THE POWER OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IN DETERMINING STUDENT SUCCESS

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study was to investigate and understand teacher perceptions of the relationships between teachers and students and how those teachers perceive relationships affect student academic performance and behavior in a small town elementary school. The relationship between a teacher and a student is defined as a formalized interpersonal association between an authority figure and a subordinate who interact on nearly a day to day basis. A cross-case analysis of five individual case studies of elementary grade classroom teachers teaching in a 500 student preschool through fifth grade predominately Caucasian middle-income small town school located approximately an hour from a large Midwestern metropolitan city was used to investigate the following research questions: (a) What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships? (b) To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms? (c) How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success? (d) How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement? Through analysis of teacher interviews, classroom observations, and participant journals, four predominate themes were determined:

(a) relationships; (b) culture; (c) high quality instruction; and (d) behavior management. The data from this study showed that these teachers believe that there is value in forming and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with their students in providing for their students' academic achievement and behavioral success. The data also showed that these teachers feel the classroom and school culture influences academics and behavior and believe it is important to understand and respond to individual student cultures. These teachers all spoke of and wrote about the importance of planning high quality instruction in providing for academic and behavioral success and high quality instruction was observed in each teacher's classroom. These teachers felt a system-wide positive behavior management plan and classroom management procedures that taught students how to behave and supported positive behavior through student accountability also was important in providing for academic and behavioral success.

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APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, have examined a dissertation titled “The Power of Teacher-Student Relationships in Determining Student Success,” presented by Michael David Camp, candidate for the Doctorate of Education degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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PREFACE

Personal Reflection

As an elementary school principal, I spent nearly every lunch period every day in the cafeteria. It was the one place where I could visit with and get to know each and every one of the approximately 500 students that came through the school doors each morning. With that many students we celebrated a lot of birthdays. It rarely failed that when wishing a child a happy birthday some curious youngster would ask me how old I was. It was quite entertaining to get the kids to debate my age. “I think he is 28 because my dad is 28…” or, “He is a principal so he is old, like my grandpa…my grandpa is 52.” Sometimes I would tell them the year I was born and we would figure it out together as a “group project.” My fundamental belief as a school leader was that students had the right to enjoy life and learning and we as educators had the responsibility to preserve that right.

As a child of the sixties, ours was a typical working middle income family...sort of. I was the first born. My brother came along eleven and a half months later. A year later my sister was born, and the following year brought another brother. My parents stopped renting and bought a house for their ever-growing family. My father worked full time in retail and my mother, while an x-ray technician by profession, stayed home to raise us kids. Two years later, five days before my sixth birthday, siblings five and six were born. My new twin sisters meant my parents had six children under the age of six years old.

Growing up the oldest of six kids who were so close in age I didn’t get a lot of attention. My first brother needed glasses and couldn’t say his r’s. My sister needed leg braces to correct her stance. My youngest brother’s vision required surgeries and for him to wear eye patches. With the twins there were two of them and they were the babies so they

got a lot of attention. I was the normal one…except that I was constantly getting corrected for wiggling around and I seemed not to learn as fast as my classmates. I was in trouble quite a bit and had to stay after school to catch up.

When I was in fifth grade my family moved to a new city. My fifth grade teacher changed my life. He was my first male teacher and was unlike any teacher I had known before. He was funny and he told stories and showed he cared. I still had a hard time concentrating and learning the material but this was a different breed of teacher than what I had experienced before. He worked with me and encouraged me to learn.

Junior High was still academically tough but I was developing my own coping strategies and began to experience success. I still had some struggles but made huge gains academically. By the time I reached high school I had defeated the obstacles that stood in my way of learning and enjoyed much academic success. My most influential teacher was my junior and senior English teacher. She was serious but used humor effectively and though she demanded excellence she did so with care and support and I wanted to do well in her class. I graduated fifth in my class of 165 with a 3.95 GPA and earned a college scholarship. Positive and supportive relationships with teachers made the difference. These teachers inspired me to look to public education for my life's calling.

In my various administrative roles I have been responsible for student discipline and teacher evaluations. It seemed apparent, even without conducting a formal study, that the most highly rated teachers had the fewest discipline issues. Likewise, the teachers who seemed to have the most behavior concerns with students also seemed to struggle more with teaching pedagogy. These were also the teachers who generated the most student and parent

complaints regarding their treatment of children. The teachers I found myself spending the most developmental time with were the teachers who had the frequent discipline issues.

Teaching in an elementary school is not a job. It is a life calling and requires a strong commitment to kids. Teachers must be empowered to form and maintain positive and supportive relationships with their students so that their students may grow and develop into successful and contributing members of the adult society. It was the goal of this study to explore the characteristics of effective teachers and to investigate how these teachers perceive their relationships with their students positively affects their behavior and academic success.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study was to investigate and understand teacher perceptions of the relationships between teachers and students and how teachers perceive those relationships affect student academic performance and behavior in a pre-school through fifth grade small town elementary school. For this research, the relationship between a teacher and a student was generally defined as a formalized interpersonal association between an authority figure and a subordinate who interact on nearly a day to day basis (Larson, Wilson, Brown, Furstenberg, & Verma, 2002; Bartlett, 2005).

In the past two decades classroom management has gone from a recognition-and-punishment intervention based paradigm to a focus on prevention through the development of classroom communities in which norms are established and academic routines promote constructive work (LaPage et al., 2005). Early classroom management practices included Pavlov's theories of behavior conditioning and reinforcement suggesting this was the manner in which to elicit desirable behavior. Many new teachers find their energies focused on classroom management and discipline. According to Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LaPage (2005), research demonstrates that effective teaching begins with a meaningful curriculum and motivating and engaging instruction. In my various roles in school administration I have observed some tremendously empowering and engaging classrooms,

too many teachers still rely on the authority of their teaching positions to get through the day rather than putting effort into getting to know and serving the needs of their individual students.

According to Horace Mann (as cited in Mondale & Patton, 2001), the primary goal for public education is to "serve all boys and girls" and "give each student an equal chance in life" (p. 29). Shapiro (2006) agrees declaring:

> …the first job of the school is to help all young people become effective citizens in a democracy. Democratic citizenship, in any era, is a complex task but it seems especially difficult at this time when international conflict and growing economic and social inequality are the rule and not the exception. (p. 1)

Education must have moral purpose. Schools must teach core values and the necessary pedagogy to prepare our children to become democratic citizens and to lead a productive life. The current accountability pressure of No Child Left Behind has unfortunately resulted in a greater focus on preparing students to take a test than on moral development (Storey & Beeman, 2006). Driven by high stakes testing regimes and mandated curricula, if schools do not carefully and purposefully attend to moral and democratic development, there is a real danger of regressing to scientifically managed factory schools of Taylor's efficiency era (Callahan, 1962).

With increasing empirical attention, the teacher-student relationship has been identified in the literature as a significant factor influencing academic and behavioral success in school. In their work with Love and Logic, Fay and Funk (1995) found that students who do not feel they enjoy positive relationships with their teachers are more disruptive, are less likely to be academic engaged, and are more likely to drop out. Other researchers illustrate

significant behavioral and academic improvement (Eccles et al., 1993; Baker, Terry, Bridger, & Winsor, 1997) and motivation to learn (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996) when students enjoy caring and supportive relationships with teachers.

Problem Statement

As a middle school assistant principal for four years in the early 2000s in an urban 600 student middle school and as the principal of two 400-500 student elementary schools, one urban setting for four years and one small town school for two years, in two Midwestern states, one of my responsibilities was to observe, develop and evaluate probationary teachers and tenured teachers on the evaluation cycle. When these teachers were aware they were to be observed most would prepare elaborate and wonderfully detailed lessons. It was evident from student response for some of these teachers that this was not the norm. The lessons would look wonderful on paper but the teaching would appear awkward and the teacher nervous and students would often passively sabotage the lessons. It would become apparent that students were not accustomed to these types of lessons and even those who wished to support the teacher would not know how. It was also obvious the teachers who prepared and delivered the same high quality lessons daily as they prepared and delivered for formal evaluations. Students were actively engaged, the lesson would progress smoothly, and there was a sense of comfort in the student and teacher interaction. More frustrating were the teachers who did not seem to care that they were being evaluated. Some seemed to see the observation as a nuisance with no real fear of consequence due to tenure. These teachers who did not plan for maximum learning opportunities, but technically met the requirements for continued employment, certainly did not serve the best interests of students.

While serving as an assistant principal, I was responsible for student discipline. I worked daily with adolescents who rebelled against the school system and who were what most educators would consider at risk for failure. I usually encountered these students as a result of discipline referrals and a typical referral would involve a student showing disrespect to a teacher. While not as prominently encountered in my elementary principalships, I still responded to many respect-based discipline issues and it was as clear with elementary students as it was with middle school students that many of these students were struggling in their interactions with their teachers. As these students progressed through their school years, their records typically demonstrated an increase in behavior issues as their academic achievement declined. In conversing with these young people a thread that often appeared was a dislike or distrust for teachers. I began to question whether some of these teachers were in fact disrespecting their students. A few of these students with who I was able to develop trusting relationships shared that they felt their teachers had been treating them unfairly for years. A review of several cumulative records of students showed early primary teacher reports with encouraging comments and positive marks for behavior. A common pattern would be a negative change in such comments and a record of disciplinary incidents increasing in the intermediate grades. Also typical would be a decline in grades and performance during these years.

These were the students that stood out. What about the students who were underserved but less obvious in their reaction? Did they also fail to benefit from positive relationships with teachers? Knestrict (2007) reflects on his life in school sharing:

> I am struck by the times teachers failed to connect with me on any real human level. I am a professor of education now, and I am still struck by the lack of emphasis on this

> human connection in education. We spend so much of our time as teachers worrying about the standards, giving tests, and focusing entirely on content that the child as a person seems to disappear. (p. 786)

I do not pretend that all teachers treat all students fairly. I do not pretend that all teachers are genuinely nice people. It is easy to understand why these teachers encounter problems with students. Many teachers, however, do try to be fair and are kind and generous. Still, they face resentment and disenfranchisement from many students who once appeared to be on the road to success. What makes these students whose early records show such promise rebel against such giving and compassionate adults?

I have observed a correlation that students who perceive they do not enjoy a positive and supportive relationship with their teacher tend to struggle academically and behaviorally in school. In my experiences as a teacher and as an administrator developing and evaluating teachers, positive and supportive relationships between teachers and students are essential for creating an effective learning environment. Jones (1987a) states that nearly every poll of parents and teachers lists discipline as the number one concern in most classrooms. According to Wickham, Britten, and McCart (2001), the single most common request for assistance from teachers is related to behavior and classroom management. First year teachers frequently cite difficulties in classroom management as their most significant problems (Polloway & Patton, 1993). In the mid 1990s, public schools were reporting all-time highs in violence and vandalism, alcohol and drug problems, and problems of discipline and disruption (Barr & Parrett, 1995). More recent data suggested that even though extreme violence was stabilizing and historically low, the rate of disruptive problem behavior was escalating and classrooms contained an increasing percentage of students who were at risk of

failing, dropping out of school, and disconnected from society. Besides affecting educational performance and achievement, school behavior problems affect society.

No Child Left Behind. In the United States, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, officially registered as Public Law 107-110, became law on January 8, 2002 (107th Congress, 2002). This law, commonly referred to as NCLB, reauthorized a number of federal programs aimed at improving performance in United States public schools through measures of state, district, and school accountability. The stated purpose of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act is to address the diverse needs of public school students nationwide by identifying achievement gaps between White middle income students and lower income students of color and motivating schools to close those gaps through an accountability system of graduated sanctions (Olbrys, 2004).

To make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), all students and all subgroups must score at or above state determined levels of proficiency. Subgroups are composed of the different racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners. Schools that do not make AYP as a whole or in any subgroup for two consecutive years are said to "need improvement" and are subject to increasing sanctions (Owens & Sunderman, 2006). By disaggregating student performance by race and class, NCLB effectively identifies long-standing inequalities between groups, and this identification could ideally prompt efforts to serve the needs of these students historically neglected in many schools (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The result of this mandate has been to create a pressure cooker environment where teachers are feeling the stress to make Adequate Yearly Progress. Adequate Yearly Progress is a level of proficiency, determined by each

state, which a specified percentage of the state's students must achieve as determined by state assessment in a given year ("Adequate Yearly Progress," n.d.).

NCLB requires every student to score at or above "proficiency" on standardized assessments of math, reading, writing and science by 2014. This has never been done before and is likely to never happen ever especially considering the fuzzy definitions of "proficiency." For many reasons, not every student experiences success in school. NCLB does not want excuses. NCLB demands results from all students in every subgroup and they are expected to all perform at their grade level, regardless of their diverse abilities (Shannon, 2005). This pre-qualifies most schools for eventual failure. According to Street (2007), "A 'good-performing school,' by the dominant definition, is one with high and/or rising standardized test scores" (p. 1). Street says this to make a point.

I once served on a district improvement committee where the directive from the State was to develop a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, research-based, and time-based) goal to help our district's students make academic achievement as measured by the state assessment test so we might make "Adequate Yearly Progress, get off of "Improvement" status, and avoid the graduated sanctions that were looming above us. In discussing the SMART goal, our assistant superintendent said, "Our goal is to make AYP." A few people laughed. She wasn't joking. I knew this district leader quite well and I did not feel this was what she believed in her heart but the pressure to perform well on this test caused this district administrator to put her belief in a well rounded and personalized education for all students on the back burner and concentrate future district professional development on test score improvement strategies. For her, the pressure to improve test scores was an inescapable reality. Educators must struggle with this conflict and determine for themselves what is right

for kids. Many teachers and schools that once strived to incorporate the child's voice democratically into the planning process have had to silence and dismiss those voices greatly because their ideas might not fit the tested curriculum. As Knestrict (2005) summarizes:

> We know that human connection is crucial to child development, but our schools fail to manifest this knowledge in practice. Classes get bigger and bigger, and test scores matter more and more. Our cultural obsession with measurement and testing often serves to sort students, not help them. (p. 786)

The Achievement Gap. The standardized testing occurring in today's diverse schools is clearly the antithesis of democratic accountability and perpetuates the achievement gap. According to Beane (1998), test scores are the false idols of education. Bureaucrats allege that a one-size-fits-all testing paradigm is the only reliable measure of academic proficiency (Johnson, 2007), and school systems, principals, and teachers are being forced to adopt measures they know will not produce a fair or accurate analysis of student performance but will instead assign inaccurate and unfair performance data to underprivileged students who are underserved and assaulted by an antidemocratic system of accountability. Mullen and Johnson (2006) suggest these standardized tests are biased and serve to sort and socialize children to fit a racist and capitalistic culture.

Research shows children of poverty typically perform below middle and upper-income students. Similarly, research indicates that African American students perform considerably behind their White counterparts (Kalmijin & Kraaykamp, 1996). Table 1 shows the percentages of 4th and 8th grade students by achievement level as they performed on standardized reading achievement tests in 2009. These gaps are persistent and exist

throughout the country and correlate with increased dropout rates and a disproportionate assignment of special education labels (Nieto, 1999; Barton, 2003).

Table 1

Reading Achievement Gaps: 2009

	Grade 4			Grade 8		
	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
Total	67%	33%	8%	75%	32%	3%
Male	64	30	6	71	28	2
Female	70	36	9	79	37	4
White	78	42	10	84	41	4
Black	48	16	2	57	14	<1
Hispanic	49	17	3	61	17	1
Asian/Pac .Isl.	80	49	16	83	45	6
Am. Ind./AK Nat.	50	20	4	62	21	2
Free or reduced-price lunch						
0–25 %	83	50	15	87	47	5
26–50 %	71	34	7	77	32	2
51–75 %	61	25	4	68	22	1
> 75 %	45	14	2	53	12	<1

Note. Achievement levels define what students should know and be able to do: Basic indicates partial mastery of fundamental skills; Proficient indicates demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter; and Advanced indicates superior performance. The percentage of students at or above Proficient includes students at the Proficient and the Advanced achievement levels. Similarly, the percentage of students at or above Basic includes students at the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced achievement levels. Adapted from "2009 Reading Assessments." *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.* NAEP Data Explorer.

Frutcher (2007) suggests while purported to decrease the achievement gap between majority students and those of minority sub-groups, this NCLB/AYP plan is defective and dangerous and forces many schools and teachers to divert their efforts from "good practice"

and what they know is best for kids to meeting a state-determined number of proficient-or-above student scores on standardized imposed standard is humiliation assessments without regard for the uncontrollable and many times invisible nuances that exist in many schools.

Dropout Rates. Regardless of socioeconomic status, students who do not feel valued and cared for or cared about must feel disenfranchised and deprived of educational opportunities. It is likely that these students do not clearly recognize they are not having their educational and personal needs met but they know they are uncomfortable in the school setting and many seek escape. Likewise, students who do not experience academic success in school or struggle to fit the ideal mold behaviorally often have little motivation to persevere through what can be years of negativity and feeling of poor self-efficacy.

According to Pytel (2006), "The traditional high school format does not meet the needs of many students living in today's society," and they fail to see the relevance between "what they are learning and the need in the world for the information" (p. 1). The Math and Reading Help authors ("The Importance of Teacher-Student Relationships," 2010) suggest, "Most students dropping out of high school have had problems throughout their entire educational careers" (p. 1). The decision to drop out of school is not typically made at the spur of the moment but results from years of academic struggles, behavior issues, and social problems. Drop out prevention strategies do little good when targeted at high school aged students for the damage has likely already been done. Attention instead needs to be focused on students as they begin to experience struggles in school, often in the earliest grades.

According to the Alliance of Excellent Education Fact Sheet ("High school dropouts in America," 2009), approximately 71% of our nation's children complete high school and graduate with a standard diploma. Almost half of African American and Hispanic students

complete high school and graduate with their classmates. In some states the gap between White and minority graduation is as much as 40 to 50 percentage points. Table 2 displays the status dropout rates comparing Whites to minority students in selected years from 1990 through 2008.

Table 2

Status Dropout Rates

Year	Total %	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Isl.	Am. Ind./AK Nat.
1990	12.1	9.0	13.2	32.4	4.9	16.4
1995	12.0	8.6	12.1	30.0	3.9	13.4
2000	10.9	6.9	13.1	27.8	3.8	14.0
2001	10.7	7.3	10.9	27.0	3.6	13.1
2002	10.5	6.5	11.3	25.7	3.9	16.8
2003	9.9	6.3	10.9	23.5	3.9	15.0
2004	10.3	6.8	11.8	23.8	3.6	17.0
2005	9.4	6.0	10.4	22.4	2.9	14.0
2006	9.3	5.8	10.7	22.1	3.6	14.7
2007	8.7	5.3	8.4	21.4	6.1	19.3
2008	8.0	4.8	9.9	18.3	4.4	14.6

Note. The status dropout rate is the percentage of 16-24 year-olds are not enrolled in school and not earning a high school credential. Adapted from "Dropout rates in the United States," by L. Laird, S. Lew, M. Debell, and C. D. Chapman, 2006, *U.S.D.E, National Center for Education Statistics.*

Individuals who do not complete high school are more likely to receive government assistance and to stay on government assistance longer than those with at least a high school diploma (Boisjoly, Harris, & Duncan, 1998). Female high school dropouts are more likely to join the growing welfare dependent underclass, have children at younger ages, use more illicit drugs, and become single mothers then female high school graduates (Egemba & Crawford, 2003; Grant & Sleeter, 2005). LuPont (2010) suggests, "Pre-adolescence and

adolescence are high-risk years for alcohol and drug abuse," (p. 1) and cites early drug and alcohol use as primary risk factors for dropping out of school. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between dropping out of school and the use of illicit substances and noted a correlation of higher rates of substance use among dropouts than among adolescents who stay in school or graduate. Bruno and Doscher (1979), for instance, documented the higher levels of drug use in Hispanic dropouts. Fagan and Pabon (1985) conducted a study where they found that 54% of dropouts reported using illicit drugs compared to 30% of those still in school. Guagliardo, Huang, Hicks, and D'Angelo (1998) reported that early age drug use was a predicting factor for dropping out of high school or being old for a given grade.

Further, high school dropouts are more likely to become involved in crime. High school dropouts represent disproportionately high percentages of prison and death row inmates. "Failure to graduate from high school," according to Harlow (2003), "is associated with a tripling of the likelihood of being imprisoned," p. 10). In the twelve years between 1983 and 1995, more jails were built in the United States than schools or hospitals (Zukin, 1995). This imprisonment has historically not been equitably distributed among the races and ethnic groups. According to Chanse (2002), from 1977 to 1985, "when prison populations almost tripled, 70% of new inmates were African American, Latino, or other nonwhite minorities" (p. 3). Research shows that high school dropouts commit 82% of crimes in the United States (Wickham et al., 2001) and over 80% of the inmates of America's prisons are high school dropouts (Barr & Parrett, 1995). The United States Department of Justice estimates 50% of death row inmates dropped out of high school (Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Laird, Lew, Debell, & Chapman, 2006). Between 2006 and 2007 time period, 1.4% of American 16-24 year old men and women were institutionalized. Of these incarcerated

young people, 0.1% held bachelor degrees, 0.7% had completed one to three years of college, 1.0% were high school graduates, and 6.3% were high school dropouts without a GED certificate. Sixty three times more high school drop outs were incarcerated than prisoners with bachelor degrees (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2009).

High school dropouts are more likely then graduates to live in poverty and be unemployed as they typically lack the minimum skills and qualifications to compete in today's technologically complex society (Caspi, Wright, Moffit, & Silva, 1998). According to Sum et al. (2009), There was an average jobless rate of 54% for young (16-24 year old) high school dropouts during 2008 which was 22% higher than the jobless rate of high school graduates. Table 3 compares the national jobless percentage by education status for 2008.

Table 3

Jobless Rates, 2008

Education Status	Jobless Percentage
High School Dropout	54
High School Graduate	32
1-3 years College	21
4 year College Degree	13

Note. Adapted from "The consequences of dropping out of high school: Joblessness and jailing for high school dropouts and the high cost for taxpayers," by A. Sum, I. Khatiwada, J. McLaughlin, and S. Palma, 2009, *Center for Labor Market Studies*.

Students of color are far more likely than White students not to finish high school. According to Orfield (2004) approximately 75% of White students graduate with a standard diploma in four years compared to only 50% of Black high school students. This discrepancy also translates to the unemployment market. In 2008, Sum et al. (2009) point out, Black

dropouts were unemployed at a rate of “69% followed by Asians at 57%, Whites at 54% and Hispanics at 47%” with the “ above average employment rates of Hispanic dropouts primarily reflect[ing] the sharply higher employment rates of young Hispanic immigrants, many of whom were undocumented immigrants” (p. 3).

Need for the Study

We are first and foremost economic creatures. America is not so much a culture as it is an economy, and our sense of worth and purpose is to be found in our capacity to secure material benefits (Postman, 1996). This is dominant in society and can be seen in schools through the focus and emphasis on standards, testing, and accountability. Schools are bureaucratic and social institutions. No matter how democratic we may wish for schools to be, with few exceptions schools today look much like schools of a century past, resembling mechanistic factory model assembly lines, in form and function (Darling-Hammond, 1997). As almost any school is a microcosm of the society in which it exists and schools accordingly represent the ideologies of the greater society, the purpose of school becomes to train and produce contributing members to the greater society—cogs in the machine. The reality is these kids will one day be running our society and they must be prepared to do so. Accordingly, the function of school must be to combine both ideals and prepare our children democratically to take their places in society. The haves, for the most part, will continue to have, and the have nots, will continue to have not, or at least to have far less than the haves. Teachers may want to practice democratic learning but when the bell tolls it is the teacher who is called to defend the choices made and the lessons learned. The teacher is expected to keep the order and to make most of the decisions. Accordingly, the teacher must struggle to

represent democratic practices in the classroom and take care not to impart personal ideological sentiments and the capitalist ideologies of the dominant society.

When teacher candidates are asked about their future classroom concerns, most express anxiety about dealing with potential student disruptions and misbehavior (LaPage et al., 2005). Bernard (2003) suggests when students are asked what they want and need in a teacher, they unequivocally want "a caring teacher who accepts "no excuses" and who refuses to let them fail" (pp. 115-116). According to Trumbull, Greenfield, and Quiroz (2003), most teachers in the twentieth century were prepared using a "Piagetion approach to developmental psychology, which saw development primarily as an individual rather than a social matter" (p. 69). Today, we know much more about teaching and learning. Research, according to Marzano (2003), has demonstrated that teacher actions have twice the influence on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement. School is one of the first places where behavior and future success is shaped. Teachers have the power to provide positive or negative experiences for their students. Brendro, Brokenleg, and VanBocken (1990) assert the school is the only institution that provides for the development of long-term relationships with all of our children.

There are many kinds of teachers and some are more effective than others. Through my life I had some teachers who were well prepared and others who did little more than show up. I had some teachers who treated students fairly and others who seemed to enjoy holding court over their students. Teachers can make or break a student's ability to enjoy academic success. This is an awesome power that must be taken seriously. With this in mind, the purpose of this case study was to investigate teacher perceptions about the relationships

between teachers and students and to determine the qualities of those relationships that teachers perceive contribute to student success. This study investigated five successful teachers who had been determined through professional evaluations to consistently form and maintain positive and support relationships with their students. In collecting the data of this study, many of the nuances of these relationships were observed, discussed, and analyzed. These observed teacher attributes indicate both academic and behavioral success in and beyond these teachers' classrooms. Accordingly, the resulting data from studying these teacher behaviors should be used to inform teacher training programs, professional development in schools, and professional teacher evaluations. If our students are our future, then our teachers must understand how they either support or thwart their success.

Research Questions

The specific questions this study intended to address were:

1. What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?
3. How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success?
4. How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?

To answer these questions, exploratory descriptive case studies of five general education elementary classroom teachers were designed and conducted.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study informed through the lenses of narratology and portraiture was to investigate teacher perceptions of the relationships between teachers and students and to determine the qualities of those relationships that teachers perceive influence students behaviorally and academically. A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts that guides the research. These teacher-student relationships were examined by considering the critical characteristics that influence and can be influenced by public schooling. These characteristics are introduced here and are explored in detail in the literature review. As I have personally experienced the pressures of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiatives, I began by exploring and examining their affect, positive and negative, on school culture and student achievement. While touted as an educational reform with its purpose to raise the math and reading levels of American students through school level accountability, NCLB has had a great negative impact and has prompted the complete and detrimental restructuring of many school programs.

As a counterpoint to the negative pressures of NCLB, democratic schooling, especially as an agent of social justice, was studied and the positives of this movement and the obstacles that exist in its implementation were considered. In a democratic school, the child is at the center and is much more a part of the decision making process. The goal is to aid the child in developing the skills necessary to become a productive democratic citizen. My experience has been that democratic education faces resistance because it runs counter to what most people know. People are drawn to their comfort zones and too many people find comfort in traditional schooling. Social justice is concerned with fairness and equal

opportunities for all students. This considered, the literature was examined for threats to social justice and movements and methods to counter systematic inequality.

A prominent concern faced by the field of education during my leadership career has been the achievement gap between students of color and poverty and White students. I endeavored to explore possible causes for this achievement discrepancy and any proposed solutions. I especially considered teacher perceptions and expectations or lack of expectations for minority students. I also reviewed the literature regarding the possible reasons for the achievement differences I have observed between genders.

Culture is a major component of this literature review. I considered culture in society and in school and I also studied hegemony and how cultural forces work to maintain the status quo. Counter to the status quo, I explored opportunities for school improvement and obstacles against school reculturing. In consideration of how students learn, I investigated the constructivist literature and also took a close look at individual student culture and how unique cultures fit in the culture of school and society. For teachers to work effectively with students of diverse cultures, I felt it was important to examine what it is to be culturally competent and how multicultural education serves to maximize learning and opportunities for all students.

The balance of the literature review examined the components of teacher-student relationships and the specific elements of the teaching pedagogy that teachers can and do influence and that research demonstrates affects academic and behavioral success. If our students are our future then teachers must understand how they either support or thwart this success. In my career, I have observed that students who do not feel they have a positive and supportive relationship with their teachers often tend to struggle academically and

behaviorally in school. Some teachers form positive and supportive relationships with students and listen to their needs and empower them to become successful while other teachers intimidate students and keep them in their place and seek to fit these students into conformist molds from which they have a difficult time ever breaking free. Accordingly, it was my intent to examine critically the power and influence of teacher-student relationships because to not properly prepare students to do more than serve a productive role in society is to perform a great disservice.

The specific elements of the teaching pedagogy that I researched were selected because, as a school administrator evaluating teachers, I believe these components are critical to student successes or struggles academically and behaviorally. It has been my experience that teacher effectiveness and effective teaching strategies have become increasingly popular topics of professional development since the work of Robert Marzano became broadly known during the early 2000s. Accordingly, I included a review of teacher effectiveness and the components Marzano and other researchers find critical for teaching to be effective. I also reviewed the literature about student motivation to evaluate the methods and techniques that motivate students to perform well and behave appropriately.

Constructivism, democratic schooling, multiculturalism and just about any educational design beyond lecture understands the important of student engagement. Students who are actively involved in the learning process achieve at higher levels and behave in productive and appropriate manners. Considering this, I evaluated the student engagement literature for connections between engagement and academic and behavior success and for strategies for increasing active student engagement. Learning is not complete unless students receive feedback regarding their efforts. My experience has been that

feedback that is swift, specific, and positively stated typically results in higher achievement than feedback that is general, negative, or delayed. I searched the literature for connections between feedback and student success and for strategies and practices teachers can use to improve the feedback they provide for their students.

Children learn in different ways and at different rates and all students have their own interests and preferences. Accordingly, I included a review and discussion of the literature related to differentiated instruction and how differentiation affects student achievement. Classroom management is critical to enjoying positive relationships with students. Students know when a teacher is not organized or does not have control of the classroom. Some students may respond in negative ways and disrupt the environment even further. Others may not react so obviously but may become frustrated and give up trying. Accordingly, I included a thorough analysis of classroom management in the literature review and how classroom management or a lack of classroom management affects student success. Similarly, effective discipline practices are necessary for student success. Students need to know what to expect and that they will be held accountable but treated fairly. I searched the literature for connections between discipline procedures and student achievement and behavior and look for methods and strategies to maximize the benefits of an effective discipline program.

Overview of Methodology

This qualitative research consisted of an ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study supported through the lenses of narratology and portraiture designed to examine teacher perceptions of the relationships between teachers and their students to determine how teachers perceive their relationships with their students affect academic performance and behavior.

Theoretical Traditions. As ethnomethodology is considered excellent for seeing how individuals make sense of the social world for themselves (Gingrich, 2003), this tradition permitted me to explore fully the relationship dynamics of elementary teachers and their students. Similarly, using narratology to interpret stories and to explore and expose the intricacies of teacher-student relationships further served to inform this study (Patton, 2002). Finally, since the goal of portraiture is to investigate fully and to illustrate those being studied, using portraiture to create a portrait of an elementary school teacher substantially aided in telling the teacher's stories (English, 2000).

Ethnomethodology investigates the norms, understandings and assumptions that are taken for granted by people in a setting because they are so deeply understood that people do not even think about why they do what they do (Patton, 2002). Ethnomethodology is purported in the literature to be a very good method for seeing how individuals make sense of the social world for themselves. In view of that, this tradition permitted the full exploration of the relationship dynamics of teachers and their students. According to Yin (1994), a case study often serves as the primary design for qualitative inquiry as it provides for a detailed assessment of a person, group, or setting under study (Yin, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) offer two purposes for employing a case study approach: (a) increasing understanding of the phenomena being studied; and (b) investigating the attributes that permit themes to emerge. Stake (1995) suggests an "instrumental case study...is expected to catch the complexity of a single case…coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Stake (2000) further emphasizes the value of a single instrumental case study is what specifically can be examined to offer insight into an issue or reinforce a generalization. "In a single ethnographic case study," Bernard (1995) asserts, "there is

exactly one unit of analysis—the community or village or tribe" (pp. 35-36). Within a single case study, Patton (2002) suggests a researcher may study several participants. In this qualitative study, case studies were conducted that explored and chronicled the complexities of five general education elementary school teachers as they interacted with and related with their students.

Narratology, according to Patton (2002), "strives to understand the lived experience and perceptions of lived experience" (p. 115). Patton (2002) further suggests narratology focuses specifically on the interpretation of "stories, life history narratives, historical memoirs, and creative nonfiction to reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (p. 478). Patton (2002) suggests "stories and narratives offer especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings" (p. 116). Accordingly, the five teacher participants agreed to keep participant journals specifically around issues of student relationships. Narrative analysis was used with the participant journals which served as data to reveal information about teachers and students and their environment. The data from the participant journals was therefore analyzed to develop narratives to aid in telling the stories of these teachers and their relationships with the children they teach. Interviews and observations were analyzed using a generic coding process to identify themes.

Portraiture is a way of capturing the "essence" of people (English, 2000). Similar to narratology, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), suggest portraiture "blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (p. xv). As the purpose of portraiture is to investigate and illustrate subjects being studied, this technique proved helpful in telling the stories of the five elementary classroom teachers in this case study.

Qualitative analysis commonly centers on specific cases and analysis across cases (Patton, 2002). Case study methodology, by investigating in real-life context, can shed needed light on how students and teachers interact in the classroom. Five general education classroom teachers were selected based on specific criterion of high evaluation ratings regarding teacher-student relationships and collected data from three sources—interviews, observations, and participant journals—to inform this study.

Setting. The research setting for this study was a 500 student middle-SES predominantly Caucasian elementary school in a small town located approximately an hour from a large Midwestern metropolitan area.

Participants. These case studies began with an overview of teacher evaluations in search of records that indicate superior rating in the areas related to student relationships. From this overview, five teachers were identified as the focus of these case studies.

Sampling Techniques. Selection of the participants was accomplished using purposive criterion-based sampling. According to Maxwell (2005), purposeful criterion-based sampling "is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88). The reason for making purposeful criterion-based selections is to examine select cases critical to the goals of the research study. These selections were made based on document analysis of teacher evaluations seeking teachers with superior ratings in areas related to student interaction.

Data Collection. Data was collected through interviews, participant journals, and observations. The purpose for conducting interviews was to capture teacher perceptions and lend validity to the research. Maxwell (2005) suggests interviews "can provide additional

information that was missed in observation, and can be used to check the accuracy of the observation" (p. 94). Semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews were used to make certain specific questions were asked that were believed would inform the study and to provide for exploration in greater depth. Threats to validity and reliability were addressed by following a standardized interview protocol including an interview guide with topics for exploration (Patton, 2002). The five teacher participants were also asked to keep participant journals around the issues involving their relationships with their students. Journal prompts were provided that were designed to provide information and ideas related to teacher-student relationships. Observations of the selected teachers were also conducted in the classroom setting and in other areas while the teachers were interacting with students. Observations, according to Maxwell (2005), allow the researcher a direct and insightful way to learn about behavior and the context in which the behavior occurs. Care was taken to record concrete instances by capturing direct quotations and noting unembellished descriptions as the interactions between teachers and students were observed.

Data Analysis. In qualitative data analysis, researchers examine and interpret patterns to generate meaning from the collected data. In this case study, interview, observation and participant journal data was analyzed through the constant comparative method (CCM) to investigate the characteristics of five elementary teachers interacting in positive and supportive manners with their students (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data from participant journals was analyzed through the narrative analysis process while interviews and observations were analyzed using a generic coding process. Through the constant comparative method, the data was unitized into individual ideas and then these units

were sorted into categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data was arranged in a Microsoft Word table and rearranged as themes were determined and refined.

Summary

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of this case study of five elementary classroom teachers and the nuances of their positive and supportive relationships with their students and how those relationships influence academic performance and behavior while in and beyond their classrooms. The current problems facing these and most other public school teachers were discussed including the No Child Left Behind initiative and the achievement gap between low-income minority students and students of affluence. The theoretical framework for this study was provided as well as an overview of the literature review to be further explored in chapter 2. The balance of this chapter provided an overview of the study methodology.

Chapter 2 consists of a thorough overview of the professional literature that provides a structural foundation for this study. Included in the literature review is a thorough discussion of the No Child Left Behind laws and democratic schooling with a focus on social justice. Examining the literature around the achievement gap, this review specifically examined the minority achievement gap including teacher perceptions and expectations and the gender achievement gap. Culture was a major component of this chapter and included school culture, hegemony, reculturing school, constructivism, student culture, cultural knowledge and competence, and multiculturalism. The balance of the literature review examined teacher-student relationships including teacher effectiveness, student motivation, student engagement, teacher feedback, differentiated learning, classroom management, and effective discipline.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology for this study in depth. Included in this chapter is the rationale for qualitative research, an exploration of case study, ethnomethodology, narratology and portraiture, a description of the study setting, data production procedures, the data collection process, and the steps followed for data analysis. Chapter 4 is the analysis of the data collected through interviews, participant journals, and observations and is presented by research question. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the findings. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with a presentation and discussion of the discoveries, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for educators and researchers for continuing research about the influence of teacher student relationships.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

John Goodland (1976) said, “Winning becomes increasingly attractive and absorbing. Frequently, purposes beyond winning are lost to view. Children invariably are the losers” (p. 70). He was addressing the eventual reality that often greets the voice of educators in the struggle to improve schooling. He could just as well make this assertion today. Winning seems to be everything. In this era of No Child Left Behind, a paradigm shift has occurred in too many schools away from teaching and preparing kids for the future toward drilling and preparing kids for state assessments. We must win. We must reach that line drawn on that page and we must win. Those mighty scores, after all, are how successful schools are measured and reaching that magic line each year has become “increasingly attractive and absorbing.” There is so much pressure to prepare for the state assessments that many teachers get bogged down in attempting to address the stuff and “children invariably are the losers.” Until the late 1970s, the majority of our political leaders were satisfied with our schools. There was no pressure to fix what did not seem to be broken. Then, very suddenly, politicians became aware that not nearly enough students were getting good enough grades or scoring well enough on achievement tests. This awareness led to the present hue and cry to improve our schools. The pressure to improve achievement so that no child will be left behind and every school will make adequate yearly progress continues to fail in too many schools because, as Glasser (1993) asserts, most of the “suggested improvements are tied to the old teach, test, reward, and punish, boss-managed system” (p. 5).

This literature review began by evaluating the empirical literature describing and informing teacher-student relationships and the effect of these relationships on student learning and behavior by perusing text books and professional journals in my home, office and school district library for each topic and subtopic included this review. Keyword searches in WilsonWeb's Education Full Text, Illumina's ERIC, and EBSCOhost's professional publication databases were also performed. The purpose for conducting searches through three databases was the differing results each produced. Some of the entries between the databases were duplicates but most were unique. When a search of one database would provide few or no relevant articles or other documents, another would offer ample direction for investigation. When a search produced an abundance of material, key words were added to narrow the focus to yield a more manageable selection. Many of the publications were of direct benefit and often those that were of little or no direct relevance offered suggestions through in text citations or end of chapter or article reference lists of where to look to gather more significant information. What follows is a brief overview of this search.

As the main topic of this study is "teacher-student relationships," this review began with a keyword search of that topic. WilsonWeb's Education Full Text yielded 3,126 entries compared to ERIC's more manageable 372 sources, and EBSCOhosts's overwhelming 15,946 unique publications. Narrowing the search to "teacher relationships" and "student motivation" provided 193, 400, and 369 results concurrently. "Democratic schooling" yielded 1,293, 38, and 15 results; "social justice" resulted in 2,947, 3,500, and 29,842 entries; and "democratic schooling" and "social justice" together produced 52, 3, and 3 documents. Sufficient empirical research was found to inform this review on the broader topics but fewer resources were found for some of the subtopics. Searching "achievement gap," for example,

produced 860, 1,628, and 1042 results and adding “minority,” or “Black,” or “African American” produced hundreds of sources—sufficient for a saturated review. “Achievement gap” and “teacher perception,” however, produced only 8 publications in the WilsonWeb Education Full Text data base and no results in the other two databases. In cases such as this, related terms such as “achievement gap” and “expectations” were searched which produced 7, 68, and 0 results, and “achievement gap” and “expectations” yielded a more informative 57, 99, and 4 documents.

Some subtopics, while sufficient resources appeared available, failed to inform adequately this review and therefore seemed to be lacking in the literature. Wanting to review the literature on how teachers perceive their relationships with students affect their academic achievement and behavior, a search of “teacher relationships” and “teacher perception” provided 483, 13, and 117 results. While this seems sufficient, many entries looked at parent relationships, student relationships with each other, perceptions of teachers about student relations, and many other directions that did not inform this review. A few relevant sources were found which lead to others. Still, the available literature seemed slight and this further encouraged the need for this study.

The purpose of this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study was to explore teacher perceptions of the relationships between teachers and students and to consider the qualities of those relationships that teachers perceive influence student success. According to Leitão and Waugh (2007), “Positive teacher-student relationships are characterized by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation” (p. 3). Teacher-student relationships provide an essential foundation for effective classroom management and classroom management is a key to high student

achievement. Teacher-student relationships must not be left to chance or be permitted to be dictated by the personalities of those involved. Instead, by using strategies supported by research, teachers can influence the dynamics of their classrooms and build strong teacher-student relationships that will support student learning.

Whether democratic or authoritarian, everything that happens in school influences school culture. Danielson (2002) suggests the culture of a school is defined by the norms and values that prevail in the school setting. Often the culture of a school represents and is influenced by societal factors outside of the school and the school culture serves to maintain the status quo and promote separation between more affluent and minority groups resulting in an achievement gap (Hale & Rollins, 2006). Teacher relationships with students are critical because teachers have the power to build students up or to tear them down (James, 1994). Myers (2007) agrees that every teacher affects the attitudes of the students in the classroom. Teachers can nurture or negate the innate curiosity these students bring with them into the classroom. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher whether the students see school as a place in which to thrive or as a place to be feared. Effective teachers know their students and their unique needs and have a proactive plan to address those needs (Stronge, 2002).

Many students do not enjoy school or see it as a positive opportunity and expend little positive energy toward academics. In order to develop positive relationships, teachers must first understand their students before they can expect their students to understand and follow them. Understanding the needs and the beliefs of students is crucial to finding ways to increase their motivation to learn (Jones & Jones, 1981). Danielson (2002) asserts that students must be genuinely engaged and active participants for maximum learning to occur. Such engagement typically refers to behavioral engagement and involves participation in

group activities, following rules and routines, and putting forth appropriate effort (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). For students to understand what they are doing well and what needs revision the teacher must also provide specific and meaningful feedback (Hattie, 1992). Classroom success and student engagement is increased when teachers plan to accommodate the unique differences in students and differentiate instructional content, process, products, and the learning environment (Lezotte, 1992; Stronge, 2002). All of these facets of schooling are supported through positive proactive classroom management and positive discipline. Behavior is a living and dynamic entity, which is learned, modeled, observed and copied every minute of the day. Good and Brophy (2000) suggest the relationship between the teacher and the student is the most significant factor in maintaining a positive classroom culture. Effective discipline is not punitive, and is a process of teaching, not of coercion. Effective discipline programs seek to involve students in social responsibility and self control (Brendro et al., 1990).

No Child Left Behind

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (107th Congress, 2002) marked the beginning of an accountability era with an emphasis on increased student achievement and holding schools accountable for learning as never before (Andrews & Ridenour, 2006). NCLB requires schools to disaggregate achievement data by grade in racial, demographic, and socioeconomic subgroups and focuses attention on the achievement gaps between minority and White students (Storey & Beeman, 2006). This has resulted in efforts to align the curriculum with national standards and meet the individual needs of students while still increasing scores for all students on state-mandated tests (Barnett & Aagaard, 2007).

The resulting emphasis on business-style efficiency bears an uncanny resemblance to the Frederick Taylor-inspired traditions that dominated the field from the 1920s through the 1940s (Brooks & Miles, 2006). This focus on standards, assessments, and adequate yearly progress has certainly created challenges for the building principal as externally imposed definitions of academic excellence adds to traditional leadership and management responsibilities. The paradox, according to Shapiro (2006) who cites McNeil (2000) and Kochan and Reed (2005), is that "the barrage of accountability measures aimed at schools has caused educators to focus on varied and questionable purposes, such as teaching to the tests and "dumbing down" the curriculum rather than preparing students to become useful and productive citizens" (p. 4).

While NCLB has encouraged schools and districts to align more closely teaching and learning with the state's curricular standards, and while test scores in reading and math are improving, social studies, science, music, art, and many other subjects are almost being viewed as intrusions on the tested curriculum. Accountability, at this extreme, can only hurt students as there seems to be little room or desire for democratic According to Shannon (2005), many scholars and educators see NCLB as reactionary legislation that is only pretending to be concerned with closing achievement gaps, seeking instead to impose bureaucratic control and maximize and spotlight the achievement deficits of poor, minority, immigrant, and physically and mentally disabled students who the elite view as "drains on American prosperity" (p. 26). Owens and Sunderman (2006) suggest:

> When NCLB was enacted, researchers and state education officials projected that a high percentage of schools would fail to meet the law's tough accountability

> provisions, creating a crisis in public education and overwhelming the capacity of state education agencies to help low performing schools. (p. 1)

Amrein and Berliner (2002) point out:

> Twenty-five states distribute financial rewards to successful or improved schools, and 25 states have the power to close, reconstitute, or take over low performing schools… In 17 states low average class scores may warrant the displacement or removal of teachers or administrators. (pp. 5-6).

Mullen and Johnson (2006) suggest the real intent of NCLB and the attached sanctions is to eliminate or modify drastically public schooling through covert "racism and classism, sorting and socialization, and punitive ideologies leading to corrective courses of action" (p. 9). Owens and Sunderman (2006) found that highly segregated schools with disproportionate enrollments serving disadvantaged and minority students are most likely to be identified as needing improvement and to receive corrective sanctions.

According to Street (2007), standardized testing results are regularly providing:

> …empirical justification for the closing and privatization of "failing" public schools and the related rollback of teachers' collective bargaining rights and guarantees. Low test scores have become a marvelous vehicle for shaming public schools, teachers, and teacher unions and advancing the corporate educational privatization agenda partly encoded in the reactionary, bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act. (p. 4)

Echoing these thoughts, McKinzie (2003) offers that:

> Lurking behind this NCLB program is an educational VIRUS or WORM much like the Sobig.F virus that recently struck computers globally. The hidden agenda of NCLB is to shut down urban public schools and send their clients into the brave new

> world of corporate schooling, even though there is no convincing evidence that these free market alternatives will reverse the long established patterns of poor school performance. (p. 1)

Mullen and Johnson (2006) suggest that accountability systems have always been used for political gain but add that the NCLB accountability system goes blatantly beyond historic practices by restrictively defining educational proficiency and using "disaggregated test scores" as "the focal point for hiring, firing, rewarding, and punishing school administrators and staff" (p. 12).

By the time many students reach the intermediate elementary school grades our present system of teach-to-the-test skill-and-drill public education has effectively killed-the-thrill of learning and rendered our once curious and excited youth into mechanized sit-and-get-and-test-and-forget victims of the NCLB and AYP disease. The idea that the only one right answer is the answer to a test question is ludicrous and leaves a school system vulnerable to authoritarian rule. If the only acceptable answer is the one on the test then there is no purpose in thinking about options or debating the truth. Teaching that there is only one right answer breeds compliance and complacency.

According to Stafford-Johnson and Dill (2007), "as of June 2006, seven thousand children in our nation drop out of school every day" (p. 1). These are students that math and reading dominant curriculums are failing to serve. How does such a curriculum serve the needs of the artist, the scientist, the social activist, or the musician? How does it even serve the needs of the journalist or the mathematician? It does not and it cannot. It is far too limiting. Such a restrictive curriculum only serves the goals of those who wish to impose their will on our nation's youth and perhaps to illuminate and exacerbate the deficiencies of

what has typically become a reactionary school system. While it is certainly important to study Language Arts and Mathematics, even more critical for many students is the need to develop competencies in social justice. Banks (2005b) stresses the importance of educating for social justice in today's society and world. A narrowly defined education based on reading and math will do little to prepare today's students to become contributing socially just and democratic citizens.

The problems in society rarely relate to an inability to read and multiply. While important skills, in order to truly succeed, students need to be well versed in cooperative learning and problem solving skills. Democratic schooling serves the needs of all students as it allows for all voices to be heard. The limits of the reading and math based curriculum threaten to choke the life out of the love of learning born into our youngest citizens. Too often this love of learning is effectively amputated before many of our children outgrow their first sets of school clothes. Clearly, the No Child Left Behind initiatives pose a serious threat to democratic schooling and social justice.

Darling-Hammond (2007), argues, "we need…something much more than and much different from what NCLB offers. We badly need a national policy that enables schools to meet the intellectual demands of the twenty-first century" (p. 1). The Adequate Yearly Progress system of evaluation should be replaced by a model of multiple measures that looks for continuous improvement, assesses higher order thinking, and assesses special education students and English language learners appropriately. Rather than imposing sanctions on schools that serve our neediest children, NCLB should concentrate its efforts toward providing low performing schools with whatever supports are needed to maximize the potential for all students to succeed (Owens & Sunderman, 2006). Darling-Hammond (2007)

suggests schools should have their improvement comprehensively measured by factors such as "student progress and continuation, graduation and classroom performance on tasks beyond multiple-choice tests—and gains should be assessed by how individual students improve over time" (p. 5). For students to learn at high levels they must benefit from effective teaching, a quality curriculum that considers their interests, and adequate and appropriate resources. Testing and punishing students and schools will not guilt or threaten them into sustaining higher levels of achievement. Such tactics instead serve to limit severely the most vulnerable students and schools. It would be much more beneficial to schools and school systems if NCLB would evaluate the instructional programs of schools and determine shortcomings and offer assistance in addressing identified deficiencies. This is not the current focus of NCLB and as schools have no control over its focus, schools and teachers must instead focus on factors on which they do have considerable influence.

Democratic Schooling

The modern system of education began in the early 20th century and was influenced by Frederick Taylor's (1923) theory of Scientific Management. Ellwood Cubberley's (1929) factory model schools were the norm and were not designed to be democratic as, according to Darling-Hammond (1996), they were defined by "highly developed tracking systems that stressed rote learning and unwavering compliance for the children of the poor…" (p. 6). Darling-Hammond (1996) further explains, "Like manufacturing industries, [schools] were designed as highly specialized organizations-divided into grade levels and subject-matter departments, separate tracks and programs-to facilitate the use of routines and procedures" (p. 13). According to Lieberman, Wood and Falk (1994), teachers were perceived as technicians to be trained to accept and adopt the "right ideas" (p. 30).

America's early focus was on corporate management and business style leadership in schools and this focus with the exception of a few largely unsuccessful attempts at restructuring remains prevalent in education today. Shields (2004) warns that children who do not enjoy a sense of belonging in schools are excluded and marginalized in systems that "perpetuate inequity and inequality rather than democracy and social justice" (p. 122). Johnson (2007) contends:

> Children are born positive, curious, confident, physical beings. They want to learn, they want to succeed, they want to build independence and they want approval. Children learn best when they are actively engaged and appropriately challenged. They learn best when they are having fun. They need to feel safe and appreciated. They need to physically experience skills and knowledge. They are not machines. They are not preprogrammed insects. Being forced to sit at a desk for hours on end, completing a series of worksheets which may or may not be at their level only destroys their natural enthusiasm for learning. (p. 1)

Mundane instructional practices are nothing new. Wyett (1998) quotes Albert Einstein as recognizing the shortfalls of education in his time: "It is, in fact, nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry" (p. 151).

Education, according to Meighan (2002), is basically authoritarian, since one person, or a very few people, determine "what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, how to assess learning, and the nature of the learning environment" (p. 1). While society looks to schools to develop common values in its citizens, private and public goals are always in conflict and as long as private industry rules the marketplace, private interests will carry great sway

(Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). Schools are too often held responsible for social and economic disparities, and that can make teaching awfully hard to do. While schools are certainly obligated as agents of social justice to strive to provide opportunities for those who are economically disadvantaged to gain the knowledge and skills to succeed, schools have not been designed or enabled to be the great equalizer.

Winchester (2003) suggests "most schools, most times, nearly everywhere are not democratic places" (p. 2). We deny our students the freedom to choose by imposing rituals and structures and by mandating their curriculum and the design of their day. Apple and Beane (1995) argue that healthy societies provide for freedoms that demonstrate mutual respect, and our society is in real danger of losing those freedoms. While traditional schools are bureaucratic institutions and assume a hierarchy of power with the teacher stationed above the student, in democratic schools this hierarchy is deemphasized and vast opportunities exist for negotiating all operations of the school. Traditional teachers' power is in their authority over students while democratic educators have power in their expertise. There is a fundamental difference between the concept of democratic schooling and the school structures that dominate capitalistic markets.

According to Giroux (1998), "Growing up corporate has become a way of life for youth in the United States" (p. 12). While it is clear the market plays an important role in shaping American identities, it is a sad commentary that when asked to provide a definition for democracy, many of our youngest citizens, according to Wright (1997), refer to "the freedom to buy and consume whatever they wish, without government restriction" (p. 182). Beane (2002) suggests "as free market economies are glorified and public services privatized, the meaning of democracy is evolving almost exclusively as a matter of personal

choice and self-interest, and the complementary notion of a public or common good is disappearing" (p. 25). Moffatt (2008) defines a free market economy as "an economy in which the allocation for resources is determined only by their supply and the demand for them" (p. 1). Moffatt (2008) further suggests "this is mainly a theoretical concept as every country, even capitalist ones, places some restrictions on the ownership and exchange of commodities" (p.1). According to Grace (1997), whether an unchecked free market or one that is somewhat regulated, our capitalistic economy is certainly and effectively eroding our ideal vision of democracy in its shift from a "democracy of citizens [to] a democracy of consumers" (p. 315). The corporate influence on educational practice promises to serve well those privileged enough to have the power and the ability to make their choices matter while leaving those who lack the influence of power struggling to participate in our economy driven society (Giroux, 1998).

Nearly a century ago John Dewey pondered how educators could claim to believe in democracy if they did not practice it in schools as the practice of democracy in schools is far more than an intellectual expression of beliefs and requires the persistent interaction of people which is a much more complex task (Rusch, 1995). Dewey's vision of education was to prepare children for active citizenship in a participatory democracy ("Education for democracy," n.d) because, as Miller (2007) argues, "all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them" (p. 1). According to Miller (2007), the term "participatory democracy" was used in the 1960s "as a way of reclaiming the essence of democratic idealism in a society some believed had grown over-organized, hierarchical and authoritarian" (p. 1). Dewey (as cited in Tyack, 1997) argued, "We need not only education in democracy, but also democracy in education...for the welfare of the young,

thoughtful citizens must participate in the politics of public schooling" (p. 22). Similarly, according to Wilms (2007), Dewey claims "in order to promote a nation that truly [values] democratic principles, all of its citizens must be empowered to engage in a democratic discourse in order to be advocates for themselves as well as to be able to advocate for others" (p. 1). It would seem to make sense then that a nation that prides itself of democratic freedoms would embrace democratic systems of education. In reality this seems furthest from the truth.

Throughout the literature there are many descriptions and definitions of democratic education and democratic schools. According to Dewey (1916):

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, a conjoint communicated experience… An undesirable society is one which internally and externally sets up barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience. (p. 87)

A democratic society, on the other hand, "makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms" and "secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through the interaction of different forms of associated life" (p. 115). Dewey viewed schools as places where students could and should learn how to change their societies. Schutz (2001) asserts that public schools in a democratic society were intended to promote and support the public good. . It was not critical that what happened in the school mimic greater society. What was important was that the lessons learned would aid in active democratic participation outside of school. Horton (1990) suggests democracy is an ideal where "people are really free and empowered to make collectively the decisions that affect their lives" (p. 169). Horton's Highlander Folk School was built on principles of democracy. Horton wanted to

create a public space where people could learn from each other and use education as a means to challenge the unjust social systems affecting their lives. He felt all citizens should live in a flexible and adaptive society where their voices are heard and affect the decision-making process.

According to the 16th International Democratic Education Conference (Loflin, 2008), democratic schools generally share most or all of the following characteristics: (a) shared decision-making among the students and staff; (b) a learner-centered approach in which students choose their daily activities; (c) equality among staff and students; and (d) the community as an extension of the classroom (p. 4). For Patrick (1995) democratic schools share three common components: (a) core concepts that denote essential knowledge; (b) intellectual and participatory skills that enable practical application of civic knowledge; and (c) virtues that dispose citizens to act for the good of their community (p. 1). According to Shields (2004), "Democratic education requires empowering children to participate in, and take responsibility for, their own learning" (p. 124). Checkley (2003) asserts, "Schools that are democratic are naturally caring places... When students have an equal voice in the governance of their school and its classrooms, they develop the ability to genuinely get along with others" (p. 1). Students take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. Helping students become active citizens and preparing them for participation in a democratic society are two key purposes of democratic classrooms.

Democratically operated schools exchange traditional teacher authority for informal control driven by close teacher-student relationships and mutual leadership responsibility. In democratic schools and classrooms students actively engage in self government (Gutmann, 1995; Checkley, 2003). Neigel (2006) suggests involving students in school leadership

provides opportunities for them to contribute beyond their classrooms as they "explore their interests, refine their talents, gain a better understanding of themselves, and collaborate with their peers" (p. 4). Such involvement also provides for the development of social skills and opportunities for leadership, both of which are important components of the democratic process. These opportunities give students a voice and a sense of belonging which helps to build healthy relationships and connections with students, teachers, administrators, and the greater community. When students are provided opportunities to participate actively in school decision making rather than act passively within the bureaucratic structure they take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning and develop a sense of social intelligence that will serve them throughout their lives (Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994).

Democratic schools are environments where children can live in much the same way as they will live in society. As principal stakeholders, diverse students should participate in the democratic process by playing an active role in schools and in school leadership. According to Schutz (2001), schools have an obligation to promote such active democratic involvement among students, "initiating them into practices that will enable them to effectively engage with oppression and improve our society for everyone" (pp. 294-295). Schools need to teach children not to accept what is being thrust upon them by those who would protect to status quo and the privilege of class and to demand access to opportunities for themselves and for others. Democratic schools must follow the norms of justice, equity, inclusion, participation, and integrity (Calabrese, 1990). Lessons are developed around these components. The RMC Research Corporation ("Quick guide," 2004), similarly suggests, "Democratic classrooms are those in which the curriculum actively engages students in collaborative inquiry, decision making is shared between students and staff, and students

choose their daily activities" (p. 1). When children are bound by expectations and rules they had no part in establishing they are not democratic participants. Accordingly, schools managed entirely by adults are not democratic and do not educate democratically (Miller, 2007).

Social Justice. According to Ayers and Quinn (2009), "Educators, citizens, and activists committed to social justice face a recent history characterized by the radical rise of social injustice" (p. xiv). Individual and family poverty levels have drastically increased but the money they are missing has not disappeared. Without coincidence, that wealth has found its way to the upper echelons of the economy. Socioeconomic factors are historically and now a clear and always present rating system in greater society and in schools. For Bruner (1996), "the impact of poverty, racism, and alienation on the mental life and growth of [children]" (p. xiii) means that "effective education is always in jeopardy either in the culture at large or with constituencies more dedicated to maintaining a status quo than to fostering flexibility" (p. 15).

The United States prides itself as a democracy that fair and just where every citizen has the right to equality in society, economics, politics, and education. The Constitution of the United State advocates "liberty and justice for all." According to Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution:

> No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. ("14th Amendment," p. 1)

Regardless of this advocacy ours is a nation of injustices. Even though the mandates in this amendment extend equal protections to education, inequities always have existed and continue to exist. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2007) state frankly:

> The U. S. educational system to this day is beset with inequities that exacerbate racial and class-based challenges. Differential levels of success in school distributed along racial and social class lines continues to be the most pernicious and prevail dilemma of school. (p. 21)

Wolk (2007) asks:

> What can be more essential to the health of a democracy than caring citizens? Yet explicitly teaching "caring" rarely goes beyond kindergarten. In schools obsessed with teaching "technical" knowledge and questions with single correct answers, the idea of teaching children and young adults to care is seen as not being sufficiently "rigorous". (p. 653)

Skrtic (1991a) stresses that education for social justice is predicated on the belief that schooling is not just and is not democratic "unless its practices are excellent and equitable" (p. 199), and clarifies that educational excellence "is a precondition for excellence" (1991b, p. 181). Bruner (1996) acknowledges, "Education is risky, for it fuels the sense of possibility. But a failure to equip minds with the skills for understanding and feeling and acting in the cultural world… risks creating alienation, defiance, and practical incompetence" (pp. 42-43).

Greenberg (2000) argues that children are entitled to the same human rights and freedoms as adults and "should be full participants in the life of their community" (p. 1). Shields (2004) concurs that socially just learning is deeply democratic, and "an educational orientation to social justice and democratic community requires pedagogy forged with, not

for, students to permit them to develop meaningful and socially constructed understandings" (p. 115). MacKinnon (2000) stresses that educators who teach for social justice must be concerned "with the quality of relationships among all those who constitute 'the school' and the nature of the school circumstances in which children learn" (p. 7). Shields (2004) adds in order for teachers "to promote deeper understanding and more meaningful relationships and to enhance social justice for all students," they must overcome "pathologizing silences and understand that learning is situated in relationships in which students need to be free to bring their own realities into the conversation to 'make sense of things'" (p. 117).

In defining democratic instructional practices, the Rethinking School Reform ("RSR book intro," 2003) authors suggest the curriculum choices and classroom values needed for democratic education should promote "a common social and pedagogical vision that…strives toward what we call a social justice classroom" (p. 1). According to the Sociology Guide authors ("Social Justice," 2006), "Social Justice derives its authority from the codes of morality prevailing in each culture… [and refers] to the overall fairness of a society in its divisions and distributions of rewards…" (p. 1). Freire (1970) suggested teachers must follow three steps to educate for social justice: (a) acknowledge students' voices—thoughts and feelings from their own perspectives and experiences; (b) use students' voices and past experiences to develop the curriculum; and (c) encourage and show students how to apply their voices and past experiences towards making significant changes in their communities. For Freire, the rationale for educating for social justice was the empowerment to belong in the classroom and in society.

For Lunenburg (2003), social justice in its simplest form is concerned with "redressing institutionalized inequality and systemic racism" (p. 10). According to Rawls

(1971), the four principles of social justice are: (a) equal treatment of all members of society including equal rights and liberties; (b) all people are regarded as individuals; (c) every person is gives a fair chance or equal opportunity; and (d) the greatest social and economic benefits go to those who are least advantaged. Regarding equal treatments, Apple (1993) suggests:

> The "same treatment" by sex, race and ethnicity, or class is not the same at all. A democratic curriculum and pedagogy must begin with a recognition of "the different social positionings and cultural repertoire in the classrooms, and the power relations between them." Thus, if we are concerned with "really equal treatment:" …we must base a curriculum on recognition of those differences that empower and depower our students in identifiable ways. (p. 1)

Accordingly, additional resources would be provided for the disadvantaged. These resources would have to come from somewhere and the privileged have not traditionally been very willing to give up the advantages they enjoy.

Ayers and Quinn (2009) suggest three principles or pillars of social justice:

> (a) *Equity*, the principle of fairness, equal access to the most challenging and nourishing educational experiences, the demand that what the most privileged and enlightened are able to offer their children must be the standard for what is available to all children. This must also account for equitable outcomes, and somehow for redressing and repairing historical and imbedded injustices. (b) *Activism*, the principle of agency, full participation, preparing youngsters to see and understand and, when necessary, to change all that is before them. This is a move away from passivity, cynicism and despair. (c) *Social literacy*, the principle of relevance, resisting the

> flattening effects of materialism and consumerism and the power of the abiding social evils of white supremacy, patriarchy, homophobia—nourishing awareness of our own identities and our connection with others, reminding us of the powerful commitment, persistence, bravery, and triumphs of our justice-seeking forebears, reminding us as well of the link between ideas and the concentric circles of context—economic condition, historical flow, cultural surround—within which our lives are negotiated. (p. 1)

Teachers, Connell (1994) points out, are in the best position to provide socially just opportunities for students as "the workers most strategically placed to affect that relationship," and adds that schools must "bring teachers' work to the center of discussions of disadvantage" (p. 143). Freebody, Ludwig, and Gunn, (1995) stresses that teachers must be alert for "interactive trouble" and identify and rectify gaps in learning and the crucial cues underprivileged students miss in school because of the "privileging of pedagogical routines" to which they are unfamiliar (p. 296). Freebody, et al (1995) suggest teachers can counter social injustice by recognizing and addressing inconsistencies and incompatibilities between the cultures and lived experiences of disadvantaged students and the culture of the school. For Quinn (2003), educating for social justice is requires three transformations: the transformation of self; the transformation of people; and the transformation of culture. In transformation of self, students examine personal and professional positions about specific situations. During the transformation of people, learners strives affect other people through their own beliefs. Transformation of culture requires the learners to begin to empower others to affect social change in their communities.

The Achievement Gap

The gap in wealth in the United States is greater now than in any time since 1929. Educators, legislators, the media and the general public are becoming increasingly aware that increasing numbers of minority and economically disadvantaged children are not achieving school success (Shields, 2004).

Minority Achievement Gap. Research indicates that many low-income children do not perform as well in school as middle and upper-income students, and that African American student achievement lags considerably behind that of White children (Kalmijin & Kraaykamp, 1996). These student achievement gaps are large and persistent and exist across the nation (Barton, 2003). These gaps are accompanied by high rates of failure, high dropout rates, over-identification of special education and behavior problems, and placement in the lowest academic programs (Nieto, 1999). There are many reasons why achievement gaps exist between students of color and White students. According to Gordon (2000), in most American societies, schooling seems to benefit those of privilege while underclass students typically do not fare as well. As school populations become more diverse, the educational opportunities in our schools are proving greatly inadequate. One suggested contribution to the student achievement gap is the distinct gap that has been identified between the preparation and experience of teachers who teach in culturally isolated schools and those who teach in more affluent areas. Research indicates teachers in diverse settings are more likely to be "unqualified" in their content areas, inadequately prepared, and lacking sufficient professional development to teach effectively (White-Clark, 2005).

Teacher Perceptions and Expectations. Another significant contributing issue suggested in the literature is the lower expectations teachers and principals have for low

income students and students of color. Noddings (2007) refers to the lowered expectations for minority students as the "soft bigotry of low expectations" and suggests, "When we look honestly at the history of education in the United States, we must admit—much to our shame—that we have badly served our poor and minority students" (p. 201). Numerous studies suggest a correlation between teacher perceptions of minority students and how they educate or fail to educate these children (White-Clark, 2005). Delpit (2006), suggests, as a result of living "in a society that nurtures and maintains stereotypes", many teachers naturally make assumptions about students assigned to their classrooms (p. xxiii). Accordingly, middle and upper class students tend to succeed more from what school has to offer because the culture of the school is based on the culture of the greater society—of those in power.

Gay (1993) suggests many teachers do not share similar backgrounds and perspectives as their culturally and ethnically diverse students and are not culturally sensitive to the needs of these students. Often high poverty and high minority schools are staffed by teachers with middle class values and attitudes who demonstrate low expectations for poor minority students thus perpetuating the achievement gap between minority and White students (Hale & Rollins, 2006). Delpit (2006) offers that this is because many teachers of minority students have their own roots in other cultures and "do not often have the opportunity to hear the full range of their student's voices" (p. 17). Shields (2004) describes these "pathologies of silence" as "misguided attempts to act justly, to display empathy, and to create democratic and optimistic educational communities" (p. 117) and stresses, "To ensure that we create schools that are socially just, educators must overcome silences about such aspects as ethnicity and social class" (p. 110). This is not easy and even teachers who do hear their students struggle to relate to them and understand their thoughts and ideals.

Valencia (1997) suggests that “deficit thinking” and “blaming the victim” is the most feasible explanation for the lower achievement of these children (p. 3). Ferguson (1998) suggests “teachers underestimate the latent potential of Blacks more than Whites” p. 281). Lower teacher expectations can lead to a “self-fulfilling prophecy” as these lower expectations result in a lower self-image and less effort from these affected students (Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan & Shaun, 1990). James (1994) observed that teachers have the power to make children “feel invisible and insignificant and that their differences are irrelevant” through the choice of educational materials and teaching style, p. 27). Good (1981) found low-achieving students receive less attention, are seated further from the teacher, are assigned less demanding work, get less help from the teacher when struggling, and get less time to answer questions.

According to Ferguson (1998), there are three types of teacher “deviation from some benchmark of neutrality” (p. 275). Teachers tend to practice unconditional race neutrality, conditional race neutrality, or unobserved potential. In unconditional race neutrality teachers are unbiased and expect the same of students regardless of race and class. Conditional race neutrality is where the expectations teachers have for students are shaped from past experiences. Unobserved potential is based not on past performance but on what students might accomplish in the future. Regardless of whether teachers are biased, research suggests many teachers treat White and Black students differently. In Marylee Taylors’s 1979 experiment (Ferguson, 1998) comparing teacher responses to Black and White students, she found that Black students get “briefer feedback after mistakes, …less positive feedback after correct responses, …and fewer helpful slips of the tongue” (p. 294). While education has been historically purported to be the great equalizer and a vehicle to provide for social

mobility (Muller & Schiller, 2000), it is all too clear that while perhaps unintentionally, many of our schools in effect reproducing social inequality.

Banks and Lynch (1986) contended that teachers must understand how "race and culture interact to cause educational problems for many ethnic minority students" (p. 16). To make gains toward closing the achievement gap McKinley (2006) agrees that educators must attend carefully to the social context for learning to increase cultural competence. If we are to transform educational experiences and maximize academic achievement for all of our students, we must overcome the silence about class difference and guide our teachers to recognize openly that learning is relationship situated and that students must have their cultural and individual styles recognized so they may flourish (Shields, 2004). According to McKinley (2006), researchers have found that strategies that address historical and contemporary sociocultural causes of achievement gaps focus on "effective and culturally congruent instruction, constructive teacher attitudes and beliefs, positive relationships that nurture student motivation, equitable opportunities to learn, and activism that addresses racism, injustices, and disparate expectations and conditions" (p. 44).

Teachers are undoubtedly an important factor and the influence of the lived experiences of predominantly White teachers and administrators working with an increasingly racially diverse student body needs to be understood (Carr & Klassen, 1997). Noddings (2005) said effective pedagogy is grounded in reciprocally caring relationships based on trust and respect between students and their teachers. According to Hale and Rollins (2006), "data-driven professional development and explanations of the basics of standardized tests and student movement up and down the achievement scale help teachers understand where and on whom their energies are best spent" (p. 7).

Research shows that when children feel they belong and their interests are recognized as important they become more engaged in the learning and they experience greater academic achievement (Brokenleg, 1999; Glasser, 1996). Specifically, Brokenleg (1999) states, "…in cultures and communities where adults are securely bonded to children, learning flourishes" (p. 196). Glasser's (1996) work with "choice theory" demonstrated that people have five sources of internal motivation: (a) survival or physical needs; (b) belonging; (c) power or attainment; (d) freedom; and (e) fun. When teachers recognize students' strengths and connect to their needs, their challenges are met with hard work and effort from students. In schools where student deficits are emphasized, challenges are seen as reflective of their innate ability and students are treated as if they have a limited potential for learning. This kind of deficit thinking must be changed and all students must be viewed as having potential, and teacher actions must aggressively push students to tap into this potential. While social and economic disadvantages, cultural differences, covert and overt racism, poor nutrition, and negative attitudes toward academics certainly effect the achievement gap, schools must not underestimate the very important influence they have on academic achievement for all students, regardless of status.

Fruchter (2007) suggests "that the nation's urban public schools can be transformed to effectively educate their poor students of color, and that the nation's urban school districts are the key agents of this transformation" (p. 44). Knestrict (2005) agrees, "It is not unreasonable to assume that we can teach a solid curriculum and at the same time treat students with dignity and care" (786). This suggestion can be broadened to include all poor urban students regardless of color. Schools and teachers, if afforded the respect and autonomy to do what they know through best practice works for kids, can transform schools

into powerfully successful learning institutions. Fruchter (2007) rejects the "invidious myth" that public education is so ineffective that it must be transformed by market solutions. Market solutions have a long history of not serving the greater needs of schooling which must be to prepare all students to succeed in the society and not to fulfill slots in the capitalistic machine. Systematic and continual professional development designed to raise cultural awareness and prepare teachers to differentiate instruction for a diverse population of students is critical in closing the achievement gap (White-Clark, 2005). This starts, of course, with a strong commitment to improve teaching and learning and an unwavering belief that all students can reach high expectations. Good schools and good teachers hold the key for student success.

Gender Achievement Gap. With all of the attention to the achievement gap between White students and minority students, Sadker and Zitterman (2005) suggest too little attention has been recently given to the achievement gaps and biases between genders. Certainly, most teachers want to treat and teach all children equitably. The reality is boys and girls are often treated differently. Teachers call more on boys, wait longer for answers, and provide more precise feedback. Boys also receive more punishment even when misbehavior is similar. According to Altermatt, Jovanovic and Perry (1998), one reason boys get more attention than girls is they demand more attention. Boys are more likely to shout out answers and they dominate classroom interactions. Sadker and Sadker (2005) in considering teacher-student interaction studies suggests teachers give more attention to boys including attention that is positive, negative and neutral. Babad (1998) recognizes a correlation between low achieving boys getting more negative attention and high achieving boys getting more positive attention. Low achieving girls are more often ignored by teachers (Sadker & Sadker, 2005).

Sadker and Zitterman (2005) suggest boys are expected to "act out and rebel at school work," while the girls are expected to be "docile, conforming, and willing to work hard" (p. 19). Both views reflect gender stereotyping. Boys often credit their own academic successes to intelligence and blame their failures on bad luck. Conversely, girls typically attribute their successes to good luck and their failures to a lack of ability creating a potentially damaging self-fulfilling prophecy. As when working with economically disadvantaged students and students of color, school teachers and school leaders must work diligently to change this kind of detrimental thinking.

Culture

"Culture," according to Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003), "is a loose and slippery term" (p. 4). Although no single, universally accepted definition of culture has been established, much of the literature defines culture as the context in which everything else takes place. There is general agreement that culture involves, in the words of Deal and Peterson (1990), "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of history" (p. 7). O'Neil (2006) agrees and suggests for behavioral scientists, "culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns" (p. 1). According to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* ("Culture," 2010), culture is defined as:

> …the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations [and] the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. (p. 1)

Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003), suggest "culture" is not " a fixed set of group traits, but rather values, attitudes, and skills that are shaped and reshaped by environment" (p.

4). Perhaps the original definition was provided by Tylor (1871), who defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [or woman] as a member of society" (p. 15). Perhaps the simplest and most direct definition is from Strahan (1994) who suggests culture is a shared sense of "who we are and how we do things around here" (p. 7).

Schein (1985) describes culture as the pattern of shared basic assumptions that are invented, discovered, or developed by a group as it learns to cope with internal and external and has worked successfully enough to be considered valid and to be passed on to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

School Culture. The teacher and students are part of a learning system within the classroom, and are part of a larger system within the school. Writing in 1932, Waller suggested, "Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in a school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them" (p. 103). Goodwyn and Findlay (2002) agree that every school has a culture and describe cultures as a set of norms and ways of working, thinking, talking, valuing, and behaving. Goodlad (1976) suggests school culture is characterized by rules, regulations, functions and activities of a system, and is defined by the norms and values that prevail in the school setting. The interactions of the people, the language they use, they

traditions they uphold, and the beliefs to which they subscribe, also contribute to make up the culture of a school. According to Rooney (2005), a school with a good culture knows what it believes in and where it is going. In the culture of a school, caring connections, positive behavioral supports, and social and emotional learning are essential (Osher & Fleischman, 2005). What is taught and how it is taught exert tremendous influence on student performance and learning. There is abundant research stressing the importance teachers caring for their students and believing that these students can learn and to hold high expectations for them as learners (Barr & Parrett, 1995). Many studies have found that student performance and achievement are enhanced when teachers hold students to high expectation and communicate these expectations for learning and the belief that students are capable of success (Borba, 1989; Nieto, 2000; Danielson, 2002). A 1979 study of effective schools conducted by Rutter and colleagues found that the underlying norms, values and traditions of schools contributed to their academic success. Other studies demonstrated where the culture was not supportive, academic improvement did not occur (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

An effective school culture consists of a caring, supportive and helping atmosphere conducive to learning and support (Barr & Parrett, 1995). Schools are cultural institutions with norms and values and formal and informal rules that affect how people are treated and how they treat each other. The teacher and students are part of a learning system within the classroom and are part of a larger system within the school. The school is part of the school district, the state, the nation, and the world (Bonstingl, 1992). Every school has a culture; a set of norms and ways of working, thinking, talking, valuing, and behaving. Hanson (2001) suggests school culture is vital to the group interaction because culture is “shaped around a

particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings that emphasize what is of paramount importance" (p. 641).

Hegemony. Fruchter (2007) defines the culture of schooling as "what results from how a society structures, organizes, and implements its educational system" (p. 26) and suggests "it reflects and embodies the dominant values of each society's hegemonic class and race" (p. 27). These observations are certainly relevant as written and unwritten rules, expectations, norms and traditions permeate every aspect of schooling. The culturally diverse have always been and perhaps always will be in conflict with the upper and middle classes as the well-to-do strive to protect their ability to have and to get more and the less-to-do struggle to have and to get enough. According to Breault (2003), because the concept implies equality, common goals, and cooperation, democracy presents a particular challenge to diversity as "diversity pushes a democracy to its limits of trust and forces it to honor its rhetoric by demanding an equal political and economic voice while supporting separate cultural identities" (p. 2). Breault (2003) further suggests oppression can be a stabilizing societal force but warns such "stability is illusive and stifling" (p. 2). Freire (1970) defined an oppressive situation as any "in which 'A' objectively exploits 'B' or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person" (p. 40). If democracy is to survive, schools must do more than make kids smarter. For schools to have the potential for continuous improvement they must create opportunities for engagement and secure commitments from all members through democratic practices and active meaningful participation. Schools must strive to break the grip of oppression and must make concerted efforts to instill the virtues in children that they need to participate as democratic citizens.

In 1949, DuBois (DuBois, 1970) originally wrote:

> …we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn, the right to have examined in our schools not only what we believe, but what we do not believe… We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be. (pp. 230-231)

Felluga (2003b) defines hegemony as:

> The processes by which dominant culture maintains its dominant position: for example, the use of institutions to formalize power; the employment of a bureaucracy to make power seem abstract (and, therefore, not attached to any one individual); the inculcation of the populace in the ideals of the hegemonic group through education, advertising, publication, etc. (p. 1)

According to Erickson (2005), "hegemony refers to the established view of things—a commonsense view of what is and why things happen that serves the interests of those people already privileged in a society" (p. 48). Hegemony, according to Burke (2005) means "the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations" (p. 1). Burke (2005) asserts that hegemony refers not only to ideological control but more critically to consent. This suggests the public is content in existing roles. School systems are not immune from hegemonic forces and schools proves ideal for socializing individuals into maintain the status quo.

According to Darling-Hammond (1996), DuBois knew America's best hope for survival rested upon democracy and the "kind of education that arms people with an intelligence capable of free and independent thought" (p. 5).This would be a kind of education that takes into consideration the desires and interests of children and allows them a voice and refrains from imparting a predetermined, restrictive, and hegemony-maintaining curriculum upon them. In too many schools, the dominant hegemonic school culture has served and continues to serve to keep students in their place. School cultures are key to school achievement and student learning. We must work to re-culture schools in a multicultural and democratic ideal so that student voices are heard and they participate actively in the design and implementation of their education.

Reculturing School. Schlechty (1997) warns that "structural change that is not supported by cultural change will eventually be overwhelmed by the culture, for it is in the culture that any organization finds meaning and stability" (p. 136). According to Schein (1992), culture is the most difficult organizational aspect to change as it represents "the enduring assumptions, values and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's views of itself and its environment" (p. 12). Critical classroom practice is centrally important to all effective and lasting reform efforts and, as the Rethinking School Reform ("RSR book intro," 2003) authors assert, "unless our schools and classrooms are animated by broad visions of equity, democracy, and social justice, they will never be able to realize the widely proclaimed goal of raising educational achievement for all children" (p. 1). Accordingly, while schools with positive and supportive cultures have an opportunity to provide strong democratic and academic opportunities for students, schools that do not have

positive supportive cultures face an uphill battle in making the necessary changes to provide such democratic and academic opportunities.

The human organism becomes a human being through participation in culture. Human culture is made up of conscious and nonconscious ways of being. Culture is learned behavior that is shared with other people. Culture influences how we behave and how we expect others to behave. Schools have a unique culture that is both part of and separate from the surrounding society (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). School cultures are vital to school achievement and student learning. Climate and the learning environment set the stage for teaching and learning. A positive interpersonal environment can exist only within a highly respectful school culture that treats all students with dignity in a businesslike manner where teachers and students share the sense that work is relevant and important (Danielson, 2002). Both the overall climate of the school and the specific learning environment of the individual classroom have enormous influence on student achievement. Much of school climate is a reflection of perceptions and feeling. Teachers have the ability to influence these perceptions and feelings through the relationships they establish with students. For students, the school's culture is what is valued and considered important to become a successful learner (Danielson, 2002). Positive relationships do not happen without a substantial and continued investment (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Heim, 2007).

Constructivism. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2005) state, "In a democratic society, it is vital that students learn to think reflectively, function at high stages of moral reasoning, and be autonomous decision makers" (p. 156). Meier (2003) adds, "We have lost sight of the traditional public function of schools: to pass on the skills, aptitudes, and habits needed for a democratic way of life" (p. 15). These skills are difficult to develop and are not

natural but they are necessary if our students are to participate fully and to thrive in society. Participation is critical and all must be involved. School is the ideal place for such opportunities to occur. Dürr (2005) admits, if the school is to carry out critical functions for society by preparing students for roles as "informed, responsible, democratic and participative citizens" (p. 28), then it must be strengthened and empowered to exercise that role. Education must regain and retain its position as a foundation of democracy. Democracy requires citizens who are academically prepared and prepared ethically and morally with drive for self-actualization.

According to Hein (1991) "constructivism…refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves—each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning—as he or she learns" (p. 1). For Cohen, Cohen, and Kondo (2008):

> Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own "rules" and "mental models," which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences. (p. 1)

Fosnot (1993) states, "Constructivism is not a theory about teaching. It is a theory about knowledge and learning" (p. vii). Fosnot (1996) identifies five principles of constructivist pedagogy:

> (a) posing problems of emerging relevance to learners; (b) structuring learning around "big ideas" or primary concepts; (c) seeking and valuing students' points of view; (d) adapting curriculum to address students' suppositions; and (e) assessing student learning in the context of teaching. (pp. 29-30)

These principles represent practices that have validity for all students, regardless or ethnic, language, race, class, religion, gender, disability, or other cultural factor.

For constructivist educators, each student is seen as a complex and multidimensional individual with unique needs (Wertsch, 1997). The focus is on the learner rather than the subject or lesson being taught. Is the student learning? The constructivist also views knowledge as irrelevant if it is not constructed by the learner. Students are not learning if they simply regurgitate what they hear or read. "Learning," for Hein (1991), is the "personal and social construction of meaning out of the bewildering array of sensations which have no order or structure besides the explanations…which we fabricate for them" (p. 1). A teacher who delivers a thorough lecture has not provided knowledge unless the student connects with the material and constructs his or her own meaning. For students to construct their own meaning, VonGlasersfeld (1989) argues that the learner must be actively involved in the learning and must take responsibility for the learning.

Constructivist educators favor a loosely structured learning environment (Savery & Duffy, 1995). Rigid learning environments make it difficult for students to construct their own meaning. Jonassen (1994) proposed eight principles that represent the constructivist learning environment:

> (a) provide multiple representations of reality; (b) represent the natural complexity of the real world; (c) focus on knowledge construction, not reproduction; (d) present authentic tasks (contextualizing rather than abstracting instruction); (e) provide real-world, case-based learning environments, rather than pre-determined instructional sequences; (f) foster reflective practice; (g) enable context-and content dependent

> knowledge construction; and (h) support collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation. (p. 35)

While the goal of constructivism is for learners to arrive at their own version of the truth, it is critical that learners interact with those who can help them learn (Wertsch 1997). According to Bauersfeld (1995), teachers have to step out of their traditional roles and adopt the role of facilitator to help the learner create his or her own meaning. Without effective facilitation and social interaction, students would not be able to connect the learning to the greater social structure and know how to use any newly acquired learning (Wertsch 1997). Accordingly, the constructivist educator should provide direction and guidance but not so much as to influence unnecessarily the learner's understanding of the truth.

According to Cohen et al. (2008), constructive curriculum, instruction, and assessment look for different from traditional schooling. The constructivist curriculum emphasizes a hands-on learning and problem solving approach and is constructed according to the prior knowledge of the students. Regarding instruction, teachers concentrate on helping students connect facts and develop new understandings and "tailor their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyze, interpret, and predict information" (p. 1). Much of the instruction is represented by open-ended questioning and extensive dialogue among the learners. Grades and standardized testing are not important in constructivist learning and students are directly involved in assessing their own progress. Holt and Willard-Holt (2000) suggest the true potential of learners can only be accessed through dynamic formative assessment which is significantly different from traditional tests. Assessment is a two-way process that involves both the instructor and the learner through dialogue. This permits the instructor to determine the student's performance level on any specific task and

discuss with the learner how the task might be improved in the future. Accordingly, the learning and the assessment are continually connected and the learner makes meaning through the assessment as well as the learning.

Student Culture. The characteristics of most cultures are based on accepted myths or beliefs. While one's culture can clearly influence how adults perceive and participate in society, such perceptions and actions can also have a profound influence on children. Students have unique cultures and cultural awareness. A student's culture is dynamic, situational, and historic and directly influences how that student learns and performs in a diverse setting. A student's culture is shaped by many influences including but not limited to ethnicity, gender, religion, location, generation, age, group memberships, and education (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). For Vygotsky (1978):

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (p. 57)

Similarly, Cardwell and Flanagan (2004) cite Vygotsky's ideas that culture makes two critical contributions to a child's intellectual development:

> First, through culture children acquire much of the content of their thinking, that is, their knowledge. Second, the surrounding culture provides a child with the processes or means of their thinking, what Vygotskians call the tools of intellectual adaptation. In short, according to the social cognition learning model, culture teaches children both what to think and how to think. (p. 118)

For Giroux (1996):

> Children's culture is a sphere where entertainment, advocacy, and pleasure meet to construct conceptions of what it means to be a child occupying a combination of gender, racial, and class positions in society, positions through which one defines oneself in relation to a myriad of others. (p. 89)

Research suggests cultural values and beliefs affect motivation toward academic tasks (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) assert culture affects academic performance and contributes to the academic discrepancies between Asian and Caucasian students and African American and Hispanic students. Shields (2004) argues, "if strong relationships with all children are at the heart of educational equity, then it is essential to acknowledge differences in children's lived experiences" (p. 110). Every child has a culture and cultural awareness that is uniquely his or her own and no child can successfully be forced to fit into any "ideal" mold. Children tend to be drawn to the familiar and children as young as three demonstrate an awareness of racial and ethnic identity ("Culture and children," 2010). In addition to ethnicity, a child's culture is affected by, gender, age, religion, group membership, and family history (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003).Cultural development is also influenced by education, community, friends, and the media. Each exposure to different group characteristics serves to form and modify a child's unique culture.

Every cultural factor contributes to a student's success or failure in diverse settings. When differences exist between a school system's culture and a student's culture, issues and problems can quickly manifest. According to Delpit (2006), "teachers can easily misread students' aptitudes, intent, or abilities as a result of the differences in styles of language use

and interaction patterns" (p. 167). Grant and Sleeter (2005) warn teachers "it is essential for you to understand how the dynamics of race, class, language, gender, and disability can influence your understanding of your students" (p. 64). Further, as each student is a member of multiple groups, it is critical to consider these dynamics communally, not individually, as each student's unique culture influences thoughts and actions. Shields (2004) suggests, "When children feel they belong and find their realities reflected in the curriculum and conversations of schooling, …they are more engaged in learning and that they experience greater school success" (p. 122). The goal must not be to create a perfectly matched cultural experience for each individual child. Instead, school systems and individual teachers must strive to be culturally competent and recognize when certain situations provide problems for individual or groups of children and address those issues at their roots (Delpit, 2006).

Cultural Knowledge and Competence. The demographic makeup of the United States is constantly changing and is symbolized by multiple diverse racial, ethnic, religious, language, and cultural groups. Ethnic and racial diversity continues to grow chiefly as a result of immigration. The population growth between 1990 and 2000 was the largest in American history with a marked increase in people of color from 20% to 25% (Perry & Mackum, 2001). In 2000, according to Grant and Sleeter (2005), the U. S. population distribution was "75% White, 12% African American, 4% Asian and Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, 2% more than one race, and 6% some other race" (p. 61). About 12% of the United States population considers itself Hispanic. In many cities, Whites were no longer the majority ethnic group. Approximately 50% of those immigrating to the United States in the 1990s were from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Of these immigrants, the largest population came from Mexico. In 2000, 14% of the U.S. population did not speak

English in the home. According to Martin and Midgley (1999), by 2050 racial minorities are expected to represent 48% of the U. S. population. Such demographic changes certainly and profoundly affect the diversity of children in our nation's schools and perpetuate the achievement gap between minority students and middle and upper class White students. According to the National Association of Social Workers ("NASW standards," 2001):

> In the United States, cultural diversity... has primarily been associated with race and ethnicity, but diversity is taking on a broader meaning to include the sociocultural experiences of people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, and physical and mental abilities. (p. 8)

Culturally competent educators who recognize and value diversity are key in closing this achievement gap maximizing learning opportunities for all students.

In order to define "cultural competence", it is necessary to look at the words "cultural" and "competency" independently. Similar to other definitions provided above, for Chamberlain (2005), culture embodies "the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world" (p. 197). For Walker, Reavis, Rhode, and Jenson (1985) and Osher and Osher (1995), competence implies having the capacity to function within the context of these culturally integrated patterns of a group. According to the University of California, Berkeley Glossary of Terms ("Diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2009), "Cultural competency is a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, and responsiveness to cultural differences and the interactions resulting from them" (p. 1). King, Sims and Osher (2007), cite Davis' 1997 operational definition of cultural competence as "the integration and transformation of knowledge about

individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes" (p. 1).

Martin and Vaughn (2007) suggest cultural competence is comprised of four components: (a) awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) attitude towards cultural differences, (c) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills. Martin and Vaughn (2007) further suggest a limited number of individuals seem to possess cultural competence innately. Many others have to put forth considerable effort to develop cultural competence by identifying biases, associating with culturally competent role models, and continuously developing culturally competent skills. A culturally knowledgeable and competent educator is able to function effectively with other cultures and has the capacity to understand successfully and communicate effectively with people of diverse cultures (Walker et al., 1985; Osher & Osher 1995).

To value diversity, one must recognize, accept and respect cultural differences. Children come from a variety of backgrounds and their values, traditions, customs, and thoughts differ as well. It is vital that teachers and school leaders understand and respond accordingly to these cultural variances because by being responsive to culture, educators can maximize the affect of their relationships with students and families (Walker et al., 1985; Osher & Osher 1995). While it is important to recognize diversity between cultures, it is also importance but sometimes more difficult to recognize diversity within cultures. Individuals may be similar in appearance, religion and language but diverse in many other ways. King et al. (2007), assert, "Assimilation and acculturation can create kaleidoscopes of subcultures within racial groups" (p. 1). For Osher and Osher (1995), gender, geography, and

socioeconomic status can more powerfully impact culture than race. In recognizing and responding to intra-cultural diversity educators must avoid stereotyping and overgeneralizing as not to offend or upset or offend a student by choosing an inappropriate tone, word, or body language (Walker et al., 1985; Osher & Osher 1995). According to King et al. (2007), culturally competent institutions experience less cultural related miscommunication and misbehavior and enjoy stronger and more supportive relationships with students and their families and therefore a higher likelihood of academic and behavioral success.

Multiculturalism. According to the University of California, Berkeley Glossary of Terms ("Diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2009), multiculturalism recognizes that we as a nation are culturally diverse and provides an avenue for "the sharing and transforming of cultural experiences [which] allow us to re-articulate and redefine new spaces, possibilities, and positions for ourselves and others" (p. 1). "Multicultural education," according to Banks (2005b), "incorporates the idea that all students—regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (p. 3). The goal is to help students develop social action and decision making skills (Banks, 2003). Many schools are structured in such a way that they deny equal educational opportunities to certain students. Sadker and Sadker (1994) assert that boys are more likely to receive discipline for the same infractions that are committed by girls while the girls typically escape consequences. Donovan and Cross (2002) point out that boys are also more likely to be referred for special education services than girls. Minority males traditionally receive an even higher rate discipline and suspension for similar offenses than do White males (Gibbs, 1988).

Banks (2005b) suggests multiculturalism was born as a result of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. A primary goal of the civil rights movement was to eradicate discriminatory practices in public accommodations, housing, employment, and education. According to Banks (2005a), "A curriculum that focuses on the experiences of mainstream Americans and largely ignores the experiences, cultures, and histories of other ethnic, racial, cultural, language, and religious groups has negative consequences for both mainstream students and students of color" (p. 242). Such a mainstream curriculum reinforces and perpetuates the racism and ethnocentrism of the mainstream culture. Similarly, Banks (2005a) suggests a mainstream curriculum provides the mainstream students a "false sense of superiority" and denies them the "knowledge, perspectives, and frames of reference that can be gained" from other groups and cultures (p. 242).

As a result of the civil rights movement, minority groups demanded that curricula reflect their cultures, histories, experiences, and perspectives. School response was reactionary. Programs and policies were developed without sufficient discussion and forward planning. Dominant were holidays, celebrations, and courses that recognized individual ethnic groups. Attempts to integrate the mainstream curriculum with multicultural content proved difficult for several reasons (Banks, 2005a). First, it is difficult to counter the assimilation ideology and change the way many educators view the development of the country's culture related to British heritage and consider the contributions of ethnic and cultural groups as significant. Second, multicultural education can face resistance because for many the mainstream curriculum reinforces and justifies the mainstream social, political, and economic power structure. Even though faced with these difficulties, today's idea of multiculturalism rose from these early interventions.

Grant and Sleeter (2005) point out that multicultural education is not a single course or program. Instead, multicultural education is a wide variety of programs and practices that serve to provide for educational equality for women, language minorities, ethnic groups, low socioeconomic groups, and people with disabilities. Nieto (2003) and Sleeter and Grant (2003) also suggest multicultural education can extend to total school reform efforts. When extended to broad based educational reform, Nieto (2005) attests that multicultural education can have a profound effect on how and to what level students learn. Nieto (2004) defines multicultural educations as:

> …a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates the school's curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (*praxis*) as the basis of social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 346)

According to Grant and Sleeter (2005), teachers work with multiculturalism according to five approaches: (a) teaching the exceptional and culturally different; (b) human relations; (c) single-group studies; (d) multicultural education; and (e) education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. The goals of the "teaching the exceptional and culturally different" approach "are to equip students with the cognitive skills, concepts,

information, language, and values traditionally valued by U. S. society, and eventually to enable them to hold a job and function within society's institutions and culture" (p. 65). Teachers begin by determining a student's current achievement level, and then working with that student to attain the ascribed grade level norms. The goals of the" human relations" approach are to "engender positive feelings among all students, promote group identity and pride for students of color, reduce stereotypes, and work to eliminate prejudice and biases" (p. 67). This approach uses cooperative learning and role playing to examine similarities and differences and to include contributions of student groups to provide accurate information about ethnic, racial, gender, disability, or social class to address stereotypes.

The goals of the "single-group studies" approach are to "raise the social status of the target group by helping young people examine how the group has been oppressed historically and what its capabilities and achievements have been" (p. 67). The approach focuses on one group at a time so the knowledge of that group is cohesive rather than gradual with the hope that students will develop respect and work to improve the group's status. The goals of the "multicultural education" approach are to "reduce prejudice and discrimination against oppressed groups, to work toward equal opportunity and social justice for all groups, and to effect an equitable distribution of power among members of the different cultural groups" (p. 70). This approach looks to reform the educational process for all students regardless of the cultural makeup. This approach assumes all students are capable of learning complex material and performing at a high level. Multiple languages are taught and all students are expected to become at least bilingual.

The goals of the "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist" approach are "to prepare future citizens to reconstruct society so that it better serves the

interests of all groups of people, especially those who are of color, poor, female, and/or with disabilities" (p. 71). There are four practices unique to the education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist approach: (a) democracy is actively practiced in school—students practice politics, debate, social action, and the use of power—teachers guide students so they develop prudent decision making skills; (b) students learn to analyze institutional inequality according to their own lives—students prepare to change unjust social practices; (c) students learn to use social actions skills—social action skills are described by Bennett (1990) as "the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are necessary for active citizen participation" (p. 307); and (d) bridges are built across various oppressed groups so they can work together to advance their common interests—this can strengthen and energize struggles against oppression but can be difficult because members often believe they will have to give up something to the goals of the other group. Pine and Hilliard (1990) assert, "If Americans are to embrace diversity, the conscious and unconscious expressions of racism (sexism) within our society must be identified and done away with" (p. 7). Multicultural education assists greatly in the goal of recognizing, respecting, and celebrating diverse cultures and living together in harmony.

Teacher-Student Relationships

What is taught and how it is taught exert tremendous influence on student performance and learning. "Children," Ashworth (1990) asserts, "are keenly aware of where they stand in the school community and of how they are perceived by other students and teachers" (p. 3). "By nature," Ashworth (1990) adds, "human beings are social creatures…biologically intended to live, work, play and succeed together…deeply influenced by others and how they treat us" (p. 6). For Perry (2001), the "capacity to form and maintain

relationships is the most important trait of humankind—without it, none of us would survive, learn, work, or procreate" (p. 32). In positive teacher-student relationships, Payne (2005) states "emotional deposits are made to the student, emotional withdrawals are avoided, and students are respected" (p.111). Moos (1979) and Goodenow (1993) suggest teachers who show personal involvement with students show those students that they are respected. These feelings of respect motivate and engage students toward increased positive productivity and academic achievement (Wentzel, 1997).

There is abundant research stressing the importance of teachers caring for their students and believing that these students can learn and holding high expectations for them as learners (Barr & Parrett, 1995). Numerous studies suggest a connection between teacher beliefs and how they teach or fail to teach children (White-Clark, 2005).

According to Payne (2001):

> Relationships always begin as one individual to another. First and foremost in all relationships with students is the relationship between each teacher and student, then between each student and each administrator, and finally, among all of the players, including student-to-student relationships. (p. 111)

The relationship between a teacher and a student, therefore, is the foundation upon which learning rests. For many students, their successes or failures are largely dependent upon the relationships they enjoy or fail to enjoy with their teachers. Kohl (2006) suggests most children do not fail due to their cognitive abilities but because they feel unwelcome, detached, or alienated from significant others in the educational environment. Effective teachers care about their students and demonstrate that they care in such a way that their students are aware of it. According to Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996), "Teachers who care

about their students are remembered, effect change, stimulate growth, and are more likely to be successful at teaching their students" (p. 255). Senge (1990) states:

> When people genuinely care, they are actively committed. They are doing what they truly want to do. They are full of energy and enthusiasm. They persevere, even in the face of frustration and setbacks, because what they are doing is what they must do. It is their work. (p. 148)

Research indicates that children who are securely attached to significant adults become more curious, self-directed and empathetic. Such relationships foster achievement, autonomy and altruism (Brendro et al., 1990). Students need to feel affirmed and to be assured they are valued. They need to be challenged and they need to know they can succeed at a high level of expectation. Teacher expectations can be very powerful and can influence a student's attitudes and actions and lead to success or failure (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003; Shalaway, 1989).

As Pianta (1999) suggests "No amount of focus on academics, no matter how strong or exclusive, will substantially change the fact that the substrate of classroom life is social and emotional" (p. 170). Brophy and Good (1970), assert that many teachers treat students differently toward based on preliminary perceptions and expectations. Students pick up on these perceptions and this can affect student self-image, motivation toward learning, behavior, and relationships with the teachers and other students and adults. These results can then reinforce the teacher's initial perception and result in perpetuating underachievement. Accordingly, teachers demand better performance from those children for whom they have higher expectations and less from those they perceive as less capable. Teachers are more likely to praise the performance of high-expectation students and to accept poor performance

from low-expectation students. Holding high expectations “raises the bar” and promotes a “culture of achievement” (Shouse, 1996). According to Smey-Richman (1989), students with teachers who expect them to put forth their best effort are more highly motivated and more likely to work hard than are students who have teachers who expect less. Smey-Richman (1989) also suggests students for whom teachers have low expectations have fewer opportunities to interact and participate in classroom activities.

The teacher-student relationship is recognized to be a formalized interpersonal association between an authority figure and a subordinate who interact on nearly a daily basis (Larson et al., 2002; Bartlett, 2005). Positive individual relationships between adults and youth are the foundations of successful programs of education. According to Borba (1989), “The importance of interpersonal relationships in our lives cannot be overstated. We all need to feel a sense of connectedness to another human being—particularly to those whom we consider to be important and significant” (p. 163). If students are to learn, they must feel comfortable in their instructional environment. One method of enhancing student performance is to cultivate a culture of achievement in the classroom where instruction is challenging, students feel comfortable asking questions, and students are expected to do their best. When students feel challenged, they are less likely to be bored and disengaged (Brophy, 1987b). Several studies exploring what makes a good teacher show the importance of caring in the eyes of teachers and students. One study defines caring as an act of bringing out the best in students through affirmation and encouragement. The characteristics of caring go well beyond knowing the students to include qualities such as patience, trust, honesty, and courage. Specific teacher attributes that show caring include listening, gentleness, understanding, knowledge of students as individuals, warmth and encouragement, and an

overall love for children (Stronge, 2002). Creating a culture in the classroom where learning is "cool," and asking questions is not only okay but expected takes time to develop and is accomplished by setting clear, high, consistent yet attainable expectations for all students. High quality instruction that is rigorous, aligned with content standards, and uses instructional strategies to meet the academic needs of all students is key in promoting a culture of engagement and achievement in the classroom (Weiss & Pasley, 2004).

It was once commonly held that it is not important for students to like their teachers but they must respect them. Fay and Funk (1995) point to a convention of psychology that states:

> Human beings will perform for the person they love. If a person loves himself [of herself], he [or she] will do it for himself [or herself]. If he [or she] does not have that high self-esteem or belief in self, he [or she] will have to do it for someone else until the time comes that he [or she] does love himself [or herself]. (p. 20)

According to Jones (1987a), "If the students like you, they will go along with almost anything" (p. 191). Effective teachers understand that they can create and maintain a positive learning environment by developing positive relationships with their students. Developing such relationships takes time but this investment of time can set the stage for meaningful learning because students want to work hard for teachers that care for them. For Jackson and Davis (2000):

> The quality of relationships between school staff members and [children], and among all the adults within the school community, makes an enormous difference in the ability of a school to mount an effective instructional program. Positive relationships based on trust and respect, nurtured over time by supportive organizational structures

and norms of interaction, are the human infrastructure within a school that enables effective teaching and learning to occur. (p. 222)

A fundamental assumption of quality education is that children have a safe place to learn (Heim, 2007). Students generally feel secure in classrooms if they feel they can trust and depend on the teacher (Borba, 1989). The learning environment must be safe to make errors in learning and it must be safe to make errors in behaving (Jones, 1987a). Safe classrooms where students feel cared for and respected are required for good learning opportunities. Enjoying positive supportive relationships with teachers are essential to classroom success (Sornson, 2001). Students come to school with common human needs. They need to feel safe and secure, both physically and emotionally. They need to feel they belong to the group and are important to it and that they share common ground with their peers (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003; Shalaway, 1989). Building on early relationships enjoyed with their parents, students' sense of belonging and acceptance at school enhances their ability and opportunity to learn and perform well in school (Jackson & Davis, 2000). This need is recognized and addressed in Ernest Boyer's Basic School (Boyer, 1995), where each classroom is a community where teachers become listeners and learners along with their students. What matters most is not the amount of talk but the quality of the communication. The same can be stated for relationships. What matters is having a positive productive relationship. Any other kind is counterproductive. A tenet of the Basic School (Boyer, 1995) is that it must be a "caring place, where the principal, teachers, and students are respectfully attentive to each other" (p. 26). Stronge (2002) suggests praising students, reinforcing positive behaviors, and establishing trust helps to build caring and respectful teacher-student relationships.

The research supports that relationships between teachers and students are critical for academic achievement and school success. According to its 2002 *Set for Success* report, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (Blankstein, 2004) asserts, "positive relationships are essential to a child's ability to grow up healthy and achieve later social, emotional, and academic success" (p. 59). McLaughlin's twelve-year study (Lewis, 2000) also concluded that fostering relationships between children and adults provides opportunities for them to "see each other in new ways" (p. 643). According to Glasser (1993), "The better we know someone and the more we like about what we know, the harder we will work for that person" (p. 30). Similarly, Ryan and Patrick (2001) found that students who believe that their teachers care about them perform better on tests.

In Payne's (2001) work on poverty, she offers, "The key to achievement for students from poverty is in creating relationships with them. Because poverty is about relationships as well as entertainment, the most significant motivator for these students is relationships" (p. 142). Nine out of ten students from poverty who make it to middle class credit the success of their journey to the power of relationships with specific teachers, counselors or coaches who took an interest in them as individuals. Honoring students as human beings worthy of respect and care establishes relationships that enhance learning. Jackson and Davis (2000) also found that when successful adults are asked what factor of their education most impacted their success they often credit a special relationship with a teacher. Students are "empowered" or "disabled" as a direct result of their interactions with educators in the school. Relationships are also key to academic success for minority students and the influence of the lived experiences of predominantly White teachers working with an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse student body needs to be understood (Carr & Klassen, 1997). Research

indicates teachers in diverse settings are more likely to be “unqualified” in their content areas, inadequately prepared, and lacking sufficient professional development to teach effectively (White-Clark, 2005). Banks and Lynch (1986) contended that teachers must understand how “race and culture interact to cause educational problems for many ethnic minority students” (p. 16).

Students who are empowered by their school experiences develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically. They participate competently in instruction as a result of having developed appropriate school-based knowledge and interactional structures. Students who are disempowered or “disabled” by their school experiences do not develop this type of cognitive-academic and social-emotional foundation (Cummins, 1986). Relationships matter and positive relationships with caring adults increase opportunities for children to succeed. It takes time to build positive relationship. Jones (1987a) suggests, “From the giving and receiving of caring, helping, concern, and respect, a bond is built between two individuals that can be trusted. This bond is the basis of most cooperation and spontaneous helping” (p. 65).

Teachers have great influence in the classroom and school corridors. This influence and relationship building and maintaining are directly related in the pedagogy of teaching. Teachers not only influence students by how they treat them. They also influence students by how they teach them and how the communicate with them during this teaching. Positively influential teachers teach with effective strategies, plan for motivating lessons and motivate students during these lessons, provide specific and appropriate feedback, differentiate learning to promote the interests and skills of all students, manage the classroom effectively and efficiently, and practice effective and positive discipline procedures.

Teacher Effectiveness. Every August millions of children walk through the doors of our schools capable of engaging in meaningful learning and of experiencing great success. These students bring differing levels of preparedness and a variety of attitudes toward schooling. Many of these students with these varying backgrounds want to do well but do not know how. Development of a positive and supportive relationship with the students is imperative, but to fully affect positive academic outcomes, the teacher must demonstrate effective pedagogy. Effective teachers who know their students formally and informally not only know their learning styles and needs but also their personalities, likes, dislikes, and personal situations that might affect performance in school (Stronge, 2002). The term "teacher effectiveness" is broadly used to identify attributes of what constitutes a good teacher (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Effective teachers are not only accomplished instructors but also work to understand their students' personalities and needs and to develop and maintain positive supportive teacher-student relationships (Good & Brophy, 2000; Larrivee, 2005). Effective teachers are aware of the important differences among students and identifying these differences helps the teacher better understand individual students and permits students to understand that the teacher has a personal interest in them (Marzano, 2003). The research is clear in demonstrating that effective teachers have a profound influence on student achievement and ineffective teachers do not (Stronge, 2002).

Marzano's research (2003) demonstrates the affect of teacher effectiveness on student achievement. Researchers estimate that students typically gain approximately 34 percentile points measuring academic achievement points each year. Accordingly, a student who begins a year at the 50th percentile will end the year at the 84th percentile as measured by the same assessment. While students of effective teachers will enjoy higher gains, students unfortunate

enough to have teachers who do not possess the attitude or aptitude to maximize their learning will achieve at a far lesser rate. Table 4 compares the differences in achievement level that can be anticipated dependant on the effectiveness of the teacher.

Table 4

Student Achievement Differences Affected by Teachers

Teacher	Student Achievement Gain in 1 Year
Least Effective	14 percentage points
Average	34 percentage points
Most Effective	53 percentage points

Note. Adapted from *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. By R. J. Marzano, 2003, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

According to Marzano (2003), schooling accounts for about 20% of the variance in student achievement. About 67% of this effect, or 13% of the total variance in achievement, is due to the efforts of individual teachers. The remaining 7% is dependent on the efforts of the school. Sanders and Rivers (1998) have shown the enormous difference that teachers can make in the achievement of their students. One study in Dallas in the mid-1990s showed that children assigned to effective teachers for three years in a row scored an average of 49 percentile points higher on a standardized reading assessment than children assigned to three ineffective teachers in a row. Teacher effectiveness is a set of experiences, traits, behaviors, and dispositions that are typically evident in effective teachers. Although the effect the classroom teacher can have on student achievement is clear, the dynamics of how a teacher produces such an effect are not simple. The effective teacher performs many functions that can be organized into three major roles: making wise choices about the most effective

instructional strategies to employ, designing classroom curriculum to facilitate student learning, and making effective use of classroom management techniques (Marzano et al., 2001). Marzano has shown that students in effective schools as opposed to ineffective schools have a 44% difference in their expected passing rate on a test that has a typical passing rate of 50%. When comparing the top 1% with the bottom 1% of schools, the difference in the passing rate on a test with a typical passing rate of 50% climbs to 70% (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Words such as ideal, analytical, dutiful, competent, expert, reflective, satisfying, diversity-responsible, and respectful have been used to describe good teachers (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). Effective teachers have been further described as caring, enthusiastic, motivated, fair, respectful, reflective, and dedicated individuals with a sense of humor who interact well with students. Stronge (2002) suggests interviews with students consistently reveal that they want teachers who hold them in mutual respect. Stronge and Hindman (2006) add that effective teachers cultivate a positive classroom environment for their students by working with students to ensure that routines, procedures, and expectations are clear. Marzano (2003) warns that ineffective teachers might actually impede the learning of their students.

Student Motivation. Many students enter school excited to learn but after a few short years this excitement too often falls victim to apathy (Glasser, 1993). Many become skeptical of the value of school. School is not nearly as much fun as it was in Kindergarten and there is increasingly less satisfaction connected to learning. Research demonstrates that motivation decreases as students progress from elementary through the secondary grades (Harter, 1981; Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001; Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Otis, Grouzet, &

Pelletier; 2005). Kohn (1993) suggests this drop in motivation might be caused by changes in or elimination of various extrinsic reward systems which undermine intrinsic motivation. Jones (1987b) suggests a reason for this lack of joy and motivation toward learning can be attributed to the classroom learning environment. Motivation is too often considered to be an innate quality that students bring with them to school. Jackson and Davis (2000) suggest, however, that student motivation and engagement is relative to the quality of the relationships they have in school. Stronge and Hindman (2006) add that a high level of motivation and enthusiasm for learning in teachers leads to high levels of motivation and achievement in children. The link between student motivation and achievement is straightforward. Covey (1989) said we must "Seek first to understand, then to be understood" (p. 237). While a teacher cannot understand every problem for every child, through good communication the teacher should be able to acquire enough information to assist and motivate students who are struggling. Effective teachers must accordingly strive to motivate students to want to learn and achieve.

A significant body of research indicates that "academic achievement and student behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher and student relationship" (Jones & Jones, 1981). Students respond well and are motivated by teachers who like and respect them. Accordingly, students who are motivated to learn will typically enjoy increased academic success (Marzano, 2003; Shalaway, 1989). Learning is an active process in which students must be engaged as genuine participants (Danielson, 2002). When teachers make the classroom experience engaging and students are meaningfully engaged in challenging learning opportunities and are experiencing success, learning increases and there is little time or inclination for misbehavior (Stronge, 2002; Danielson, 2002). Teachers must help students

perceive themselves as capable and responsible. When the child's learning needs are met, motivation for further achievement is enhanced (Marzano, 2003; Shalaway, 1989). Conversely, students deprived of educational success typically express their frustration through inappropriate behavior or withdrawal (Brendro et al., 1990).

Most authorities agree that motivation is an abstract concept that is not easy to define operationally. According to Berelson and Steiner (1964), motivation refers to all those strivings that are designated by such terms as "wishes," "desires," "needs," and "drives." Accordingly, Berelson and Steiner assert that a motive is an inner state that moves people toward goals resulting in purposeful behavior. Wlodkowski (1986) defines motivation as "those processes that can (a) arouse and instigate behavior; (b) give direction or purpose to behavior; (c) continue to allow behavior to persist; and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior" (p. 12). Brophy (1988) suggests the motivation to learn is "a student tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to derive the intended academic benefits from them" (pp. 205-206). For Borba (1989), "motivation is an internal impetus that induces us to perform a chosen exercise" (p. 230). Glynn, Aultman, and Owens (2005) define motivation as "an internal state that arouses, directs, and sustains human behavior" (p. 150). Marzano et al. (2005) referred to motivation as the extent to which students are motivated to be engaged in academic tasks from both external and internal sources.

Motivation can be either intrinsic, extrinsic, or a combination of the two. According to Unrau and Schlackman (2006), "Intrinsic motivation arises from an individual's personal interest in a topic or activity and is satisfied through pursuit of that topic or activity," while "extrinsic motivation arises from participation in an activity, not for its own sake, but for

rewards or the release from some external social demand" (p. 81). Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (2001) argue that extrinsic motivation can undermine intrinsic motivation. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) suggest not all extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation and asserts that some extrinsic motivation may be internalized and owned by the student. According to the self determination theory (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006), extrinsic motivation takes four forms:

> (a) external regulation (least autonomous), (b) introjected regulation (motive and associated behavior not fully embraced as one's own), (c) identified regulation (valuing of a goal or regulation and associated behavior as personally important), and (d) integrated regulation (most autonomous extrinsic motivation that is fully assimilated into the self and one's own values but not inherently enjoyed). (p. 82)

For many students, getting good grades is "identified and integrated regulation" as it is meaningful and valuable to them.

Motivating students consists of making students receptive to and excited about learning and aware of the importance of learning itself (Stronge, 2002). Student motivation can be stimulated by teachers' instruction and engaging school curriculum (Brophy, 1987b). Teachers can elicit motivation by selecting academic activities that students will want to engage in because they are interested in the content or because they enjoy the task (Smey-Richman, 1988). Stronge (2002) asserts that, "Teachers can effectively motivate most students by encouraging them to be responsible for their own learning, maintaining an organized classroom environment, setting high standards, assigning appropriate challenges, and providing reinforcement and encouragement during tasks" (p. 18). According to den

Brok, Levy, Brekelmans, and Wubbles (2005), researchers have determined four separate, though interrelated elements of motivation:

> (a) the *pleasure* (or enjoyment) students experience in lessons of a subject; (b) the *relevance* of the subject (for future work or other subjects and domains); (c) the *confidence* students have in learning and achieving for the subject; and (d) the *effort* they put in or interest they have for the subject. (p. 21)

Research shows that students may not realize the influence effort has on their success in school, but they can learn that effort helps them succeed. Simply teaching students that effort pays off in terms of enhanced achievement actually increases student achievement. One study by VanOverwalle and DeMetsenaere (1990) found that students who were taught about the relationship between effort and achievement achieved more than students who were taught techniques for time management and comprehension of new material. Reinforcing effort can help teach students one of the most valuable lessons they can learn—the harder you try, the more successful you are. Similarly, providing recognition for attainment of specific goals not only enhances achievement, it stimulates motivation (Marzano et al., 2001).When students feel they are emotionally supported they are better able to concentrate on and generate interest for the learning objective. Highly motivated students achieve more, are better behaved and are positive about themselves and others. They are creative, curious and confident. Providing for this feeling of support is the responsibility of the teacher (Shalaway, 1989; Sornson, 2001).

Student Engagement. It was not that long ago that school was viewed as one of the most important aspects of a young person's life. Few questioned the value of a formal education and most wanted to perform well in school. Many students today do not share the

positive view of schooling that once was the norm. These disengaged students do the minimum to get by and to avoid getting into trouble. They expend little energy on schooling and do not see focusing on education as important to their future success. According to Osterman (2000), the best indicator for effort and productive engagement in school is the quality of relationship students have with their teachers. Students who enjoy a positive and supportive relationship with their teacher attend better to instruction, put forth greater effort, work through difficult situations, are better able to cope with stress, and are more accepting of teacher redirects and criticism then students who do not enjoy supportive and positive teacher-student relationships (Midgley, Feldlauffer, & Eccles, 1989; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Pianta (1999) asserts students who have close relationships with caring teachers and share with them personal feelings and information are more engaged and achieve higher academic levels than students who do not enjoy such relationships. Stipek (2006) agrees suggesting, “When students have a secure relationship with their teachers, they are more comfortable taking risks that enhance learning--tackling challenging tasks, persisting when they run into difficulty, or asking questions when they are confused” (p. 46).

Stronge (2002) contends that the time students spend engaged in the instruction contributes greatly to classroom success. A 1993 study by Anderson discovered that only about 83% of allocated time is actually devoted to instruction in the typical United States school. Anderson also found that only about 62% of the allocated time for instruction was actually spent with the kids engaged in leaning which translates to only 37 minutes of each school hour with students actively engaged in the learning process. Too many students who are not engaged become bored and complacent and typically spend this extra time counter to educational purposes and soon find themselves in trouble or lacking the motivation to invest

themselves in learning. Learning seems to be most successful when the learner is actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Students who are excited about what they are doing in school are usually active participants in their own learning (Lezotte, 1992). According to Newmann (1986), students are engaged when they "devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value" (p. 242). Steinberg et al. (1996) define "engagement" as "the degree to which students are psychologically 'connected' to what is going on in their classes" (p. 15).

According to Graden, Thurlow, and Ysseldyke (1982), researchers have found a strong relationship between the amount of time students are actively engaged in learning and their achievement. In their analysis of studies of influences on achievement, Good and Brophy (2000) also noted a strong association with achievement and engaged learning. Good performance in school is perhaps the best indicator of later success whether that success is measured by eventual level of education, occupation or income. More recent research has also concluded that positive student engagement in the classroom is a critical and compelling factor in enhancing student achievement (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005). Maehr and Midgley (1992) identified several strategies for increasing student engagement and motivation: (a) emphasize goal setting and self-regulation; (b) offer choices in instructional settings; (c) reward students for attaining "personal-best" goals; (d) foster teamwork through group-learning and problem solving experiences; (e) replace social comparisons of achievement with self-assessment and evaluation techniques; (f) teach time-management skills; and (g) offer self-paced instruction when possible.

Teachers are vital in fostering student engagement as they work directly with the students and typically are the most influential in a student's educational experience. Black (2004) contends, "Teachers who are most successful in drawing students into deep and thoughtful learning develop activities that keep students' psychological and intellectual needs in mind" (p. 42). Effective teachers are thoroughly prepared and keep their students actively involved in the teaching and learning process. When actively and positively engaged in the classroom dynamics, there is little opportunity or desire to misbehave (Stronge, 2002; Danielson, 2002). Creating a culture of achievement in their classroom, developing interactive and relevant lessons and activities, and being encouraging and supportive to students are all ways in which teachers can foster student engagement in the classroom (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005).

Student disengagement is often a result of lacking a positive school relationship with a caring adult (Steinberg et al., 1996). Teachers have an obligation not only to inform students but also to engage them. According to Adler (1982, "All genuine learning is active, not passive. It involves the use of the mind, not just the memory. It is the process of discovery in which the student is the main agent" (p. 23). When students are highly engaged they are involved emotionally as well as physically. They are committed to the learning activity. Well-managed classrooms are task-oriented and predictable with high levels of student involvement and little wasted time, confusion or disruption (Wong & Wong, 1998).

Teacher Feedback. Lezotte and Pepperl (1999) assert, "There's nobody more important in a school than the teachers in terms of meeting the learning goals of the kids" (p. 29). One of the most effective strategies a teacher can use to maximize student achievement is to provide useful feedback relative to how well students are doing (Hattie, 1992). As

Brookhart (2008) suggests, “Feedback says to a student, ‘Somebody cared enough about my work to read it and think about it!’ …It’s just-in time, just-for-me information delivered when and where it can do the most good” (p. 1). The purpose of giving feedback in the classroom is to improve student performance. Lee (2006) asserts, “Effective feedback helps pupils to know how to move forward with their learning” (p. 56) by focusing “on what needs to be done to improve and specific details about how to improve” (p. 59). For Stronge (2002), feedback is one of the most powerful modification techniques for increasing learning outcomes. Danielson (2002) describes feedback as information provided about the results of performance intended to reinforce positive behavior and encourage needed change. Emberger (2002) defines feedback as information that learners receive from their teacher about their performance that may cause them to take self-corrective action and guide them to attaining their goals. Effective teachers *tell* students what they are doing right and why and what needs improvement and how to improve.

Children develop a self-image based on their experiences and on the feedback they receive from significant adults. If this feedback is positive, children become more confident and successful. If it is frequently negative, a child can develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority (Barakat & Clark, 1998). Rosenshine (1971) found evidence that high rates of achievement were associated with high rates of approval while lower rates of achievement were associated with higher rates of disapproval. Formative feedback is critical to student learning as it gives information to the learner about what is going well and what needs to be done for improvement. Brookhart (2008) explains that effective feedback is a “double-barreled approach” (p. 2) as it addresses both motivational and cognitive factors. The cognitive benefit is the information students need to understand the level of their learning and

what to do to increase that learning. The motivation comes from developing the feeling that they have control over their own learning. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) found that students who receive feedback on average outperform students who do not receive feedback by .41 standard deviations which would represent an improvement of 16 percentile points on a standardized test. They also learned that while on average student performance improves with feedback, ineffective feedback can actually cause student performance to decline.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggest four levels of student feedback: (a) task performance feedback such as if work is correct and how to get more information; (b) task processing feedback such as strategies the student used or could use; (c) self-regulation feedback such as information about student self-confidence or self-evaluation; and (d) personal feedback such as value statements about the student being "smart" or a "hard worker." Feedback about the quality of work and the strategies and processes used produces the most improvement gain. Task performance feedback is of the greatest benefit when it corrects a student's misconceptions rather than when it points out a need for more information. The more specific the task feedback, the stronger the correlation with improvement. Task process feedback benefits some students is they are able to connect and scaffold the process with the results. Feedback that causes students to consider self-regulation can produce gain if students hear it and believe that additional effort will improve the results. With self-regulation feedback, students will accept, act on, and seek future information, or they will not. Students with high self confidence usually find self-regulation feedback helpful. Even though such statements might boost a student's self-esteem, personal value feedback do not show to improves results as they are not formative and do not focus the student's attention on the learning. Such feedback can also backfire and cause a student to

view intelligence as fixed and achievement as something beyond his or her control because he or she is either “smart” or not.

Lee (2006) suggests there are three criteria the learner must know for feedback to be effective:

> (a) the learning objectives and success criteria for the task; (b) the extent to which they have achieved the learning objectives/success criteria; and (c) how to move closer to achieving the learning objectives or how to close the gap between what they have done and what they could do. (p. 57)

Immediate student awareness of progress usually serves as an incentive for increased effort (Smey-Richman, 1988). Schweinle, Meyer, and Turner (2006) suggest, “Providing substantive feedback about competence and goal progress increases self-efficacy, enhances interest and persistence, and increases intrinsic motivation” (pp. 272-273). Conversely, nonconstructive performance feedback can decrease motivation. Similarly, personal rather than process feedback and criticism can decrease motivation. Students who receive positive feedback are more likely to engage in learning activities and initiate positive with the teacher interactions than those who receive negative feedback (Newman & Schwager, 1993).

A teacher behavior often cited in the literature addressing feedback is the use of praise and criticism. Brophy (1981) defines praise as a positive response to students’ good work or conduct that goes beyond mere affirmation or positive feedback. Smey-Richman (1989) adds that, “Teacher praise involves expressing surprise, delight, or excitement and/or placing the students’ behavior in context by giving information about its value and its implications for students’ status” (p. 12). Emmer (1998) warns that overenthusiastically praising students for correct answers loses its effectiveness over time so effective feedback

must always be diagnostic and should always be constructive. Smey-Richman (1989) refers to criticism as a negative teacher response that connotes expressions of disapproval, disgust, or rejection. While in the past, teachers seemed to believe that students were motivated by the fear of failure, research now supports that using fear of failure only reinforces poor self-concept (Danielson, 2002). Feedback that is corrective in nature must provide students with an explanation of what they are doing that is correct and what they are doing that is not correct (Marzano et al., 2001). When corrective feedback is done properly, it will always be supportive. One of the major by-products of effective corrective feedback is the relationship building that comes from frequent and supportive helping (Jones, 1987a).

Butler (1988) found that assigning grades or judging student work as a part of the feedback process can discourage the learner from using such feedback as a motivating factor or from seeking additional feedback to improve future learning. Judgment centered feedback creates a focus on ego or performance rather than the learning task. Butler (1988) learned that student performance on task improved with value free feedback describing what the students did well and offering suggestions on what they could do to improve. When grades were provided as feedback, performance declined. If descriptive feedback was provided with a grade attached, student task performance declined further. Table 5 describes the differences in achievement gain different types of feedback can be expected to generate.

Table 5

Feedback Comments and Grading

Feedback Method	Gain in Student Achievement	Impact on Student Learning
Descriptive feedback: teacher provides only comments (no grades) on student work	30% gain	All positive
Evaluative feedback: teacher provides only grades (no comments) on student work	No gain	Positive for the top students only and negative for the lower achieving students
Descriptive and evaluative feedback: Teacher provides both comments and grades on student work	No gain	Positive for the top students only and negative for the lower achieving students

Note. Adapted from "Enhancing and undermining intrinsic motivation," by. R. Butler, 1988, *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 58*(1). 1-14.

Differentiated Learning. Schools as cultural organizations have a reputation of sameness in their day-to-day operations. Many teachers tend to fall into stagnant patterns of instruction (Lezotte, 1992). While all would certainly agree that all students are to be treated equitably, equity is rarely equality. In determining a proper educational fit for students, one size does not fit all. Heim (2007) warns, "A lock-step learning environment may lead to students falling out of step and not regaining their footing" (p. 6). Children of the same age differ widely in their readiness to learn; they move forward at different rates of speed; and they acquire quite different patterns of learning and thinking (Goodlad, 1976). We know that students learn best in very different ways and in very different educational settings (Barr & Parrett, 1995). While most would agree it is impractical to try to individualize every lesson for every child, research has shown that teaching to the middle is also ineffective. Teaching

to the middle ignores the needs of advanced students while it intimidates and confuses lower functioning learners (Tomlinson, 2000).

Best practice recommends differentiating instruction so learners can be reached through a variety of methods and activities. Research has shown that students are more successful when they are taught based on their own readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2000). Alexander and Murphy (1998) and Keller (2002) suggest when students are disinterested in something this can often result in lower achievement over students with interest. Students with high interest often see their achievement levels improve. According to Pintrich and Schunk (1996), interest is "elicited by activities that present students with information or ideas that are discrepant from their present knowledge or beliefs and that appear surprising or incongruous" (p. 277). For teachers to be effective they must be aware of difference between children and must take a personal interest in each student (Marzano, 2003). Teachers must determine what students are ready for and to what degree. Learning activities that are too hard or too easy can hinder student learning. Those that are too hard require excessive time and do not increase achievement while those that are too easy are a waste of time (Sornson, 2001). Since students learn at different rates, effective teachers recognize differences among their students and plan academic enrichment and remediation opportunities to accommodate those differences in their instruction (Stronge, 2002). Engaged students are clearly more likely to perform better academically than students who are not actively engaged. Therefore, teachers need a large inventory of instructional strategies to engage a variety of students (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). There is ample evidence that students are more successful in school and find it more satisfying if they are taught in ways that are responsive to their readiness levels (Tomlinson, 2000).

Effective teachers differentiate instruction according to student needs (Tomlinson, 2000). How best to differentiate and individualize for the range of student needs and abilities in a common classroom is an ongoing challenge (Stronge, 2002). Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to meet students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests (Willis & Mann, 2000). As defined by Tomlinson and Eidson (2003):

> Differentiated instruction refers to a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners. It is a way of thinking about the classroom with the dual goals of honoring each student's learning needs and maximizing each student's learning capacity. (p. 3)

Differentiated instruction is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that values the individual and can be translated into classroom practice in many ways. At its most basic level, differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom. Whenever a teacher varies teaching in order to create the best learning experience possible, that teacher is differentiating instruction. According to Tomlinson (2000), teachers can typically differentiate four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile: (a) content--what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information; (b) process--activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content; (c) products--culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit; and (d) learning environment--the way the classroom works and feels. If schools are going to teach children successfully, teachers must become more flexible and dynamic (Lezotte, 1992).

Classroom Management. According to Wong and Wong (1998), "The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline; it is the lack of procedures and routines" (p. 167). Classroom management addresses many teaching areas including but not limited to developing relationships, structuring respectful classrooms, organizing work around a meaningful curriculum, teaching and modeling morality and citizenship, motivating students, and other instructional aspects to maximize effective teaching and student learning (LaPage et al., 2005). Marzano (2003) suggests that a classroom that is chaotic as a result of poor management not only does not enhance achievement, it might even inhibit it. According to Allen (1996), about 50% of instructional time in poorly managed class rooms is lost due to student misbehavior and being off task. Of the time lost, 80% is attributed to talking without permission. Nineteen percent is lost to daydreaming, students being out of their seats and student making noises. Only 1% is lost to more serious misbehavior. Classroom management clearly plays a role in maximizing learning opportunities. Establishing high standards and behavior expectations has proven to be successful (Barr & Parrett, 1995).

The intent of effective classroom management is to enhance student involvement and cooperation and to establish a positive working environment (Wong & Wong, 1998). Doyle (1986) defines classroom management as "the actions and strategies teachers use to solve the problems of order in classrooms" (p. 397). For Duke (1979), classroom management is "the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur" (p. xii). Brophy (1988) defines classroom management as "the actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to attainment of the goals of instruction-arranging the physical environment of the classroom, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining attention to lessons and engagement in academic

activities" (p. 2). For Marzano (2003), classroom management is "the confluence of teacher actions in four distinct areas: (a) establishing and enforcing rules and procedures, (b) carrying out disciplinary actions, (c) maintaining effective teacher and student relationships, and (d) maintaining an appropriate mental set for management" (p. 88).

Every interaction we have with children is a learning opportunity (Cattermole & Thompson, n.d.). The key to minimizing behavior problems is good classroom management. Proactive classroom management is the most effective deterrent to inappropriate student behavior (Stronge, 2002). Effective classroom management is more a function of a teacher's ability to prevent problems than skill in responding to problems (Brophy & Good, 1986). Research in classroom management, according to Shalaway (1989), demonstrates that "effective teachers spend very little time dealing with student misconduct" (p. 69). Effective teachers do not ignore problem behaviors; rather they have developed management strategies for preventing such problems before they erupt. Effective teachers must develop and teach procedures and routines so that students know how things are done in their classrooms.

According to Wong and Wong (1998), research has shown a clear link between effectively managed classrooms and high student achievement. In a major review of the literature, Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) identified classroom management as a factor that has the greatest impact on student achievement out of 228 variables. An effective relationship may be the keystone that allows the other aspects of classroom management to work well. As teachers invest themselves in building relationships with students, they build a willingness in students to cooperate with directives and classroom rules. When adults build a positive relationship with a young person, they place themselves in a position to influence the behavior of that young person. When an adult is in the role of a teacher to a young person, a

willingness by the young person to please the adult produces both cooperation and mutual appreciation (Jones, 1987a). According to Marzano (2003) in order to establish an optimal relationship with students, a teacher must exhibit appropriate levels of dominance that convey the teacher is in control and can be trusted to provide behavioral and academic guidance and must communicate appropriate levels of cooperation that demonstrate concern for the individual needs and opinions of students and a willingness for the class to function as a team.

Effective Discipline. Classroom management, behavior management and classroom discipline are interrelated. Danielson (2002) defines discipline policies as the "rules regarding student conduct, both within classroom and in the school as a whole" (p. 53). Classroom discipline is the business of enforcing classroom standards and building patterns of cooperation in order to maximize learning and minimize disruptions (Jones, 1987a). Studies investigating antisocial behavior have regularly illustrated that low academic performance is related to behavioral problems (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). Teacher interactions with students who demonstrate aggression and resistance tend to be critical and punishing (Coie & Koeppl, 1990; Walker & Buckley, 1973), and are often characterized by high conflict and low warmth (Itskowitz, Navon, & Strauss, 1988). When children perform poorly or resist school work or act inappropriately, frustrated teachers commonly resort to coercion or use punishment or threaten students with low grades and failure to make them comply. This clearly does not work and typically results in alienating students to where they do not believe putting forth any real effort is worth it (Glasser, 1993). More than three decades ago Walker and Buckley (1973) found that students perceived as antisocial tend to be less likely to receive encouragement for appropriate behaviors and are more prone to

punishment for negative behavior than students perceived as well behaved. Research continues to suggest that repeated punishment likely serves to bring about a sense of estrangement from teachers, and that this feeling of alienation may lead to increased anger and defiant behavior (VanAcker, Grant, & Henry, 1996).

Negative reinforcement almost never positively influences behavior. To improve undesirable behavior, the environment must be changed to reinforce the desired behavior. Behavior that is observed, attended to, and rewarded will certainly increase. A school climate relying on punishment can provoke problem behaviors resulting in an increase in antisocial behavior, a breakdown of student-teacher relations, degradation of school and social climate, and decreases in academic achievement (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1994). The price of "laying down the law" means upset and burnout for the adult and rejection and alienation for the child. Punishment can lead to feelings of hatred, revenge, defiance, guilt, alienation, unworthiness, and self-pity (Faber & Mazlish, 1980). If the relationship between teacher and student is allowed to degenerate into an adversary relationship between the punitive adult authority and the revengeful child, the child inevitably is the loser (Jones, 1987a).

Thomas' (2000) essay, "The Mind of Man [and Woman]" states, "children who are yelled at feel rejected and frightened because a teacher shouts at them" (p. 122). These feelings lead to inhibiting the child from learning. Anxious or alienated students are less likely to be motivated to learn than students who feel welcomed and cared for (Brophy, 1987a). Alienation destroys relationships as it drives a wedge between the teacher and the student that will ultimately destroy the child's motivation to cooperate (Jones, 1987a). Alienated children are commonly described as aggressive or anxious, as attention-disordered or affectionless, and as unmotivated or unteachable, and struggling to find belonging through

attention seeking and other undesirable behaviors (Brendro et al., 1990). Many rejected students learn to resist positive or negative interpersonal involvement, and are more likely to develop psychological problems, use drugs and alcohol, engage in early sex, and commit criminal acts (Steinberg et al., 1996).

A quote from Bronfenbrenner (1986) clearly illustrates the effect of alienation: “To be alienated is to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school or work—the four worlds of childhood” (p. 430). Methods commonly used to attack dignity generally consist of put-downs, sarcasm, criticism, scolds, and threats, many of which are delivered publicly (Mendler, 1992). Elementary school students may be young but they are every bit as deserving as the adults in the school to be treated well. Danielson (2002) warns that some adults in schools seem to forget the imperative to treat everyone with dignity and respect and “talk down to students, dismiss their accounts of situations, and cut them off when they are speaking” (p. 17). Teachers who show respect for their students are more likely to have active learners in their classroom. Arrogant or offensive teachers typically meet passive or active resistance and have little meaningful control over the children. Authoritarian control often squashes the inquisitive nature of student in the primary grades and upper grades teachers usually experience difficulty managing and motivating children who were subjected to an earlier authoritarian teacher (Jones & Jones, 1981).

Many teachers get stuck in a rut and find it difficult to shift from punishing students who do not do as they are told to creating learning environments where students are motivated to do what is desired of them (Glasser, 1993). Danielson (2002) asserts there is no place in a school committed to learning for policies and procedures that “are punitive, turn students away, or undermine their confidence” (p. 51). Actions that insult or belittle are

likely to cause children to view their teachers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others (Barakat & Clark, 1998). Discipline is a broad concept designed to provide for good behavior or to correct poor behavior. An effective discipline program operates in concert with an effective classroom management system. Good discipline programs prevent most problems by attending to student physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs. Effective discipline techniques focus on improving a student's self-image and sense of responsibility through encouragement and kind words rather than rebukes and reprimands. Teachers can send messages that students are valuable and capable even when students make inappropriate choices (Shalaway, 1989; Purkey & Strahan, 2002).

Behavior management refers to teacher activities designed to promote positive behaviors in students. Self-discipline is the goal of all behavior management. All activities should be individualized to each child's behavioral needs with the objective of decreasing antisocial and disruptive behaviors and increasing appropriate social behaviors. From age 6 to about 12, children begin to act with increasing self-control (Barakat & Clark, 1998). It has been often found that children's confidence and their beliefs about their abilities are better indicators of how they will do in school than their actual intelligence quotient (IQ) or achievement test scores (Bempechat, 1998). Recent research backs the understanding that self discipline in students is a better predictor for future success than IQ. Duckworth and Selligman (2005) found that the failure to exercise self discipline was a major reason for students falling short of their intellectual potential. Discipline is crucial because it promotes children's self-control, teaches children responsibility and helps children make thoughtful choices. Teaching children self-discipline requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child (Barakat & Clark, 1998).

Discipline techniques must be compatible with helping students maintain or enhance their self-esteem (Mendler, 1992). Children feel confident when they experience the positive consequences of doing a job well. When children “mess up”, they need to have a learning experience from that event as well; a child who “owns” the problem will suffer the pain of the consequence and will learn from it. For Fay and Funk (1995):

> The difference between consequences and punishment is where we interpret the pain emanating from. Consequences result in pain from coming from the inside; punishment results in pain coming from the outside. Children will respond positively to a penalty when they see a logical connection between their behavior and what happens to them as a result of their behavior. (pp. 164-165).

Studies of successful teachers show that they consistently monitor performance and expect good results. They do so in ways that are positive and prescriptive rather than punitive. Consequences are intended to help students reflect on the infraction and determine how to make more acceptable choices in the future (Purkey & Strahan, 2002).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The identified problem this study considered was that students who perceive they do not enjoy a positive and supportive relationship with their teacher tend to struggle academically and behaviorally in school. It was the intent through this research to explore and understand how teachers perceive the relationships between teachers and students affect student behavior and academic performance in a 400-500 student small town elementary school serving preschool through fifth grades.

Preliminary Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the power of teacher-student relationships and teacher perceptions of how these relationships influence student learning and affect behavior. Accordingly, the specific questions posed were:

1. What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?
3. How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success?
4. How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?

Rationale for Qualitative Research

An ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study supported through the lenses of narratology and portraiture was conducted to examine the relationships between students and teachers and the affect of those relationships on academic success and social behavior. These qualitative procedures served to address the complexities and associated methodological issues that arose in this study of human experiences and outcomes.

Substantial documentation supported several methods associated with qualitative research investigations as useful in studying complex systems and human experiences in the context of natural environments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to McEnery and Wilson (1996), quantitative researchers "classify features, count them, and even construct more complex statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed" (p. 76). Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) suggest qualitative methodology makes data analyses more explicit and promotes "openness on the grounds of refutability and freedom from bias" (p. 28). Findings can be generalized to larger populations and comparisons can be made between similar settings as long as valid and reliable techniques have been used. Accordingly, quantitative analysis permits the distinction between what happens as a result of a variable acting on something and what occurs merely out of chance. A quantitative study can provide the researcher precise information regarding the frequency and rarity of particular occurrence, and the relative normality or abnormality (McEnery & Wilson, 1996).

Qualitative data analysis permits researchers to discern, examine, compare and contrast, and interpret meaningful patterns or themes. According to Frechtling and Sharp-Westat (1997), meaningfulness is determined by the purpose of the research and the research questions. The main disadvantage of the qualitative approach is that findings cannot be

extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses provides. This is because the findings of the research are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance. Yin (1994) argues that the relative size of the sample is not of concern. The purpose of the research should establish the parameters and should then be applied to the research. Yin (1989) asserts that the results of a study are generally applicable depending on the methodology employed and the rigor of the resulting case study. If a case study meets the three tenets of qualitative inquiry: describing, understanding, and explaining, the results are generally applicable.

This study was not concerned about the generalizabilty of complex statistics across settings, and was only concerned with the deep analysis of a limited number of five general education elementary teachers and how they perceive the relationships they have with their students affects their students' academics and behavior. According to Patton (2002), the benefit of qualitative research is to "facilitate study of issues in depth and detail" (p. 14). McEnery and Wilson (1996) suggest, "Qualitative analysis allows for fine distinctions to be drawn because it is not necessary to shoehorn the data into a finite number of classifications" (p. 76). For Patton (2002) "Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Good description takes the reader into the setting being described" (p. 437). Thick descriptions provide the information needed to make informed judgments regarding the degree and extent of fit in particular cases (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990), and captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them (Ponterotto, 2006). According to Schwandt (2001), "to thickly describe social action is actually to begin to interpret it by recording the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode"

(p. 255). Using thickly described analysis of interviews, observations, and participant journals to reveal the intricacies of teacher-student relationships served well to inform this study because, just as Patton suggests, “stories and narratives offer especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings” (p. 116). While it would certainly be nice to discover the magic cure that will allow all students to enjoy successful, supportive, and positive relationships with their teachers, the goal was to investigate the nuances of five select successful teachers and learn how these teachers facilitate and nurture these relationships. As a rich, in-depth, intensive description is required to begin to speculate on the multiple dimensions of teacher-student relationships, a qualitative design best served that need.

According to Patton (2002), “*Inductive analysis* involves *discovering* patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analyst’s interactions with the data, in contrast with *deductive analysis* where the data are analyzed according to an existing framework” (p. 453). Quantitative research is deductive and qualitative research is inductive. Deductive reasoning works from general to specific. Sometimes this is referred to as a “top-down” approach. A researcher begins by developing a theory about a topic of interest that is then narrowed down into specific hypotheses that can be tested. The researcher is ultimately able to test the hypotheses with specific data to confirm or disconfirm the original theory. Inductive reasoning moves the researcher from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. This is sometimes referred to as a “bottom up” approach. In qualitative inductive reasoning, the researcher begins with specific observations and measures, and works to detect patterns and regularities through coding (Trochim, 2006).

Quantitative research can be very cold and quantitative researchers may destroy valuable data while imposing their worlds on those being studied. A questionnaire, for instance, can influence the findings and become itself an artifact of the research. Participants can suppose they know what the research is about and try to respond accordingly in either a positive or negative fashion, in either a thoughtful or haphazard way, or in complete or sketchy responses. In quantitative research, the researcher is ideally an objective observer that neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. According to Marshall and Rossman (1980), a researcher cannot understand human behavior without first understanding the setting in which the participants interact. Participants may not always know or understand their feelings, interactions, and behaviors, so they cannot respond fully and informatively to a questionnaire. This is where a qualitative researcher can assist the participant through dialogue in providing a constructive reply. In qualitative research it is believed much more can be learned about a case under study when the researcher participates in or is immersed in the setting to discover categories, dimensions and interrelationships ("Principles supporting qualitative research," n.d.). A qualitative design best served the goals of this study as I was a fully immersed participant in the environment before, during, and after the study.

Theoretical Traditions

Specific theoretical traditions were selected to inform this study that assisted in investigating and analyzing the intricacies that exist in the dynamics of teacher-student relationships. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the qualitative researcher operates in the unique position of a "human-as-instrument," whose function is to recognize the social constructs discovered through data collection processes that are unobtrusive, non-controlling, and non-manipulative. The only research instrument with the flexibility to capture the

subtleties, complexities, and fluidity of the human experience is a person—a human-as-instrument. This human being possesses skills, knowledge, experiences, background, and certain biases and this person is the primary collector and analyzer of data. This collection of data is generally accomplished through observations, interviews, and analysis of documents and archival forms of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). As a responsive, adaptive, and holistic researcher with the immediate ability to summarize and clarify, the human instrument can investigate unique observations with deeper insight then any quantitative instrument designed for a similar study. These mechanisms provide the basis for a holistic, inductive analysis that involves unitizing and categorizing processes from which patterns and themes are discovered during the process of investigation. The theoretical traditions employed in this research are case study, ethnomethodology, narratology and portraiture.

Case Study. According to Patton (2002):

> The case study approach to qualitative analysis constitutes a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; in that sense it represents an analysis *process*. The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. (p. 447)

For Stake (1995), "A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case [and] is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Stake (2000) emphasizes that the term *case study* "draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case" (p. 435*)*. A case study, sometimes called a "monograph", is the exploration of an event, process, person, organization unit or object (Routio, 2007). According to Benbasat,

Goldstein, and Mead (1987), “A case study examines a phenomenon in its natural setting, employing multiple methods of data collection to gather information from one or a few entities (people, groups, or organizations)” (p. 370). Yin (1994), suggests a case study approach is often the primary design of a qualitative investigation and provides a detailed, in depth examination of a person, group, or settings and holds explanatory evidence related to the “how,” “why,” and “what” aspects of the questions that served as the impetus to the study. The case study design was appropriate for several reasons. Instead of attempting to explain teacher-student relationships by controlling variables, this study instead strove to understand the diverse characteristics and beliefs of five teachers as they relate with students in natural settings.

According to Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991), “The quintessential characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a holistic understanding of cultural systems of action” (p. 152). Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) further define “cultural systems of action” as “sets of interrelated activities and routines engaged in by one of more networks of actors within a social context that is bounded by time and space” (p. 152). As case studies are ideal for understanding the intricacies of a single unit of analysis within a bounded system (Stake, 1995; Yin 1994), in this case the teachers were the units of analysis and the classrooms and school constructed the bounded system. The case study provides for flexibility permitting the researcher to investigate the empirical events of the case under study with minimal to no impact on the holistic characteristics of the setting (Yin, 1984). Zonabend (1992) suggests that case studies should be done in a way that incorporates the views of the “actors” in the case under study. This was the intent of seeking the teachers’ views and perceptions in this study.

Two purposes for using a case study approach identified by both Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) include: (a) increasing the reader's understanding of the phenomena being studied, and (b) revealing the aspects and characteristics that promote a construction of themes. Another benefit of case study research is its personal construct. Case study results can lend to natural generalizations, or "conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experiments so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (Stake, 1995, p. 85). Where quantitative research permits statistical generalizations, the specificity and in-depth nature of case studies provide intimate and immediate results. A reader can connect personally and identify characteristics of others known to the reader compared to the individual featured in the case study.

Yin (1994) suggests case studies can be exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. There is no exclusivity between the three case study types and while each serves a specific purpose the types can be combined. An exploratory case study is preliminary research that looks for patterns in the data and is often conducted prior to other social research. Exploratory case studies typically attempt to define the research question and form hypotheses. Data collection occurs before theories or specific research questions are formulated. Descriptive research design is more rigid and goes beyond exploratory research and attempts to describe characteristics of a phenomenon. While exploratory case study data collection is conducted prior to the formulation of theory and research questions, descriptive case studies depend on a theory and specific questions to guide data collection. The theory must cover the scope of the case under study. Explanatory case studies are appropriate when a field of research has matured. Explanatory case studies attempt to explain courses of events and how those events occurred. While the field of research around teacher-students

relationships is fairly established, it is far from mature and there are many gaps. Because existing literature about teacher perceptions regarding how their relationships with students affect their learning and behavior was scarce, I chose to conduct an exploratory descriptive case study and chronicle the complexities of five general education elementary school teachers as they interacted with and related with their students in an effort to understand the perceptions of those teachers and how those teachers see the relationships they have with their students affecting student learning and behavior.

Ethnomethodology. According to Patton (2002), ethnomethodology is a study of the ordinary methods of how people do things. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Blackburn, 1994) defines ethnomethodology as "the study of common social knowledge, in particular as it concerns the understanding of others and the varieties of circumstance in which it can take place" (p. 126). For Giddens (2006), "Ethnomethodology is the study of how people make sense of what others say and do in the course of day-to-day social interaction" (p. 1). Ethnomethodology gets at the norms, understandings and assumptions that are taken for granted by people in a setting because they are so deeply understood that people don't even think about why they do what they do (Patton, 2002). Silverman (1993) suggests, "Ethnomethodology attempts to understand 'folk' (*ethno*) 'methods' (*methodology*) for organizing the world. It locates these methods and the skills ('artful practices') through which people come to develop an understanding of each other and of social situations" (p. 60).

The goal of ethnomethodology is to observe naturally occurring events through the exploration of the inner dynamics in order to comprehend the routines of a culture under study. To accomplish this goal, ethnomethodologists conduct deep interviews and participant

observations (Patton, 2002). Ethnomethodologists look on everyday interactions, and the practices involved in them, as having a regularity or stability so they form what sociologists refer to as institutions and structures. These are always actively produced through interaction among social actors, but not necessarily in a conscious or meaningful manner. The ethnomethodological perspective emphasizes a social interaction that has a rationality of its own (Gingrich, 2003). Ethnomethodology is purported in the literature to be a very good method for seeing how individuals make sense of the social world for themselves. Accordingly, this tradition permitted me to explore fully the relationship dynamics of teachers and their students.

As a school principal, I am a frequent formal and informal visitor to all classrooms and have unique access to conduct a case study that will permit me to observe the teacher's natural classroom setting with little interruption. Accordingly, I enjoy what Levine (1981) defines as "privileged access" of "sufficient intensity and duration" essential to a descriptive case study (pp. 173-174). As principal I am intimately familiar with multifaceted context of the school which nearly eliminates the possibility that I will be an 'outsider' who would misinterpret observed events and my contextual attendance would not be contrived. As a result, prior to beginning this study I had already informally conducted what Corsaro (1980) defines as a "prior ethnography" and considers a required step for case study research. As I interacted with each teacher multiple times weekly in my role as principal, I had numerous opportunities to record detailed single case study type observations. While my position as a principal is one of authority and separated me from these teachers, my regular positive relationship with each of them permitted unique opportunities for me to write detailed and personal case studies of each teacher's relationships with his or her students.

For Lincoln and Guba (1985), reality is complex and uncertain, is relational rather than of linear cause, and is more perspective than objective. Concerning objectivity, Schwartz and Ogilvy (1979) suggest "perspective" is a more relevant concept:

> Perspective connotes a view at a distance from a particular focus. Where we look from affects what we see. This means that any one focus of observation gives only a partial result; no single discipline ever gives us a complete picture. A whole picture is an image created morphogenetically from multiple perspectives. (p. 15)

Rather than seeking an objective truth, the intent was to examine the perceptions and beliefs of five teachers' relational experiences with their students and how those experiences affect student achievement and behavior.

Narratology. According to Patton (2002), narratology strives to "understanding lived experience and perceptions of experience" (p. 115), focusing specifically on the interpretation of "stories, life history narratives, historical memoirs, and creative nonfiction to reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (p. 478). Stories are at the heart of narratology. Determining how best to interpret such stories is the challenge for the narratologist (Patton, 2002). Narrative is a form for inquiry that can contain both the environment and the relations within that environment and those relationships become the focus of attention (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). Narratology is the theory of the structures of narrative and accordingly examines the ways that narratives structure our perception of both cultural artifacts and the surrounding world. The study of narrative is particularly important since our ordering of time and space in narrative forms constitutes one of the primary ways we construct meaning in general (Felluga, 2003a). The narratologist

dissects the narrative into component parts and then attempts to determine functions and relationships (Manfred, 2005).

A major benefit of narratology is that narratives are rich in detail derived from human relationships and a rich, in-depth, intensive description is required to begin to speculate on the multiple dimensions of teacher-student relationships (Benham, 1997). Considering this richness, narratology provides an opportunity to really get into "thick descriptions" of the cases under study (Geertz, 1973). According to Holloway (1997):

> Thick description builds up a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the setting in which they live… Thick description can be contrasted with thin description, which is a superficial account and does not explore the underlying meanings of cultural members. (p. 154)

Rosembaum and Silber (2001) assert a thick description of human events and behavior faithfully retains the meanings which that behavior has for the people involved and entails a detailed, perhaps narrative, account of a case under study.

Portraiture. Similar to narratology, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) propose that portraiture "blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (p. xv). Portraiture is a way of recording people. Their personality, character, status, the place and time they lived, the environment in which they live, are all under study ("Portraiture", 2007). Portraiture is a creative qualitative approach to engaging in research of groups in action and in telling the stories of individuals in life and the intent is to capture the "essence" of the subject (English, 2000). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, (1997) "Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying,

documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom" (p. xv). Portraiture narrative analysis is loaded with visual elements to create a thick description. The portraiture composition uses stories and knowledge to create a clear vision ("In the company of others," n.d.). As the goal of portraiture is to investigate fully and illustrate those being studied, this technique was useful in creating portraits of five elementary classroom teachers and in telling their stories. As part of the data collection protocol, the five teacher participants were asked to journal around the issues connected with their relationships with their students. The data from these journals helped develop rich and detailed portraits and narratives to tell these teachers' stories.

Design of the Study

Setting. The site for this research was a middle-SES predominantly Caucasian preschool through fifth grade elementary school consisting of 498 students in a small town approximately 45 miles from a large Midwestern metropolitan area. The school is located on a district campus and is self standing but sharing a property with a district office and a joined middle school/high school building. The original building was opened in the late 1950s and followed with additions in 1990, 2000 and the recent addition of a preschool center which replaced existing modular classrooms in 2010. In the 2009-2010 school term, there were 24 general classroom teachers with four sections of four teachers, two sections of three teachers, and one section of two teachers. There were four special education teachers, three Title I teachers, a full time counselor, a full time nurse, and a shared district social worker. A principal and an instructional coach supported teaching and learning. The site had seven special education paraprofessionals, two cafeteria-recess supervisors, one secretary, one

health clerk, and one computer lab manager. The school had full time art, music, and physical education teachers and a full time library media specialist.

According to the 2008-09 School Accountability Report Card filed with the state department of education, there were 471 full time students enrolled in Kindergarten through fifth grades and 27 half day Preschool students. Full time students included 78 in Kindergarten, 88 in first grade, 63 in second grade, 90 in third grade, 76 in 4th grade, and 76 in fifth grade (see Appendix A). From 2004 through 2009, building enrollment has ranged from a low of 469 in the 2006-2007 school year to 498 in the 2008-2009 school year (see Appendix B). In that same period, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch ranged from 46 in the 2004-2005 school year to 51.4 in the 2009-2010 school year (see Appendix C). The racial and ethnic diversity in the 2008-2009 school year consisted of 88.3% Caucasian, 8.9% African American, 1.7% Hispanic, and 1.0% Other. Since the 2004-2005 school year there has been a 9.1% increase in African American students and a 4.3% increase in Hispanic students and a similar decline of 12.7% in the enrollment of Caucasian students (see Appendix D). From 2004 through 2010, daily average attendance has exceeded 95% (see Appendix E).

Site Access. Gaining access to this site was directly accomplished as I served as the building principal and enjoyed the permission and encouragement of the district superintendent. In order to generate informative case studies, this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study began with with an overview of teacher evaluations in search of records that indicated positive teacher-student interactions. Specifically, teachers were sought who had been recognized for positive teacher-student relationships according to the district professional performance evaluation instrument. A letter was generated for the

teachers I wished to study. In this letter the steps were specified that would be taken to ensure confidentiality. Also, because according to Lofland and Lofland, (1984), qualitative researchers ask participants to grant "access to their lives, their minds, [and] their emotions," straightforward descriptions of the goals of this research were provided (p. 25). The teacher participants were referred to as Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 any specific descriptions that might identify them as individuals were avoided. A locked data physical artifact storage system was maintained that only I had access to and a password protected computer storage system was used to store all electronic data.

Data Collection. Yin (1994) suggests case studies may be significant if they are unusual and are of general public interest. Other theorists suggest a case is suitable for study if the case is typical and permits naturalistic generalizations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). The teachers in this study were "unique as well as common" (Stake, 1995). The teachers studied were unique in that they had all been rated superior in their professional evaluations in the area of student relationships. These teachers were also common as they taught students in general education elementary grade classrooms.

Participant Selection. Selection of the participants was accomplished using purposive criterion-based sampling procedures to identify teachers who were unique in that they were recognized for positive teacher-student relationships according to the district professional performance evaluation instrument. These teachers were typical as they were all female and Caucasian. Of the 20 regular education classrooms (four fewer than in the 2009-2010 school year) in the school, 19 teachers were Caucasian females. Three of the five study participants were in their first five years of teaching and two were tenured veteran teachers. Four were

married and two had personal children. Each taught a different grade between Kindergarten and grade five.

Patton (1990) describes criterion sampling as selecting participants that meet criteria specific to the phenomenon of interest. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), researchers use purposeful sampling when they believe a specific sample will yield needed data. Maxwell (2005) suggests the reason for making purposeful criterion-based selections is to examine selective cases critical to the goals of the research study and that purposeful criterion-based sampling "is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88). For Patton (2002), purposeful cases "are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 40). Patton (2002) further asserts:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. (p. 230)

Rubin and Rubin (1995) assert a case to be studied must be purposefully sampled based on its ability to provide completeness. Similarly, Patton (2002) avows purposeful sampling is justified and necessary when logic and power result from the power generated from the sample. Purposive sampling procedures were used when determining which teachers to study. While Bassey, (1999) warns case studies allow for "fuzzy generalizations" (p. 17), data was collected that permitted the comparison of five teachers' relationship experiences and perceptions of the affect of those relationship experiences to theories of how teacher-student relationships affect students academically and behaviorally. Since only a

small sampling of five teachers was compared to ideas rather than to a larger population of other teachers, purposive sampling served these objectives.

In this inquiry, the selection was made based on document analysis of teacher personnel files and personal observation. An informed consent letter outlining the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, benefits, information to be collected, refusal to sign and authorization, and canceling consent and authorization was developed and provided to each proposed interviewee. Information as also provided regarding the process of the interviews and any questions from the interviewees about the process were addressed prior to beginning each interview.

Role of the Researcher. The role of the researcher is critical to the inquiry process in qualitative research that seeks to understand and portray natural settings and events. Accordingly, the researcher is the key instrument of data collection and the characteristics or attributes of the researcher are relevant in establishing the trustworthiness of the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). While I had completed graduate coursework in qualitative inquiry, I was and still consider myself to be a novice in using qualitative methodology. I did have expertise in the field of elementary education and a profound desire to understand and honestly represent the affect of teacher-student interactions central to this inquiry. Additionally, I had important foundational contextual knowledge regarding the setting for this inquiry through my direct involvement in the setting. Specifically, I served as principal of the elementary school central to the study and was accordingly an administrator in the public school system where the students and teachers participated. The nature of my participation as the researcher in that setting significantly enhanced my ability to collect and interpret data for this inquiry.

***Data Production*.** Data was collected through observations, interviews, and participant journals. Patton (2002) suggests, "By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings" (p. 244). Combining data sources to validate and cross-check findings triangulates the data and increases validity as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the potential weaknesses of another (Silverman, 1993; Maxwell, 2005). Research was collected over an eight week period by systematically observing and interviewing these teachers regarding their interactions and perceptions of their relationships with their students from late November 2010 through early February 2011. Additionally, these teachers kept journals around the issues of their relationships with their students.

Interviews. According to Maxwell (2005), "interviews can provide additional information that was missed in observation, and can be used to check the accuracy of the observation" (p. 94). Accordingly, interviews provide a source for data triangulation and add validity (Silverman, 1993; Maxwell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Interviewing is an efficient and valid method of capturing and understanding someone's unique perspective and delving deeply into the phenomenon under study. Patton (2002) states, "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe… We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe the behaviors that took place at some previous point in time" (pp. 340-341). According to Lofland and Lofland (1995), an in-depth interview does not follow a rigid form in order to provide for free and open responses and is designed to elicit rich, detailed information that can be analyzed.

The goal of most qualitative studies is to gather an authentic understanding of experiences and open-ended interview questions seem to produce the best results toward this

goal. Patton (2002) suggests the purpose of asking open-ended interview questions is to gather and comprehend the perspectives of other people without influencing the responses through pre-selected questions. For Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), the value in the open-ended question is the individuality of the obtained responses. According to Silverman (1993), in a typical open-ended interview, interviewees are asked to give their own definitions of particular activities. The most open-ended interview approach is the informal conversational interview or unstructured interview (Patton, 2002). The purpose of this conversation type interview is to let the interview wander with complete flexibility permitting most of the questions to develop in the context of the conversation. Unstructured does not mean unfocused, however, and while the goal is to go with the flow, the interviewer is still asking the questions and can subtly redirect if the dialog wanders into obviously irrelevant territory. Clearly, data gathered in such informal unstructured conversational interviews will be different for each interview and will have to be coded.

Silverman (1993) suggests a potential concern with unstructured interviews is that while they are flexible and can provide for a more intense study of perceptions and feelings, their results often lack comparison to other open-ended interviews and the analysis is more difficult and time consuming than structured interviews. On the opposite pole from the unstructured open-ended interview approach is the standardized interview approach which requires careful preparation of each question prior to the interview (Patton, 2002). The reason for this attention to detail is to make certain that each interviewee is asked the exact same questions in the exact same way. A combination of the informal conversational interview and the standardized structured interview where a set of specifically worded questions are asked and responded to in the beginning and then the interviewer is free to explore other areas of

interest at the end is highly effective. According to Patton (1990), the key to a good interview is good questioning and listening and the interviewer refraining from offering opinions, perceptions, or feelings.

These interview methods and used semi-structured open-ended in-depth interviews (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007) were combined to make certain specific questions were covered to inform the study while providing for the thickest possible descriptions. Each interview began with semi-structured, focused, and open-ended questions to form an initial understanding of the teacher's perspectives on the importance of relationships between the teacher and students (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Although each interview began with a pre-determined set of questions, the design of each interview, as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (1995), remained flexible, iterative, and continuous. In what Schutt (2004) refers to as progressive focusing, interview questions may be modified or additional questions developed to investigate emerging findings. Rubin and Rubin (1995) assert it is important that "design remains flexible throughout the study because you have to work out questions to examine new ideas and themes that emerge during the interviews" (p. 45).

Following a semi-structured open-ended in-depth interview process permitted the interviewee and me as researcher the opportunities to expand and clarify during the interview session. As cautioned by deMaris (2004), care was taken to avoid questions and question stems that could generate rationalizations, causal explanations, or evaluations. Questions were designed to invite sharing of specific examples and feelings. When questioning resulted in rationalizations, causal explanations, or evaluations, follow-up questions were asked to

redirect toward specificity. Asking follow-up questions permitted thicker description and a more complete portrait of each participant.

Threats to validity and reliability were addressed by following a standardized interview protocol throughout. As Patton (2002) recommends, an interview guide was prepared with a list of questions to be explored and suggested probes for follow up when responses invited further examination. In this way, although the guide assured that same general information was gathered from each participant, I was able to, as Hoepfl (1997) suggests, remain "free to probe and explore within these predetermined inquiry areas" (p. 1). Using an interview guide helped to keep interviews focused and provided some skeletal structure.

While each participant was offered the opportunity to meet at a convenient site of their choosing for the interviews, each participant elected to conduct his or her interview in my office. After each interview was recorded, it was transcribed and provided to the interviewee to be reviewed for accuracy and revision if necessary. After the accuracy was checked, the completed transcripts were coded.

Research Questions and Initial Interview Questions.

1. What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?
    a. What is the importance of a teacher having positive supportive relationships with his or her students?
    b. What do you do to develop and maintain positive and supportive relationships with your students?

c. What do you do to develop and maintain a positive and supportive relationship with a student who appears distant or resistant to positive advances?

2. To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?
    a. To what extent do your relationships with your students affect their learning and academic performance in your classroom?
    b. To what extent do your relationships with your students affect their behavior in your classroom?
    c. What do you do to maintain or build a positive and supportive relationship with a student who displays behavior concerns?
3. How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success?
    a. To what extent do your relationships with your students affect their learning and academic performance once they leave your classroom?
    b. To what extent do your relationships with your students affect their behavior once they leave your classroom?
4. How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?
    a. To what extent does the school culture affect student learning and academic performance?
    b. To what extent does the school culture affect student behavior in and out of school?

Document Review. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define documents as written or recorded material not prepared for the evaluative purposes. The value of documents is the window they provide for examining a setting or group of people that cannot be adequately or at all observed or noted in another way (Tellis, 1997). Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest documents can be either public or private. Public documents are created for accountability purposes and can be collected from internal or external sources. External records such as newspaper archives, business reports and government documents can help a researcher understand participants and compare persons or groups. Internal documents include such artifacts as student transcripts, mission statements, grade cards, standardized test reports, and policy manuals. Internal records help researchers understand personal and group characteristics and assist in identifying strengths and concerns. Personal documents are first-person accounts and include diaries, portfolios, photographs, artwork, schedules, and much more. These documents can help the researcher understand how people view the world and what they want to communicate. Fetterman (1989) suggests attaining information from documents is the least intrusive data collection method and requires relatively minimal cooperation from those within the setting.

Each study participant was asked to keep participant journals around specific prompts to generate written documentation of their perceptions of how they relate with students and how those relationships affect student learning and behavior. These journals were coded line by line using the code book established, used, and refined during the interview transcription.

Journal Prompts.

1. Reflect on the democratic process in your classroom.
    a. How do you include student involvement and participation in the decision making process regarding the development and refinement of rules and procedures in your classroom?
    b. What voice do students have in determining the direction of instruction or learning activities in your classroom?
2. How do you balance building and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with your students with the need to maximize learning and academic performance in preparing for state assessments?
3. Discuss steps you took this week to create and maintain a positive learning environment.
    a. What verbal and/or non-verbal feedback did you receive from students and/or parents to indicate the learning environment was positive?
4. Reflect on High Gains Instructional Strategies utilized this week in instruction.
    a. How were these strategies appropriate to promote engaged and positive learning?
5. Reflect on Differentiated Instruction utilized this week.
    a. What differentiation strategies did you include in you lesson design and how did this differentiation affect student engagement and learning?
6. Reflect on any struggles encountered during the week in instructional delivery.
    a. How did you determine students were not learning as intended?
    b. What adjustments did you make when encountering instructional struggles?

7. Reflect on any issues of student misbehavior you encountered this week.
    a. What factors could be identified as preceding the misbehavior?
    b. What steps did you take or do you intend to take to address the problem in a positive and supportive manner?

Observations. According to Hoepfl (1997), the observation of participants in the context of a natural setting is the classic form of data collection in qualitative field research. Observations are important because they provide opportunities to learn things the participants may not even be aware of or may be unwilling or unable to discuss in an interview. Conducting observations leads to deeper understanding than interviews alone, because observations permit windows through which the observer can study participants interacting in the natural setting. Maxwell (2005) suggests observations allow the researcher a direct and insightful way to learn about behavior and the context in which the behavior occurs. Silverman (1993) contends the purpose of any observational study is to gather first-hand information about the "social processes in a 'naturally occurring' context" (p. 11). Patton (2002) adds:

> The first-order purposes of observational data are to *describe* the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed. (p. 262)

According to Hoepfl (1997), field research notes are "are running descriptions of settings, people, activities, and sounds" (p. 1). Lofland (1971) suggests "the fundamental concrete task of the observer is the taking of field notes. …this task is perhaps the most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis. Field notes provide the

observer's *raison d'être*. If [the observer] is not doing them, [the observer] might as well not be in the setting" (p. 102). Patton (2002) maintains field notes must contain a description of everything that has been observed and nothing should be omitted with the hope for later recall. Field notes should be dated and should include the setting, the participants, social interactions, and activities observed. Silverman (1993) insists when talking field notes, it is critical to record descriptions rather than impressions. Patton (2002) specifically states a researcher's field notes "should include the exact language used by participants to communicate the flavor and meaning of "native" program language" (p. 289). Spradley (1979) recommends researchers take four types of field notes: short notes made at the time of the field session; expanded notes made soon after each observation; a fieldwork journal to record problems and ideas that present during the fieldwork; and a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation. As observations were conducted, concrete instances were recorded by capturing direct quotations and noting unembellished descriptions of interactions between the teachers and their students.

Observations usually are guided by a structured protocol which helps assure that observer is gathering important information that will inform the study. According to Mahoney (1997), the protocol should prompt the observer to describe the setting, identify the participants, describe the activity, document interactions between participants, and be alert to unanticipated events that might require refocusing one or more evaluation questions. In order to understand fully the complexities of cultural situations and take the reader into the observed setting, the best method to capture data that can provide great depth and detail to illustrate what happened and how it happened may be direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002). Field notes were taken during classroom

observations and during other opportunities such as in the hallways and at recesses where these teachers interact with students. I strove to capture and record thick description as I observed the interactions that comprise the relationships between teachers and students. Most field notes were typed the day of or the day after the observation but in all cases the notes were formalized within a week of the observed interaction. These observation notes were coded line by line using the code book established, used, and refined during the interview and journal coding.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis typically considers individual cases and multiple cases (Patton, 2002). This study involved analyzing the data from five teacher participants generating five unique case study reports following qualitative data analysis procedural steps and processes. A cross-case analysis was conducted examining the data from each participant and comparing to the other participant data for common themes (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Participant journals were examined using the narrative analysis process. For White (1989), the narrative permits the transformation of knowing into telling. According to Casey (1995), researchers who employ narrative analysis carry believe meaning is made through the telling of stories. By telling their stories people "put shards of experience together, to construct identity, community, and tradition…" (p. 216). Riessman (1993) suggests storytelling is a collaborative process with a teller who has something to share and a listener whose role is to gather and emphasize. Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that narrative analysts reflect on study data and construct the data elements into an account of the story teller's experience. Narrative analysis permits the researcher to consider the context as well as the content of the story. Narrative analysis seeks to understand why a storyteller told a story is such a manner.

Why the story was told and how it was told is critical to making meaning of the story elements. Participant observations and interviews were analyzed by employing a generic coding procedure.

The constant comparative method (CCM) was employed to analyze the data generated in this study (Glaser & Strauss, 1968; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). By comparing events and incidents against themselves and against prior determined categories, the qualitative researcher is able to determine themes to describe the data. According to Glaser & Strauss (1968), there are four stages of CCM: (a) comparing incidents applicable to each category; (b) integrating categories and their properties; (c) delimiting the theory; and (d) writing the theory. In the first stage data items were considered individually and each item was placed in a category based on similarities to items already in that category. Next, each item was compared to the properties defining the category. Third, categories were fine tuned, combined as was reasonable and eliminated when irrelevant to make the number of categories more manageable. Lastly, themes were determined by considering the context of each category. By following the constant comparative method, information was analyzed throughout the case study by unitizing and categorizing the data. Unitization involved reducing the interview transcripts into individual "units" of information that represent single ideas or thoughts. During the unitization process, units of data associated with categories of information were developed and through a process of organizing and re-organizing the units of data and categories, a final category scheme was devised that contained all relevant data collected or reviewed.

Coding. The data analysis began by micro-analyzing each data point by grouping words, phrases and events into categories of meaningful units (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This

permitted the generation of tentative categories that were later revised as new themes were discovered. Data collected through interviews, journals, and observations were organized onto a Microsoft Word table where it could be stored, merged, sorted, analyzed, and coded. I worked to collect data beyond theoretical saturation to where no new data will be discovered that might provide a unique dimension or property. The final themes represented constructs associated with factors that affect the educational experiences of the teacher and his or her relationships with students.

Interviews were digitally recorded using an Olympus WS-400S Digital Voice Recorder and were each transcribed verbatim by listening to a phrase and then typing that phrase into a word document making note of every syllable, fragment, filler, stutter, and restart, as well as completed thought. While this was a very tedious process it involved hearing every response multiple times to assure accuracy and helped me to become very familiar with each interview. Participants were then provided transcripts of their interviews for review and revision if needed to clarify participant positions. Of the five participants, one participant elaborated on most areas when provided the opportunity to revise and a second participant made a few clarifications. The three remaining participants agreed the transcripts accurately represented their feelings and ideas. The additional data provided by the two participants who edited their transcripts was entered into the word documents and noted as revision to keep separate from the original interview response but to still provide the opportunity for coding. Through this immersion in the research and data analysis, I was able to hear the voices of these five teachers and understand their perceptions of how their relationships with their students affect the academic and behavioral success of their students while in their classrooms and in the future.

Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss descriptive, interpretive and pattern codes. Each places more interpretation on the code than the previous one. I began by defining simple descriptive codes which were then developed into interpretative codes and refined as I became more familiar and knowledgeable of the data discovered in the study. A code book was developed with operationally defined themes based on the conceptual framework and research questions and the interview data was coded by marking excerpts that represented similar information with the same short hand code. This coding process was similarly employed to analyze observation field notes and narrative analysis was used with the participant journals. Categories were identified during data analysis. These categories included: relationship; culture; engagement; classroom management, high quality instruction; and feedback. Repeating ideas were grouped under these categories. Once transcriptions were complete and participants had the opportunity to review and revise, each interview was coded line by line in a Microsoft Word data table. The data was first examined for fit in predetermined categories and new categories were determined as needed. Codes were then assigned within the categories to more precisely and accurately characterize each specific line of data. In coding line by line it became apparent that "feedback" was more accurately a facet of "high quality instruction" and data coded as "engaging" also fit within other categories. "Classroom management" ideas extended beyond the classroom so the theme of "behavior management" seemed more appropriate. These revisions resulted in four predominant themes—each with multiple interpretive codes.

Limitations. Perhaps the most apparent limitation was the proposed research site. While case studies provide rich descriptions, this single site limited the study to a unique community with a fixed set of criteria. This limitation was addressed by accessing

appropriate related literature and establishing and following a rigid data collection protocol. Another potential limitation was my personal involvement in the setting. I performed a key and continuous role in the school and therefore consciously kept myself aware of any biases or influences I may have presented. Further, I consciously considered the possibility that the responses and behaviors in the interviews, observations, and participant journals may be influenced by the teachers' relationships with me in a deliberate or unintentional way. This limitation was addressed through multiple data sources and through the literature review to lessen the potential for bias.

Many factors affect a child's levels of academic and behavioral success in the classroom. This study only investigated the factors that the teacher can influence. Factors—such as the adopted curriculum, the design of the instructional day, class size, home life, extracurricular peer involvement, socioeconomic status, race, culture, gender, and health—were considered beyond the grasp of the teacher's influence. In terms of making generalizations to a larger population, qualitative researchers do not attempt to generalize, as such, but to specify. This means that any theoretical formulation applies to the specific situation or circumstance under study but not to others (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As this case study is designed to meet the three tenets of qualitative inquiry—describing, understanding, and explaining—the results are believed to be generally applicable (Yin, 1989). To further address the concerns of these limitations, specific measures were taken to attend to the validly and reliability of this study. I also worked to ensure that the data was supported through triangulation and endeavored to maintain trustworthiness in conducting, analyzing and presenting this research.

***Validity*.** Validity pertains to the congruence of the researcher's claims to the reality those claims seek to represent. According to Joppe (2000), "Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (p. 1). Validity is a concern in case study research due to potential investigator subjectivity. Maxwell (2005) contends validity is relative and must "be assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research" (p. 105). Winter (2000) concurs the concept of validity is not fixed but is "rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects" (p. 1). Validity pertains to the congruence of the researcher's claims to the reality those claims seek to represent. For Creswell and Miller (2000), validity is determined by the researcher's study design and procedures. Strauss and Corbin (1990), suggest the literature can be used to validate case study research finding. Yin (1994) further suggests researchers protect for validity by using multiple sources of data, establishing a chain of evidence, and having drafts of the data reviewed by study subjects for accuracy. Appropriate literature was referenced to validate the accuracy of the findings. Challenges of validity were further addressed by taking complete and careful interview and field notes and recording and reporting the data as completely and accurately as possible.

***Reliability*.** Joppe (2000) defines reliability as, "The extent to which results are consistent over time," and suggests "if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable" (p. 1). This definition is fitting for the qualitative domain where the instrument generating the data is consistent. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as a human-as-instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Healy and Perry (2000) argue that reliability of a qualitative

study should be judged by its design. Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest reliability be supported by a carefully designing, adhering to, and documenting the research procedure. Validity and reliability were protected for by properly and thoroughly following case study protocol and appropriate data collection methods. To establish reliability in qualitative research the researcher must establish trustworthiness. Seale (1999), asserts the "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability" (p. 266). Triangulation can aid in testing and maximizing reliability for a qualitative study. By using a consistent interview protocol, having all participants respond to the same journal prompts, and by comparing data from participant interviews, participant journals, field observations, and existing literature, every attempt was made to provide for reliability in this study.

Triangulation. Triangulation is a process central to ensuring that the findings of inquiry can be viewed as credible, valid, and reliable (Manning, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Patton, 1990). Triangulation is comparing different kinds of data and different methods to see whether they collaborate (Silverman, 1993), and to reduce the risk of unintentional associations and systematic biases based on limited and restrictive research methods (Maxwell, 2005). Patton (2002) suggests by using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings. Mathison (1988) feels, "Triangulation has arisen as an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation have demanded attention to controlling bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with these alternate epistemologies" (p. 13).

Triangulation also serves to reduce the risk of unintentional associations and systematic biases (Maxwell, 2005). Inquiries that employ multiple methodologies ensure that different data forms are available as a means of corroboration that give rise to emergent constructs and themes. Patton (2002) suggests combining observations, interviews, and document analysis permits the researcher to use various data sources to validate findings. In this study, multiple sources for data collection—interview transcripts, participant observation notes, and participant journals—were used to strengthen the validity of the findings, to reduce any known or unknown limitations, and to reduce the possibility that the findings would be affected by any known and unknown biases.

***Trustworthiness*.** In both quantitative and qualitative research, rigor is a concern. Research procedures must ensure that credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are demonstrated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Skrtic, 1985). Accordingly, all four components were addressed as the data was analyzed. First, this study naturally addressed credibility through multiple interviews, frequent observations, and participant journal and other document analysis serving to triangulate the data. The participants were also asked to review the findings and perform member checks—the step Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Each teacher was asked to ascertain the extent to which the results accurately represent him or her. Credibility was established by utilizing the constant comparative method and by intentionally seeking data points to disprove emerging categories and theories.

Credibility. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) define credibility as the "degree of confidence in the 'truth' that the findings of a particular inquiry have for the subject with which—and context within which—the inquiry is carried out" (p. 29). In this

inquiry, credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, member checks and peer debriefing (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement ensures that sufficient time has been spent by the investigator in settings of interest and with participants that a rapport and trust has been established. It also enables the researcher to assess the possibility of receiving misinformation and lessens the possibility of distortions in interpretation (Lincoln & Guba; 1985; Manning, 1997; Rodwell & Byers, 1997). Prolonged engagement was achieved as I, as the researcher, served as principal of the elementary school that employed the teachers whose interactions with students served as the focus of this inquiry. Accordingly, ongoing opportunities were available to observe and participate in inclusive elementary school experiences and to interact with the teachers and the students associated with each teacher.

Persistent observation allows the inquirer to examine in depth and overtime the scope of the data as it is acquired and interpreted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement and persistent observation are therefore integrally related processes. Persistent observation allows the most relevant characteristics and elements of a case study setting to be discovered. In this investigation, multiple interviews were conducted to inquire about the school experiences of the participating teachers to generate an understanding of the motivations and events that ultimately influence the nature of interactions with students. The review of multiple journal entries associated with the participating teachers provided an in depth view of relationships with students over time. Further, I engaged in ongoing reflection and dialogue about the interactions and relationships with students with the teachers in my role as principal of the elementary school where the teachers are employed and the students are enrolled.

Lincoln & Guba (1995) describe peer debriefing as "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (p. 308). A peer debriefer is an outside party who engages in discussions and who poses questions that may help the researcher: (a) become aware of biases, perspectives and assumptions, (b) heighten sensitivity to their posture toward data and analysis test, and (c) defend emergent hypotheses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Schutt (2001) suggests this process is the employment of a "devil's advocate." In this study, a doctoral candidate in the field of education studying through a different university was engaged as a peer debriefer to review the data in an effort to reduce bias and strengthen validity, which might have potentially been influenced by my strong feelings regarding the positive treatment of students by teachers in my role as principal. This individual had prior direct classroom experience with elementary students and a record of research and project work relative to teacher-student relationships. This debriefer reviewed the transcripts of the interviews, the participant journal entries, and the observation field notes and considered the coding and themes assigned to the data. The peer debriefer agreed with the identified themes and made several recommendations for rewording to clarify or strengthen definitions. Interactions with this peer debriefer occurred through all phases of this inquiry.

Narrative accuracy checks are a subtype of a process called member checking and were employed in this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that narrative checking is the most critical procedure for establishing credibility This process involves asking the individuals who participate in the interview to review a written transcription of their interviews and to confirm that the transcript content accurately represents what they said, and

also depicts what they meant to say. Interviewees are requested to make desired deletions, changes, or additions either directly on the transcript or in a direct conversation with the researcher. Accordingly, while an interviewee may find the content of the interview to be accurate, he or she may feel that his or her own words did not convey the meaning intended and can further explain or expand the response. Narrative accuracy checks were used for all interviews conducted in this study.

Dependability. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), a study is dependable if, when "replicated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or similar) context, its findings would be repeated" (p. 33). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest dependability is sometimes assessed through an audit of a study that employs ethnographic procedures. Erlandson et al. (1993) call this a "dependability audit" which involves an accounting of the research process through research logs. An auditor confirms that the assertions and quotations in the case study report can be directly traced back to original, raw data. The auditor also reviews the researcher's journal reflections and/or methodological log to confirm the appropriateness of the study design and procedures. The same peer debriefer was enlisted to perform a dependability audit on the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability. Erlandson et al. (1993) define confirmability as "the degree to which its findings are the product of the focus of its inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher" (p. 34). As with dependability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the confirmability of a study can be assessed through an ethnographic audit where interpretations and conclusions are evaluated. Erlandson et al. (1993) call this a "confirmability audit." A study is confirmable if facts and conclusions can be traced to their sources and the findings follow a logical path. To address comfirmability and dependability, an audit trail for this investigation

was created to ensure that an audit can be conducted. The peer debriefer performed an inquiry audit on the data and findings to examine the process and the product of the research and performed a content analysis of the field notes, interview transcripts, and document analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Holsti (1969) describes content analysis as, "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14). Representative data was selected to serve as what Rex (2001) refers to as "telling cases" (p. 295) and that, as Mitchell (1984) describes, will "show how general regularities exist precisely when specific contextual circumstances are taken account of" (p. 239). These were specific and revealing yet typical examples of teacher-student relationships and interactions between the teacher and his or her students. A peer debriefer was enlisted to perform and inquiry audit on the analyzed data and conclusions. This debriefer performed an analysis of the content of all interview transcripts, participant journals, and observation notes. To further provide for comfirmability representative data was selected to serve as "telling cases" that were specific, revealing, and typical examples of teacher-student relationships and interactions.

Transferability. Transferability is defined by Erlandson et al. (1993) as "the extent to which its findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents" (p. 31). Transferability relates directly to the quality of the methodology followed throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is realized through thickly described, sufficient, and precise detail to ensure that the readers are able to determine the degree to which the findings can be applied to their own situations (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). The design of this study strove to provide a "thick description" of observed teacher-student interactions (Geertz, 1973), and the transferability of the study was

addressed through purposive sampling procedures and the preparation of case studies that provide thick, descriptively rich narrative. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that these two strategies allow the reader to determine the degree to which the case study findings and interpretation may apply to other settings. By taking detailed notes in a purposefully sampled case, this case is reported in a manner that provides for readers to view the case within the lens of their own experiences. Accordingly, the test of transferability rests on the readers who must compare details of the case study to their own backgrounds. By thickly describing the data, readers will further be able to judge the analysis as confirmable, dependable, and credible to them.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In my role as a school administrator responsible for evaluating public school middle school and elementary school teachers regarding pedagogy and teacher-student interactions, I have supervised many teachers who had positive and supportive relationships with students and others who seemed unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to form and maintain positive and supportive relationships with the students they instructed. In my experience, the students who enjoyed positive and supportive relationships with their teachers achieved at higher levels and had fewer behavior problems then these same students did with teachers with whom they did not enjoy such positive and supportive relationships. In evaluating the professional literature, many studies were found that looked at the teacher-student relationship and the affect on learning and behavior but a gap was found in the literature exploring teacher perceptions of how they feel their relationships with students influence their students' academic and behavioral success.

The purpose of this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study supported through the lenses of narratology and portraiture was to investigate and understand the relationships between small town elementary grade teachers and their students and how those relationships affect the academic performance and the behavioral choices of those students. Five elementary classroom teachers were purposefully selected from a staff of twenty classroom teachers with the specific criterion that they had been considered exceptional in their relationships with their students according to the district teacher

evaluation instrument. The school served approximately 500 students, was comprised predominately of Caucasian middle-income students, and was located in a small town approximately 45 miles from a large Midwest metropolitan city. These teachers were typical in that they were all Caucasian females as were 19 of the 20 classroom teachers in the building. They were unique in their teacher-student relationship rating of exceptional on the district teacher evaluation instrument. I served as principal for this school during this study.

Data for each case was collected over approximately two months from late November 2010 through early February 2011. Semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant and transcripts were provided back to each participant to permit participant clarification and additional explanation if the participant felt her position needed clarification. Two to three classroom observations were conducted of each of the participants where care was taken to observe for and note dialog and interactions between the teacher and the students. Each participant also completed and submitted journals around specific prompts regarding to their perceptions of how their relationships with their students influence their students' behavior and academic achievement. Each participant journal was coded through a narrative analysis process and the interview transcripts and observation field notes of each participant were analyzed using a generic coding process.

The resulting data informed five individual case studies that were later cross analyzed by examining the information from each participant case and comparing to each of the other cases to determine common themes. In addition to asking each participant to review interview transcripts and provide clarification, a peer debriefer was engaged to review the data to reduce the potential for bias and to strengthen validity by reviewing the interview transcripts, the participant journal entries, the observation field notes, and assigned coding

and resulting themes. This debriefer performed a dependability audit by reviewing the research process followed and an inquiry audit on the analyzed data and conclusions.

Presentation of Data by Research Question

The data presented in this chapter is organized thematically according to each of the research questions posed in chapter one of this study. The specific questions that inform this study are:

1. What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?
3. How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success?
4. How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?

For each discovered theme, the codes used to arrive at the theme are discussed. While tedious and requiring many reads and categorical revisions, this process permitted the data to be revealed in such a manner that concepts were logically organized. The analysis was accomplished partly by including vignettes from interviews and narrative stories shared in journal responses. These vignettes and revelations from observations assisted in presenting portraits of the five study participants. Within each section, participant data was discussed in order of participant. Each teacher was referred to as Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Each research question was addressed first by considering participant responses to interview

questions. Secondly, data from participant journals informed related research questions. Lastly, the relative research questions were supported through observation data. In coding the data, some questions were informed by a larger quantity of data than others. Interviews provided the bulk of the data for each of the research questions. Participant journals contributed data mostly to questions 1and 2. Observations primarily supported participant responses regarding questions 1 and 2 and to a lesser degree contributed to question 4. Interview and participant journal data will be addressed together in question order. So the observations can be presented as coherent units the data derived from them are presented separately and analyzed chronologically by participant.

Participant interviews and journals.

Question 1: What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships? A significant theme identified was "relationship." The relationship between teacher and students was defined as a formalized interpersonal association between an authority figure and a subordinate who interact on nearly a day to day basis (Larson et al., 2002; Bartlett, 2005). The interpretive codes that lead to the determination of this theme were "caring," "personal knowledge," and "empowerment." For Noddings (2005), effective teaching is based on caring, trusting, and respectful relationships between students and their teachers. Effective teachers interact with students in such a way that their students are aware that they care about their learning and about them as people. A caring relationship is defined by acts that bring out the best in students through listening, gentleness, understanding, knowledge of students as individuals, warmth and encouragement, and an overall love for children (Senge, 1990; Thayer-Bacon and Bacon, 1996; Stronge, 2002; Knestrict, 2005;

Leitão & Waugh, 2007; Wolk, 2007). According to Strong (2002), teachers show they care through listening, gentleness, understanding, knowledge of students as individuals, warmth and encouragement, and an overall love for children. Shields (2004) attests for teachers to have strong relationships with students they must understand and accept their lived experiences. A teacher who has personal knowledge of his or her students goes the extra step to get to know students' interests, backgrounds, strengths, and struggles individually and ties that knowledge into the day to day relationship (Giroux, 1996; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Shields (2004) suggests children must be empowered to participate in their own learning and to take responsibility for their own learning, An empowered student is provided opportunities to develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed behaviorally and academically (Freire, 1970; Cummins, 1986; Horton, 1990; Apple, 1993; Mosher et al., 1994; Gutmann, 1995; Checkley, 2003; Shields, 2004).

Another significant theme was "culture." Deal and Peterson (1990) define "culture: as the "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of history" (p. 7). The teacher and students and classroom are part of larger learning system within the school building with a set of norms and ways of working, thinking, talking, valuing, and behaving that are shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings. The teacher and students each have conscious and non-conscious ways of being that they bring to the classroom that influence behaviors and expectations (Waller, 1932; Goodlad, 1976; Schein, 1985, 1992; Goodwyn & Findlay, 2002, Osher & Fleischman, 2005; Rooney, 2005). The interpretive codes that lead to the determination of culture as a theme were "cultural knowledge," "culture of achievement," "high expectations to learn," and "high expectations to behave." To have cultural knowledge is to be aware of the individual student

cultures (Vygotsky, 1978; Giroux, 1996; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Cardwell & Flanagan, 2004; "Culture and children," 2010) and to be culturally competent (Walker et al., 1985; Osher and Osher, 1995; Chamberlain, 2005; Martin and Vaughn, 2007). Cultural knowledge is what the teacher knows about student culture that allows the teacher to make effective instructional decisions. By being knowledgeable of and responsive to culture, educators can tap in to this knowledge to maximize learning opportunities for all students (Walker et al., 1985; Osher & Osher 1995). A culture of achievement is characterized by instruction that is challenging where students feel comfortable asking questions and students are expected to do their best (Brophy, 1987b; Smey-Richman, 1989; Shouse, 1996; Weiss & Pasley, 2004; Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). Having high expectations for students to learn is grounded in the teacher having the belief that students can demonstrate high academic achievement (Borba, 1989; Barr & Parrett, 1995; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Danielson, 2002). Similarly, high expectations to behave are based on a teacher believing that students can demonstrate acceptable behavior (Shalaway, 1989; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993; Barr & Parrett, 1995).

Participant 1. When asked directly what she feels is the importance of having positive supportive relationships with her students, Participant 1 suggested:

> First you have… you have to give them the respect that they need to start off before you're gonna get it from them… um… and every morning I always start off by… um… greeting my kids at the door whether they come in by five I always say good morning to each and every one of them to start out the morning… um… good, on a good note, even if they had a bad day the day before just to wipe it clean and let them, let them start over… let them know that I care.

In her journal, Participant 1 wrote about her quest to provide a supportive and positive classroom culture by providing her students a democratic voice:

> We make our classroom rules together as a class. These are not decided until the first day of school. We make a class constitution and all of the students agree to follow the rules and sign the rules. These are posted all throughout the year. As the year goes on, if we find that we need to add a rule to our classroom rule postings we can just add it.

This teacher also journaled about the need to avoid negativity when developing and supporting positive supportive relationships:

> All students need to have the opportunity to be praised. Instead of criticizing what a student is doing wrong, I think it is important to find a student doing what they should be doing and showing the student what it looks like. If a student feels like they are always in trouble and not making good choices they are not going to form that relationship they need with their teacher to have a good learning experience in the classroom.

Caring relationships in her classroom also extend from student to student. To this regard she shared:

> My students are learning to help each other out in the classroom and how to take care of themselves in different situations. They have started clapping for each other when someone earns a [school coupon]. They are even telling me when and why they think someone deserves a [school coupon].

Participant 1 also looks to extend these positive supportive relationships beyond the classroom. Accordingly, she wrote:

> I send home a daily communication log with all of my students. It just gives me a way to stay in touch with the parents and for them to stay in touch with me. For those students needing a boost of confidence I write a good quick note home to their parent on their log.

Participant 2. When asked about her feeling of the importance of a teacher having positive and supportive relationships with his or her students, Participant 2 replied that having such relationships is:

> …the most important thing that goes on at school. That's the basis for everything, if they don't have a positive relationship with you they don't want to come to school, they don't want to try, they don't want to learn, they have a bad attitude, that kind of sets the stage for everything else that's gonna happen at school.

To develop and maintain a caring relationship with her students, Participant 2 shared a clear process for developing personal and cultural knowledge by getting to know her students to let them know she cares:

> First I try to get to know them, ask them questions, see what they like, I… I joke around a lot with them, um…make them feel comfortable, let them get to know me, don't just like put up that shield and… you know… show them that I'm human and I… I want to get to know them, that that's why I want to be at school every day. Get to know them personally and to do that… um… one thing I do, we do weekend news every Monday we write what we did over the weekend and then that can lead to questions that I can bring up later with them and something like, "Oh yeah, she knew, she knew that, she cared enough to remember to ask me about it," and then that's

> good conversation starters too. They share a lot. Like their parents might not want to know that I know everything that I do.

In her participant journal, Participant 2 wrote about her perception of the importance of student voice in determining classroom rules and procedures and setting a culture of high behavior expectations:

> On the first day of school I read a story called *The Monster at School*. It's about a boy who doesn't know the rules and acts like a monster. Once he learns the rules, he starts acting like everyone else. After we read the story, we talked about what is important to know. Then I had students share ideas and thoughts on what procedures and rules were important to know in our classroom. After we had our chart paper filled up, we divided them between being respectful, being responsible, and being safe. I already knew in my head what procedures I wanted to teach, but the students came up with even more ideas and got to feel like it was all their idea.

Along with getting to know her students, to provide for personal connection and academic success, Participant 2 also considers the individual needs of her students when planning instruction and establishing a culture of achievement. Considering how individualized planning helps to engage her students in a culture of achievement, she wrote:

> Reading Workshop allows for differentiation and for higher student engagement because students are reading books at their independent reading level, yet still working on the comprehension skills and strategies that we learned as a whole class. If a student who is reading [below] grade level is required to read a book written for middle of the year [current] graders, they aren't going to be able to demonstrate their knowledge of cause and effect relationships because they didn't understand the words

> in the book when reading. If they get a book on their level, they will be able to read it, show the skills—or if they still need help—and develop confidence as a reader. The same goes for students who are reading at a [higher] grade level. If they are forced to read a [current] grade level book, they might not be as engaged, and definitely not as challenged and pushed toward their potential.

Participant 3. When asked for her perception of the importance of having positive and supportive teacher-student relationships, Participant 3 explained her feelings about accentuating the positive to achieve desired behavioral outcomes:

> I believe always to reward positive behavior, that's my big thing is reward positive behavior and the kids. I have classroom cash. I have a row or a group of honor depending on how large it gets… um… I give my kids, they get warnings for doing things they know they're not supposed to and if they get less than two warnings for the whole week they get to be in the group of honor… um… that has been a big thing, everybody wants to be in the group of honor, so… um… I've always… I meet them at the door, high five, hand shake or hug… um… at the end of the day I do the same, I try to acknowledge everybody in the room, you know, with everything.

Participant 3 also indicated that she shows her students she cares by getting to know them on a personal basis. Explaining the personal and cultural knowledge she has of her students she related a couple of vignettes:

> I try to find… um… positive things or maybe things we have in common, things I can talk to them about, like I have some boys in my room that are really into football… so that makes a big conversation, you know we can talk about football… Some of my boys were kind of off, you know, like, "Well, I don't want to do this, I'm too cool for

> school," kind of thing but I think, it's taken a while but we've kind of gotten some common ground and they, I think they're really a lot better than they were… and they, they come in and tell me things, you know, "Well I have football practice," or, "I have this," and it's something, if they know that I understand something that they're doing and I talk to them about it, it makes them feel, "Oh, she really cares."

Sharing a story of an individual student, this teacher continued:

> …and then if I have a kid that's… um… like I have one student that's really… um… his home life's not so hot so, you know, he said something about, "Well, I don't know if I'm gonna have a Christmas tree," you know, well, I said, "If you want you can take ours home for the holidays," you know, that kind of stuff, just making, doing anything to make their life here at school more positive. And that is the main thing is listening, you know, even though you have twenty-five kids trying to talk to you all at once you have to try to at least acknowledge, you know, everybody and that's what I try to do.

Journaling about the procedures she follows to empower her students to share their voices in her classroom, Participant 3 wrote, "I have class meetings to get their input on what they feel is important in the classroom. I [also] have class jobs so that the students help to make the classroom run smoother." This teacher also encourages her students to share in the direction academic activities take. "The students can share with me how they feel about an activity... They help me to determine if the way I am presenting the information is ok for them or if we need to do something different." This teacher also shows she cares about her students' success by sharing her personal stories. In her participant journal she wrote, "I always try to make them understand that it is ok if you don't understand something right away. Then I will

bring up times in my childhood when I struggled to understand something. They really like these stories."

Participant 4. In sharing her perception of the importance of having a positive supportive relation with her students, Participant 4 responded:

> If you have a positive relationship with them or they trust you and they're willing to work for you, they're willing to try and they're willing to put in effort. If you don't have a relationship with them, they're not gonna care, they don't, they have no reason to impress you, the kids are, that you have a relationship want to impress you, want to do their best, want to show you how good they can do. If they don't care about you and they don't want to be around you they don't care.

Speaking to how she promotes a positive caring relationship by developing personal and cultural knowledge of her students, Participant 4 added:

> I try to do as much one on one things and find what their interests are to where I can, when I'm giving problems in the classroom or giving examples of things, I can use sentences… um… like I have a lot of boys in my class that are into football; I can do football related things just to grab their attention and that just shows them that I do recognize that they're in football and recognize that their interests, what their interests are; I have a lot of girls that are interested in horses… so I'm able to correlate a lot of things with that and sports, and some of my kids are very artistic so we try to draw things and just kind of shows them that we do things that they are interested in just to keep them, keep the relationship going.

In her journal, Participant 4 shared how she works to build and maintain positive and supportive relationships with her students by empowering them to assist in developing and reviewing class expectations. Accordingly, she wrote:

> At the beginning of the year the class and I make a classroom expectation poster that we follow throughout the school year. I always title the poster with the word expectations rather than rules or procedures because the students view it as something to work towards and not as something that is refraining them from doing things; they feel as though they have more freedom. We frequently make additions to our expectations as the students grow academically as well as mature throughout the year. I prompt the students with questions regarding how they think things will work best revolving around different activities.

In addition to helping determine class expectations, Participant 4 also journaled about how she empowers her students to share their voice in academic decision making:

> Centers are introduced a few weeks into school and the students voice their opinion on how they feel centers should look and sound like throughout the allowed time. By [this] grade a large majority of the students know how the classroom should work and what decisions they should be making, so they are able to express and show by modeling what they need to do in the classroom to be able to learn and allow others to learn.

Sharing evidence of the academic and behavioral influence resulting from the culture of high expectations she holds for her students, Participant 4 wrote about parental confirmation she regularly receives:

> I have a very open line of communication with my parents. I received a few e-mails, written notes, as well as phone calls from parents this week about our *Polar Express* unit. The parents expressed their excitement for our unit and asked if they could help in any way. I had one parent that let me know about how happy she was that her son was receiving punches for his behavior because in the past years the relationship had gone down with his teacher toward the end of the fall and she was happy that he was still showing me effort and working for me.

Empowering her students to own their learning and showing caring concern for their success, this teacher regularly plans differentiated opportunities. Discussing how this works in her class, she wrote:

> While working on our United States region project, students researched to their ability and found a determined amount of facts based on their reading level. I also allowed the students to do different projects, all of which met a different learning style. The [gifted education] students were extremely excited to be able to research and find information at their own pace and ability level. The students that are easily overwhelmed by a large amount of information found the differentiation very helpful and were very willing to research the required information and did not get easily frustrated with the task. I modified our research form for the students that needed additional assistance in looking for information and allowed for more fill in the blank information on their project. When students are given a task at their ability level they are willing to reach their expectations and go above and beyond what is required of them to do.

Participant 5. Regarding her perception of the importance of a positive supportive relationship with her students, Participant 5 stated:

> I think that you have to have a positive relationship in order for the kids to want to learn and want to come to school and be in your classroom. If you don't have a positive relationship it's gonna turn them off I think.

To develop and maintain a positive caring relationship with her students, Participant 5 shared the importance of listening to her students to develop personal and cultural knowledge:

> I listen to, you know, they always have stories that they want to tell you when they come in the morning so I'll listen to their stories and talk about just personal things that they have, if they're having a personal issue or something, you know, somebody's picking on em then we talk about it, I try to pull all the kids involved out and talk to them about it and discuss ways that they can improve whatever the problem is.

In her participant journal Participant 5 echoed her interview response as she wrote about the importance of listening to her students and showing that she genuinely cares:

> I try to take time to listen to student's stories they can't wait to tell me. I like to show them that I do care and I am interested. I want the students to know that they can trust me, and show them that I trust them as well. Showing the students that I respect them helps them to respect me as well. Learning would be at a minimum without the trust and respect needed.

Additionally, Participant 5 strives to empower her students and provide for student voice in her classroom. Describing the process of determining class rules, she wrote:

> At the beginning of the school year, we establish the rules together. I ask the students what they think should be included in the rules, write down their suggestions, and then we combine and look at the suggestions that are similar and rewrite them to include everyone's. As the school year progresses, we often have to have class meetings to revisit our rules and procedures. The students are passed a ball, and only the person with the ball may talk. This is where we have discussions about what is not working with our procedures. The students give suggestions on how we can make things run smoother in the class and I take those suggestions into consideration. This gives me a chance to see where I might need to improve in my daily classroom management too.

Promoting a culture of achievement with high expectations for learning, this teacher stressed that while she is available and willing to help, the students are held accountable for their own learning:

> Students are always welcome to come to me for help on academics. I also tell them that I won't just give them the answer, but I will guide them into finding the correct answers as well. Many times, students just feel like giving up when something is hard for them, but I try to build up their self-esteem by guiding them in the right direction and letting them figure it out independently. This is a challenge for many students, but I think it has to be done in order for them to fully understand the concepts being taught.

Again discussing the importance of listening to her students and being available to them beyond academic support, Participant 5 added:

> In showing students they can trust me I have often told them that they can talk to me in private to work out any problems that may arise. I have several girls who do this, and I think it helps them to know that I care. If I didn't offer this to some students, they would be so focused on their personal problems, that they would not absorb any of the information and tools they need to be successful.

Question 2: To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms? As with Question 1, the significant themes were "relationship" and "culture." The interpretive codes that supported the "relationship" theme were again "caring," "personal knowledge," and "empowerment." The interpretive codes that supported the theme of "culture" were again "cultural knowledge," "culture of achievement," "high expectations to learn," and "high expectations to behave."

A third theme for this question was "behavior management." In the literature, classroom management, behavior management and classroom discipline are interrelated and often used interchangeably (Jones, 1987a; Danielson, 2002). In collecting data for this study it became clear that the teacher participants felt classroom management extended into all facets of the school. Accordingly, for this study the management of student behavior is referred to as "behavior management." Many definitions of "classroom management", "behavior management" and "classroom discipline" were provided in the literature (Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1988; Marzano, 2003). Duke's 1979 definition best fits this study. According to Duke (1979), classroom management is "the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur" (p. xii). The interpretive codes supporting this theme were "discipline policies," "rewards and

recognition," and "consequences." Discipline policies are rules regarding student conduct within the classroom or school (Jones, 1987a; Danielson, 2002). Rewards and recognitions can be tangible or intangible and result from positive behavior (Shalaway, 1989; VanOverwalle & DeMetsenaere, 1990; Marzano et al., 2001; Sornson, 2001). Consequences are defined as a negative response for inappropriate behavior coming from the inside (Fay and Funk, 1995) and are intended redirect negative behaviors and assist students in making better decisions in the future (Mendler, 1992; Purkey & Strahan, 2002).

A fourth theme of "high quality instruction" was also identified in the data informing this question. High quality instruction is rigorous, is aligned with content standards, and uses instructional strategies to meet the academic needs of all students classroom (Marzano et al., 2001; Weiss & Pasley, 2004). Interpretive codes that lead to the determination of this theme were "teacher effectiveness," "differentiated instruction," and "effective feedback." An effective teacher makes wise choices about the most effective instructional strategies to employ, designs instruction to facilitate student learning, and makes effective use of classroom management techniques (Good & Brophy, 2000; Marzano et al., 2001; Stronge, 2002; Marzano, 2003; Larrivee, 2005; Stronge & Hindman, 2006). Teachers who differentiate instruction follow a systematic approach to planning instruction for academically diverse learners and modify the instructional content, process, product, and environment so that students who learn best in different ways are instructed in a manner that maximizes learning (Lezotte, 1992; Barr & Parrett, 1995; Stronge, 2002; Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). For feedback to be effective it must always be supportive, diagnostic, and constructive and must provide an explanation of what is correct and what is not correct and how to make improvement (Hattie, 1992; Lezotte & Pepperl, 1999; Danielson, 2002; Stronge, 2002;

Brookhart, 2008). Emberger (2002) describes effective feedback as information that students receive from their teacher about their performance so that they may take action to correct and to guide them in attaining their goals.

Participant 1. When asked how she perceives that her relationships with her students affect their learning, Participant 1 stressed the importance of establishing a caring environment for them to succeed:

> If they don't feel welcome they are not going to learn what they need to learn. If they don't feel a part of my class, or my family, or my community, they might not perform to the best of their ability. I think a lot has to do with…um… your tone too, your tone that, "This is my teacher voice…I mean it"…um…tone.

Regarding her relationship with her students and the impact on student behavior, this teacher spoke about the importance of consistent expectations and predictable responses and how that supports a culture of high expectations for behavior:

> They know…they know what I expect and so they know that if they don't follow what I'm asking them to do that they are going to have their bear down and they are going to have to have to go to the safe seat and if they're not okay there…you know… there are things that they have to follow and if they don't…they know what's gonna happen next.

In her journal Participant 1 shared an example of how she positively impacts the learning environment to provide for a culture of high learning:

> In the mornings sometimes the students can get a little jittery on the carpet. When I observe this, I always stop my instruction and do something to get them back on

> track. These can be anything from deep breathing breaks, songs to sing and dance to, or just stretching exercises.

This teacher also considers the ability levels of each of her students as she plans for differentiation and individualized instruction. “Every student is put into a different group based on their reading skills according to my [screening] testing. Each group is directly working with me on specific skills they need to work on.”

Participant 2. Participant 2 also stressed the importance of establishing a culture of achievement where students feel safe and cared for and know what to expect. “I think if we have that positive relationship,” she explained, “they’ll…they’ll be motivated to learn, they’ll want to try… they want to please you.” Additionally, considering the personal and cultural knowledge she had developed, this teacher suggested:

> Since I know them and try to get to know them and they know me that they know that they aren’t gonna get away with anything… they want to do what’s best and if they know that I’m not going to scream at them if they do make a bad choice for a day or something but we can practice making good choices together and… and they can feel safe enough that if they try something… you know… and they don’t make a good choice that they’re not gonna be… excluded. … it’s a partnership and so if it’s a partnership then they’re gonna try and they’ll, they’ll work harder on those, making better choices.

Journaling about building and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with students, Participant 2 drew a direct connection between building and maintaining those relationships and academic success. Specifically, she wrote, “I think that you have to build and maintain positive and supportive relationships in order to maximize learning and

academic performance. For me, the focus is on those relationships first." In discussing specific ways to build and maintain such relationships, this teacher journaled about balancing and prioritizing time as she develops personal and cultural knowledge of her students:

> One way to make sure the time is balanced [between instruction] without forgetting about the importance of positive relationships with the students is to use any extra time—during morning work/time before the bell rings, recess, lunch line, dismissal time—to really work on relationships. I ask students questions and talk to them. Once you show them that you care and want to get to know them, most students are pretty easy to relate to and eager to have a positive relationship back with you. Others require more work and effort to show them that you care and are there for them. These are the ones that sometimes turn out to be the most rewarding. If you use this time explicitly on these types of activities, then you can focus more on academic performance during communication arts time because the relationships are still being built and the students/teacher can work together to maximize the learning during learning time.

Participant 2 also stressed the use of high gains instructional strategies, instructional technology, and engaging the home in an academic partnership to promote academic and behavioral success as she plans her instruction. Writing about one week of effective teacher practices in particular, she shared:

> We used graphic organizers—non-linguistic representation—while doing cause-effect relationships this week. One way that these graphic organizers promoted engagement and positive learning was because they were done with technology on the [Interactive White] Board. We also had math homework on our regular Tuesday and Thursday

> nights. I think this promotes positive learning because it shows that practicing our money skills in math is so important and valued that it needs to be practiced at home. It also allows for a partnership with parents/guardians between what we do at school and what the students are practicing at home.

This teacher also journaled about the importance of empowering her students to have ownership in the learning process and differentiate their own learning:

> Students in my classroom do take learning activities in new directions sometimes. For example, they can ask questions or want to look up information on the internet that goes along with what we're learning but not what I had planned. By allowing students to do go deeper into a topic or to expand on the required standards gives students ownership to their learning.

Participant 3. Speaking about maintaining of a culture of high behavioral expectations where students feel safe and are empowered to perform at high levels through positive recognition, Participant 3 said:

> I go back to always rewarding positive behavior… I've had some parents say, "You know they love that you have this thing going on because it's rewarding them for the way they're, you know, acting and they really work, and they try to, you know, do their best to stay there…" I think they try really hard, they really try hard, and I think it makes them feel safe in the classroom and the environment makes them feel like they're going to, you know, they're gonna get rewarded if they do the good job, it's not like, "Well, you know, she never notices when I do something good," or, "She never says anything to me when I do something good."

This teacher also stresses the importance of providing consistent effective feedback when recognizing and addressing inappropriate behavior choices:

> There's still some that struggle, can't make the good choices… [I believe in] also calling them out on things that they shouldn't do, you know, I mean, I, I totally believe… I do call them out… their parents may not, they let them get away with whatever and I, I call them out on it every time and I know it's hard and it's really, the first month of school's pretty tough but I keep doing it and I think they get used to it and they know, they know, "Oh, she's gonna, you know, do that to me," or, "She's gonna…," and that's been another issue, they, I'm consistent I guess, and I stay on them, you know, "Unuh, that's not the way you act, you're not gonna do that," they know, they know. And then, we've had some tears cause they're like, "Oh, but I forgot." "Oh, I'm sorry, maybe next time, you know, it'll be, you'll remember," it's tough.

Writing about how she interacts with her students to affect their academic and behavioral successes, Participant 3 stated, "I make learning as fun as possible. I BELIEVE IN REWARDING THOSE WHO ARE DOING GOOD!!" Further, this teacher wrote about the high expectations for learning that she has for her students and the importance of rewarding appropriate behavior:

> I always have high expectations for what my students are doing. This includes behavior and academics. I have lots of reward systems. This is helping with a positive learning environment because I am rewarding the good behavior and not always picking on the bad behavior. The students realize that they need to do what they are supposed to do to get the rewards.

This teacher also shared in her journal how she uses high gains instructional strategies and instructional technology to differentiate instruction and provide for success and increased engagement for all students:

> This week I had the students work in partners as they worked on a *Time for Kids*. I think that it is good for all kids to work together and learn in a different way. They also get so see how others see things. We also learned the elements of a story by using a graphic artistic activity. I use my [Interactive White] Board to change the way I am teaching. This allows students a different way to learn. I try to make sure that I am changing the way I teach often. This also adds some interest to learning. The students enjoy school more.

Participant 3 also moves through her class showing her students she cares about their learning checking for understanding. In her journal she shared, "I constantly go around the room to check comprehension. I also give small assessments along the way to see if I need to reteach or can go on." Writing about behavior struggles, this teacher wrote, "Misbehaviors can be small or large. They could be arguing with another student, they could throw something, talking inappropriately, just being rude, talking back to me, etc." Hypothesizing about what may cause this misbehavior and considering the personal and cultural knowledge she had developed, Participant 3 pondered, perhaps "the student gets frustrated about something and does not know how to handle the frustration. They may have something going on at home or at school that I don't know about." Regardless of the reason for the misbehavior, she wrote:

> I always remove them from the frustration and allow them to calm down. Then I talk to them about why this happened. I try to talk to them about how they could handle

> that situation differently. Then if there is a situation that is taking place that I cannot talk to them about, I will send them to the counselor. I just want them to know that it is not ok to act this way at school and we talk about what would happen in life if they acted this way.

Participant 4. For Participant 4, a culture of achievement defines her relationship with her students. To this regard she stated, "My kids want to show off what they know, are willing to do whatever just to get their grades, they want the good grades, they want to show me that they know the information." When discussing students who were initially resistant to this teacher's invitation to participate in a culture of achievement, this teacher talked about reaching beyond the classroom:

> Last year I had a couple of students that would be with me for a little bit and then go completely away from me, didn't want to have anything to do with me, and I actually went back and built the relationship through the parents and the parents …um… kind of built it up at home and then when they'd come we were able to talk about the same things that were being talked about at home, so I built the relationship up at home before I was able to fully get them at school, and by the end of the year last year I was able to see a big difference of, after I've done more with the family then they started to become… have a better relationship with me.

Writing in her journal about balancing positive supportive relationships with a culture of high expectations, Participant 4 asserted:

> How you present information is one of the most important things in building the positive relationship; students don't want to sit and answer [state assessment] questions all day but they are willing to do hands on activities revolving around [state

> assessment] questions. If you are able to have them active and interested in what they are doing, you will have the positive relationship with them.

This teacher also feels that sharing her personal experiences with her students shows she cares and helps maintain a positive relationship and a culture of high expectations for academic and behavior. She shared:

> With the demand of preparing students for state assessments, the students get easily frustrated and shut down quickly. I notice more students shutting down in the spring rather than the fall so after Christmas break I try to have many classroom meetings about how important effort is with everything we do in life. I try to share some of my own experiences so that they know that I have had many of the same frustrations as them.

Writing about her belief in empowering students by giving them voice in determining academic direction and differentiating their learning while maintaining a culture of high expectations for learning, Participant 4 journaled about her process:

> Students have opportunities to determine activities within the given instruction. As a class we learned about the regions of the United States and followed up this classroom instruction with a research project. The students were able to choose the region they would like to find more information about as well as how they would like to present their information. The students took great ownership in this project because they felt as though they had control of what they were doing. When the students are able to have choice and make their own decisions they are more willing to put in effort towards whatever they are working on. Towards the end of the year the students will take on more responsibility of what they are learning. We will do a unit

> on Scientists and they will choose what scientist they would like to research, what they would like to research about that person as well as how to present the information. I will still have requirements that need to be met such as writing [learning objectives], reading [learning objectives], and science [learning objectives] but the students will have the opportunity to control their level of learning about their scientist.

Participant 5. When asked how she feels her relationships with her students affect their learning and academic performance, Participant 5 stated:

> I think that has a lot to do with, with their performance in the classroom because if, if they want, if there's some, if the role model in the classroom wants them to do well and expresses that in a caring way then I think that they're more apt to want to do well for them.

Provided the opportunity to review the interview transcript, Participant 5 added to this response stressing the importance of positive reinforcement in providing for a culture of achievement in her classroom. "Students need positive reinforcement," she stated, "whether they are the highest student in the class or the lowest. If I never praised a student for a job well done, it would be a very chaotic environment." She then shared a personal vignette to illustrate the effect of positive reinforcement:

> From personal experience, I remember how good it felt for my teachers to praise me doing well on something, and it made me want to work even harder. I will never forget my second grade teacher telling the class that another student and I were the best behaved students during one of our holiday parties. I still remember very clearly

how good that made me feel, and made me want to keep up the good work. I think the same goes for students now.

This teacher also added a written statement to her interview response discussing the importance of recognizing and rewarding positive behavior choices. Describing how she rewards good behavior and accomplishments she explained:

> I also reward the students on a job well done. For example, when the class as a whole gets a compliment from another teacher, they receive a handful of marbles. Once the marble jar is filled up, we will celebrate by having a movie or a game. We also set Reading goals each quarter, and for those students who meet their goal, I have a pizza party or an ice cream party where just those students and I can spend a relaxing lunch period talking.

This teacher also spoke of the importance of a highly structured agenda in maintaining an environment that supports a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations:

> I've noticed that if I have too much down time or something like that then the behaviors kind of get out of hand and then, then the talking starts and that kind of thing so I always have to make sure that we have a set schedule that we're sticking to and not a lot of down time for them to start talking so that way we all stay on the same page and the behaviors don't get out of hand.

Participant 5 also empowers her students to have a voice in determining academic direction when possible. To this goal, she journaled:

> The students get some choice in learning activities. We do many activities with partners, and I will allow the students to choose their partners. We try to do as many

> hands-on activities as possible. The students seem to enjoy these hands-on activities and learn from them.

Further, this teacher discussed how the effective teaching practice of helping her students set goals and how providing materials at students' instructional levels differentiates their learning and reinforces a culture of high expectations for learning and empowers students for academic success. Journaling about her reading program, she wrote:

> The students set reading goals at the beginning of each quarter, and if they meet their goal by the end of the quarter, they get a reward. They must choose a reading level based on their test results that they must stay within. This ensures that the students are reading books on a level they should be able to understand. Therefore, there is a wide variety of reading going on in the classroom and the students get very excited about reading. It also pushes those students who don't "like" to read. Some of my lower-level readers were going to great lengths and working really hard to meet their goals. It really helped to boost their confidence in themselves as well. It didn't seem to them that they were learning to be better readers in a boring way. It made them feel successful and that they could do it for themselves.

Writing about behavior expectations and how the relationships she has with her students affects their behavior choices, Participant 5 stated:

> When discipline needs to be used, I try to follow the [building] procedure and our Citizenship program as well. The students in my class do a pretty good job with this, and I very rarely have any students who have to go as far as the Focus Room. The students know that my main focus is to teach them what they need to know in order to move on to the [next] grade.

Writing further about how she strives to provide a caring culture while maintaining high behavior and academic expectations, this teacher shared the following vignette:

> With one student in particular, I noticed that he was starting to act silly and be the class clown. I could also tell that he was getting frustrated with his work, as this is what he normally does in this situation. He would get out of his seat, play with his pencils, turn around, and whisper to his neighbors. I simply walked over to the student, put my hand on his shoulder, and quietly asked him if he needed help on his work. After helping him, I let him work independently for a while. When he got frustrated again, I asked him to go to the safe seat so that he could calm down and compose himself, and I told him that as soon as he showed me how he should sit in the safe seat, I would help him on his assignment again.

Question 3: How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success? As with Question 1, the significant theme was "relationship." "Caring" and "empowerment" were the supporting interpretive codes. The "culture" theme was also evident and was again supported by the interpretive codes of a "culture of achievement", "high expectations to learn", and "high expectations to behave." As this question asked the teacher participants to consider how their relationships with their students influenced those students' future behavior and learning, the tenure and grade levels of these teachers played a factor in their responses. All participants had taught more than one year and had former students to reflect on. Two participants, by grade level or tenure, had former students to reflect on who had completed the elementary school experience. Some lived in the community and had knowledge of former students outside of the school setting and others lived outside the school community. A less prevalent theme was

"behavior management," which was again supported through the interpretive code of the building "discipline procedures."

Participant 1. When asked how she feels the relationships she has had with students affects their academic and behavioral performance when the leave her classroom, Participant 1 shared the following vignette regarding the carryover from her high expectations for behavior and the caring culture of her classroom:

> I had… my first year of teaching… um… [student] moved in mid-year… and um… it was really, really a struggle and he… behavior wise we had big issues but once [the next year] rolled around and he got a new teacher I was his best bud and so to this day...like out at recess he came up and just gave me a hug and said… um… you know, "I had… I had a good day today..." and just to get to talk to him or… um… and he used to get to come down to my room but now he's to the point where he can't be trusted to walk down there anymore… He's different with me then he is with his teacher.

Similarly, reflecting on a student she recommended for grade retention the prior year and is repeating the grade with a different teacher, Participant 1 reported how he is still drawn to her:

> This year one of my [students] that repeat…is repeating the grade…he comes… [his teacher] will let him come down to me and he will read me their paper decodable books and last year was not even… was not even possible for him to be able to do that.

Participant 2. Participant 2 stated that she feels the culture of achievement and high academic and behavior expectations in her classroom "sets the stage for what they're going

to do in [the next] grade." This teacher shared several stories of students returning to share their accomplishments:

> There's kids that come back, "Look at this book I'm reading," or show me their [reading] test…they'll bring back to show so hopefully that's making them work even harder cause, "Oh, I want to go show [teacher]," so that I think affects them. There's so many that still come back every morning and every afternoon to talk to me but like, "I'm gonna talk to your teacher and see if you had a good day," so they know that I'm still checking on them and hopefully they don't… they, they want to impress me… you know… that, "Oh, I'm in [the next] grade, I'm still, I still have good behavior." And it's kind of surprising some of the ones that come back everyday…some that I didn't realize, like [student], you know, you…moved or whatever he did in the middle of the year, he comes and talks to me almost every single day and he was only with me half the year…so that meant a lot that I still see him every day.

Participant 3. Reflecting on the development and maintenance of her students' personal values supported through the caring and empowering culture from their time in her classroom, Participant 3 stated:

> I think that… um… hopefully they're a better person when they leave my room, I would hope… um… I would hope that it would make them a stronger student just because they had a good relationship with me. I've had parents write notes; I've had kids come visit… um… I've had even, I had a [parent of a former student] and her daughter went to middle school and she wrote me a note and saying how she thought

> my class helped her daughter in middle school… some days you think, "Oh my word, why am I here?" but most days it's a rewarding job… it is.

Regarding former students sent to her room from other rooms for behavior time outs as part of the building discipline plan, this teacher talked about seeing this time as an opportunity to remind students of what they learned together and to reinforce expectations:

> They don't like to come to the buddy room in my classroom, from a future grade, they, they always look at me because I look at them, "Why are you in here?" and they're just, they know what my expectations of them were and that I am still thinking that they should be acting that way… um… I think they're gonna think about it, a lot of teachers will send them to me and I might have a talk with them, "Why are you in here? What's going on?"

To further illustrate how her caring relationships with students and her high behavior expectations influences future choices, this teacher shared the following vignette:

> There was one girl in a [next] grade class and I had a talk with her… um… her teacher just mentioned that she was doing some things and so I had a talk with her and I said, "Now you know what we went through last year and how you're supposed to act," and, you know, she straightened up, I see her every once in a while in my safe seat, she comes a lot, but, or she did, and now I see her every once in a while so it's helped, so I think that just having those high expectations and… um… them knowing that you're gonna support them even if they do something wrong… um… that you're gonna still say, "No, you know that that's not right," you know, "we need to have you acting better and you know, you can act better, I know you can," that kind of thing,

and maybe even having confidence in them, saying, “I have conf…,” I say this all the time to my kids, “I have confidence in you, why can’t you?”

Participant 4. Participant 4 reported evidence of the positive affect the caring relationships she formed with her students and high academic expectations had on them from their regular visits to talk and to share with her their successes:

> I have a lot of my kids [from] last year come and show projects that they’ve done like the leaf art… some of my kids that really struggled with spelling last year have brought me their spelling tests that they’ve got 100% on and they want to show me that they’re doing well; they want to show me that they’re getting good grades.

Behaviorally, this teacher also talked about evidence of the influence her interaction with students had on their future behavior choices and feelings about their behavior:

> I’ve had a couple of [former students]; a couple of their teachers sent them back to my buddy room, and they feel very, I want to say, embarrassed, cause they don’t want me to see them doing wrong things once they’re in [the next] grade, and I see the same thing if I send some, one of my kids down to [a prior] grade, they don’t want to come back to my classroom because they know that they’re expect, you know, that I expect them to do a lot more then what they’re doing to get themselves into the buddy room, and so it seems like they’re calmed down by the time that they get to my room because they know what the expectations are; they’ve had a year with me and I’ve seen that it’s made, or if I see them in line, I’m able to just say their name and they, you know, do what their supposed to do rather than whatever they were doing.

Participant 4 also perceives her relationships have influenced former students by showing she cares and has high expectations by the way they respond when she encounters them in public. Specifically, she stated:

> If they see me out at Wal-Mart they come and tell me all about their school day and [former student] especially, when I see him around, he wants to tell me all about [the gifted program] because I was the one that got or submitted him to the [gifted program].

Participant 5. Participant 5 discussed how she views the time students spend learning in her classroom as developmental academically and behaviorally and she cited caring visits from former students in support of her perception:

> I think that they get used to that nine months of having me as a teacher and then they go [on] and, and hopefully they, they'll follow that same expectations that they did for me when they go on to [future grades]… I still have several kids that come back and see me and, you know, I'll see em out and about in the community and they're always coming up and give me a hug and stuff like that.

Reporting that she felt hopeful about having a positive influence on her students' lives, this teacher stated, "I hope that I am able to teach them the values of the classroom that they carry out into, you know, when they leave the school." Regarding the culture of high expectations, she said she shares her expectations for her students with her students as she empowers them to practice appropriate behavior beyond her classroom:

> I tell them too and, you know, if, I don't want to hear about bullying, or, you know, if there's an issue with bullying or picking on somebody, I said, "I don't want to hear about it happening after school hours either because it started here and we're gonna

end it here and if I hear of it, you know, otherwise then we're gonna have to take care of the problem in another way," so I just keep encouraging them to make good choices outside of school too.

Question 4: How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement? A significant theme addressing this question was "culture," with interpretive codes of "culture of achievement," "high expectations to learn," and "high expectations to behave." "Behavior management" was a common theme in many responses and the dominant interpretive code was "discipline policies." The theme of "relationships" was also present and was supported by interpretive codes of "caring" and "empowerment." To aid the reader in understanding Participant responses, a brief overview of the two facets of the school's discipline program is provided. First, the school has a building wide discipline policy designed to create a consistent, supervised, safe environment in order to teach and protect students. When a student is having difficulty following a school expectation, he or she may be asked to go to a safe seat where they can sit and think about making good choices. If the student is not able to be in the classroom, he or she may be asked to go to a buddy room or focus room. Secondly, the school also recently developed a school-wide behavior expectations matrix to teach students the expected behavior in all school related areas. As a component of this program students who are observed following the expectations are given school coupons which can be entered into weekly drawings or banked toward earning a class or school privilege.

Participant 1. When asked how she feels school culture affects the student learning, Participant 1 shared that she feels school-wide celebrations and recognitions establish a culture or achievement that supports high expectations for learning and good behavior.

Specifically regarding academic support, she stated, “The [state assessment] celebrations are fun… I know [students] do look forward to…you know…getting to go up there and be recognized in front of everybody.” Behaviorally, this teacher feels “the [the weekly Mascot] Achiever is huge for them to be picked and…you know…they clap for their, for their friends that get picked and say, “Yeah, I did see them… They…they’ve been, they haven’t had their bear down all week…” Further, Participant 1 stated she feels the school-wide behavior expectations matrix is:

> good because everybody—people have different expectations in different part of the building and not all of our expect, expectations are the same so by creating that matrix…you know… the music teacher [is] able to follow the same discipline that I…you know…we have the same rules for hall way if we see somebody…you know…turned around walking the hall way they should be able to correct that behavior…um…and people not feel like their toes are being stepped on.

In her participant journal, this teacher shared an example of how she typically uses the school discipline program. Regarding a particular issue with a particular student, she wrote:

> He didn’t want to follow directions. He was testing the waters to see what he could get away with. I followed [the discipline] process. This child didn’t follow my direction I gave. He was given 1 warning. The behavior still existed, so he had to pull his bear down and go to the safe seat. In the safe seat he still wasn’t okay so I took him to our buddy room. He was okay in the buddy room, and eventually made it back to his regular seat in the classroom. This child later showed me he could follow directions so he received a [school coupon].

Participant 2. For Participant 2, academic artifacts displayed throughout the building convey a culture of high expectations for learning. In her response she stated:

> Everything hanging in the hallways…so no matter where we go we can see, "Oh they did this in this grade or in this grade, and oh I can't wait till I can do something like that," so then they might be like, "Well I, I need to try harder on my sentences so when I'm in [the next] grade I can write stories like this," you know…just seeing all the, all the different stuff that [other] kids can do.

Participant 2 also sees the school-wide behavior expectations matrix as a tool that promotes a culture of high expectations for behaving. This teacher explained that having school-wide behavior expectations empowers students because they know that "it's the same in each, the expectations are the same, consistent with everyone." Putting herself in the position of a student, she shared:

> If it was me, if it was me as a student I would, I would feel a lot better, I would think it was more fair like, "Why did they get all the attention or…now since we have these in place I, everyone knows I'm following the rules."

Additionally, this teacher talked about reviewing the procedural steps of the "classroom" component of the behavior expectations matrix with her students to promote a culture of high expectations for behavior and academics and provide an awareness and rationale for the consequences imposed for inappropriate behavior:

> We talk about it … "Don't take learning opportunities away from other people when you shout out or when you answer a question when it's not your turn and stuff, but that takes away opportunities for other people, just like that's why you have to go to

> the safe seat or buddy room because it's taking away from the rest of the class… so if you talk about it then I think they realize that.

In her journal, Participant 2 also wrote about the importance of school and classroom culture and the need to revisit school and classroom norms during key times of year:

> This was the first week back from a two week Christmas break… Students were tired, but also excited to see everyone again. Their routines were entirely different over break so getting back into the swing of things [was needed]. I went back over all our procedures and routines on the first day back. We [reviewed] the behavior matrix and [went] over specific things that are required in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, playground, and specials classes. We're still going through those and practicing every day.

Participant 3. Like the first two teachers, Participant 3 saw the school-wide behavior expectations matrix as establishing a culture of high expectations for behaving which then provides for a culture of learning:

> I think that…um…if the whole school culture is expecting them to be on good behavior… I think is wonderful…um… because they need to know, okay, for every student in this building this is how you are supposed to behave, this is how you're supposed to act and I think eventually the behavior getting… um…under control is gonna help academics big time… this is how you act here, this is how you write things, this is how you, I mean, just saying, "This is what you do," …it's just this is what is expected of you and I think eventually that's gonna affect their academics—they're gonna know, "Well yeah, I'm safe here. I know that I'm not gonna get away

with this. I'm gonna try my hardest," … actually get down to business and understand that school's very important.

Participant 4. Participant 4 discussed how she feels extracurricular activities such as clubs support a culture of achievement.

> I have a lot of [students] in my room for Science Club; I don't teach Science Club but they use my room so that they can use my [Interactive White] Board with other rooms around them and so the [students] that I had last year, they love coming in there after school because they get to see me outside of the school setting… it doesn't seem that they're there for academic things and just having those after school things just helps build your relationship with them just, or even seeing them outside of school out on the playground with the [other] graders, it just gets them all kind of one community.

This teacher further suggested clubs and other extracurricular activities show students that teachers care and "the students begin to feel more at home and safe at school… school can be fun and geared to their interests. When students feel safe and at home they are likely to try their hardest and meet academic expectations." Participant 4 also feels the school-wide behavior expectations matrix supports a culture of high behavior standards and stated it "has helped the school form into more of a learning community. Students that feel that they are part of a community feel important and want to show what they are learning." This teacher also reported by having high expectations:

> [Students] trust you more and respect you more that you're holding up to those expectations, that their not able to just, "Okay, she's gonna say this but I'm still gonna be able to do whatever I want," and it builds your relationship up more because they know exactly what you want of them and exactly what the expectations are.

Participant 4 also suggested she feels there is community transfer of the positive culture of the school. “I think it’s carrying over into the community,” she stated, “cause they’re not being amazing here and then going out and having issues outside of school.”

Participant 5. Participant 5 spoke to multiple school practices as supporting a culture of high academic learning and positive behavior:

> With our “Character Pledge” that we do every morning, you know, they know that those are our expectations of the building… “Student of the Week,” and all those types of things. I think that it’s something that they look forward to being able to do and they know that they have to live up to those expectations in order to do that… and having the celebrations for [state] testing and things, you know, just incentive—incentives to do well in the classroom.

This teacher also reported that she feels the school discipline program supports a culture of high expectations for behavior which empowers students and provides enhanced opportunities for high achievement:

> If a student is acting out in the classroom, you know, get em out of the classroom if, if we have to so that it doesn’t impede other students’ learning, and I think that’s a big thing because if one student is in your classroom messing up the whole environment of your classroom, it’s gonna negatively affect the other kids, so I think holding them accountable for doing a good job behaviorally is gonna help not only them but the rest of the students as well. …I just think that they know what is expected here and, you know, practicing that throughout the day is giving them the expectations that they know here so again hopefully, you know, when they leave school that those same values are instilled in them when they leave the building.

Participant observations.

As previously stated, data from participant observations primarily addressed questions 1 and 2 and to a lesser degree addressed question 4:

1. What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?
4. How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?

To provide for the field observations to be read and understood as coherent units the observation data is presented and analyzed chronologically by participant. All four of the previously identified themes were found in the analysis of the observation data. The theme of "High Quality Instruction" was very evident and was supported by the interpretive codes of "teacher effectiveness," "differentiated instruction," and "effective feedback." "Behavior Management" was also a clearly observed theme and the supporting interpretive codes were "discipline policies," "rewards and recognition," and "consequences." The "Relationship" theme included the interpretive comes of "caring," "empowerment," and "personal knowledge," and the theme of "Culture" was interpreted by the "culture of achievement," "high expectations to learn," and "high expectations to behave" codes.

Participant 1 .Visiting Participant 1's classroom it was evident that this teacher effectively plans high quality instructions for student success. As she began teaching a communication arts lesson about letter sounds she displayed letter cards with pictures of

mouths and asked the students what made each sound different. She called students by name and after they responded she dignified their efforts by restating their responses. When a student was not accurate, she asked follow-up questions to provide for success. She then covered the letters with sticky notes and asked students what sounds the mouth pictures were saying. After discussing each mouth shape she revealed the letter and they celebrated as a class by giving a cheer. When inappropriate student behavior was noticed, Participant 1 used student names in her redirects. Her tone was calm but her intent was clear and redirected students followed her instructions. In discussing this with her, she shared she feels the manner in which she redirects her students showed them she cares and has high expectations for their behavior. Students who were observed being redirected seemed to quickly return to positive active participation. Behavior redirects noted during this observation included: (a) [Student Name], I'm gonna ask you one more time- sit up please; (b) If you know it raise your hand; (c) You don't have to make the sound right now; (d) [Student Name], I need you to move your chair back to your regular seat because you aren't listening right now- do you need any help?; (e) [Student Name]doesn't like that- I can tell he doesn't; (f) He asked you to stop; (g) [Student Name], that's very unsafe- thanks; and (h) Five seconds to be pockets on your chair.

In a math lesson Participant 1 demonstrated how she engages in high quality planning by providing for active student involvement. Specifically, she asked students to whisper in their partners ears the number that comes after 13. She then led the class in chorally counting bear shapes to 10. She then asked her students to extend their thinking and demonstrated a culture of high expectations for learning as she asked her students to think how many more were needed to get to 14. Participant 1 also demonstrated instructional design that included

high gains instructional strategies. Specifically, in the observed lesson she provided for students to classify examples and non-examples on a t-chart. Instruction around similarities and differences is considered high quality teaching by the school district and a high gains instructional strategy (Marzano et al., 2001). Participant 1 drew a t-chart on an easel pad and labeled the first column with a happy face and the second column with a frown face. She called a student to draw out a card and to place it under the happy face if an accurate example of the number "14" and under the frown face if a non-example. Each student was thanked for participating. When determined to be a non-example this teacher asked the students to explain why. A graphic organizer was provided and each student was asked to represent an addition problem by drawing circles. She monitored students and gave specific feedback as they worked on their tasks to assess informally their understanding. As they finished she sat with each student and talked through the modeled problem and then had students self-evaluate their effort on an effort rubric. This demonstrated care for their learning and reinforced the culture of achievement in her classroom.

Upon entering Participant 1's classroom to observe a skills instruction period a student from a neighboring classroom was sitting in the class safe seat. Participant 1 served as a buddy teacher for this student's classroom. The building discipline procedure includes the use of buddy rooms if homeroom safe seats are ineffective in redirecting a behavior. Participant 1 was reading a Dr, Seuss book to her students who were seated around her on the floor. She stopped at strategic places and asked recall and application questions and connected story element to classroom. During this discussion a student returned to her room from visiting with an adult mentor and loudly and excitedly relayed what he had been doing with his mentor. The teacher paused, permitted him to share out, recognized his excitement

and told him, “That sounds like so much fun. Why don’t you sit and join us now.” This was a clear demonstration of a caring positive teacher-student relationship. When the story was finished students were directed to return to their seats where they listed words from the story on the bands of a paper “Cat in the Hat” hat graphic organizer. Noted redirects during this observation were instructional and redirected the behavior while preserving the classroom culture of achievement and high expectations for behavior and academics: (a) Ooh, I need you out please [to student who scooted under easel]; (b) Oh, I’m gonna wait till I have all eyes on me…and ears; (c) Stop and look- find the adult in charge; (d) [Student name], you need to stop making noises; (e) Stop and look- I can’t have 23 of my students talking to me at once- we can’t do that.

Participant 2. In a classroom observation Participant 2 was facilitating a communication arts activity where her students were comparing and contrasting frogs and toads on a Venn diagram. As similarities and differences is a high gains instructional strategy, this was an example of effective lesson planning (Marzano et al., 2001). As an anticipatory set the students were asked to complete the Venn diagram based on what they already knew about frogs and toads and what they thought they knew. Students were permitted to choose places around the room to work on this task. In visiting with the teacher she shared that she tries “to create a learning environment where students feel safe and comfortable to try their best.” This demonstrated caring, empowerment, and a culture of achievement. As students worked on their Venn diagrams Participant 2 maneuvered through the room informally assessing and checking on student progress. Students were then directed to return to their seats and their attention was directed to the Interactive White Board where the teacher displayed information about frogs and toads. As they read the information the

teacher called on students to identify facts and to underline them on the board. They were then asked to check and edit their Venn Diagrams for accuracy as the teacher completed a Venn diagram on the board. Generating and testing hypotheses is also a high gains instructional strategy and is an indicator of high quality instruction (Marzano et al., 2001). The teacher did make a mistake and entered a fact on the incorrect side of her modeled Venn diagram and a few students noticed, raised their hands and asked her why the fact went there. She told the class, "Ooops, I made a mistake, let me correct that for you." This demonstrated high academic expectations and caring as it showed her students that it is okay to make mistakes while learning but it is important to recognize errors and to correct them when you do. Behavior redirects were subtle and succinct: (a) Go put your hat in your cubby; (b) Keep it on your wrist; (c) Put that away; and (d) Pass that up to me.

During a math lesson students were asked to use a thermometer to measure temperature and to organize that data on a bar graph. Participant 2 engaged her students by first asking questions to activate prior knowledge about temperature and graphing. She dignified all student responses and from the responses she asked follow-up questions to clarify and further develop the overview of understanding. She then directed student attention to the Interactive White Board where she called on students to read the displayed text and questions and answer the posted questions. She asked the students to engage in strategic thinking to explain the mental process of determining each answer. When a student appeared to struggle while formulating an answer this teacher used wait time and then dignified the student's response, thanked the student for answering, and remarked, "That was a tough one." Further demonstrating high quality teaching and an effectively planned lesson, Participant 2 then displayed a graphic organizer on the Interactive White Board and called

students to the board to list temperatures from the organized list they had created the day before. She then passed out graphic organizers and directed her students to transfer the data from the board to their graphing sheets. She walked the room informally assessing their work while answering questions, giving feedback and redirecting where needed. In discussing how she performs such informal formative assessments as students work, Participant 2 shared that she felt this conveyed importance to her students to work accurately and showed them she cared about their success. Students finished transferring the data and Participant 2 had them stand up and led them through a series of stretches telling them that they were getting oxygen in their brains and getting loosened up so they could do their best work. Through this 50 minute lesson students were actively participating and working in small groups. The only redirect was not for behavior but to gain attention for a new direction. To get their attention the teacher asked the students to "Gimme 5-4-3-2-1." She waited until they were quiet and focused on her and did not talk over them. This demonstrated high expectations for both behavior and academics and further showed her students that she cared enough about their success that she would wait until all were attending.

In an observed science lesson, Participant 2 prepared a lesson and activities for her students to be actively involved in using levers to raise objects. She began by displaying a ruler with different amounts of pennies taped to each side sitting across a marker like a see-saw. She had the students engage in the high gains instructional strategy of generating and testing hypotheses as she asked them to predict which side would go down if placed with the marker directly in the middle (Marzano et al., 2001). Students were called on to share ideas and all suggestions were dignified by repeating or restating the idea and if vague by asking for more information. A student was called to the table to test his hypothesis and describe the

results. Students were then asked to think about how to make the heavier side go up. All ideas were again shared and dignified. Students were called up to adjust the ruler and test the various hypotheses. Students were then asked to discuss in partners why the balance changed. Partners then shared out ideas and the shared thoughts were dignified, clarified, and expanded upon through additional questioning. Teams were then issued rulers and markers to make their own levers and were permitted to manipulate the items to change the balance points. The teacher then instructed each group get two books and had them use fingers on the other side. She asked groups to figure out how to make the books rise and when successful to place their hands on their heads. This permitted her to assess their understanding as they completed the task. While no individual student behavior redirects were observes, two class behavior redirects were noted during this lesson: (a) I'm gonna wait till your ready; and (b) We're gonna wait till everybody's being respectful. Participant 2 also recognized appropriate behavior and in doing so reminded others of preferred conduct: (a) Thank you for raising your hand; and (b) Our next person to read is going to wait till everyone is quiet and following along.

Participant 3. Participant 3 began a Communication Arts lesson by directing student attention to the posted learning objective and telling them they would be "using details from a story to tell the beginning, middle and end." This lesson asked students to participate in the high gains instructional strategy of summarizing and note (Marzano et al., 2001). The teacher read a snowman picture book to her students. She then displayed a snowman shaped graphic organizer. The teachers asked for details that occurred at the beginning of the story. She restated student responses which served to clarify and she asked follow-up questions when more detail was desired. One noted example was when a student reported an event and the

teacher asked, “How did she feel about that?” The teacher then modeled completing the snowman graphic organizer by listing beginning elements on the head, middle elements on the body and ending elements on the base of the snowman. Students were then provided their own copies of the graphic organizer and told they would be identifying beginning, middle and ending details from their individual reading books. A scoring guide was shared with students and its components were discussed. This provided the students with the exact requirements for success. As students worked Participant 3 moved through the room informally assessing understanding, asking leading questions to prompt student thinking, and encouraging students when needed. The only behavior redirect was subtle and respectful. A student was getting into his desk during discussion and the teacher quietly said the student’s name and then asked the student a question. In discussing this with her later, this teacher stated she feels it is important to provide for the success of all her students and redirecting this way and then including the student immediately back into the lesson shows the student she cares about his learning and communicates high expectations for learning and behavior. Participant 3 also stressed again the importance of rewarding her students’ appropriate behavior. She uses sticker cards for students to earn incentives in her room and she also has special honor chairs that are different from regular school chairs for students who have regularly demonstrated appropriate behavior. In a recent conversation she shared that these chairs grew to a row of honor and have now grown to a group of honor. This is a clear demonstration of a culture of achievement, high expectations for behavior, and rewards and recognition for appropriate behavior.

In an observation of a Social Studies lesson Participant 3 planned for cooperative learning which is a high gains instructional strategy (Marzano et al., 2001). The objective of

this lesson was to have students solve conflicts and present solutions. One student from this class was sitting in the class safe seat. The teacher presented students a problem of “loud music,” listed activity directions on the board, and assigned each group member a different roll. Each student wore a yarn necklace with a badge detailing each cooperative role title and role description. Groups were provided chart paper on which to publish their resolutions. As groups worked Participant 3 moved through the room assessing informally their understanding and the performance of each role. Feedback, encouragement and redirects were given to dignify effort or keep students on task. A timer was set to raise the level of concern that groups needed to get work moving along. In our discussion this teacher explained she often uses the timer to encourage her students to work with a purpose and to stay of task. This shows students a high expectation for both behavior and academics. During this observation a student was walking around looking at the work of other groups and not joining his group. The teacher parroted several times in a calm but specific manner, “On the ground with your group please.” He still did not move to floor. She stayed firm with her request and again directed for him to move to the floor. He did as requested and began to participate. In discussing this exchange Participant 3 explained that she was working to have a positive relationship with this student but he sometimes struggles with immediate compliance and she had learned from experience that if she remains calm, firm, and consistent he will usually join in after a moment. This shows a caring willingness to understand a child’s personality and work toward achievable goals while still having high expectations for learning. When asked about the student in the safe seat the teacher explained that the student had disrespected another student by calling the student a name and that she processed with the student later and she was able to return to class.

Participant 4. In an observed communication arts lesson about synonyms and antonyms Participant 4 began by directing student attention to the learning objective posted on the Interactive White Board. She called on a student to read the objective and asked student's what they knew about the word "synonym." A student said it was like "symmetry." The teacher dignified this response and stated, Synonym and symmetry have the same root word. What does symmetry mean?" She called on a student who answered, "The two sides are the same." Participant 4 then called a student to the Interactive White Board to click a button to reveal the definition of "synonym." After the definition was read aloud the teacher called on a student to suggest a synonym for the word "cold." The student said, "Snow." The teacher dignified this response by stating, "Close, snow is cold but it doesn't mean cold." What is another word that means the same thing as cold?" The student seemed confused so the teacher stated, "We agree that snow is cold," and then asked, "What makes snow cold?" The student stated, "It is frozen." By providing specific feedback and asking these leading questions and staying with this student the student experienced success and the teacher demonstrated care and a high expectation for learning. The teacher then asked, "What is an antonym?" A student was called and stated, "It means the opposite." That student was then called to click the board to reveal the definition. As the definition was read the teacher noticed she had made a typing error and pointed it out to the students and corrected the error. This demonstrated high expectations for accurate learning and demonstrated for her students that while mistakes are inevitable it is important to recognize and correct them. Participant 4 then displayed directions for the activity on the board and reviewed the directions with the students. She asked the class what the directions meant. She asked the students to recall the rules. She asked the students, "What do I not want to hear?" She asked the students, "What is

something in the room you can use to look up words?" By asking rather than telling, the students did the thinking and the work and owned the learning. This is high quality instruction and shows high expectations and caring for student success. Synonym matching cards were handed out and students were directed to locate synonym partners permitting students to interact positively. As students found partners they began working on their partner activities. The teacher circulated among the pairs monitoring work and informally assessing understanding. She gave feedback and redirected and was available for questions and discussion as she circulated. This showed the students that she cared about their success and had high expectations for their behavior and performance in the activity. There were a few subtle behavior redirects noted during the observation: (a) I want you to turn your body; (b) Hold on, we're not gonna blurt out; (c) I want your eyes up here; (d) I need you to move to the safe seat [whispered].

Participant 4 began a math lesson by echo clapping to get student attention. She then asked the students to move up in front of the Interactive White Board and sit criss-cross applesauce. Clocks faces set to 12:00 and digital times were displayed on the board. To get attention the teacher asked and modeled, "Everybody show me one finger. Put it over your mouth." The teacher orally shared the posted learning objective of "time to nearest minute." She asked review questions to activate prior knowledge and to check for understanding. She then led a discussion through questioning about how schedules apply to real life. She dignified all responses and asked clarification questions to further check for understanding. Individual students were called to the board to click the times and drag them into chronological order. As each time was moved the student was asked to read the time and explain the thinking behind why it was the next time in the sequence. Students were then

called students to board manipulate clock hands to represent the sequenced times. The student representing 10:30 was asked to explain why the hour hand was placed half way between 10 and 11. Asking students to explain their thinking processes is an example of high quality instruction as such questioning causes student to process at a deeper level. Prepared time lines were handed out and directions were reviewed for how to complete the time line activity. Clarification questions were asked to check for understanding of directions. A scoring guide was also provided and components were shared and discussed through questioning. Students were permitted to work at locations of their choice and the teacher moved among the students informally evaluating comprehension through observation and engaging in questioning and other dialog to provide for academic success. During this observation there was an effective instructional balance between teacher talk and student talk and students were actively engaged in the learning process which further indicated this was an effectively planned lesson that conveyed high expectations for learning and supported a culture of achievement. A few behavior redirects were noted: (a) [Student name], I'd like that out of your hand; (b) Okay, the only one that has permission to talk is raising her hand; and (c) [Student name], do you think you can raise your hand next time? Also noted were two positive recognition that also served to redirect others: (a) [Student name], since you are the only one who raised your hand can you tell me…?; and (b) [Student name], thank you for raising your hand. This teacher very clearly conveyed her high behavior expectation that students are to raise their hands before responding.

In a brief classroom social studies observation Participant 4 had her students working in groups to jigsaw state regions. Each group was assigned a region and an area of the room to work. The teacher moved about groups monitoring for completion and understanding and

asking and answering questions. One group began to argue among themselves and the teacher walked over and knelt down with them. She calmly asked, “How do we solve this problem?” A student said, “We need to do our jobs.” The teacher paraphrased, “We need to work together to cooperate.” Then she added, “What else do we need to do?” By engaging this group in a problem solving dialogue Participant 4 showed her students she cared about their behavior and their learning and permitted them own the solution and return directly to the academic activity.

Participant 5. Observing a communication arts lesson in Participant 5’s classroom the teacher began by calling on a student to recall a definition of “figurative language.” The student answered, “When something isn’t real.” The teacher dignified the response stating, “Okay, I think you are on the right track but I need a little more.” Another student was called who replied, “When something real is compared to something that is not real.” The teacher dignified this response and asked probing questions to arrive at a more complete definition. The teacher then informed the class that today they would be working with similes and by the end of the lesson they should be able to tell what a simile is and use it in an example. A student was called on to read the definition of “simile” from the dictionary. The teacher modeled writing the definition on the board and students were instructed to write it in their journals and. Participant 5 then wrote a simile sentence on the board and asked, “What makes this sentence a simile?” The students struggled giving a reason so the teacher underlined the word “like” and asked what two nouns were being compared. A student answered by identifying a verb and the teacher dignified the answer but pointed out it was a verb and reminded students that a noun is a person, place or thing. Students were then able to identify the nouns and the teacher drew an arrow to connect the nouns being compared. She then

instructed the class to copy the sentence and markings in their journals. Having students take notes in their journals is a form of "summarizing and note taking" which is considered a highly effective instructional strategy (Marzano et al., 2001). A non-simile example was then displayed on the Interactive White Board and a student was called on to explain how to change it to a simile. The student's response was dignified and the student was asked to come to the board to make the alteration to the sentence. Wanted Poster graphic organizers were then passed out with a scoring guide. The students were told they would be designing wanted posters where they would use similes to describe the different features of their own faces. Each component of the scoring guide was read and discussed and students were asked questions to check for understanding of the assigned tasks. As students worked Participant 5 walked through the room checking progress and giving feedback regarding simile formation. This provided the opportunity to assess informally their understanding and to show her students she cared about their learning. This lesson was an example of effectively planned and executed high quality instruction. A few behavior redirects related to off task and impulsive behavior were observed. These redirects were subtle and respectful and showed high expectations for behavior while providing for academic success: (a) [Student name] and [Student name], do you have what you need because we need to get started here; (b) This is the last time you are allowed to get up; (c) We don't have time to share stories now, you can tell me later; (d) It's okay, let him, it's not your turn; (e) If you have a question raise your hand; and (f) You need to raise your hand.

In an observed math lesson where students were asked to "convert from 1 unit to another within a system of linear measurement," Participant 5 began by calling on students to brainstorm a list of linear measurements and wrote those on the board. She then directed

students' attention to the Interactive White Board and showed a short linear measurement video. She stopped the video at an imbedded question for students to calculate mentally a linear conversion. She asked recall questions to lead the students toward application. After the video concluded the students were directed to take out their rulers. The teacher used humor to remind them of safety expectations. She asked, "Is it okay to spin and flip them around? How about poking or hitting each other?" Holding up a ruler she then asked her students, "Where do you start measuring with this ruler?" A student responded, "At the end." She dignified this response stating, "You would think so but on many rulers there is actually a little space between the end and where the ruler starts measuring." She had each student identify this space on their rulers. This is an example of effective planning and teaching as this could have been a problem for many students. Participant 5 then told the students they would be "doing a measurement scavenger hunt with partners." She told them they would start with estimating and asked what it means to estimate. A student responded "an educated guess." The teacher dignified this response and pointed out that it is not a wide guess but a guess that is as close to exact as possible. She then led a discussion through questioning about how to use everyday items to estimate measurement. Identified examples were a thumb width for an inch, a shoe for a foot, and a long stride for a yard. Students were told after they estimated they would measure to check for reasonableness of their estimates. Names were draw to determine partners and prepared sheets were provided to record estimates and measurements. As students began the activity Participant 5 monitored and assisted by asking and answering questions while informally assessing for understanding. Only two behavior redirects were noted during this observation: (a) [Student name], we don't holler out; and (b) [Student name], please stop [talking to another student during discussion].

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of five individual case studies regarding regular education classroom teachers and their perceptions of how the relationships they have with students influences learning and behavior in the classroom and when the students leave the classroom. The narratives these teachers provided and the portraits developed from interviews and observations provided insight into the lived experiences and feelings and beliefs of these teachers. A cross-case analysis was performed by examining the data from each participant and comparing to the data of each of the other participants to determine common themes. Participant journals were examined using the narrative analysis process and participant observations and interviews were analyzed through a generic coding process. In coding the data from this research, four predominant themes emerged in analyzing teachers' perceptions of how the relationships they form and maintain with their students affects the academic and behavioral performance of these students while in and after leaving their classrooms. These four predominant themes, each with multiple interpretive codes, are: (a) relationships; (b) culture; (c) high quality instruction; and (d) behavior management. The "relationship" theme was evident in the observations, interviews and participant journals. In coding the observations, interviews and participant journals the interpretive codes that supported the relationship theme were "caring," "personal knowledge," and "empowerment."

These teachers clearly articulated caring through personal acts toward and interpersonal connections with their students. These teachers made a point to get to know their students as learners and as individuals. They worked to incorporate student interest into their lesson design and in daily conversation with their students. These teachers also planned for and took advantage of opportunities for students to participate in the decision making

process in the classroom and to feel a sense of ownership in the learning. A sense of partnership with students in the business of schooling was evident in each of these teachers' observations, interviews and participant journals.

The theme of "culture" was also clear in the observations, interviews and participant journals and the interpretive codes that supported this theme were "cultural knowledge," "culture of achievement," "high expectations to learn," and "high expectations to behave." Each of the five teacher participants had comprehensible cultural understandings of each of their students and used this knowledge to relate learning so it could best resonate with each student's individual background and interest areas. Designing instruction and providing learning opportunities that students could relate to permitted each of these teachers to establish classroom cultures of achievement where students felt they were an integral a part of the learning experience and students were expected to put forth maximum effort and to do their very best. This was evident in teacher responses and observed actions as they provided learning environments where their students were expected to perform academically high and to behave appropriately within established school and classroom boundaries.

A third theme that emerged in the coding of the observations, interviews and participant journals was "behavior management". This theme was originally identified as "classroom management" but as the data was coded it became clear that these teachers felt classroom management extended into all facets of the school. The interpretive codes that emerged to support "behavior management" were "discipline policies," "rewards and recognition," "consequences," and "punishment." With building discipline policies and behavior expectations as a guide, these teachers involved their students in developing classroom rules and expectations. School-wide rewards and recognitions for positive

behavior were also supported and enhanced by systems of rewards and recognitions in each classroom. These teachers spoke of and showed evidence of imparting consequences to redirect inappropriate student behavior but there was little mention or observation of punishment and it was clear that these teachers saw that the objective was to address the inappropriate behavior and to impose a consequence to redirect that behavior but saw little to no value to imposing a punishment above what was needed to correct the infraction.

"High quality instruction" was a fourth theme that was obvious in the data collected from observations, interviews and participant journals. The supporting interpretive codes were "teacher effectiveness," "differentiated instruction," and "effective feedback." These teachers spoke of, wrote about, and were observed using specific instructional strategies purposefully selected and implemented to maximize student learning and academic achievement. These teachers also shared details of how they differentiate instruction to allow for student choice and appropriate instructional levels and this differentiation was also evident in classroom visits. In the interviews and participant journals these teachers expressed why they feel feedback and praise are beneficial and necessary and how they strive to make certain they are provided. Feedback and praise were frequently observed and feedback was specific and worded so the students could understand what was correct and why it was correct or what needed attention or correction. Similarly, observed praise was specific to what was good about a behavior or academic task.

Tables 6 through 9 illustrate the relationship of each of the discovered themes and the interpretive codes that support each theme by participant case according to each research question.

Table 6

Common Themes Across Cases: Research Question 1: What teacher and student behaviors do teachers perceive contribute most directly to developing and maintaining positive and supportive teacher-student relationships?

Theme:	Interpretive Code:	Participant:				
Relationship	Caring	1	2	3	4	5
	Personal Knowledge		2	3	4	5
	Empowerment	1		3	4	5
Culture	Cultural Knowledge			3	4	5
	Culture of Achievement		2	3	4	5
	High Expectations to Learn				4	5
	High Expectations to Behave	1	2	3	4	5

Table 7

Common Themes Across Cases: Research Question 2: To what extent do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence the academic and behavioral success of students in their classrooms?

Theme:	Interpretive Code:	Participant:				
Relationship	Caring	1	2	3	4	5
	Personal Knowledge	1	2		4	
	Empowerment		2	3	4	5
Culture	Cultural Knowledge		2			
	Culture of Achievement	1	2	3	4	5
	High Expectations to Learn	1	2	3	4	5
	High Expectations to Behave	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior Management	Discipline Policies	1				5
	Rewards and Recognition			3		5
	Consequences	1		3		5
High Quality Instruction	Teacher Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
	Differentiated Instruction		2	3	4	5
	Effective Feedback			3		

Table 8

Common Themes Across Cases: Research Question 3: How do teachers perceive their interactions with students influence their students' future academic and behavioral success?

Theme:	Interpretive Code:	Participant:				
Relationship	Caring	1		3	4	5
	Empowerment			3		5
Culture	Culture of Achievement		2			
	High Expectations to Learn	1	2		4	5
	High Expectations to Behave	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior Management	Discipline Policies			3	4	

Table 9

Common Themes Across Cases: Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive school culture affects student behavior and academic performance and achievement?

Theme:	Interpretive Code:	Participant:				
Relationship	Caring				4	
	Empowerment		2			5
Culture	Culture of Achievement	1			4	5
	High Expectations to Learn	1	2	3		5
	High Expectations to Behave	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior Management	Discipline Policies	1	2	3	4	5

The desire to conduct this ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study developed from a concern that students who do not feel they enjoy positive and supportive relationships with their teachers tend to perform lower then students who do enjoy positive and supportive relationships and they tend to encounter more obstacles to appropriate behavior. A comprehensive review of the empirical literature showed vast research around the importance of positive and supportive teacher-student relationships but did not appear to

inquire of teachers how they see their relationships with students affecting student success. Accordingly, it was the intent of this study to investigate the perceptions of teachers deemed to be effective regarding how they see the relationships they build with their students impacting student academic achievement and behavioral success. It is clear that the teachers investigated in this study believe the positive and supportive relationships they have with their students do play important roles in their students' academic and behavioral success in and beyond their classrooms. Chapter 5 will consider and present discoveries, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for educators and researchers interested in furthering the research around the area of teacher student relationships.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study was undertaken to delve into teacher perceptions of the complexities and nuances of the interpersonal relationships between small town elementary school teachers and the students they instruct and to develop an understanding of how teachers perceive those relationships affect the academic achievement and behavior choices of these students. Narratives and portraits of five teachers were developed as a result of research collected through interviews, observations and participant journals to investigate these teacher's perspectives of how their relationships with students affects their students' academic and behavioral success. This research took place over a two month period in the winter of 2010-2011.

A plethora of studies regarding the need for positive and supportive teacher-student relationships and demonstrating the negative effect of the absence of positive and supportive relationships on student learning and behavior exists in the literature. Studies around teachers' perceptions of how they can influence student learning and behavior through their relationships, however, was found to be lacking. In my experiences in more than ten years as a building level administrator I have witnessed teachers taking many opportunities to develop and maintain positive and supportive relationships with students while in their classrooms and I have watched these students return to visit these teachers and these teachers seek out these students in subsequent years after these students have left these teachers classrooms. Without fail, academic and discipline records show that the teachers I have observed who

take the time to form these positive and supportive relationships with their students have higher academic performance across the board and fewer discipline issues.

The teacher-student relationship is absolutely relevant in the current educational environment on No Child Left Behind (NCLB). To make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), students in every subgroup must score at or above state determined levels of proficiency. The result in many school systems has been an imposed pressure to perform that forces the development and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships toward the bottom of the list of school priorities. In my experience, effective teachers recognize the goals and pressures of NCLB but see the development and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships with their students as a vehicle toward meeting those goals.

If the purpose of schooling is to produce well-rounded students ready to assume democratic roles in society then democratic school practices help teachers and schools accomplish that goal. Glickman (1998) cites empirical evidence that democratic schooling promotes "astonishing success in the intellectual achievement of all students" and leads to living enriched lives (p. 4). Glickman (1998) also provides evidence that students taught democratically outperform their skilled and drilled peers in mastering basic skills and in learning, understanding and applying content knowledge. By embracing and adopting many of the tenets of democratic schooling, schools can create environments where teachers and students work together to learn and grow.

Greenberg (2000) explains, offers an idealized view of democratic schooling:

> Like the old colonial towns that nurtured our country's political traditions, democratic schools are self-governing. Children of all ages are entitled to participate in all decisions affecting the school, without exception. They have a full and equal vote in

> deciding expenditures, in hiring and firing all employees (including teachers), and in making and enforcing the rules of the community. In democratic schools, there is no residual authority vested in adults, no veto power lurking in the background. (p. 1)

This vision of democratic schooling is the extreme. It is the complete opposite of children having no voice and having education done to them. With the possible exception of an experimental school, such a school could hardly survive as defined. Such chaos would never be permitted to see its possible potential and a program of this extreme would be viewed as ludicrous. There is still much room and need for teaching with democratic ideals. Children have full time jobs learning but they should and they must have a voice in this learning. Teachers' roles should be to influence and guide learning through positive and support relationships with students rather than to direct the learning. Students work to "do the right thing" due to a sense of responsibility to the learning endeavor and must have a voice in all aspects of the learning experience including determining rules, values, and norms for their classrooms.

These opportunities to have a voice give students a sense of belonging which helps to build healthy relationships and connections with peers, teachers, administrators, and the greater community. Democratic education is based on trust in the capability and creative ability of all and develops a sense of community among students and between teachers and learners ("Education for Democracy," n.d). Multiple studies indicate that commitment increases when people are provided opportunities to participate in decision making (Bacharach, Bamberger, Conley, & Bauer, 1990; Kushman, 1992).

Glickman et al. (2005) suggest, “it is vital that students learn to think reflectively, function at high stages of moral reasoning, and be autonomous decision makers” (p. 156). Similarly, Goodlad (2004) advocates for schools that:

> (a) introduce young people to the idea of democracy and the behaviors associated with a “democratic citizenry”; (b) provide all students with an education that allows for their full participation in a democratic society; (c) implement a “caring pedagogy” to which all teachers will adhere as morally committed educators; and (d) practice a responsible attitude toward the “moral stewardship” of the school and classroom. (p. 20)

Such schools do not just happen. “Democracy,” according to Covaleskie (2004), “takes a great deal of intelligent diligence and a healthy dose of altruism” (p. 5). Darling-Hammond (1996) suggests the task of implementing democratic instruction requires skills teachers do not naturally possess. It takes dedicated education professionals committed to democratic concepts who are willing to put forth the hard work and face the many obstacles.

Today’s students will one day be running our society and they must be prepared to do so. They must be equipped to make an impact on their inherited society rather than allowing society to make its impact on them. Accordingly, the function of school must be to prepare our children to fulfill active and impacting roles in society. If not empowered and prepared to participate democratically in society, the haves, for the most part, will continue to have, and the have nots, without our guidance, will continue to have not, or at least to have far less than the haves. Positive and supportive relationships between teachers and their students are clearly the vehicles that will deliver and maximize opportunities for students to learn and grow into productive and positive adults. Democratic practices in schools are possible and

educators must firmly believe that it is possible and that it is important. Schools can and must enable and prepare students democratically through positive and supportive teacher-student relationships to function democratically. Schools must be freed from their shackles to develop and articulate their own goals through cooperation and collaboration with teachers, students and the greater community. Only when learning is permitted to occur within such a system will our young people have any real hope to succeed in school and have any real hope to enter society prepared to question what may not seem right and with the courage to make a difference (Lieberman et al., 1994). We must resist molding children to fit predetermined social needs.

Conducting this research has convinced me that teachers can and must develop positive and supportive relationships with their students so that these students truly have opportunities that are not in effect predetermined by the greater society. While teachers hold the power to intimidate students and keep them in their place and cause these students to fit into conformist molds from which they have a difficult time ever breaking free, teachers equally have the power to form positive and supportive relationships with kids and democratically empower them to become students who accomplish much in and out of school. These are the teachers we must develop and demand for all children. School systems must empower and support such teachers. Such teaching must become the norm rather than the exception. Rather than having to look for and being amazed by a “good” teacher, we must accept nothing less than the vision of a school where we are instead surprised when we encounter a teacher who is “average.”

The literature is filled with theories and examples of school reform models and movements (Steinberg et al., 1996; Baker et al., 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 2003; Banks, 2005a;

Nieto, 2005). From the works of John Dewey (1916) to the modern Democratic School Movement (Apple & Beane, 1995), extensive literature considers the implications of democratic schooling (Calabrese, 1990; Lieberman et al., 1994; Mosher et al., 1994; Gutmann, 1995; Patrick, 1995; Rusch, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Grace, 1997; Beane, 1998, 2002; Wyett, 1998; Greenberg, 2000; Schutz, 2001; Checkley, 2003; Dworkin et al., 2003; Meier, 2003; Winchester, 2003; Covaleskie, 2004; Goodlad, 2004; Olbrys, 2004; Shapiro, 2006; Miller, 2007; Wilms, 2007; Loflin, 2008). Ernest Boyer's (1995) Basic School was a "caring place" where teachers became learners with students. Myles Horton's (1990) Highlander Folk School was built on principles of democracy where people learned together and use education to challenge the unjust society controlling their lives. While most certainly existing in democratic schools and other models of school reform, specific examples of schools that have used positive and supportive teacher-student relationships as a catalyst for school improvement, reform, or restructuring, however, are sparse in the literature.

One example of an improvement effort based at least partially on positive and supportive teacher-student relationships is the Partnership Schools Initiative (PSI) supported reform of Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School in Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley (Fuentes, Crum & Garcia, 1994). This region is home to some of the poorest counties in the nation with low income student populations exceeding 80% and Hispanic students comprising 98% of the student population. PSJA's school PSI improvement plan for the 1992-1993 school year focused on the human element believing that the feeling of teachers, students and parents influenced student performance and success. This improvement plan took a three-prong approach:

1) change staff's mental frameworks through monthly staff development sessions;
2) heighten student's attitudes and expectations through retreats and Saturday workshops; and
3) improve parents' understanding of their role in children's learning through parenting classes and workshops for parents.

Staff development activities were designed to "target the attitudes, relationships, and mental frameworks of staff, students and parents" (p. 3).

School leaders specifically designed and provided professional development to target attitudes and beliefs directly. They approached their reform focusing in order on:

1) staff development;
2) change in the attitudes and beliefs of teachers, students, and parents;
3) change in the classroom practices of teachers; and
4) change in the learning outcomes of students.

Another example of a school improvement endeavor considering positive and supportive teacher-student relationships is Whitman High School's three-year reform effort funded by a 1988 grant from the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (Mitra, 2003). Serving students is a northern California working class community, half of Whitman's population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and half are English Language Learners. Student focus groups were convened to share their concerns and needs. Working with staff, these focus groups identified four areas for reform:

1) improving the school's reputation;
2) increasing counseling and informational resources for incoming ninth graders;
3) improving communication between students and teachers; and

4) raising the quality of teaching.

Two strategies for implementing these reform efforts were employed. In teacher-based endeavors such as professional development activities, students were invited to participate and as a result they learned how school operates and saw school from the perspectives of the staff. Similarly, in student-based activities, adults participated and in doing so were made aware of student needs and views.

While the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo and Whitman relationship-based reforms both occurred in high schools, such improvement endeavors must certainly occur in other levels of school as well. As elementary school is the first place many students encounter adults other than their parents in roles of authority, elementary schools are prime candidates for such reform. This study shows that teachers who understand the importance of forming and maintaining supportive, positive relationships with their students understand that this behavior, whether deliberate or natural, directly and positively influences the academic and behavior successes of their students. As a deep, intense investigation is necessary to begin to consider the multi-faceted dimensions of teacher-student relationships, a qualitative research design best met this need. As a qualitative researcher, I was the instrument that gathered the data and was able to observe the setting naturally in my immersed position as the building principal. Five grade-level teachers were selected using purposive criterion based sampling methods. These teachers were unique in that they were found to have positive relationships with students according to the district's professional performance evaluation instrument and common in that they were all Caucasian female general education classroom teachers.

Implications

The focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers regarding the relationships between these teachers and their students and how these teachers perceive these relationships affect student achievement and student behavior. Teachers are very powerful in the lives of their students and they have the power to positively or negatively affect the lives of every student they instruct. Most students enter school with a love of learning and a desire to succeed. Teachers can either make or break the success of many of these students. Teachers must be aware of this power and of the affect they have on the childhoods and futures of each and every student under their charge. Teaching is an awesome responsibility and one that must not be taken lightly and one that not every college graduate with a teaching certification or license should undertake. Teachers who do not recognize the tremendous power they wield over children have the potential to destroy desire and self esteem and should find other lines of employment.

Teachers must believe in all students and must value their students and show these students that they are valued by word and by deed. Developing and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships where students feel valued and empowered to participate in the learning process must permeate every nuance of a teacher's day. Students who feel valued, empowered, and safe, are more likely to participate more fully in their own educations and to mature into adult citizens who feel empowered to participate more fully in the greater society.

Recommendations

For many teachers, having productive relationships with students is natural. Too many teachers, however, do not seem to put forth the effort to build and maintain positive

and supportive relationships with their students. They might be friendly toward their students and they might want the best for them but the relationships they form with students do not support their learning and development to the extent required for students to experience maximum success. Whether from fear of the sanctions of No Child Left Behind, from pressure from district or building administration to produce results, from lack of professional support, or from a pure lack of caring or from a desire to feel superior to their students, these teachers, by not forming positive and supportive relationships with students, are failing to serve their students' needs. These teachers must have their energies refocused or they must be removed from the classrooms. The cost of permitting them to maintain the status quo is simply too great.

The mission of every district, every school, and every classroom must be for every teacher, administrator, and support personnel to work to develop and maintain positive and supportive relationships with each and every student to maximize opportunities for each and every student to achieve at academically high levels and operate within a prescribed system of building and classroom behavior expectations so that each and every student experiences maximum success and is prepared to succeed in the greater society. Anything less is unacceptable.

The following recommendations are offered as a starting place for districts, schools, and teacher preparatory programs to consider:

1. Teacher preparation programs must include courses that consider the teacher-student relationship. Students in these programs should study accounts of teachers deemed to have positive and supportive relationships with their students and how those relationships affected academics and behavior. They should also consider

accounts of teachers who were deemed to not have such positive and supportive relationships and how academics and behavior were affected in those settings. Future teachers should also observe teachers deemed to have positive and supportive relationships with their students and other teachers who may or may not have such positive and supportive relationships and they should consider the influence of each teacher on the lives of their students.

2. Teacher selection instruments must facilitate identification of teacher candidates who have the skills, abilities, and competencies to develop and maintain positive and supportive relationships with students. Whether the instrument and procedure is a research based reliable and valid commercial product or is developed at the selection level, the process must be designed to recognize candidates who are highly predictable of being able to develop positive and supportive relationships with students.
3. Professional development in every school system must consider the teacher-student relationship and the affect of these relationships on the lives of students. Teachers should develop individual SMART goals around their relationships with their students and should build in measures of accountability such as student and parent surveys to check on their personal progress. Teachers should be provided opportunities to converse with peers and support each other in the development and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships with students and to reflect on the success and struggles in this endeavor.
4. Professional performance evaluation instruments should be designed to measure effort put forth by teachers in developing and maintaining these relationships.

Teachers should be able to respond in writing or verbally to a set of questions regarding these efforts and successes and struggles encountered. Information and ideas from successes can be shared with others to aid in the development of positive and supportive teacher-student relationships and the identified struggles can provide targets for enhanced professional development.

5. Teacher evaluation processes should focus on coaching teachers toward effective student relationship practices. Ineffective of less effective teachers found to not be working toward the development and maintenance of positive and support relationships with students should have professional improvement plans developed with specific steps identified to move toward this development and maintenance of positive and support relationships. If such teachers continue to fail to develop and maintain positive and support relationships with students, these teachers need to be dismissed from their teaching positions.

These recommendations are by no means exhaustive but if considered and followed the students served will clearly be the beneficiaries.

Future Research Needs

As this study only considered the experiences and perceptions of five teachers in a single small town Midwestern elementary school, future research is needed that will consider an increased sample size, various demographics, and other locations. Future researchers endeavoring to research the affect of relationships between teachers and students should consider the following:

1. Research conducted by a researcher with whom the teachers do not have a professional relationship.

2. Research conducted in urban, suburban, rural and other small town school systems.
3. Research conducted in larger school systems.
4. Research conducted in the middle and high school grades.
5. Research conducted in schools that are more affluent and schools with higher poverty levels.
6. Research conducted in schools with higher student mobility rates and schools whose populations are more stable.
7. Research conducted to study teachers in high performing schools and in struggling programs.
8. Research conducted in a longitudinal study to consider the experiences of students as they progress through the grades.
9. Research conducted regarding students who have been retained and have the same teacher for the subsequent year or a different teacher when repeating the grade.
10. Research conducted regarding teachers, moving from one school setting to another, who are deemed to have positive and supportive relationships with their students.
11. Research conducted to compare teachers from preparatory institutions that stress the teacher-student relationship and teachers from institutions where the teacher-student relationship is not a strong consideration.
12. Research conducted regarding teacher applicants selected through a procedure designed to predictably identify which ones are able to form and maintain positive and supportive relationships with students.

13. Research conducted to examine the affect of a professional development focus on building and maintaining teacher-student relationships and their effect on student success.
14. Research conducted to examine the affect of teacher evaluation procedures that consider positive and supportive teacher-student relationships.

This listing of future directions for research is certainly not a conclusive list but a starting place for researchers interested examining how teachers perceive they affect the lives of students in various demographic situations.

Summary and Conclusion

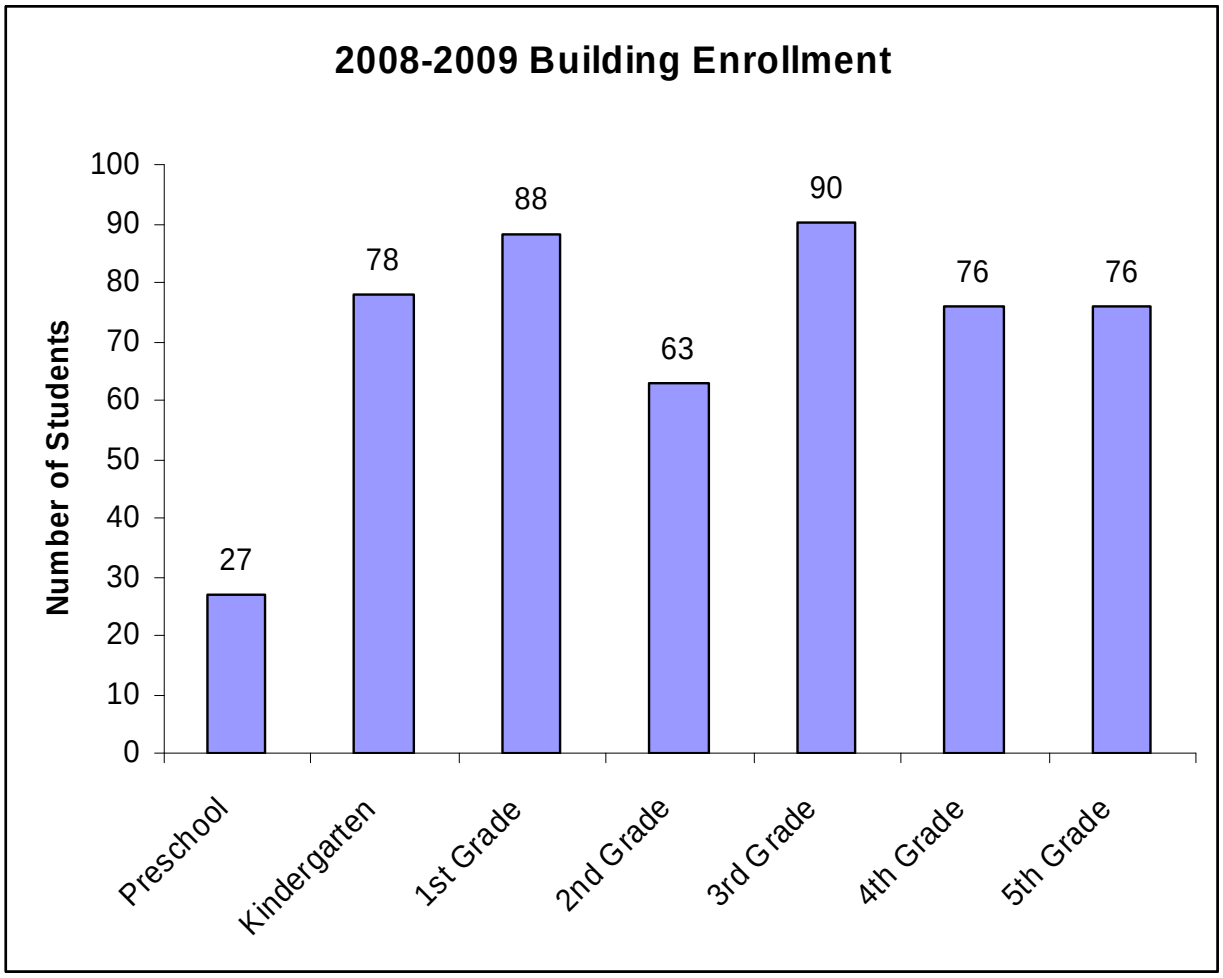
This ethnomethodological exploratory descriptive case study informed through the lenses of narratology and portraiture explored the perceptions of five small town general education elementary school teachers regarding how they perceive the relationships they build and maintain with their students supports student academic and behavioral success. During the winter of 2010-2011, interviews were conducted with each teacher, observations were made of each teacher interacting with students, and participant journals were provided by each teacher. The data from the journals, interviews and observations were analyzed, coded, and organized by theme and presented in chapter 4 and again in chapter 5.

Many studies exist in the literature concerning the benefit of positive and supportive teacher-student relationships but studies considering how teachers perceive they influence student learning and behavior through their relationships were not apparent. As a teacher and administrator I felt my interactions with students and the relationships I enjoyed with students made a positive difference. As an administrator I observed teachers who worked to develop and maintain positive and supportive relationships with students, and I observed,

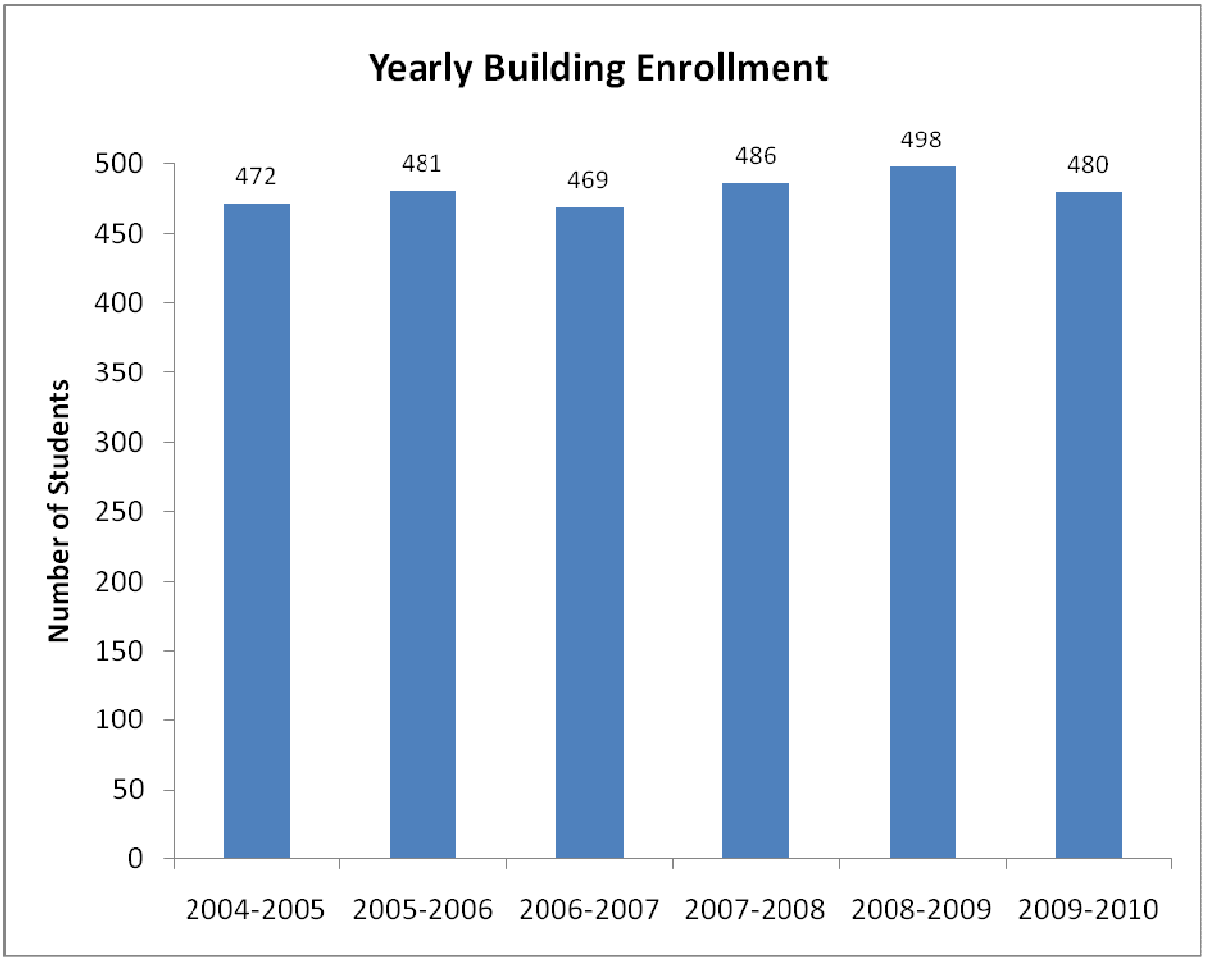
coached, and occasionally non-renewed contracts of teachers who did not see the teacher-student relationship as important.

The pressure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and the mandates and of sanctions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) weighs on most school systems and the administrators and teachers within. While some teachers appear to feel the pressures of teaching maximum content so their students perform well on state assessments leaves little room for relationship building, I have observed and worked with many effective teachers who recognize and accept the goals and pressures of NCLB but rely the development and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships with their students to help these students develop the competencies needed to reach their goals.

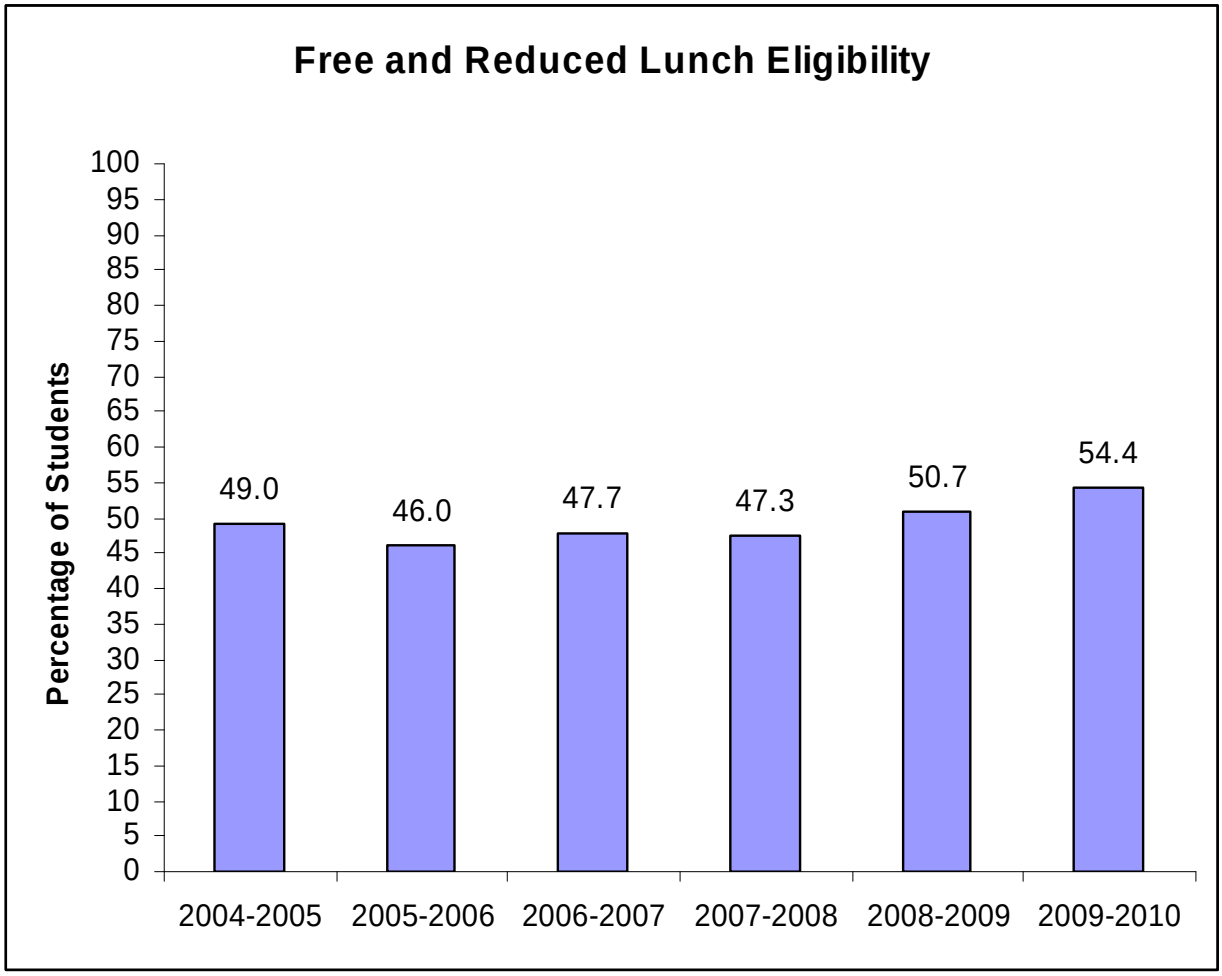
APPENDIX A


2008-2009 Building Enrollment
Number of Students
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
27
78
88
63
90
76
76
Preschool
Kindergarten
1st Grade
2nd Grade
3rd Grade
4th Grade
5th Grade

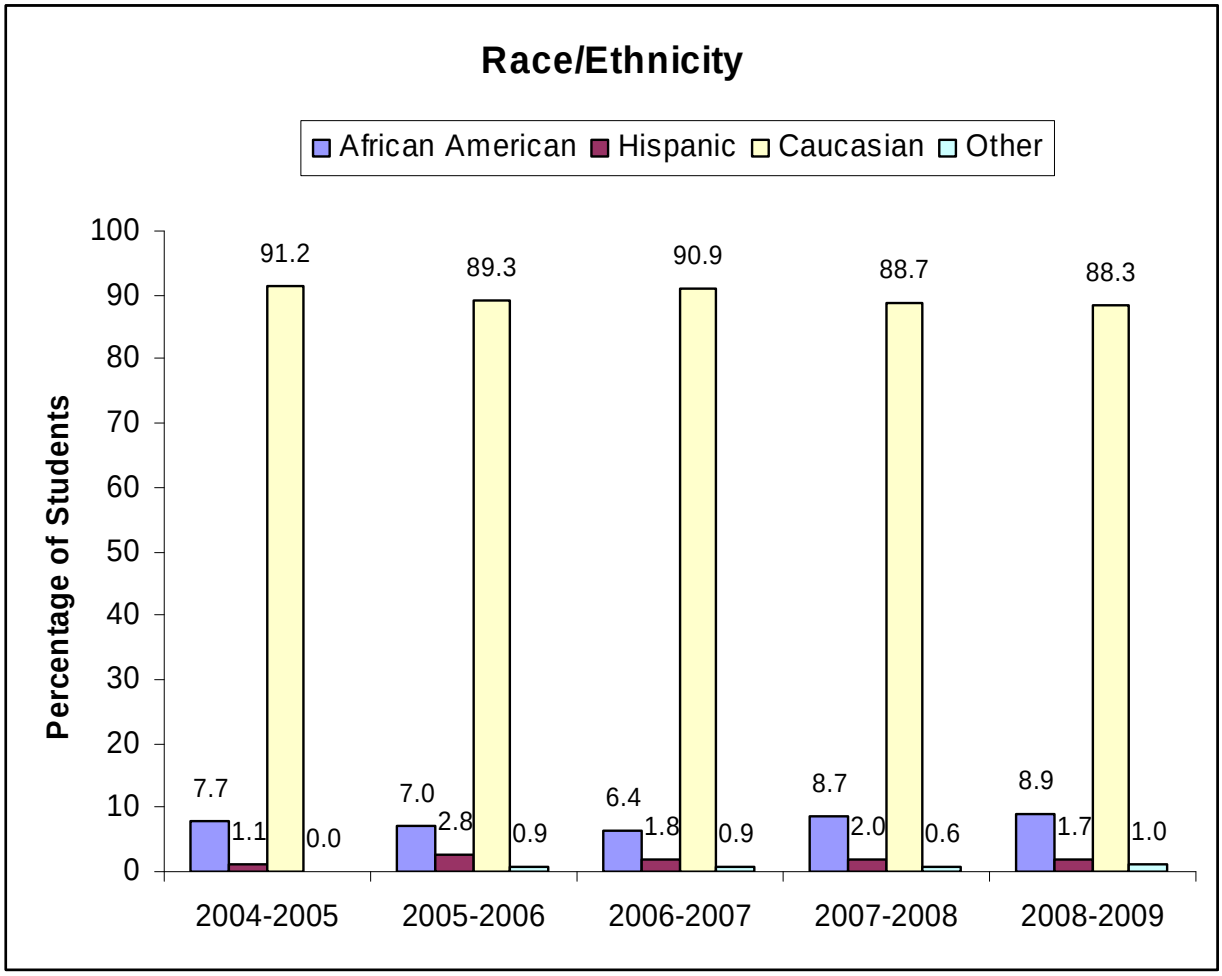
APPENDIX B


Yearly Building Enrollment
Number of Students
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
472
481
469
486
498
480
2004-2005
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
2008-2009
2009-2010

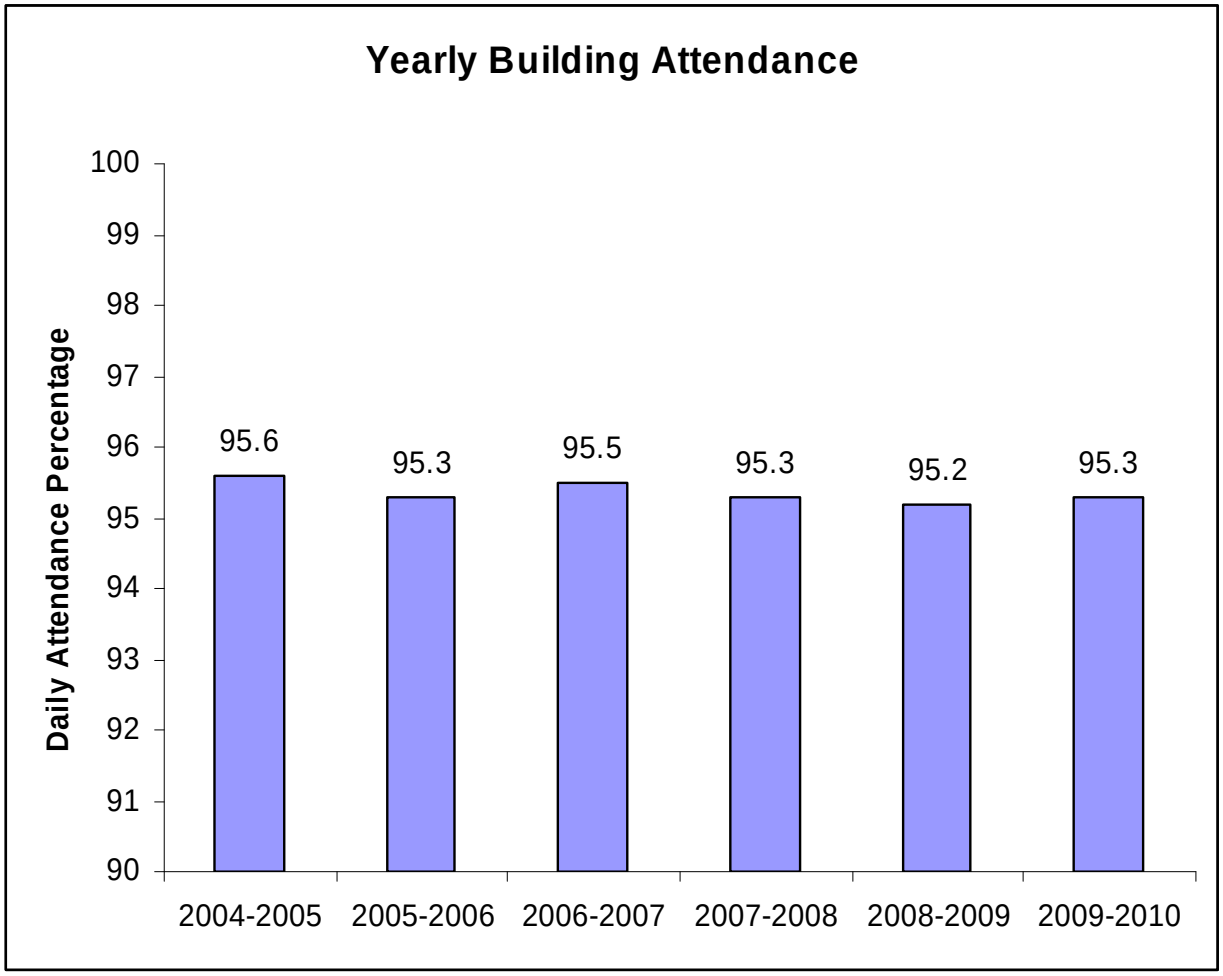
APPENDIX C


Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility
Percentage of Students
100
95
90
85
80
75
70
65
60
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
49.0
46.0
47.7
47.3
50.7
54.4
2004-2005
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
2008-2009
2009-2010

APPENDIX D


Race/Ethnicity
African American
Hispanic
Caucasian
Other
Percentage of Students
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
91.2
89.3
90.9
88.7
88.3
7.7
1.1
0.0
7.0
2.8
0.9
6.4
1.8
0.9
8.7
2.0
0.6
8.9
1.7
1.0
2004-2005
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
2008-2009

APPENDIX E


Yearly Building Attendance
Daily Attendance Percentage
100
99
98
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
95.6
95.3
95.5
95.3
95.2
95.3
2004-2005
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
2008-2009
2009-2010

APPENDIX F

SSIRB APPROVAL LETTER

Study SS10-54: The Power of Teacher-Student Relationships in Determining Student Success

barrethr@umkc.edu
Sent: Friday, November 05, 2010 10:36 AM
To: Camp, Michael D. (UMKC-Student)
Cc: Barreth, Rebekah; Anderman, Sheila H.

November 5, 2010

Michael Camp, Ed.S.
2036 North 66th Terrace
Kansas City, KS 66104

Dear Michael Camp,

The UMKC Social Sciences Institutional Review Board approved your research protocol #SS10-54: The Power of Teacher-Student Relationships in Determining Student Success" on 10/14/2010 pending revisions to the informed consent form. These revisions have subsequently been received and approved.

You have full approval on the following documents:
-Informed Consent Form (Version dated: 11/5/2010)

This letter is to confirm that your application is now fully approved. You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. You must obtain signed written consent from all subjects. The study is subject to continuing review on or before 10/13/2011, unless closed before that date. It is your responsibility to provide a progress report prior to that date to avoid disruption of your research.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Rebekah Barreth (phone: 816-235-6150; email: barrethr@umkc.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Thank you,

Rebekah Barreth, CIP
Administrator
Social Sciences Institutional Review Board
University of Missouri - Kansas City
5319 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110-2499
Office: 816-235-6150
Fax: 816-235-5602
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VITA

Michael David Camp was born on January 8, 1965, in Omaha, Nebraska. He attended Kindergarten through the beginning of fifth grade in Omaha. For the balance of fifth grade through high school, Mr. Camp attended school in Bonner Springs, Kansas where he graduated in 1983. Earning a scholarship to Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kansas, he attended one year and then took a position in retail management. Not finding this career path fulfilling, Mr. Camp returned to Donnelly College and earned an A.S. in Business in1988. He followed this degree with a brief career in food service management. Still not satisfied with this career choice he enrolled at the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1991 and graduated with B.S.E. in Elementary Education in 1993. A certification year followed in the Turner School District in Kansas City, Kansas.

Mr. Camp began his teaching career as a fifth grade classroom teacher in the North Kansas City School District in Gladstone, Missouri in January 1995. During his tenure with North Kansas City, Mr. Camp earned M.A. and Ed.S. degrees in Education Administration through the University of Missouri- Kansas City. After five and one half years he left the elementary classroom for a middle school teaching and coaching experience in the Blue Valley School District in Overland Park, Kansas. The following year brought an opportunity to return to the Turner School District as a middle school teacher and coach with administrative responsibilities. After one semester, Mr. Camp accepted a full-time middle school assistant principal position with Turner Schools and after four years became an elementary principal in the Turner District. After leading the school for four years, the staff and students earned Adequate Yearly Progress in all areas of the state assessment test.

During Mr. Camp's tenure with Turner Schools, he was accepted into an Ed.D. cohort at the University of Missouri- Kansas City where he studied with other professional educators and school leaders—many serving in Missouri. Seeking new leadership opportunities, Mr. Camp accepted a position as an elementary principal in the Lafayette County C-1 School District in Higginsville, Missouri in 2009. In his first year as principal, the district was accredited with distinction in performance—a recognition not received since 2001. Mr. Camp's pursuit of a Doctoral degree is grounded in his continual desire to significantly and positively influence the lives of children.