

STUDENT PERCEPTION OF ASPECTS OF TEACHER STUDENT
INTERACTIONS WHICH ENHANCE OR INHIBIT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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STUDENT PERCEPTION OF ASPECTS OF TEACHER STUDENT INTERACTIONS WHICH ENHANCE
OR INHIBIT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate student perceptions of aspects of teacher student interactions which were perceived to enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom.

To gather data about a range of perceptions across age groups, the study involved students from four different levels of education. Four groups of students were selected for interview: a grade three class; a grade 5/6/7 split class; a grade eleven class; and an adult class. Interview strategies established by Borgen and Amundson (1984,1987) were adapted and used to elicit student perceptions through their responses to open-ended questions. The data from the interviews were gathered in five ways: investigator observation, verification of investigator observations with classroom teacher and/or audio visual technician observation, recording of field notes, audio-tapes and video-tape recordings and, in some cases, hand-written information from students.

Data from students' responses about teacher student interactions as recorded in interviews with four groups of students were systematically analyzed. The analysis began with the viewing of the primary data on the video-tapes. Student responses were summarized to identify patterns of

reported experience related to teacher student interactions. The patterns that emerged from the data were categorized into "meaning units," that represented general categories of student perceptions related to learning opportunities.

The findings revealed those "meaning units" or components of interactions perceived by students to enhance learning opportunities in the classroom to be: empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect and self-esteem.

Conclusions were consistent with research presented in the literature review and pointed to the relationship between teacher student interactions and classroom learning opportunities. Moreover, students appear to be aware of and impacted by these interactions. The findings have implications for the nature of classroom discourse, as well as for teacher training. Suggestions for further study include two questions: how might teachers respond to these findings and what are the possible implications for teacher training?

Dedication

To my parents, sisters and sons.

Acknowledgements

Undying gratitude to Selma and Jack Wassermann for their support, nurturing and friendship.

To Terry, who held my hand.

To the friends who have been put on hold and have waited patiently.

To the professors in General Studies 350 and 351 who were instrumental in encouraging my academic pursuits.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Personal Reflections

It was just after Christmas and I was in grade two. Ms. Tobin did the obligatory round of "what did you get for Christmas?" Ronnie replied, "I didn't get anything."

"Why?" queried Ms. Tobin.

"Cause I got a bad report card."

For over three months I had witnessed Ronnie's unsuccessful struggle to learn. Why didn't Ms. Tobin see Ronnie's struggle and why didn't she help? Even in my child's mind I was able to make the connection between Ms. Tobin's behaviour toward Ronnie and his report card. I had, after all, seen her berate and ignore him, while at the same time she chose to praise and favour others. The memory of Ronnie's report card has haunted me since those grade two days, and as I struggled to make sense of what had occurred, it seems clear that Ms. Tobin did not like Ronnie. And not having the teacher like you was punishable. I know now that there was something about the interactions between them that was implicitly powerful and unsafe, even dangerous. Even at age seven, it was for me, a profound learning experience about power in the classroom.

At age seven, I did not have a frame of reference for understanding the events I witnessed in grade two. Yet I could see that something was going on between Ronnie and Ms. Tobin and that that something had very little to do with lessons from a book. It was covert, unclear, and confusing, at both verbal and non-verbal levels. Ronnie and I and, I suspect, even others, learned those lessons. In retrospect, my interpretation of the lessons was: the teacher must like you or she won't help you learn; learning is the responsibility of the student; and failure to demonstrate learning is punished. I suspect the other children learned something similar as well.

The type of learning that lies under the surface of school curriculum is documented by theorists such as Carl Rogers. The events that I recall from my Grade 2 classroom experience have similarities to what has been reported by Rogers (1983) in recalling his school days:

A child would ask the teacher a question and the teacher would give a perfectly good answer to a completely different question. A feeling of pain and distress would always strike me. My reaction was, 'But you didn't hear him.' I felt a sort of childish despair at the lack of communication which was (and is) so common (p. 222).

Rogers (1983) describes the experience of a small boy entering school on his first day, both eager and frightened, filled with scary uncertainty and confronted with rules. The boy has heard stories. He is directed to his room where a businesslike teacher shows him his desk and chair. Rogers says the children are greeted with a forced smile. Then come the rules. Raise your hand and ask permission before leaving your seat, even to go to the bathroom. No unnecessary noise, only speak when called upon and do not whisper or talk to neighbours. Classes begin. The teacher talks. Children are praised for correct answers. The little boy is called on and he makes a mistake. Other children are asked to correct him. He feels stupid. He attempts to tell a neighbour how he came to make the mistake but the teacher comes by and stands by his seat to make clear that she is watching him and he must abide by the rules.

The rules learned in second grade stayed with me throughout my entire educational experience. From the day that Ronnie said "I didn't get anything, " I worked hard to adapt my behaviour to ensure safety for myself in each of the classrooms of my life. In grade two I adapted to the rules to get Ms. Tobin to like me. The adaptation included the demonstration of learning through academic achievement. Piaget (Pulias & Young, 1968) describes this as a concept of adaptation whereby a new

event is incorporated into what we already know, so that the experiencing of new events enlarges and changes what we know.

Prior to my grade two experience, learning had been less structured around right answers and safety, and more around curiosity. What I knew before grade two was that I could learn. I knew sometimes things were arbitrary so you checked the information with others. I can recall memorizing colours while sitting in the bathtub, looking at the colours in the bath towels and repeating to myself "that's blue - no, that's red - Mom?" I will never forget the day I discovered that reading ability allowed me into a world shared by my mother and older sister. I can still see the note in my hand and still feel the delight when I realized I could make sense of the marks on paper. I remember too, deciding that I truly was a princess (the British Royals were referred to as "blue bloods") when, through my carefully examined hand, my blood also looked blue. And the day the teacher had us put our foot on a ruler to discover that words like "foot" had more than one meaning, I was empowered, challenged, excited, motivated. I loved learning!

My learning was a demonstration of Piaget's belief that children actively construct their cognitive structures through their interactions with

the environment. Through a process which Piaget terms "assimilation," children incorporate interactive environmental events into their previous understanding of the world. A Piagetian interpretation of my grade two adaptation is that I had reorganized my cognitive structure and behavioural scheme, changing from one kind of functioning to another. In my cognitive structure, my concept of self, I became "teacher's pet" and consequently, measured my self-esteem by how much the teacher liked me and what marks I was able to produce. This effect would traditionally be measured as a positive learning outcome. I achieved academically.

However, there was a negative learning outcome. Because I had chosen to align myself with the power in the classroom, I felt that I did not really belong with my peers. At times I felt excluded by my peers. I now suspect that I may have sometimes been included because my peers were motivated out of their fear of teacher retribution. School for me, was a struggle to get my needs both for safety and belonging met. Curriculum content and learning tasks paled by comparison to that learning challenge!

Tal and Babad (1990) studied the phenomenon of teacher's pet in 80 fifth-grade Israeli classrooms. They found this phenomenon to have psychological costs in terms of achievement and self-perception. "Pets"

were identified through students' sociometric nominations in 80% of the classrooms. In 26% of the classrooms, teachers had single or exclusive pets. In 54% of the classrooms teachers had multiple or non-exclusive pets. "Pets" tended to be girls rather than boys, very good (but not necessarily the best) students academically, and perceived as charming, socially skilled, and compliant. Teachers who had pets, were found to hold somewhat more authoritarian attitudes than teachers who did not have pets, and the rate or occurrence of the pet phenomenon was higher in religious rather than in secular schools. Students' affective reactions to their teachers were more positive in classrooms without pets, and most negative in exclusive-pet classrooms.

Lynch (1989) refers to "the hidden curriculum" – those aspects of teacher student interactions which involve a power differential in helping relationships. It is through the hidden curriculum that we learn the important lessons of school, of learning and of self. In 1960, Combs described the learning of the concept of self:

The healthy self concept is achieved. It develops from the relations an individual has with others. It is influenced by the quality of these relationships; first with family, then with peers in unstructured situations, then with teachers and peers in more structured situations. (p. 93).

Rogers (1983) contends that there is a fundamental discrepancy between our experiential reality and the introjected concepts of significant and powerful others. Rogers believes that the introjected concepts of others are rarely examined or tested. In grade two I did not consciously examine either Ms. Tobin's rules that made up the hidden curriculum nor did I examine what she appeared to value in the other students and in myself. In retrospect, I recall being so scared and so awed by her that I decided to win her approval by getting a good report card. According to Rogers (1983), we tend to take others' concepts of us which are at variance with what is going on in our own experience as our own. Ms. Tobin wanted right answers and adherence to rules. I wanted safety; but I also wanted to belong with my peers. The need for safety won out.

Rogers believes this fundamental discrepancy causes us to divorce ourselves from ourselves, giving rise to a fundamental estrangement from self "which accounts for much of modern strain and insecurity." (p. 261) In my personal experience the discrepancy caused dissonance. Prior to my grade two experiences I was empowered in my learning. I was able to recognize what I needed to learn and what was of value to me. I could choose to learn alone or could actively seek help when necessary.

But in grade two I learned that I must learn what the teacher valued. As a consequence my own creative learning processes were stifled and a defiance emerged. I learned to learn what the teacher wanted me to learn in the way the teacher wanted. But I clung to the knowledge that I also had my own way of learning. I wondered if maybe other students had similar experiences, but I never spoke to them about it because of fear of punishment. It felt like I knew the secret, was colluding in it and lived with a profound dread of exposure.

Throughout my academic experience, I continually attempted to reconcile these two seemingly incompatible needs. I looked to my teachers for the definition of a safe and socially acceptable self concept. My adaptation began with assessing what each teacher wanted and giving it to them. The adaptation was cemented with strong academic achievement. My self concept became "high achieving teacher's pet." The positive, academically measurable outcomes were bought in deference to immeasurable negative outcomes. In my school experience, it was easy to pick out teachers' pets. Although included in social groups, we were envied and distrusted by our peers.

However, it is through the eyes of an adult that a tapestry emerges as I weave the threads of the subsequent understandings through the warp of those early poignant memories. The interaction of the experiences with each other becomes the texture, colour, and shape. Just as the colour red changes when juxtaposed with blue or yellow and the size of threads appears different in the process of the weaving so, the tapestry changes.

I cannot claim to have had any conscious awareness in grade two of insights, and the implications of being privy to the hidden agenda of the classroom. Yet, beginning with the day after the incident with Ronnie, a friend and I went to Ms. Tobin's house and from that day until the end of the school year we walked with her to school. As Rogers suggests, I became fundamentally estranged from myself, by becoming "teacher's pet" and aligning myself with Ms. Tobin. I risked peer alienation and I felt I had to learn what teachers wanted me to learn in the way they wanted me to learn it. I can only guess that my little colleague was "peer insurance."

It was this estrangement from self which stimulated my interest in the interactive process, and the extent to which that process impacts human development and learning. The resulting defiant urge to break the silence led to many questions about the hidden curriculum experiences of others.

When are students first aware of the hidden curriculum, those verbal and non-verbal, teacher student interactions that shape human development of self concept and of self-esteem? How does the hidden curriculum affect student learning? When does it enhance and when does it inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom? Is it possible for students to go through their educational process unaware of or unaffected by the hidden curriculum? Is it possible that the lessons in the hidden curriculum are the most significant of all?

It may be that lessons of the hidden curriculum teach children adaptation and survival in situations where adults hold the power, and where academic ability and achievement are often the only recognized and accepted measures of success. It may be that these lessons are also learned through unacknowledged and intangible verbal and non-verbal behaviours, in teachers student interactions. These concerns, rooted in personal early experiences were pivotal in shaping the direction of this study.

Background and Statement of the Problem

It is generally assumed that there is a hidden curriculum (Lynch 1989) that can be identified and that has implications for learning. Researchers have examined the concept of the hidden curriculum from many perspectives. Some researchers focus on student needs, for example, Wassermann (1987, 1989) examines the need for empowerment; Glasser (1986) the needs for care and belonging, and Aspy and Roebuck (1977, 1982) investigate affective learning. Although the literature reveals that there are a variety of definitions of the concept of the hidden curriculum, there is clear demonstration of a general theme, that is, the hidden curriculum does exist in classrooms; students are aware of it; and it impacts students in positive and negative ways.

This study examined three hypotheses related to those ideas:

1. Students not only are aware of the hidden curriculum, but they are also able to identify the lessons of the hidden curriculum which occur outside of traditional subject learning.
2. The messages and lessons of the hidden curriculum are communicated both verbally and non-verbally in the teacher student interactions in the classroom.

3. The messages of teacher student interactions affect students' learning opportunities in the classroom since they are intimately related to their self concept and self-esteem in both positive and negative ways.

Need for the Study

Teaching is a helping profession. In teaching, as in other helping professions, the relationship between the more and the less powerful persons is integral to the process wherein there is a range between potentially being therapeutic or being pathological. Student perceptions of this process have not been studied in depth. Consequently, the examination of students' perceptions of teacher student interactions and the effect those interactions are perceived to have on student self concept and self-esteem becomes central to understanding those learning conditions which may enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom.

Greenburg and Mitchell (1983) state that personal identity (or self concept) and feelings of self-esteem originate in our relationships with others, where we learn information about ourselves which is provided to us by them. Maslow (cited in Pullias & Young, 1968) explains the process:

Let people realize clearly that every time they threaten someone or humiliate or hurt unnecessarily or dominate or reject another human being, they become forces for the creation of psychopathology, even if these be small forces. Let them recognize also that every man who is kind, helpful, decent, psychologically democratic, affectionate, and warm, is a psychotherapeutic force even though a small one.

(p. 90)

As a helping profession, teaching is fraught with potential. There is a responsibility that requires awareness and acknowledgement of the potential of the teacher student relationship. Because students may be helped or hurt in the process, teaching has, potentially, the power to range from psychotherapeutic to psychopathological. Since teacher student interactions are the basis of the learning process, their examination may yield valuable data.

While there exists a considerable body of research that examines the relationship of teacher student interactions to academic achievement (Farley, 1981; Gaffney & Anderson, 1991; McAllister, 1990; Wells, 1987), few studies focus on the more complex phenomenon of student perceptions. In order to tap into perceptions, this study gathered anecdotal data through open-ended interviews, in which response patterns could be examined that would shed light on how students perceived classroom events.

Learning experiences build upon one another. In a Piagetian learning model, learners adapt to environmental events, reorganizing cognitive structures and structural schemes, changing from one kind of functioning to another in the presence of significant events. This raises many questions. For example, do environmental events like teacher student interactions, as perceived by learners, reorganize cognitive structures and thereby contribute to the enhancement or inhibition of learning opportunities in the classroom? What is the perceived impact of the hidden curriculum's messages to students? What aspects of a teacher's messages are perceived as contributing to positive self concept, positive self-esteem and empowerment? What aspects are perceived to break the cycle of disempowerment? Also, do students perceive teacher student interactions as significant?

Teacher student interactions which students perceive to be powerful and to effect self concept and self-esteem need to be examined from the students' perspective (Quicke, 1986; Weisz, 1989). In order that students achieve a positive self concept and feel empowered, educators may find it productive to examine more closely the relationship between teacher student interactions and student learning. According to Quicke (1986),

students may have something to say to teachers that may be of value.

These authors found that students say they are aware of and learn from the hidden curriculum in ways which both enhance and inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom.

Berlak and Berlak (1981) say conscious awareness of one's perspective and hence one's interactions with students is important for teachers as promoters of learning. Unconscious patterns that one adopts in familiar situations need first be brought into conscious awareness before they can be changed (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Rogers, 1987).

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological ethnographic-type study was designed, first, to investigate teacher student interactions from the perspective of students, ranging in ages from elementary school ages to adult. The second purpose of this study was to examine students' awareness and perceptions of teacher student interactions, bearing in mind that teaching is a helping profession wherein the interactions have a potentially powerful range from therapeutic to pathological. The third purpose of this study was to examine the

literature for a relationship between perceived cognitive and affective dimensions of learning such as self concept, self-esteem and empowerment in relation to teacher student interactions. This study has been done in an effort to determine the relationship between student perception of teacher student interactions and concomitant learning which is traditionally considered outside curriculum tasks.

To gather data about a range of perceptions across age groups, the study involved students from four different levels of education. Four groups of students were interviewed: a grade 3 class; a grade 5/6/7 split class; a grade 11 class; and an adult class. Adapting the research model established by Borgen and Amundson, (1984, 1987), naturalistic observation was combined with the use of interview-based research to elicit student perceptions through anecdotal accounts. This research model was used because it allowed important aspects of teacher student interactions to be uncovered and did not limit student responses.

Assumptions

The first assumption upon which this thesis rests is that teaching falls within the class of helping professions (Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Carkhuff, 1967, 1987; Combs, 1969; Rogers, 1987; Schön, 1982; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Wassermann, 1987, 1989). Therefore teachers, as helping professionals, must be cognizant of the ways in which their teaching strategies and personal style contribute to the self concept, self-esteem and empowerment of their students.

A second assumption made is that teacher student interactions are potentially therapeutic or pathological. The therapeutic potential includes the promotion of human learning, as well as the promotion of personal growth and the development of positive self concept, self-esteem and empowerment. If a teacher communicates conditions of esteem and empowerment; respect, empathy, genuineness, and positive regard, students' positive perceptions of classroom experience are enhanced.

Third, it is assumed that there is validity to student perceptions. Miller (1983) provides evidence that a power differential in interpersonal relationships may cause doubt of perceptions. However, for the purpose of this study, student perceptions are seen as indicators of students' real experiences.

Fourth, it is assumed that while the conditions conducive to positive self concept, self-esteem and empowerment, as cited above, may be necessary for the enhancement of learning opportunities in the classroom, the presence of these conditions alone may not be sufficient in the promotion of student learning.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they were used in the context of this thesis:

Concomitant Learning - learning from all experiences, not just those derived from teaching "the lesson".

Empathy - the ability to recognize, sense and accurately perceive and communicate understanding and acceptance of another's behavioural and verbal expressions of feelings with sufficient detachment to avoid becoming directly involved in those feelings.

Empowerment - non-controlling, non-possessive, non-judgmental behaviour on the part of the person "in power" that creates a safe atmosphere and gives decision-making power to others. This results in a perceived sense of enhanced cognitive competency and such psychological skills needed to successfully influence their environment.

Genuineness - authentic communication reflecting congruence of behaviour with feelings wherein the person is presented as what s/he seems to be. Another term used in the literature which refers to this construct is congruence.

Hidden curriculum - aspects of teacher student interactions which are non-academic, verbal and non-verbal, unacknowledged, and intangible factors in the interpersonal relationship and which covertly involve power differential in helping relationships

Interactions - the exchanging of messages that occurs among people involved in the communication process.

Learning - the acquisition of a relatively enduring change in behaviour, thoughts and/or feelings caused by experience or practice.

Positive Regard - an ability to relate in a very special empathic way, leading to an accepted understanding of another's inner world which communicates respect and facilitates self-esteem.

Relationship - what one person has to do with another, the way in which one stands or is related to another, the connection or correspondence or contrast or feeling that prevails between persons. The relationship between the teacher and student is generally agreed to be at the heart of the process of schooling and, therefore, learning.

Respect - communicated attitudes (verbal and non-verbal) which demonstrate an acceptance of another as a person; a caring for that is not possessive and which acknowledges feelings and the experience of personal meaning. Other terms used in the literature which refer to this construct include positive regard, warmth, non-possessive warmth and unconditional positive regard.

Self concept - the evaluation that the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to him/herself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself/herself to be capable, significant and worthy.

Self-esteem - appreciating one's own worth and importance and to be accountable for oneself and to act responsibly toward others.

Teacher student Interactions - the verbal and non-verbal dynamics between the teacher and student(s) wherein actions of one party influence the other.

Limitations of the Study

1. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and were therefore limited by personal perceptions and selective attending. Open-ended questions and reflective listening interview techniques were used in an attempt to reduce researcher bias.

2. The research involved only four classes consequently, the results cannot be generalized to other teaching situations.

Chapter One has included the introduction: personal reflections, background and statement of the problem, need for the study, purpose of the study, assumptions, definitions of terms, and limitations of the study. **Chapter Two** provides a review of related literature. **Chapter Three** describes the pre-interview and interview phases of the study, the subjects, the instruments, and the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Chapter Four presents the data collected. Chapter Five offers an analysis of the data, draws conclusions and implications, and makes recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter presents a review of the current literature on teacher student interactions which students perceive to enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom. Macmillan (1985) states that, although many theorists and educators have investigated teacher student interactions, the recognition of teaching as a special relationship among individuals was being overlooked in much of contemporary research and policy making. Since 1985, the concept of learning as it occurs within the teacher student interactive relationship has received some attention. However, the literature review failed to yield information concerning the integration of three aspects of teacher student interactive relationship: the personal needs and values of teachers as a strong component of the hidden curriculum; the manner in which those needs are played out in teacher student interactions; and consideration of student perceptions of the interactions.

The literature and research examined were derived from a variety of sources. Some sources were part of the researcher's readings from the fields of psychotherapy and education. Some were references pursued from related readings, course work, and direction by colleagues and

graduate committee members. Still others were culled from both ERIC and PsychLit searches. These readings have been used as supportive literature for this chapter.

The literature was examined from the following perspectives: perceived tasks of schools and teachers; the hidden curriculum; teacher student interactions; student perceptions of the impact of teacher student interactions; and teacher as person. The literature review is presented in three sections as follows:

- (1) Perceived tasks of schools and teachers
- (2) Teacher student interactions
- (3) Teacher as person

Perceived Tasks of Schools and Teachers

Most children in British Columbia attend public schools. These schools serve society in many ways, e.g. from providing instruction in basic academic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, to socialization. It is the Ministry of Education that is responsible for identifying the goals of education for the different stages of schooling, but there is considerable variation from district to district in the way Ministry goals have been translated into classroom practices. These variations exist from district to district, from school to school within districts, and from classroom to classroom within a school. There are several reasons for this. First, some goals are more easily identified and enacted; some are more complex, and less able to be consistently translated to practice. Second, complex and undifferentiated goal statements may leave teachers unclear about how what they do affects the more subtle aspects of student learning.

The general concept of school as a universal social organization (Harre and Lamb, 1986) embraces a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Schools have complex social systems that have certain structures, e.g. a formal and informal organization, a system

of management and administration, an allocation of roles with rights and duties. Schools can also be characterized as "cultures" with one or more systems of values, norms and sanctions among its members. Harre and Lamb (1986) acknowledge and validate the potential power of schools, classrooms, teaching and teachers when they say that, "from a psychological point of view these perspectives consider the impact of the school on the attitudes and achievements of the individual teachers and pupils and on the interactions between individuals or groups of individuals" (p. 203).

According to some researchers, official, standard or explicit formal curriculum and educational policy outline the goals of teachers within schools as social organizations (Kanpol, 1989). Educational policy also outlines the goals of teachers as citizenship educators (Popkewitz 1985; Radz, 1988). Some researchers have found that educational policy can also: acknowledge different types of curriculum (Weisz, 1989); and types of knowledge (Benson, 1988; Gundsmundsdottor, 1990) and differentiate between direct and indirect content and process (Miller & Coady, 1986). Yet these acknowledgements are often stated in policy without clear mechanisms for implementation.

In British Columbia the Ministry of Education's mission statement is:

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

(Province of British Columbia, 1989, p. 13)

The ministry states that in order to carry out the mission statement it is necessary for the school system, in general, and teachers, in particular, to assist in developing educated citizens. And the ministry visualizes educated citizens as:

- 1. thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and who can communicate information from a broad knowledge-base;**
- 2. creative, flexible, self-motivated and who have a positive self-image;**
- 3. capable of making independent decisions;**
- 4. skilled and who can contribute to society generally, including the world of work;**
- 5. productive, who gain satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well-being;**
- 6. co-operative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences;**
- 7. aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world.**

(Province of British Columbia, 1989, p. 14)

The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes which society considers important are seen as a major function of the school system. "It is generally agreed that schools have a major role in the students' intellectual development and share the responsibility with the family and other institutions for the students' human and social development, and for their career development" (Province of British Columbia, 1989, p. 19).

In British Columbia's Ministry of Education Reform document, (Annual Report, June 1990) academic goals are outlined for the three stages of educational development, i.e., primary, intermediate and graduation. Alongside the academic goals, however, psychosocial, social and cultural goals are also clearly delineated. With the focus on the individual learner, the Ministry makes explicit the role of the school in promoting "educated citizens" - including thoughtful, creative, independent decision makers, who are skilled, productive, cooperative, principled, and respectful of others.

In his sociological study of the school teacher, Lortie (1975) speaks to the universal nature of public education:

Public schools shape our young and influence their life chances. Elementary and secondary schools consume billions of dollars each year and employ one-quarter of the nation's

public servants.... Public schools, in short are among our major social, economic and political institutions.

(p. vii)

Yet, as Goodlad (1984) says, in general it is believed that schools function to provide the basics when it would be reasonable to take more interest in the other ways schools function. Goodlad says:

Society in general and parents as a group, I believe, assume that the primary function of schools - whatever the other functions may be - is to teach academics, which they define, correctly if incompletely, as a few subjects and a set of communicating and thinking skills, starting with reading, writing and arithmetic, that point towards goals of intellectual development.... The very fact that the schools have been given much more to do than teach reading, writing and arithmetic would make it reasonable to assume that [we] have more than passing interest in matters in addition to academics.

(Goodlad, 1984, p. 61)

It seems clear that the public perception of schools as places in which academics are taught does not fully recognize the other, more potent aspects of what students learn there. This lack of recognition appears to exist despite public documents that are specific in outlining goal statements that go far beyond the academic domain.

In addition to explicit goal statements and their differentiated applications to classroom practices, another phenomenon exists that is also credited with contributing substantially to differences in practices, as well

as impact on student learning. That phenomenon lies in the nature of teachers themselves-- who they are, and what they bring to the interpersonal climate and the human transactions that constitute the classroom learning experience. Eisner (cited in Barrell, 1985) states, "teaching is a form of human action in which many of the ends achieved are emergent - that is to say, found in the course of interaction with students rather than preconceived and efficiently attained" (p. 176). This phenomenon, often unacknowledged, unappreciated, and not fully understood, yet having considerable impact on classroom climate and student learning, is referred to as the "hidden curriculum."

Illich (1983) calls student experience of these often unspecified and unacknowledged goals and practices the hidden curriculum. The tasks of schools and teachers is called education but, Illich says education is a business wherein "consumer-pupils are taught to make their desires conform..." (p. 59). He maintains that:

schools sell curriculum - a bundle of goods made according to the same process and having the same structure as other merchandise. Curriculum production for most schools begins with allegedly scientific research, on whose basis educational engineers predict future demand and tools for the assembly line, within limits set by budgets and taboos. The distributor -teacher delivers the finished product to the consumer-pupil, whose reactions are carefully studied and charted to provide research data for the preparation of the next model, which

may be 'ungraded', student-designed', team-taught, visually-aided, or 'issue-centered'. (p. 59)

Berlak and Berlak (1981) say, while the impulses behind people's actions may be in their consciousness, they are not necessarily in their awareness. Although the Berlaks did not refer to their findings as a hidden curriculum, they did categorize and outline sixteen (sometimes hidden) dilemmas facing teachers: the locus and extent of control over students, ways of knowing and learning and the transmission of knowledge, and contradictions in schooling patterns related to equity, justice and social relations between ages, sexes, and ethnic and racial groups (pp. 135-136).

Illich (1983) states

everywhere the hidden curriculum of schooling initiates the citizen to myth.... The hidden curriculum of schooling does this in spite of contrary efforts undertaken by teachers and no matter what ideology prevails. (p. 105)

Although methods used to teach may be influenced by the larger school culture, individual teachers ultimately communicate underlying values and unspoken attitudes through questions, establishment of priorities, and differentiation among the elements and experiences in their own lives. According to Weisz (1989) the hidden curriculum consists of

values and norms that schools and teachers subtly teach often without intending to do so. Kloss (1987) asserts that the ways in which teachers conceptualize their institutions and their students are interrelated and will control the process of learning.

For example, Kanpol (1989) describes unstated ideological assumptions concerning moral, philosophical, and political world views contained in practices and policies. Kanpol examined data from a research project portraying four eighth-grade teachers who promote the ethic of hard work and racial and sexual equality. Kanpol says moral values implied in school practices and policies may be promoted by individual teachers and as such constitute curriculum which is sometimes unstated: hidden. The hidden curriculum may be implied by the school but whether it is or is not promoted by individual teachers occurs behind closed classroom doors.

John Goodlad (1984) states "no matter how we approach the classroom in an effort to describe and understand what goes on, the teacher comes through as coach, quarter-back, referee, and even rule-maker" (p. 108). Gudmundsdottir (1990) examined the role of teacher values in developing pedagogical content and found that teachers' values orientation

to their subject matter influenced not only their choice of content but also their perception of students' instructional needs. Popkewitz (1985) also found that the methods used to teach children shape the way in which students assimilate, organize, and evaluate information. Benson's (1988) findings concur with Popkewitz's. Benson found that two types of knowledge were presented in biology lessons: disciplinary subject matter and the personal, practical knowledge of the teacher and the teaching process. Benson states a teacher's philosophical orientation world view may direct students' concept of knowledge.

Sadker and Sadker (1985) found that some teachers were unaware of personal blindspots or unintentional bias that formed hidden curriculum of sexist practices in the classroom of the '80s. Their observations of students in more than a hundred fourth-, sixth- and eighth-grade classes in four states and in the District of Columbia found that teachers were unaware of sexist practices embedded in attending and deferring to males across subject matter. Sadker and Sadker found

most teachers claim that girls participate and are called on in class as often as boys. But a three-year study we recently completed found that this is not true; vocally, boys clearly dominate the classroom. When we showed teachers and administrators a film of a classroom discussion and asked who was talking more, the teachers overwhelmingly said the girls at a ratio of three to one. Even educators who are active in

feminist issues were unable to spot the sex bias until they counted and coded who was talking and who was just watching. Stereotypes of garrulous and gossipy women are so strong that teachers fail to see this communications gender gap even when it is right before their eyes. (p. 54)

Although, as individuals and as colleagues in a professional community, teachers may strive to teach without bias, teachers seem unaware of how unspoken and unacknowledged attitudes and values infiltrate their classroom interactions. Teachers come to each interpersonal interaction with their own personal history and psychology. Popkewitz (1985) finds that different cultures shape the way their members ask questions, establish priorities, and differentiate among the elements and experiences in their lives. But, Popkewitz says despite the sharing of common technical language, curriculum can incorporate widely varying values, attitudes, and concerns of both the culture and the individual teacher.

It is clear that most children experience the lessons of the hidden curriculum through teacher student interactions. Within the interpersonal interactions in the classroom lie messages with powerful impact on learners. These messages are part of the hidden curriculum. This learning goes beyond the stated educational goals and includes the less easily identified, enacted and quantified learning opportunities in the classroom.

Teacher Student Interactions

Typically, learning occurs through interpersonal classroom communication: teachers communicate many things in their interactions with students. And teacher student interactions have been found to be crucial in such things as motivation, student achievement and student self-concept. While it is generally agreed that the encounter between teachers and pupils is at the heart of the process of schooling and teaching, teacher student interactions have typically been studied only when problems are apparent and obvious (Harre and Lamb, 1986):

The pedagogical aspects of teacher-pupil interactions have been the subject of more sustained research when pupils experience learning difficulties, require remedial help of various kinds, or are considered to be disruptive pupils.

(p. 246)

The necessity to have a foundation "for the understanding of communication as the essential integrative component of all instruction" has been described by Seiler, Schuelke and Lieb-Brilhart (1984, p. ix). These researchers remind us that communication occurs in both effective and ineffective learning climates. "Teachers communicate attitudes to

students (verbally and nonverbally)" (p. ix) whether they are aware of it or not and whether they intend to or not. In addressing the questions of what teachers communicate, Lortie (1975) observed that teachers "have usually internalized, in part unconsciously, the practices of their own teachers" (p. 230).

Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) found that beginning teachers are often pre-occupied with issues of classroom management. These researchers found that one of two major tasks as perceived by teachers is establishing and maintaining order in the classroom. The second perceived task is "motivating student learning" (p. 81). Beyond establishing order and gaining student cooperation, teachers are also concerned "with how they as teachers are controlled by the organization in which they work" (p. 84). The individual teachers see these imperatives through the lens of their own personal psychology, values and beliefs, and learning experiences.

Woolfolk and Hoy found that some teachers believe their interactions with students are ineffective "because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment" (p. 82). Teacher expectations about the consequences of teaching are demonstrated in their sense of efficacy and beliefs about control. Thus,

Individuals who believe that teaching is a potentially powerful factor in student's learning may believe either that they are effective or that they lack the ability to make a difference with their own students.... Teachers may believe that teaching in general can have little impact on students and that they are not exceptions to this rule. (p. 82)

Lortie (1975) believes that because teachers are charged with maintaining good order and discipline in their classrooms, it is highly probable that elaborations along moral lines gives additional meaning to teacher student interaction. Lortie also seeks insight into why teachers consider the relationships with students both integral and problematic, reserving "special praise for colleagues who demonstrate the capacity to sustain evocative ties with their students" (p. 151). Bales (cited in Lortie 1975), argues that there is a considerable strain between two kinds of leadership, getting tasks accomplished by a group and attending to individual student needs.

The impact of interpersonal classroom communication (oral, written, and behavioural) as part of the hidden curriculum on the learner can be identified in classrooms but it may be as subtle as who sits where, who talks when and how often. "Qualitative expressions of the teaching act and its inner dynamics have often been missed, overlooked, ignored, or

discounted, possibly because they are not easily quantified or articulated" (Barrell, 1991, p. 334).

Weisz (1989) examined the hidden curriculum as one component of curriculum in two classrooms. Her findings indicated that students in each classroom had opportunities to learn via a powerful hidden curriculum, transmitted through types of activity structures, time structures, physical space arrangements and teacher behaviour. Since hidden curriculum was embedded in tasks within structures, it was part of many daily occurrences in the two classrooms. Weisz's findings suggest that teachers teach much more than academic content, and must understand that they convey norms, values, and behaviours in subtle ways. Moreover, students are aware of, can identify and are impacted by these subtle communications.

Teacher communication in the hidden curriculum has been correlated with student self-concept and achievement. McAllister (1990) discusses the effect of a teacher's expectations about a class and the individuals in the class (communicated through body language and style of interacting) on student self-expectations, self-concepts, and achievement. McAllister suggests a relationship between positive interactions and the enhancement of student self-concept and academic performance. He states

that student self-concept and academic performance are enhanced through positive and empowering interactions.

Green (1986) believes that the role of the teacher is crucial in student achievement. He proclaims that at the heart of all human learning is the person seeking to grow, develop, and realize something of value in and through another person. To Green, learning is essentially dependent on the relationships between student and teacher, and between the students themselves. Green goes further to say that all knowledge is bound up with personal identity, that is, knowledge is value-based and developed to achieve something of personal significance.

Quicke (1986) identified hidden curriculum in which teacher bias and discrimination among students was identified on the basis of social background. This hidden curriculum was communicated to students through marks and expressed attitudes towards students. Quicke evaluated teacher behaviour in a personal and social education (PSE) program in an English comprehensive school through observations and structured pupil and teacher interviews. PSE emphasizes participatory learning and positive social contributions by the students. Findings suggested that students were assessed according to covert teacher attitudes, in which

certain pupils received either preferential or rejecting treatment, were underestimated with respect to their social awareness, and regarded as low in status in the institution. Quicke said that teacher inconsistencies and perceptions of the social and moral nature of the pupils were related to a deficit view of the pupil's social background. Quicke concluded that teachers need to focus on pupils' existing social knowledge, concepts of relationships, and cultural background.

Seiler et al (1984) reported that Branan's 1972 research found that college students, when asked to describe their most negative experiences, listed interpersonal situations, most of which involved interactions with teachers. Most frequent in their elementary and high school experiences were such negative incidents as humiliation before the class, embarrassment, and unfair evaluation. Madson, Madson, Sandargras, Hammond, and Edgar (cited in Seiler et al, 1970) found that most students experienced a hidden curriculum communicated through teacher student interactions. According to student responses, the "survey of public schools found that 77% of the teacher interactions with their students were negative and only 23% positive" (p. 250).

There is increasing evidence that, whatever the nature of the relationship, the manner in which the more powerful individual interacts with the less powerful individual considerably influences outcomes. There is additional evidence suggesting that a particular set of conditions, or interactional aspects, promote such positive outcomes as self-esteem and that these esteeming conditions are necessary in all helping relationships (Aspy, 1986; Aspy and Roebuck, 1977; Carkhuff, 1981, 1983, 1989; Truax and Carkhuff, 1976).

Rogers (1958) says the relationship between teacher and pupil would often come under his definition of a helping relationship wherein "at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other individual" (p. 6). Rogers questions, "what are the characteristics of those relationships which *do* help, and which do facilitate growth?" He further wonders if "at the other end of the scale it is possible to discern those characteristics which make a relationship unhelpful, even though it was the sincere intent to promote growth and development" (p. 6). Rogers found the following characteristics to facilitate growth in a helping relationship:

1. the degree of empathic understanding
2. the degree of positive affective attitude (unconditional positive regard)
3. the extent to which the 'helper' is genuine his words matching internal feelings
4. the extent to which the 'helper's' response matches the 'helpee's' expression in the intensity of affective expression (p. 9)

Donald Schön (1988) suggests that teachers reflect on what they are about to teach or are teaching. Schön's major criticism of traditional teaching is his belief that students are not empowered with the skills they need to deal with the difficult problems of the real world. Instead of feeling empowered Schön says that students, once aware of their mistakes, hold unrealistically high expectations for their performance and believe they should be able to produce perfect work. He believes that they see error as failure which leads to low self-esteem. At the same time Schön states that students often feel in awe of the instructor's competence which makes the instructor seem more distant from them and amplifies the apparent size of the learning task.

Kostelnik, Stein and Whiren (1988) suggest that in classrooms, teachers either enhance or damage children's attitudes about themselves by

how and what they say to children. They maintain that a positive verbal environment is necessary. Bhasin (1987) focuses further on teacher responsibility and the creation of a positive classroom climate. The educationally dysfunctional role of teacher-pupil personality conflicts is discussed. Such conflicts are seen to affect motivation, discipline, social behaviour, student achievement, and the continuing desire to learn. Students' perception of teachers are affected by differing needs, self-concepts, social relationships, attitudes, and values. It is suggested that effective teachers have reasonably high expectations of their students and view themselves and their students positively.

Renninger and Winegar (1985) examine the concept of the "more capable other." Renninger and colleagues explicitly discuss power differential in the teacher student relationship which can be considered to be expert-novice interactions. In these relationships there is a complementarity between the information of the expert and progressive empowerment of the novice. The expert organizes information for the novice so that the novice can assimilate the knowledge of the expert. The extent of expert-influenced learning by the novice depends on the expert, the novice, and the organization of their interaction.

Seiler, Schuelke and Lieb-Brilhart (1984) state that effective classroom management, discipline and the maintenance of order grows out of the teacher's leadership qualities, and group process skills, and are evidenced in the mutual respect communicated in classroom interactions. However, the extent to which a teacher can be an effective leader, can acquire and employ principles of group process, and can promote a condition of mutual respect "depends upon the existence of that potential within the teacher's personality" (p. 691). Florio-Ruane (1989) says that in order to be effective, beginning teachers need to recognize the importance of knowledge about the social organization of schools and classrooms as cultural settings while examining the teacher's role within them. She says aspects of the teacher's role in school and classroom culture are often hidden to members of that culture.

Even when awareness exists it does not guarantee action. Carkhuff (1982) promotes affective education where teaching and learning are inclusive of the process of interactions between teacher and student. Carkhuff points to the complexity of including the affective domain of learning in education and he states:

That in an age of productivity where we are being asked to do more with less, people who developed their affective and interpersonal skills will be most effective at home, at school

at work.... Our schools have always been expected to serve the society in which they function. And they have done this well, preparing personnel as the system shifted... Increasingly, they emphasized the development of interpersonal and feeling skills (p. 485).

Carkhuff further states that the emphasis of affective education was largely on the teacher's contribution to the affective education of the learners. For example, teachers were trained in intrapersonal and interpersonal skills which they then used "sensitively responding to the needs of their students with cognitive achievement positive results" (p. 486). He cites many studies (Aspy & Roebuck, 1977; Brown, 1971; Buscaglia, 1978; Carkhuff, 1969, 1971; Hart & Goud, 1976; Hunter, 1977; Ragan & Shepard; Santrock, 1976; Weinstein & Fantini, 1970) that provide evidence of increase in cognitive skills, including those assessed by traditional measures when those teachers have high levels of affective-interpersonal skills themselves. Carkhuff then cites Brown (1975a) and Hurst (1980) saying that "unfortunately, for the most part, affective education was not integrated into the experience of teacher trainees" (p. 487).

In the art of teaching in her play-debrief-replay teaching model Wassermann (1990) does integrate affective education into the experience of teacher trainees. Wassermann encourages teachers to operate as reflective-practitioners "watching themselves and the impact of their

actions on the classroom situation, with an open attitude that allows for assessing the effect of their actions on the classroom situation"

(Wassermann and Eggert, 1989, p. 12). By watching and assessing themselves, teachers become aware of their participation as players in the interactions of the hidden curriculum. This learning opportunity presented by Wassermann is recognized as outside of traditional teacher training. Wassermann (1990) says that although the idea of teaching as reflection in action may present difficulties, she cites Schön (1983) who states that it is the operating level of the professional expert.

In this section, discussion has centered on how the unacknowledged set of transactions between teachers and students in the classroom contribute substantially to unacknowledged and unappreciated learning outcomes that occur beyond existing curriculum goals and practices. This "hidden curriculum" appears to exist primarily in the domain of teacher student interactions, which reflect the needs, values, beliefs, and attitudes that teachers bring to the classroom. These are further examined through the lens of "Teacher As Person" in the following section.

Teacher as Person

There is an important relationship between the teacher as person and the manner in which the teacher interacts with students, and therefore plays out the hidden curriculum. The more teachers are clear about who they are and how their own needs, values, beliefs, and attitudes are "in play", the more they are aware, and able to use that awareness to the benefit of their work with students. Wildman, Niles, Magliaro and McLaughlin (1980) address the complexity and conflict inherent in the socialization of teachers. They say:

A beginning teacher comes into the profession with a personality, a family and schooling background, professional training, and beliefs about teaching that interact with such socializing influences as students, other teachers, administrators and parents (Feiman-Nemser and Folden, 1986). With these many variables at work, one can easily imagine the potential for a range of positive and negative interactions among participants in schooling (p. 472).

Teachers bring into the classroom their own personality constructed of traits and personal history, which forms their basis for their beliefs and value systems. These constructs interact with the constructs brought by

individual students. Consequently, the degree to which teachers can promote students' growth is dependent upon more than teaching academic skills. It depends also, to a large extent, on the subtle and covert actions and interactions that allow for the successful "management" of these constructs. The extent to which teachers are aware of their own needs, and their values and beliefs, and the extent to which teachers are able to manage the "messages" they send to students as part of the classroom culture is potentially powerful to student learning.

Many individuals chose teaching as a profession based on their perceptions of the role of teacher. The beliefs one holds about teaching and learning are based on personal experience (Morrow, 1991). Teachers sometimes use their own teachers as role models and continue to teach the way they may have been taught. For some teachers, their own needs, values and beliefs about classroom control may attract them to teaching models where the teacher is the central authoritarian figure in the classroom, directing the learning activities and evaluating the degree of students' comprehension and recall of information. In 1932, Waller described the role of teacher in this way:

The perfect picture of the normal interaction of personalities in the classroom is that of the teacher and pupils playing their customary roles, of the teacher exerting pressure first at one

point and then at another in order that attention may be concentrated on routine business.... The teacher continually strives to evoke in students the attitudinal set which we call "attention".... The attention of students tends to wander from cut-and-dried subject matter. As attention wanders, the scope of social interaction broadens. The teacher brings it back in a manner very similar to that of a dog driving a herd of sheep (p. 333).

For other teachers the model of teacher as authority figure is incongruent with their personal needs, values and beliefs. Moustakas (1972) finds that the elementary and secondary grades offer a challenge and opportunity to teachers "who wish to make teaching and learning a vital and personally meaningful experience" realizing that "the entire child comes to school and is involved in every activity and experience" (p. 20). Moustakas states that every teacher wants to be a good teacher and provide the kind of environment which enables children to grow optimally. "There is no greater joy in teaching than to see growing children be themselves and explore their potentialities" (p. 37). Moustakas has identified the challenge and opportunities inherent in classroom teaching.

But, as Aspy and Roebeck (1977) state, facilitation of self and student growth is always dependent upon the individual level of physical, emotional and intellectual capability of the teacher. They say:

Those of us involved in education have always assumed the importance of the individual intellectual capability: if we cannot think clearly ourselves, we can never hope to teach our students to think clearly. Indeed, at times we have been guilty of believing that intellect and cognition alone were the concerns of education. As the National Consortium's Study has shown, this is far from the case. The inter-relationship of cognitive and affective processes, of thinking and feeling, can no longer be in doubt. As teachers our ability to understand and deal with our own unique feelings and the unique feelings of each student is no less important than our ability to come to terms with a complex subject (pp. 59-60).

Lomax (1990) directly addresses the psychological well-being of the teacher and states that teachers have many variables in their personal backgrounds that have to be recognized. For some teachers,

Teaching was chosen as a career because it appeared to be a safe and sheltered profession, and that the urge to look after the young was often tied to a search for security that was not entirely healthy. The investigator suggests that it is legitimate to inquire into the psychological processes which underlie the liking for authority over young persons (p. 295).

Jersild (1955) states that self examination is an important exercise and that teachers should be required to face personal issues in their own lives - through therapy or discussion of "personal and emotional issues" - in a manner that differs from the usual academic work. Jersild discusses psychological concerns such as fear, anxiety in childhood and youth and the

teachers reactions to them. Jersild studied the relationship between self-understanding and education. He states that a teacher's "understanding and acceptance of himself is the most important requirement in any effort he makes to help students to know themselves and to gain healthy attitudes of self-acceptance" (Forward).

Hunt (1987) states that experienced practitioners can benefit from learning only after consolidating their own personal psychology. According to Hunt, a good knowledge base of yourself rooted in your own experience allows the individual a valuable knowledge base from which to consider new information. Hunt believes practitioners, bombarded with new information must first reclaim their experienced knowledge. He bases his learning style theory on beginning with yourself, by stating three criteria :

- (1) awareness of your learning style helps you become aware of the styles of your students
- (2) your learning style is closely related to your preferred teaching style
- (3) understanding your own learning/teaching style helps you identify your own matching models

Researchers such as Lomax (1990) believe that teacher education must address the teacher as person. Lomax states "the education of teachers ought to be logically determined by the nature of the job which awaits them in the community" (p. 316). Valid teacher education must establish relationships between education courses, successful performance in the profession, and students' learning. It seems important to "seriously attend to the means of preparing teachers to achieve some of our valued educational aims" (Arnstine, 1990, p. 230). There are many variables in the students' and teachers' personal backgrounds and learning experiences that have potential for being unintentionally played out in teacher student interaction and it seems important that those be raised to increased levels of awareness.

Teachers are not immune to unrealistic self-expectations, low self-esteem and idealization of authority figures. Jersild (1955) says teachers should look at themselves before entertaining the profession of teaching. His studies showed two things:

- (1) that the school should promote self understanding
- (2) nine out of ten teachers believed that the understanding of others is tied to self-understanding

The concept of knowing oneself can be a powerful experience. Increased self awareness may allow teachers to interact more healthfully and positively with students. Many researchers have invited teachers to face themselves, lead examined lives, be artists or reflective practitioners. Jourard (1964) invites teachers to have a sense of personal well-being through appropriate self-disclosure while at the same time recognizing the fear that may go with the task of being authentic.

Authentic means being oneself, honestly, in one's relations with his fellows. It means taking the first step at dropping pretense, defenses, and duplicity.... This invitation is fraught with risk, indeed, it may inspire terror in some (p. 153).

The potential of a positive classroom climate in which the hidden curriculum has positive, rather than negative effects has implications in terms of the teacher as person. Tonnelson (1981) concludes that within each classroom, students are taught the traditional subject matter courses and a hidden curriculum consisting of the teachers' personal biases. He believes, therefore, that the teacher must have a healthy self-concept in order to create a positive classroom climate where healthy emotional growth and maximum intellectual growth can occur.

Clarke (cited in Pimm, 1988) summarizes the potential power of the relationship between the teacher as person and the manner in which the teacher plays out his/her needs, beliefs and values 'play out' the hidden curriculum. As a teacher, Clarke studied Gestalt therapy "entirely by chance" and found it a "quite remarkably apt framework for understanding what goes on in people" (p. 181). Clarke says "there are some striking similarities between therapy and education" (p. 170). "The challenge facing both the educator and the therapist is to find ways of reaching that part in people that is *wanting* (to find out, to be loved, or whatever)" (p. 171). But she says,

you are not trained to understand in detail your pupils' process, you are not trained in ways which will minimize your own difficulties and reduce problems between yourselves and your pupils, from your own side. So at best you can only be sympathetic and kind, not truly 'understanding'. That may not be enough. You are taught to expect success and that it is your responsibility to ensure it (p. 179).

Without understanding, Clarke sees such responsibility as powerful, in that, it can lead to a hidden curriculum where "the alternatives may be to resort to controlling, to be frustrated or to become cynical" (p. 181). She says people can reasonably expect to encounter difficulties and "should have some means of understanding and dealing with what is happening"

(p. 181). Clarke suggests teachers become familiar with themselves as persons acknowledging that,

People go on behaving, all through their lives, and in all their relationships, in ways they have learned during their babyhood and in their school years. It is only when the behaviour is not chosen because of its suitability to the present context that it may be called "neurotic".... All of us go around, if we could look beneath the surface, dealing with our environment, and particularly with other people, in ways which are hung over from our upbringing and which do not fully take into account the changed environments now. We are all neurotic to some extent! It is what makes us the individuals we are. (p. 171)

The more teachers are clear about the messages they are giving students in their verbal and non-verbal behaviours, the more they are aware, and able to use that awareness in beneficial classroom interactions with students. This awareness includes knowledge of self from many perspectives including how the antecedents of personality, family and schooling background, professional training, and needs, values, beliefs and attitudes interact with powerful socializing influences on students, other teachers, administrators and parents.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter presents a description of the study, the methods and procedures employed in carrying out the investigation of teacher student interaction, and the effect, as perceived by students, of those interactions on learning opportunities. The data for this study were gathered between May and November 1990. The chapter includes a general description of the study, a description of the initial class interview phase, the development of the class interview format, a description of the subjects and their learning environments, description of the class interview data collection phase, data analysis procedures, and a summary.

General Description of the Interview-Based Research Study

The study was designed to gather data about student perceptions of teacher student interactions which enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom. The study was conducted in several communities throughout Greater Vancouver, a large metropolitan area on the western coast of Canada. To gather data about a range of perceptions across age groups, the study involved students from four different levels of education.

A research model established by Borgen and Amundson (1984, 1987) was adapted and used to elicit student perceptions through anecdotal accounts. Four groups of students were interviewed: a grade three class; a grade 5/6/7 split class; a grade eleven class; and an adult class. The data from the interviews were gathered in five ways: investigator observation, verification of investigator observations with classroom teacher and/or audio visual technician observation, recording of field notes, audio-tapes and video-tape recordings and in some cases hand written information from students.

Description of the Initial Class Interview Phase

The objective of the initial class interview phase was to allow for the determination of the suitability of interview-based research with large groups of students, using open-ended interview techniques. In the research model established by Borgen and Amundson, (1982), interviews were used to elicit perceptions through anecdotal accounts but the interviews were done on a one-to-one basis. The suitability of whole class interview procedure was determined by the following methods: comparing investigator observations with the classroom teacher observation after each

of the initial class interviews, analyzing the field notes, and reviewing the audio and video-tapes of the interviews. The effectiveness of whole class interviews was determined by the following criteria: the students' ability to articulate their learning experiences; (assessing) the time required to conduct large group discussions; students' willingness to self-disclose in that context; and the investigator's ability to discern important meanings in students' statements.

The University Ethics Review Committee at Simon Fraser

University approved the investigator's request for ethical approval of research (see Appendix A). For this initial class interview phase, the researcher contacted two teachers and asked for permission to informally test and record the initial class interview procedures in each of their classrooms. Both teachers were known to the investigator and their classes had been subjects of research projects in the past. One teacher taught in a private pre-school; the other in a grade 6/7 split in a public school. The private pre-school teacher contacted the appropriate authorities for permission to test the procedure. The researcher requested permission from the Director of Instruction in the public school for testing the procedure with the grade 6/7 class. Permission was granted in both cases on the understanding that the purpose of the research was to test the class

interview tools and not to gather data.

In the adaptation of Borgen and Amundson's model, the investigator was reminded of Bogdan and Biklan's (1982) perspective, that while there are no rules that you can constantly apply across all interview situations, a few general statements can be made. "Most important is the need to listen carefully. Listen to what people say. Treat every word as having the potential of unlocking the mystery of the subject's way of viewing the world" (Bogdan and Biklan, p. 59). The investigator worked in each of the groups to establish a climate of trust where the subjects could feel safe in disclosing their world view. Bogdan and Biklan say that "if you cannot understand, assume that you have not been able to comprehend. Return and listen and think some more. It requires flexibility" (p. 59). The investigator's ability to do this was based upon experiences in Education 819 - Studies in Teacher Student Interactions, and this interactive process is explained in detail in this chapter, in the section entitled Data Collection Procedures.

Throughout the entire study the investigator took great pains to remain non-judgmental, maintain neutrality and to avoid directing the students' thinking and responses beyond what was necessary to get

information for the study. Bogdan and Biklan (1982) say that

qualitative researchers try to interact with their subjects in a natural, unobtrusive, and nonthreatening manner. The more controlled and obtrusive one's research, the greater likelihood that one will end up studying the effects on one's methods. If you treat people as "research subjects" they will act as research subjects, which is different from how they usually act... Since interviewers in this type of research are interested in how people think about their lives, their experiences, and particular situations, they model their interviews after a conversation between two trusting parties rather than on a formal question-and-answer session between a researcher and a respondent. It is only in this manner that they can capture what is important in the minds of the subjects themselves (p. 30).

The pre-school in which one initial class interview took place was located in Richmond, British Columbia. This private pre-school is located in an early childhood education centre where all staff are accredited early childhood educators. It is located in a stable, largely two-parent, middle to upper socio-economic level neighbourhood. In her twenty-three years of teaching in this pre-school, the teacher reports little change with the exception of a "dramatic increase in both population and cultural diversity in the past ten years." The pre-school class consisted of twelve students whose average age at the time of the May class interview was five years. The centre and classroom were decorated with children's art, furnished with colourful pre-school sized equipment.

The kindergarten initial class interview began with an introduction of the researcher to the subjects. It was a "baking day" and the children were excited about making cookies. The teacher moved the investigator and subjects to an adjacent room because the baking supplies had been placed on the tables. The children resisted moving from their regular area. They moved slowly, made verbal protests and required prompting from their teacher. The interview room was used for storage and many of the youngsters demonstrated curiosity about the equipment and supplies stored there. There was a further distraction because one of the boys was in possession of a pair of scissors and made aborted attempts to cut flower making supplies. The teacher took the scissors away from him.

The researcher acknowledged how difficult it must be to be moved to a new location, to have to wait to make cookies and to try to speak one at a time. Once moved and settled, the subjects investigated the audio visual equipment and asked many questions. For example "*What's your name? How come you're here? How old are you? Are you Sarah's mommy? We have a video camera, is that a video camera?*" and protested "*When are we gonna make cookies?*"

The investigator began the interview by asking the children several questions about themselves, their school and "baking day." The investigator then informed them that she wanted to talk with them about learning. The investigator used the example of learning how to make cookies. The students' responses focussed on the interaction between themselves and the teacher. The investigator then asked the students how the teacher helped them learn other things.

It was found that the pre-school students were both able and willing to self-disclose in this context in the allotted interview time of 45 minutes. Although the investigator was able to discern important meanings in students' statements, the pre-schoolers were unable to articulate their perceptions in a way which could consistently be categorized. The limited vocabulary of five year-olds, although expressive, inhibited the communication of specific ideas and feelings.

For example, the response given by one subject, in conjunction with a very wide grin and eyes turned to the teacher, was "*I like Mrs. K., she's nice to me.*" This response could not be coded without further clarification of the word "*nice.*" When the investigator sought further explanation of

the word nice the response was, head and voice lowered, "*You know, nice!*" and then with head up and an annoyed look and voice raised in impatience, "*Nice!, Nice !*" Because of many such interchanges with this age group, it was decided not to gather the data from groups below third grade because of their limited vocabulary in expressing complex ideas.

The public school in which the initial class interview phase took place was located in Coquitlam , British Columbia. The school has both French Immersion and regular English classes. This English grade 6/7 split class interviewed consisted of thirty-two students. There were eleven grade seven students and twenty-one grade six students. The neighbourhood in which the school is located consists of working class, mixed single and dual parent families. The cultural diversity of British Columbia is reflected in the school population.

The investigator spent a few minutes with the teacher setting up the audio visual equipment and talking. This teacher had been teaching for over twenty years. She was both an art and drama specialist and her interests were evident in the classroom. The portable classroom was decorated in a cacophony of student productions. Ms. M. took obvious pride in the students' work displayed throughout the classroom, and

commented on how they had worked together to "*make this class their home .*"

She described the students as "*for the most part great kids and a few little buggers*" whom she believed were in her class because of her ability to tolerate and deal with them. She explained that many of these students are "*very interested in the opposite sex*" and therefore tend to "*act out*" for each other's attention. She said the girls "*primp and preen*" while the boys display "*aggressive verbal and shoving behaviour.*" She instructed the investigator "*don't worry about it, they enjoy talking about themselves. We have class meetings. They are used to being listened to.*"

The subjects entered the room and behaved as the teacher had predicted. The teacher introduced the researcher emphasizing she was a student "*just like you*" who "*needs your help.*" She then asked the students to re-arrange the room into a large circle. The teacher then explained the purpose of the study and the researcher said,

I am a university student gathering information about kid's school experiences. I have come to talk with you and listen about what school is like for you. The way we are going to do this may be very different from what usually happens in your classroom because I do not have the answers, you do and there are no right answers. Whatever you say is very good information for me to have. I just need to know it from your experience.

For instance, sometimes you might feel that grown ups don't understand how things are for you. But that is exactly what I want to know, how things are for you. Like, at your age you might feel like you are in love with someone. But, maybe your parents or teachers would think, or even say, "Oh, that's just puppy love." But that's not how you feel. Well, if you will tell me how you see it I would like to listen and that would be very good information for me.

The only thing I really need is that you talk one at a time so that I don't miss anything. Everything each of you say is very important to me and I would hate to miss anything cause I was trying to listen to more than one person at a time.

The earlier noted introduction of the investigator, by the teacher, appeared troublesome, in that, it engendered empathy. Borgen and Amundson (1987) believe that, by design, the interview-based procedure gives the opportunity to talk freely. However, given the freedom of the open-ended interview, the students were found to be not only spontaneous, uninhibited, curious and questioning, but also concerned about the investigator. They expressed concern that they provide the interviewer with the "right" answers to her study. One student inquired, "*Did we do good? Did you get the right stuff? Will you get a good mark?*" This observation was noted, verified with the classroom teacher and recorded for modification in the development of the interview phase introduction.

The grade 6/7 split students demonstrated willingness to self-disclose in the context of a class interview. It was found that the students' ability to articulate their learning experiences increased dramatically when inquiry was made into learning things they found difficult. Again, this observation was noted, verified with the classroom teacher and recorded for modification in the development of the interview phase introduction.

Although the students protested the end of the discussion, the time required to conduct class discussions was found to be adequate at forty-five minutes because a considerable amount of data had been obtained. The investigator further assessed that she was able to discern important meanings in students' statements and that extending the interview would not likely provide further information.

The researcher used Wassermann's "teaching for thinking" type responses (cited in Raths, Wassermann, Jonas & Rothstein, 1986) which classify teacher student interactions from a teaching for thinking framework (see Appendix B) and "Responses That Promote Reflection" and "Training in Attending" (Wassermann, 1991) (see Appendices C 1 - 7 and D 1 - 2) in her interactive patterns with the students.

To verify use of "teaching for thinking" responses, analysis of the video-taped pre-school class interview was conducted by a fellow graduate student familiar with the response categories and the senior supervisor. In addition, the fellow graduate student also analyzed the grade 5/6/7 split class video-tape interviews. Responses were found consistently reflective, non-judgmental, and facilitative of the students' telling their stories with a minimum of interruption or direction. Both the abilities of the investigator and research strategies were found appropriate for the study.

The objective of the initial class interview phase, to allow for the determination of the suitability of interview-based research with large groups of students, using open-ended interview techniques was met. As noted, the investigator met with the respective teachers immediately following the interviews. The discussion reflected on observations of process and techniques. After returning from each interview, the researcher made field notes (Bogdan & Biklan, 1982) which are made at the field site. In addition, data from the audio and video-tapes were analyzed and crosschecked with

personal observations. The information was combined with a review of open-ended interview questions and used in the development of the interview format.

Development of the Class Interview Format

The research model developed by Borgen and Amundson (1984, 1987) was adapted and combined with the qualitative research method of naturalistic observation (Bogdan and Biklan, 1982) in the use of interviews to elicit student perceptions through anecdotal accounts. According to Bogdan and Biklan, in naturalistic observation "qualitative researchers try to interact with their subjects in a natural, unobtrusive, and nonthreatening manner" (p. 30). "The data are collected on the premises and supplemented by the understanding that is gained by being on location. In addition, mechanically recorded materials are reviewed in their entirety by the researcher with the researcher's insight being the key instrument for analysis" (p. 27).

Naturalistic observation research strategies were incorporated with the data gathered during the initial class interview phase, and the aggregate

data were developed into a format for the interview phase that consisted of open-ended class interviews. First, it had been determined, from the initial class interview suitability trials in the preschool class, that although the investigator was able to discern important meanings in students' statements, the pre-schoolers were unable to articulate their perceptions in a way which could consistently be categorized. Therefore, it was decided that data would not be gathered from children below third grade to allow for increased complexity in thinking and in vocabulary.

Second, it was also determined that it was necessary to prepare a brief introduction to the investigator, the study, the procedures, and the audio visual technician and equipment. The introduction was designed to satisfy students' curiosity about the researcher, the study and the audio visual technician and equipment without arousing empathy for the investigator.

Borgen and Amundson's, (1982) research model used interviews to elicit perceptions through anecdotal accounts but the interviews were done on a one-to-one basis. During the initial interview phase consisting of interview-based research with large groups of students, open-ended interview techniques were found suitable for this study. As stated earlier,

the suitability of the whole class interview procedure was determined by the following methods: comparing investigator observations with classroom teacher observations after each of the initial class interviews, analyzing the field notes, and reviewing the audio and video-tapes of the interviews.

The data collection procedures were assessed in terms of effectiveness of gaining information about the students' experiences. The effectiveness of whole class interviews was determined by the following criteria: examining students' ability to articulate their learning experiences, assessing the time required to conduct large group discussions, students' willingness to self-disclose in that context, and the investigator's ability to discern important meanings in students' statements. Because both suitability and effectiveness met the needs of the study it was decided that the interview format would be maintained with the necessary modifications.

There were several components of the interviews which were similar in all cases. For example, the video camera and audio-tapes were set up prior to the beginning of each of the class interviews. Because it was noted during the initial interview phase that the audio visual equipment

was distracting, in each of the four interviews, the students were given several minutes to adjust to the equipment. Likewise, in each interview, questions were fielded about equipment and process. The audio visual technician answered the equipment questions and the researcher answered questions about the interviewing.

Description of the Subjects and Their Learning Environments

To gather data about a range of students' perceptions across age groups, the study involved students from four different levels of education. In order to help provide a context for the teacher student interactions, the schools, their settings, and the students are described in as much detail as possible without betraying the anonymity of the participants.

The researcher requested permission to carry out the study from the New Westminster School District (see Appendix E 1 - 2). It was stated that the researcher hoped to obtain data from students representative of a wide range of age and abilities. In order to assure a wide spectrum of learning experiences and perceptions the researcher requested interviews for one elementary, intermediate, secondary and an adult education classroom.

Permission to carry out the study was received from the superintendent of the New Westminster School Board (see Appendix F 1 - 3). The Superintendent of Schools then contacted two schools which she believed could provide for a range of student perceptions. A copy of the permission letter was sent to the principals of both the elementary and secondary schools. The Superintendent contacted the investigator by telephone, gave her the names of the principals, and told her to contact the principals directly. The Director of Community Education was contacted in person, gave approval to interview any adults who chose to volunteer, and suggested contacting the Program Coordinator. Bogdan and Biklan (1982) warn:

You may be sent to the school principal; often principals have an important say in these matters, although not ultimate authority. Their influence is felt in a variety of ways. If there are some forms to be filled out for a district committee that approves all research, the principal's support carries a great deal of weight. He or she is often the "gatekeeper." The principal usually will not go to bat for you unless he or she knows the teachers involved are supportive. Meeting and talking with teachers and others you plan to involve in the study may be a necessary step in getting approval (p. 58).

The investigator contacted the elementary principal by phone and was informed by the principal that he would seek volunteers for the study.

A grade three teacher and a grade 5/6/7 split teacher volunteered to have their students participate in the study. The secondary principal was contacted in person and he suggested three possible teachers who might be willing to participate. He indicated that the researcher was to make arrangements with one of three. A grade eleven English teacher volunteered to have his students participate in the study. The teachers who volunteered their students for participation in the study signed the Teacher Release Form (see Appendix G).

The four groups of students were: a grade three class; a grade 5/6/7 split class; a grade eleven class; and an adult class. The parents of the students in the three regular classrooms were contacted by letter (see Appendix H) for permission for their children to participate in the study. With the exception of one telephone call wherein a parent expressed concern about his child appearing on the video-tape, permission was granted. In the adult class, the Program Coordinator approached the instructors and it was decided that the researcher would meet with the class and ask for volunteers for participation. Six adult students volunteered to participate.

Generally, all the learners from the New Westminster school district and ranged in socio-economic status from upper-middle to low. The four groups of students selected for interviews had been in school from four to fourteen years and ranged in age from eight years to forty-seven years. The three groups of younger students reflected the cultural diversity of the New Westminster region. The populations of these classes were in the majority Caucasian, blended with other races, many of whom were second and third generation Canadians. There were also several new Canadian students in each class but particularly in the elementary classes.

Both the grade three students and the grade 5/6/7 split classes were in a school with a total population of 244 students and 13 teachers (11 regular, 1 ESL and 1 special education). The school was built in 1928. Both classrooms were on the second floor of the two story structure. The grade three class had a male teacher and the twenty-three students were taught part-time by the male school principal. They sat in standard, arranged in rows. The room was without decoration, devoid of children's art, and displayed no signs of either the just past or upcoming holidays. The principal introduced the researcher and chose to remain in the room for the duration of the interview. During the class interview, he intervened to

discipline the children either by verbal or non-verbal instruction indicating he expected quiet.

The grade 5/6/7 split class was in what had, until recently, been the library, and twenty-six students and desks were visibly crowded among book shelves. The female teacher indicated that she was willing to leave the room for the interview but when given a choice of staying, remained marking papers at her desk. The students were noisy and active and took some time to settle to the task of the interview. However, their exuberance and enthusiasm proved useful in that they were very forthcoming in telling their stories. In fact, this class interview went beyond the designated forty-five minutes. Eight female students chose to stay and talk through the recess break and the returning students asked if they "*could carry on*" or if the interviewer "*would come back again.*"

There were 1,355 students enrolled in the secondary school. The school was built in the 1960's and originally enrolled over 3,000 students. The complexion of the school had reportedly changed over time with changing demographics. The school included a diversified community education program offering such services as entry and re-entry training programs for adults, ESL classes and an Adult Learning Centre.

There were 30 students in the interviewed Block F English grade eleven class. The teacher chose to leave during the interview but returned for a moment, because he had forgotten something. The teacher remarked that the students in this class were particularly "good kids". The students communicated with one another in a friendly manner and the atmosphere was open and playful.

The six adult learners who volunteered to participate were in a re-entry program funded by the Federal Government and were all Caucasian, twenty percent of their classmates were, by program design, either visible minorities or handicapped. The government funding criteria set minimum requirements on minority and handicapped participation in the re-entry program. The other major criterion for enrollment in the program is long term unemployment. Most of the adult students were second and third generation social assistance recipient single parents. The six-month program includes lifeskills training, academic up-grading and work experience for long-term unemployed adults. These students have typically been early school leavers who have experienced little success in traditional school environments.

Description of Class Interview Data Collection Phase

For each interview the video camera and audio-tapes were set up and the students were given several minutes to adjust to the equipment. Questions were fielded about equipment and process. The audio visual technician answered the equipment questions and the researcher answered questions about the interviewing.

Prior to the interviews in the three younger classes, the teachers made a statement to the students allowing those who did not wish to participate the option of engaging in an alternative activity (see Appendix I). The interviews began with basic introductions similar to those used in the initial interviews and were adapted with language adjustments to be age appropriate for each group.

Before the whole-class interviews began, the students were asked to participate in re-arranging the seating in the classrooms so that maximum visual contact could be made with all students. In two of the three younger groups, it was decided to create a circle so that the researcher could

observe all participants. The adult students chose to arrange themselves along two tables with the researcher sitting opposite them.

The basic introductions were followed by discussions specifically designed to elicit information for the study. An attempt was made to focus the students away from particular teachers and onto their cumulative learning experiences so that patterns might emerge about their own learning. However, following Borgen and Amundson's (1987) criteria, the researcher stressed the importance of letting the participants tell their stories with a minimum of interruption or direction. The first student response was used to determine whether there was a clear understanding of the subject or whether further direction was necessary.

Grade Three Interview

The grade three introduction and first student response indicated that there was a clear understanding of the subject and no further direction was necessary:

Introduction

You've been to school for grade three, grade two and grade one and kindergarten. Remember all the teachers you've had? Take a second and think about the teachers that you had. (pause) I want you to think, remember some times when there were some really hard, some new stuff that was really hard, that the teacher was trying to teach you? Think about

that. (pause) What was it that the teacher did that helped you to learn?

Response

It was in the math and it was during which way the arrow was supposed to point in. Well, Mr. K told me over and over again. I finally got it.

This class interview took approximately forty-five minutes but at least ten minutes were lost in re-arranging the furniture prior to and after the interview. Also, considerable time was required for the questions and answers about the equipment and study. The students gave ninety-six responses. Each of the student responses was followed by an investigator response. Student responses were often short and sometimes expanded upon after the investigator response.

Some of the students gave no responses. The discussion was dominated by ten or twelve students. One of the students explained that several of the non-respondent students were English as a Second Language students. From the perspective of students in this grade three class, the teacher student interactions which appeared to enhance their learning demonstrated empathy, empowerment, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing. These findings from this interview are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Grade 5/6/7 Interview

The procedure for the grade 5/6/7 split class interview was similar to the procedure used for the grade three class with the exception that the classroom furniture was not re-arranged. The equipment was set up, students settled, basic introductions to the investigator were given, and questions were answered about equipment and the study. Then the following specific introduction was made:

Introduction

Remember all your school experiences. Will you try and remember, think back to the time when you were trying really hard to learn something. This has to be something that wasn't easy for you. Something maybe you didn't want to learn or you did want to learn but it was hard. What was it that the teacher did that helped? Or what was it that you did? What was it about you and the teacher together that helped you learn this?

Response

Well most of the time, people need the teacher to explain stuff, not just to say do this work, explain it thoroughly.

The introduction and first response given by the grade 5/6/7 split class indicated clear understanding and no further direction was necessary. This interview took approximately 60 minutes because several of the girls

indicated they did not want to stop talking. The interview continued with eight of the girls and did not end until the other students returned from recess. These students required very little time for the questions and answers about the equipment and study.

The students gave one hundred and twenty-four responses. The discussion was not dominated by any students, or group of students, and very few students gave no responses. The responses were longer and more expansive than in the grade three class. For example, there were several pairs of student responses without direction or interruption from the investigator and one instance of three successive students and two instances of five successive student responses. In the cases of successive students' responses the students were often "piggy-backing" on one another's ideas.

For consideration of the non-responsive students, the investigator invited students who wished to record their thoughts on paper. Several students responded to the invitation. From the perspective of this grade 5/6/7 class, teacher student interactions which enhanced their learning demonstrated: empathy, empowerment, genuineness and positive regard, and were self-esteem enhancing. These findings from the study are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Grade Eleven Interview

The basic interview procedure for the grade eleven interview was similar to the procedure for the two younger classes. The equipment was set up, classroom re-arranged, students settled, basic introductions to the investigator made, and equipment and study questions answered.

However, the introduction to the grade eleven class differed because initially there were no responses to the researcher's invitation to talk about the subject of the study. The students did, however, respond by means of verbal and non-verbal communication, talking and laughing among themselves. The researcher persevered and expanded the introduction.

Introduction

When you think back trying to learn something that was really hard for you or something that you knew, what was it that helped you learn it there? What did the teacher do or not do that helped you learn that better? And then what did you do to help yourself learn that better? I'm going to talk to you about the second question. What kept you from learning stuff? For yourself, and what keeps you from learning stuff now? Are there times when you come here today, and in your past, when you came, or did come down really ready to learn something? (pause..laughter) But for some of you, you won't feel ready to learn? Can you explain that to me? Are

there times when you feel really stuck and you just don't understand what's going on? And maybe we could talk a little bit about that. And then think about that and see if you can explain that to me, what's going on with you. And what helps you get past that kind of a feeling when you're really stuck? What is it about you with the teacher that helps you get past that? And, in the best of all possible worlds, if you could have your ideal world, what would help you learn better? And what would have to happen for that to occur? So I'm just basically going to open that up now, OK, and if I have to I'll ask you questions again but if not, I think I gave enough. So, who'd like to go first?

(pauseand laughter)

...Its hard to be first sometimes.

(more pause..... and laughter)

Response

...automatic quiet

one student to another... Jason... Well, what was the first part?

(Laughter)

The students laughed, talked among themselves and were silent until the introduction was repeated. Their teacher had left the room and returned momentarily and this may have contributed to the initial reluctance to speak. The introduction was reframed and repeated.

Introduction repeated

When the teacher is trying to teach you something really hard or ... remember when you were young. I don't know if this happened to any of you but when you had to learn the multiplication tables (laughter) and you're really trying to learn it, what is it that the teacher did to help you learn it?

Response

Can we say what the teacher didn't do?

Investigator

Absolutely. You can tell anything you want.

Once assured that all responses would be honoured, the students complained at length about one specific teacher. The researcher listened, responded and with a minimum of direction and interruption moved the students to the more general topic of their personal cumulative learning experience. The researcher also repeated her request that the students respond one at a time indicating that each response was important to the study. This second introduction and second student response were observed to be related to the needs of the study.

This class interview took approximately forty minutes. The thirty students gave one hundred and forty-six responses. Most of the student responses triggered responses by other students. At one time there were eighteen student responses without interruption or direction of the investigator. The responses were lengthy by comparison with the other groups of interviewed students.

Some of the students gave no responses. Some students responded more than others but the interview was not dominated by any particular

student or students. In consideration of the non-responsive students, the investigator invited students who wished to record their thoughts on paper. Several students responded to the invitation. From the perspective of this grade eleven group, teacher student interactions which enhanced their learning demonstrated: empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing. These conditions are congruent with classes at all three levels. These findings from the study are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Adult Class Interview

Although the basic procedure for the adult class was similar to the procedure for the younger classes, it differed in important ways. The equipment was set up and there were some questions about both the equipment and the use of the recorded materials, but students had previously met the investigator when she spoke to their class requesting volunteers for the study. Therefore, these adult students required very little general information. The following specific introduction began the interview:

Introduction

What I'm interested in is when there's a situation where a teacher, any teacher is trying to teach you something that is particularly hard for you, so think about that, not something that's so easy but hard, what is it that the teacher does in a classroom situation that helps you to learn it better?

If I can get you to answer one at a time but I'll make sure everybody gets to talk. If you think about a time, not necessarily in the recent past either, but in all your learning experience, your vast experience in the classroom, when a teacher is trying to teach something particularly hard, so it's something you were having real difficulty with, what was it that the teacher did that helped you learn, and what might help you to do this is to think of specific times, when you couldn't do your multiplication tables or something that's hard.

Response

He might show you a short cut or he might sometimes go through everybody's explanation and come up with a solution that everybody seems to understand it better afterward...input into explaining.

The adult students indicated by their first response that there was a clear understanding of the subject and no further direction was necessary. Their first response was observed to be related to the needs of the study. This class interview took less than forty-five minutes because it was started late and ended early due to shortened periods in the high school. The adult classroom is located adjacent to a bank of hallway lockers and the noise made it difficult to communicate. The six adult students gave sixty responses. Most of the student responses had an investigator response but

in many cases a second student built on the first student's response. In one case there were three student responses in a row. The responses were often short and sometimes expanded upon after the investigator response.

All of the students gave responses. One student was less responsive than the others who contributed equally. From the perspective of this class of adult students, teacher student interactions which enhanced their learning demonstrated: empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing. Once again, these conditions were congruent with the findings from the younger students. These findings from the study are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

During each interview, the researcher took the role of facilitator. In her interactions with the subjects, the interviewer used "teaching for thinking" (Raths et al, 1986) responses that encourage student reflections on the issues being discussed. All methods of recording data were similar in each case with the exception of some grade 5/6/7 split and grade eleven students who, as invited, recorded thoughts on paper. The interactions between the students and the researcher were audio and video-taped.

Data Analysis Procedures

The decision to take a qualitative approach in this research was made because of the study's descriptive nature. Data were gathered through the use of personal observations, post- interview discussion with the Simon Fraser University audio visual technician, field notes, handwritten submissions from two groups of students and review of video-tapes and audio-tape transcripts. Data from students' perceptions of teacher student interactions as recorded in interviews with four groups of students were systematically analyzed.

The analysis began with the viewing of the primary data on the video-tapes. The responses were summarized to categorize patterns of reported experience related to teacher student interaction. The patterns that emerged from the data were divided into "meaning units" (Borgen and Amundson, 1987). The "meaning units" were found by the researcher to focus on several components of interactions: (a) empathy, (b) empowerment, (c) genuineness/congruence, (d) positive regard, (e) respect and (f) self-esteem.

The "meaning units" were defined as:

Empathy - the ability to recognize, sense and accurately perceive and communicate understanding and acceptance of another's behavioural and verbal expressions of feelings with sufficient detachment to avoid becoming directly involved in those feelings.

Empowerment - non-controlling, non-possessive, non-judgmental behaviour on the part of the person "in power" that creates a safe atmosphere and gives decision-making power to others. This results in a perceived sense of enhanced cognitive competency and such psychological skills needed to successfully influence their environment.

Genuineness - authentic communication reflecting congruence of behaviour with feelings wherein the person is presented as what s/he seems to be.

Another term used in the literature which refers to this construct is congruence.

Positive Regard - an ability to relate in a very special empathic way, leading to an accepted understanding of another's inner world which communicates respect and facilitates self-esteem.

Respect - communicated attitudes (verbal and non-verbal) which demonstrate an acceptance of another as a person; a caring that is not possessive and which acknowledges feelings and the experience of personal meaning. Other terms used in the literature which refer to this construct include positive regard, warmth, non-possessive warmth and unconditional positive regard.

Self-esteem - appreciating one's own worth and importance and being accountable for oneself and to act responsibly toward others.

Reliability checks were used to verify the "meaning units" (patterns of students' responses) as well as to ensure the interviewer's skill in allowing the participants to tell their stories with a minimum of interruption or direction. There was some difficulty in securing a rater who was familiar with education and counselling and who was, therefore, qualified to view the tapes and provide reliability checks. Three potential raters were identified and approved by the researcher's senior graduate supervisor. Two were unavailable and the third volunteered.

The rater, Harold McAllister, M.A., was familiar with teaching and counselling but unfamiliar with the study hypothesis. The first purpose of the reliability checks was to make sure that the same "meaning units" or patterns were being identified by the researcher and rater. The second purpose of the reliability checks was to ensure that the subjects were "given the opportunity to talk freely about their experiences" (Borgen and Amundson, 1987, p. 181).

The rater was instructed to view the tapes and report on any patterns which emerged from the data. The rater attempted several times to secure information as to what data specifically was being studied. After consultation with the senior supervisor it was decided to state that the rater was to "simply observe and record any patterns he could see in the responses given by the subjects." The rater categorized patterns of student responses. The patterns that emerged from the data were found to be consistent with the "meaning units" found by the investigator. For example, when McAllister reported a pattern related to safety and decision-making power the student response was categorized as empowering.

Thus, reliability checks were made and the percentage of agreement was 96%. The rater's assessment of the tapes provided agreement in the

identification of "meaning units." Disagreement arose only in respect to the categorizations into "meaning units" of students' responses such as "*school should be fun*" and "*I don't learn when it's boring.*" For example, discussion between the rater and interviewer focussed on whether interactions which students found boring could be categorized as disrespectful, lacking positive regard or unempathic. MacAllister also found that investigator responses and interactions consistently met "teaching for thinking" criteria.

A transcription of the interviews was made in order to further verify the "meaning units" and researcher interactions. The data were summarized and the transcribed "meaning units" found to be consistent with those coded earlier by the researcher and rater. Researcher responses were coded and found to be consistently appropriate "teaching for thinking" responses that promote student reflection. Therefore, it was determined that the interviewing procedures met with Borgen and Amundson's (1987) criteria for interview-based research because the interactions "stressed the importance of letting participants tell their stories with a minimum of interruption or direction" (p. 181).

Summary

The research began with an hypothesis suggesting that the experience of the hidden curriculum enacted in teacher student interactions can be identified by students and can therefore be studied. The chapter presented a description of the study, methods and procedures employed in carrying out the investigation of teacher student interactions and their effects, as perceived by students, of those interactions on learning opportunities. The study took place in Greater Vancouver between May and November 1990. The chapter included a general description of the interview-based research study. It also included a description of the initial class interview phase where the interview-based research method was tested. The development of the interview format was described as were the rationale for determining the age of the subjects to be used and a general introduction to the researcher and the audio visual equipment. This chapter also provided a description of the subjects and their learning environments, a description of the class interview data collection phase, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four presents the results of the study and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter presents the anecdotal data from the study, in which students' perceptions of teacher-student interactions that are perceived to enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom are detailed.

Four groups of students were interviewed: a grade three class; a combined grade 5/6/7 class; a grade eleven class; and an adult level class. A total of eighty-five students were interviewed, and the breakdown of students and classes is presented numerically in Table 1.1 and by percentage in Table 1.2.

Number of Responses

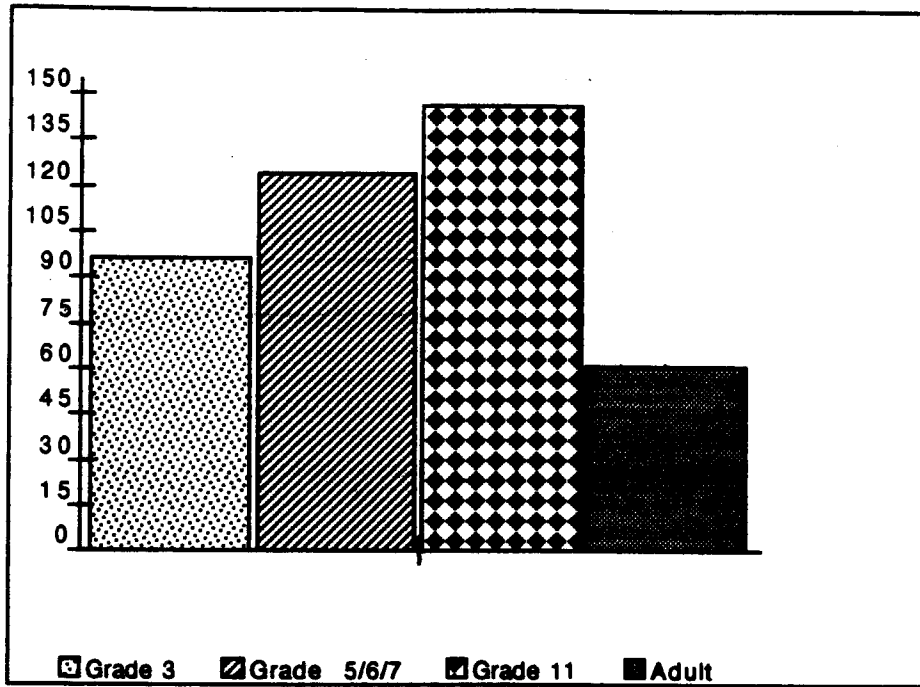


Table 1.1
Number of Student Responses by Grade

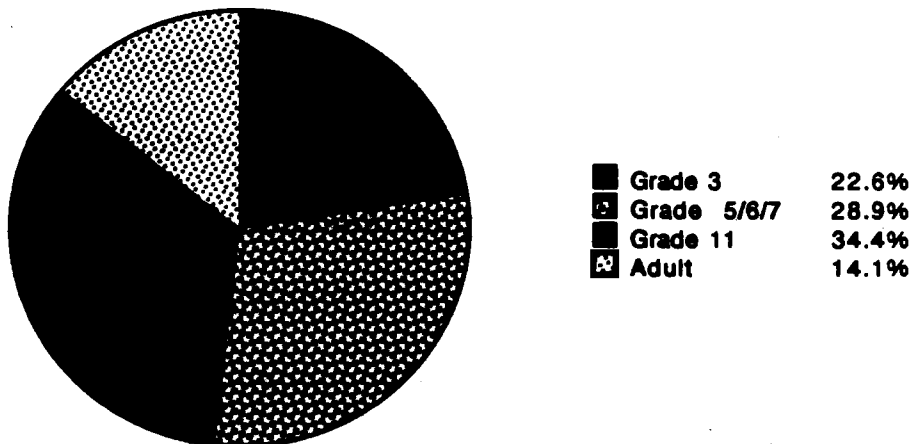


Table 1.2
Percentage of Student Responses by Grade

In order to make sense of the vast number of student responses, the responses were ordered into "meaning units" (Borgen & Amundson, 1987). These "meaning units" allowed for the classification of student responses into categories related to the interactive process. These "meaning units" were derived from the literature on teacher-student interactions, found in Chapter 2, and include the following categorizations:

- (a) Responses related to perceptions of empathy
- (b) Responses related to perceptions of empowerment
- (c) Responses related to perceptions of genuineness
- (d) Responses related to perceptions of positive regard
- (e) Responses related to perceptions of respect
- (f) Responses related to perceptions of self-esteem

The data gathered from student responses at all four levels of instruction indicate that students perceive teachers to make a difference in their learning. Students described experiences where a teacher's empathy and positive regard contributed to feelings of empowerment and self-esteem. Students indicated that the relationship developed by teachers with each student is an aspect of the learning process. Students also indicated that a teacher's non-authoritarian orientation is also learning enhancing.

Student responses also revealed that teachers who were perceived to like teaching, who liked students, and who communicated respect for students, and who created positive and safe environments in their classrooms also enhanced their learning.

In categorizing students' responses into the meaning units, the investigator's classification was supported by that of the rater's, thereby bringing greater congruence to these determinations.

It is important to note that among the four groups of students interviewed, students articulated their responses in different language, and with varying levels of complexity. For example, responses from the grade three class was markedly different in sophistication from those from the grade eleven class. With respect to the concept of empathy, for example, at the grade three level, a student suggested that "the teacher doesn't mind repeating" where at the grade eleven level, the students spoke of teacher's "patience." In terms of "positive regard," at the grade three level, this was mentioned as "the teacher sticks up for me," while at the adult level, the students were able to respond in terms of "can build rapport." Older students demonstrated the complexity of their thinking in more lengthy

responses, multiple responses (Table 2), and the inclusion of several "meaning units" within a single response. This complexity is discussed in detail for each instructional level in the interview sections.

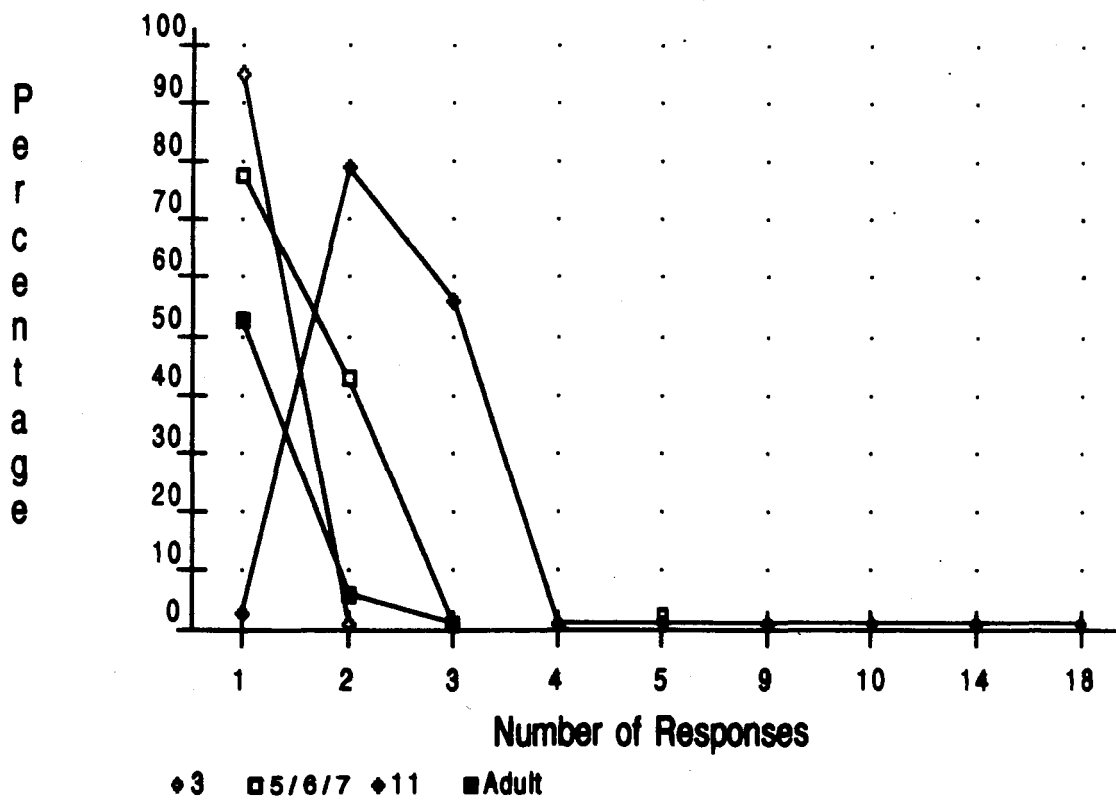


Table 2
Percentage of Multiple Responses by Grade

The responses for each instructional level are presented in the following tables: Tables 3.1 and 3.2, (Grade 3); Tables 4.1 and 4.2 (Grade 5/6/7); Tables 5.1 and 5.2 (Grade 11); and Tables 6.1 and 6.2 (Adult Class). All responses have been edited for brevity, as well as for continuity. In all cases, care was taken to ensure that neither the process nor content of the interviews was distorted in editing.

It should also be noted that given the constraints of the written word to present interview data, certain omissions are unavoidable. For example, it was not possible, nor feasible, to include references of affect, of voice inflection, of intonation, of pitch, of body language, in presenting these data. These messages of affect, must, regrettably, be considered outside the realm of this study.

Grade Three Interview

As noted in Chapter Three, the principal introduced the researcher and chose to remain in the room for the duration of the interview. During the class interview, he intervened to discipline the children either

by verbal or non-verbal instruction indicating he expected quiet. Both the investigator and rater perceived apparent tension or anxiety and a strong norm of compliance to adult direction and authority, as well as apparent tension or anxiety among the students.

The response data from this grade three class differed in two important ways from the response data from the three older groups. The grade three responses demonstrated less affect and primarily focused on present experience. This was in spite of repeated investigator invitations for reflection on past experience.

The grade three interview was forty-five minutes long. The students gave ninety-six responses. With the exception of two responses, each of the student responses was followed by an investigator response (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Student responses were often short and sometimes expanded upon after the investigator response. Some of the students gave no responses. The discussion was dominated by ten or twelve students. One of the students explained that several of the non-respondent students were English as a Second Language students.

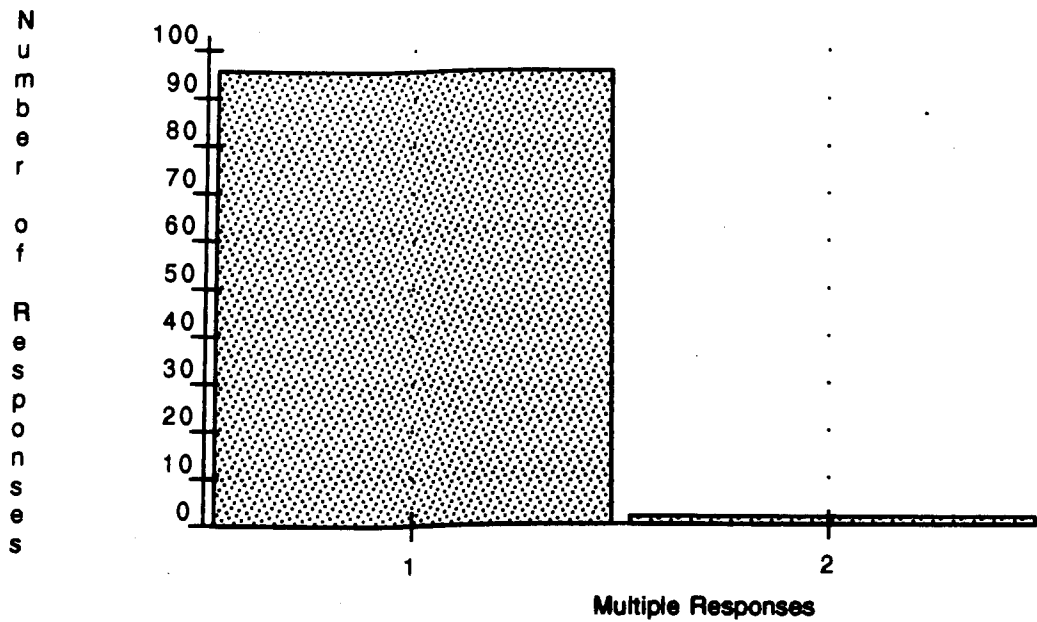
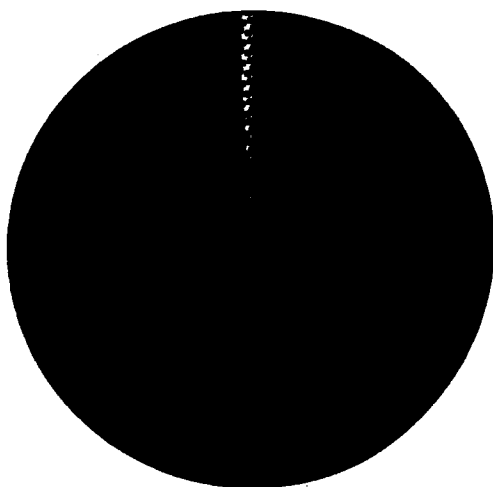


Table 3.1
Number of Multiple Responses in Grade 3



| | |
|---------------|-------|
| ■ 1 Response | 99.0% |
| ◻ 2 Responses | 1.0% |

Table 3.2
Percentage of Multiple Responses in Grade 3

The findings from the grade three interview indicate that when a teacher repeats instructions, explains, tells, shows how and helps "*without minding*," students perceived learning opportunities to be enhanced. The findings also indicate that when a teacher praises, encourages effort, provides opportunity for practice and "*sticks up for me*," learning opportunities are also perceived to be enhanced. In addition, from the perspective of the grade three class, learning is enhanced when teachers makes things fun and interesting. In terms of the defined "meaning units," respectful teachers acknowledge feelings and the experience of personal meaning.

The grade three responses have been arranged in "meaning units" except where to do so would disturb the continuity of the interview. With reference to their teacher's empathic ability to recognize, accurately perceive and communicate understanding and acceptance, the grade three students spoke of their need for repetition and help.

student

It was in the math and it was during which way the arrow was supposed to point in. Well Mr. K. told me over and over again, I finally got it.

student

And my teacher helped me.

investigator

How did your teacher help you?

student

Well, he never taught us anything, he just showed us.

investigator.
He showed you.

It would appear that teacher empathy contributed to the student's empowerment. The student continued.

student

Yeah, and then we would understand.
Uum, but I kinda learned it by myself.

investigator

Oh, you kinda learned it by yourself also.

student

uh hum.

investigator

The teacher said something you didn't understand and then did you have to kinda translate it in your own head?

student

Yeah.

investigator

Sometimes you have to learn things on their own.

student

Yeah.

This exchange triggered reports of similar experiences for several other students, who said:

student

Sometimes I have a little bit of problem, I mean, like our teachers first started teaching us French I had a little trouble and she got us to repeat it, and we all did.

student

He helped me with the first letter and then I knew the second one and then I get it wrong and he helps me.

investigator

It sounds like Mr. H. helps you quite a bit.

student

Uhuh, Mrs. R's class, the writing how to do math. I just experience it myself.

investigator

Did you! When these guys say the teacher helps that's one way to learn and you have another way to learn, that's experiencing it by yourself. Tell me how can the teacher help you to experience it by yourself?

student

They told me always to do, the right side... first before you go over to the other side. Instead of adding more of a problem.

investigator

The teacher gives you an instruction and then do they go away and let you do it yourself and then?

student

Yeah, the test.

investigator

Tell me about like a test.

student

They move you somewhere and they and then you have to do that all by yourself and then you get them all right.

investigator

The teacher tells you a way to do it and they let you go be by yourself, they let you go be by yourself.

student

See, they do it a lot of the time and you just try to remember it. Like three days before and then two days later they'll give you a test about it.

investigator

You get a chance to practice it and then you get a chance to try it out.

student

Yeah.

student

One time Mr. K was teaching us Math. We had to do this deal but I never knew what it was. I knew the number. Then I asked Mr. K what it meant and you have to add, and you have to see which, it's bigger and smaller and then I can understand and then I got this part right away, it's like 90 and then . And it says 90 again, and then it says plus 6. And then I have to add it up and then I can. And that's all.

The grade three students also reported experiences which were within the study definition of positive regard in that the teacher's ability to relate to them in a very special way, led to an accepted understanding of their own inner world and communicated to them messages (within the study definitions) of respect and self-esteem.

student

I want to say something that when I was in kindergarten and used to be very shy and I would always sit usually in the same spot and go to the same centre and now I feel, everything I try, things I make. Things I've never even tasted before tasted and now I like it a lot.

investigator

You're more willing to take a risk now and try new things. You think the teacher has something to do with that?

student

Yeah, when I was in kindergarten she always told me, "it's your turn to get up." And they would encourage you a lot.

Again the response of one student triggered the response in another. As the grade three students expanded on positive regard and respect, they reported esteeming experiences. The grade three students reported that the teacher enhanced learning opportunities by increasing their attention in ways that were personally meaningful or "*fun*."

student

I wasn't paying much attention, right, and then he said this is really fun . So I really paid attention.

Another grade three student recounted his experience of how the teacher's positive regard promoted his self esteem.

student

He told me to be proud of yourself.

The grade three students' responses did not fall within the study definition of genuineness or congruence. However, it was implicit in the anecdotal accounts of the grade three's experience that they were aware of genuineness. Therefore, this study did not specifically find genuineness to enhance learning from the perspective of the grade three students. From the perspective of students in this grade three class, the teacher-student interactions which appeared to enhance their learning demonstrated empathy, empowerment, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing.

Grade 5/6/7 Interview

From the perspective of this grade 5/6/7 class, teacher-student interactions which enhanced learning were: free of "put-downs" and rejections, positive and patient, and sensitive to student moods. Learning enhancing interactions also included: suitable explanations; trust and belief in students; honouring of individual differences; and giving power and responsibility to students. Students perceived that their learning opportunities were enhanced by teachers' influence on the classroom environment by making it: relaxed; comfortable; "safe"; and low stress. Teachers were also perceived to: promote interactions and relationships among students; make content and curriculum interesting; provide choices and student-determined direction.

As noted in Chapter Three, the grade 5/6/7 students gave one hundred and twenty-four responses. The discussion was not dominated by any students, or group of students, and very few students gave no responses. The responses were longer and more expansive than in the grade three class. As presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, for example, there were several pairs of student responses without direction or interruption

from the investigator and one instance of three successive students and two instances of five successive student responses. In the cases of successive student responses, the students were often "piggy-backing" on one another's ideas.

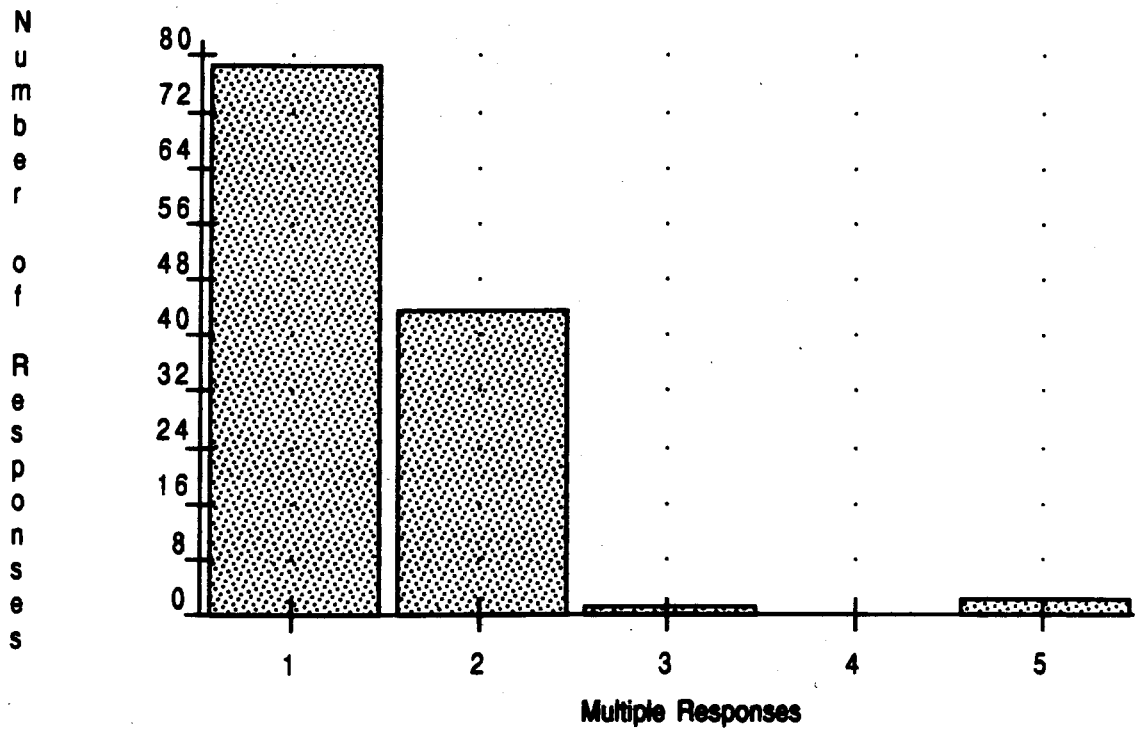


Table 4.1
Number of Multiple Responses in Grades 5/6/7

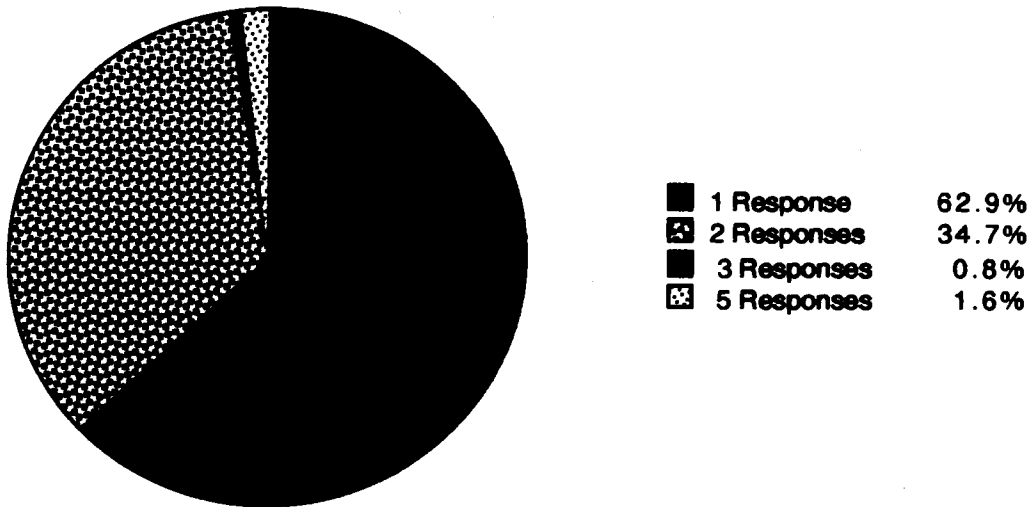


Table 4.2
Percentage of Multiple Responses in Grades 5/6/7

The grade 5/6/7 responses have been arranged in "meaning units" except where to do so would disturb the continuity of the interview. For consideration of the non-responsive students, the investigator invited students who wished to do so, to record their thoughts on paper. Several students responded to the invitation. The written responses have not been included but were used as supporting data for the verification of investigator findings.

The grade 5/6/7 students articulated experience in all six of the "meaning units" as defined by the study. With reference to empathy, the students spent some time talking about how teachers communicate both

verbal and non-verbal "put downs". They felt they were able to discern whether the teacher was genuinely communicating congruence of empathic feelings with behaviour.

student

Yeah, if they act really fed up or if they act like they don't really want to teach it to you

The students spoke of being empowered with the opportunity to find their own sense of timing and to be responsible.

student

Well some teachers will give you a certain amount of time like two weeks to finish a novel study or whatever and during that amount of time you don't have to do so much on one day or whatever, I mean it's good to have the choice but some people they could abuse it, like wait until the last day to do all the work and it just doesn't get done.

investigator

Let me ask you a question. So what if they wait until the last day? Like some people would take two weeks and do a little bit everyday. So what if they wait until the last day?

student

Well, it wouldn't get done and the people

student

How do you know?

student

Well the people, most likely it wouldn't get done and the people who took the time to do it before would succeed in getting it done.

investigator

And others would just have to experience failure?

student

Well not necessarily failure. It's more like responsibility.

investigator

Oh responsibility. Maybe what happens is the teacher gives you deadlines so that you'll be responsible. Does the teacher help you be responsible?

student

Well it does help for responsibility, I think.

The grade 5/6/7 students perceived empowerment as the teacher behaved in non-controlling, non-possessive ways and created an atmosphere where they felt they had some decision-making power.

student

I think you should be able to work with the people that you can work with the best because if you're working with someone you don't very well like that much or anything you can maybe not do your work as good as when you're working with someone you like.

When discussing the differential treatment of students by teachers, this class indicated a perceived positive regard on the part of the teacher that enhanced their feelings of respect and esteem for themselves and other students. These students reported an awareness and acceptance of themselves as individuals and appeared to value individual difference in others as well.

student

Some people like different stuff and (name) likes different stuff than other people in school. Like some people draw stuff instead of doing math and that. Some people make noises and do other things and some, the other people do their work and do lots of other stuff and speak.

This expression of positive regard for one another promoted a response which indicated awareness of the need for safety which was within the study definition empowerment.

student

I'm a shy girl and I don't really like to talk in the whole class cause I think that sometimes, like people will laugh at me, they won't like what I'm going to say and so like I'm scared to say what I really want to say. So I would just end up saying it and it would seem wrong.

From the perspective of students in this grade 5/6/7 class, the teacher-student interactions which appeared to enhance their learning demonstrated empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing. With the addition of genuineness, these findings were consistent with the findings from the grade three class.

Grade Eleven Interview

From the perspective of the grade eleven students, learning was enhanced when teachers were encouraging, supportive, and praised efforts. Learning opportunities were inhibited when the students felt the teacher was criticizing or putting them down. Students also indicated a need for the teacher to: accept and honor student thinking and student responses; to be interested; respectful of other students; and to provide explanation at an appropriate level.

These students perceived their learning to be enhanced by teachers who were: dynamic, enthusiastic, friendly, accepting, caring, patient and not power or dominance oriented. The students perceived that teachers' ability to personalize the teacher-student relationship, the interest in students as individuals and a genuine enjoyment of teaching and students promoted: learning, student cooperation, safe expression of ideas and opinions, and student self-evaluation.

As noted in Chapter Three, this class interview took approximately forty minutes. The thirty students gave one hundred and forty-six responses. As presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, most of the student responses triggered responses by other students. At one time there were eighteen students responses without interruption or direction of the investigator. The responses were lengthy by comparison with the other groups of interviewed students. Although edited for brevity, these grade eleven student responses appear in the order in which they occurred to retain the flavour of the interview and to demonstrate the flow of student perceptions.

Some of the students gave no responses. Some students responded more than others but the interview was not dominated by any particular student or students. In consideration of the non-responsive students, the investigator invited students who wished to record their thoughts on paper. Several students responded to the invitation. The written responses are not included but were used as supporting data for the verification of investigator findings.

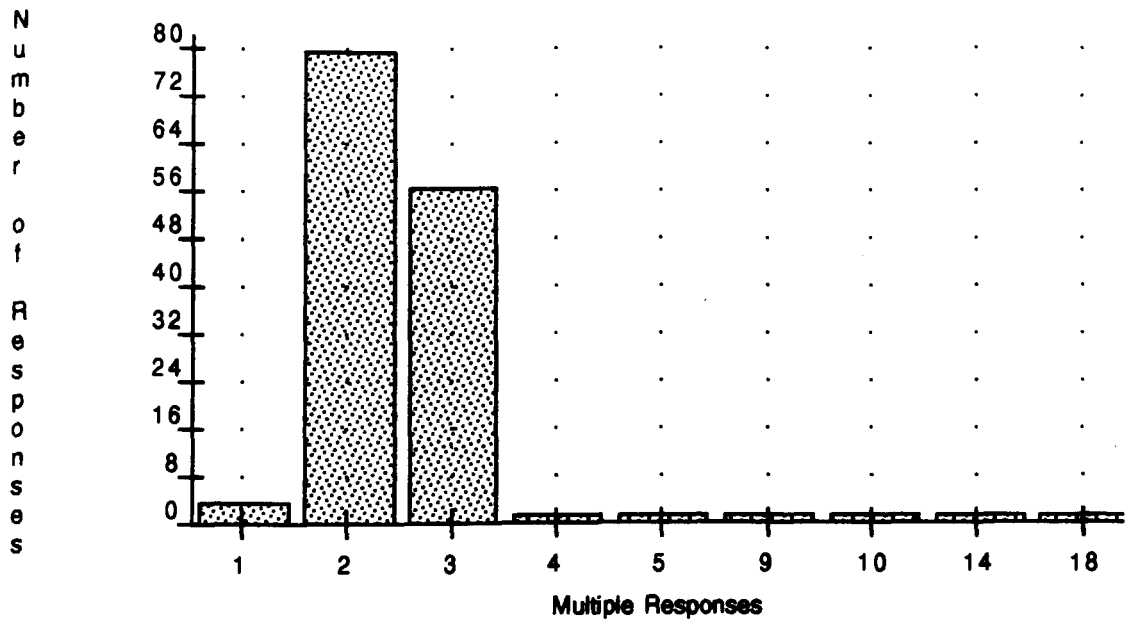


Table 5.1
Number of Multiple Responses in Grade 11

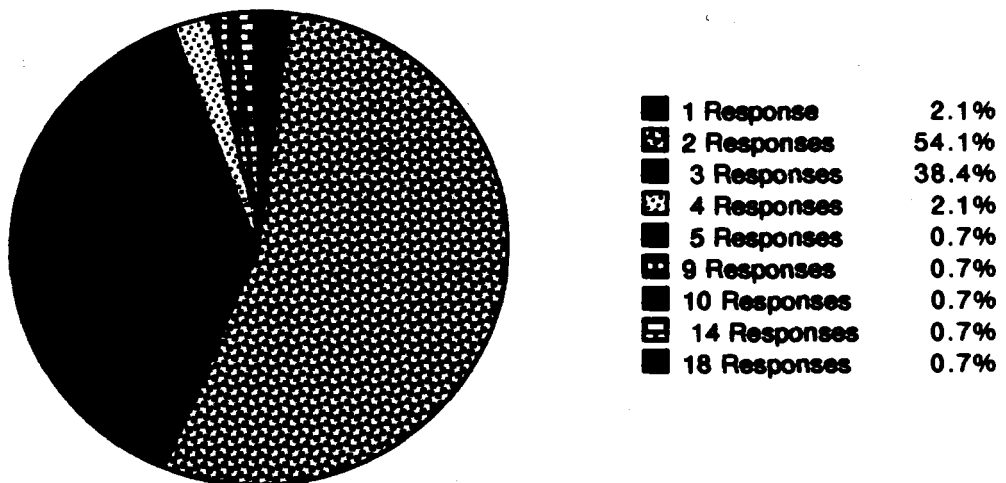


Table 5.2
Percentage of Multiple Responses in Grade 11

The grade eleven students reported experiences of positive regard wherein the teacher communicates an ability to relate to and respectfully accept the student's inner world.

student

It's impossible. I think the problem I have is he explains it and he must have a degree in physics or whatever, but he explains it so he like understands but we're like whuuh, you know, he goes right over our head. I think when we're talking about like formulas, for me it would be easier if he just gave us the formulas but he draws out all the diagrams and then does all this. And he derives all these, and you have a page and a half of calculations that shows how he gets this and you still aren't sure which is the actual one you're supposed to use so totally confusing. He over-explains it and then you ask him a question it's just, you get snowballed with all this stuff. You don't like to ask him a question because you get more confused cause he goes through all this explaining the formula. Like I'd ask him what formula I'm supposed to use and he'd explain.

student

You just want, just give me the bottom line.

student

Yeah, so I know how to do it and then, the first main thing for me is that I'd go home and have the homework and have no idea how to do it, like I'd get 75% of it done or whatever and then I'd have to go back the next day and try to get him to explain it to me. But I'd never understand it because of the way he explained it. I think the way he explains it is the way he understands it but it's not the way we understand it.

student

So he doesn't, it seems to you he doesn't even know where you're coming from.

student

No.

student

He's almost totally in his world and not paying attention to you as a learner.

student

Uh hum

According to the students, the positive regard and accepted understanding communicated respect and facilitated self-esteem and the reverse was also true.

student

And then he keeps saying well you must not have this basis in math . Like that's our fault.

student

And all of a sudden you feel stupid!

student

Yeah, like he says, (laughter), I guess you don't know this math yet.

student

Well its your problem!

student

Yeah!

student

If I can't teach it to you its your problem!

student

Yeah, something like that. And I don't see how its our fault if the two curriculums don't come together like if the math doesn't follow up to where the physics is. Someone has to teach us what we don't know and he kind of seems to think it's not his responsibility and somebody else should do it.

student

This is about the same teacher but uh, (laughter) but when you ask a question or something, if you don't understand you should ask a question. And he tries to make you feel like you missed something. That everyone missed, he just, you just missed it, you've missed it and do you feel like you're stupid! And then you don't feel like asking any more questions.

student

Yeah

student

Which is bad, because, you know, if you have a question you should ask him.

student

I find that the teachers always trying to rush too much. They're always trying to cram everything in. Like they'll say something and it's like they expect you to remember. The first time but it's like they're going so fast how are you supposed to keep up? I don't know, it seems like they're cramming too much down your throat.

investigator

So are you feeling that the teacher doesn't....

student (interjection)

Not in all my classes, just in a few of them, it just seems like the school board or whatever is giving them all this work and they have to teach it, it's just too fast in order to keep up.

investigator

So its almost that the curriculum has to be done and that's all that they're going to put to you regardless of what's going on.

student

He doesn't care, if he's going to do that why not give it to us all at one time? He's just throwing it at us so constantly he's not teaching us.

The grade eleven students perceived the need for control on the part of some teachers. They appeared to understand the dilemma teachers face with curriculum yet felt disempowered when not given decision-making power.

student

What was said about the teachers having a difficult time with this thing called curriculum and I find it kind of useless - learning this novel I don't want to know and wonder if I'll learn something from. The rest of the time there's a whole bunch of very bored students who are all bogged down, not wanting to learn. And I've been in situations, group situations and everyone wants to learn. You learn from each other just, not just from the teacher, its kinda like you learn from osmosis, sit there waiting for a learning process, so most teachers I find have this problem. It's like being forced fed.

This response triggered another student to speak about communicated attitudes of respect for the students' ability to learn and acceptance of individual differences.

student

For some of us, there's so many people, like from the grades 8 - 10 we had sort of an enhanced class where everyone in the class wanted to learn. And it was called the challenge class and there's lots of people there helped each other a lot of the times. If the teacher couldn't help you had someone else in the class help you a lot. And now a lot of the classes aren't like that. It's difficult for some of the people that are at the bottom because they sometimes fall behind when the teacher is moving forward because if one person that is really outspoken is smart and they always say, "oh yeah, I understand" then he just moves on and forgets about the lower ones.

The students then shifted discussion to the perceived ability of the teacher to demonstrate empathy by recognition and communication that students' behavioural and verbal expressions were understood and accepted.

student

Well, sometimes it's not, sometimes it's some of the bright kids that don't understand and they have problems getting over it because he doesn't realize people are being left behind.

student

Um, you were talking about individuals, everybody has different needs. I think that's valid but the unfortunate part is you have one teacher and they have 30 people in that class. If we went for everybody's individual needs I mean that would be perfect. That would be excellent and learning, you know, but the unfortunate part is we only have one teacher and we have 30 people and that one teacher also has to teach other classes, that's unfortunate. If we had one on one that would be good, I think that would be really good.

The responses then returned to the lack of positive regard and the perceived effects of that on student self-esteem.

student

I'm in the stupid class, block E students. You have a day off and you end up feeling stupid.

investigator

And what's happening to your learning.

student

Just one thing I want to say. I think it's better that a teacher doesn't compare you to other students but compares you with where you've been and where you are now so you see your own improvement.

investigator

Progress is your own.

student

Yeah because essentially you're interested in your own progress, right? I'm not saying you don't care about how anyone else is doing but you know what's important is your grades, where you've been and where you're going.

investigator

What helps you to learn is if you were evaluated on your own progress.

student

Yeah, well I'm just saying I don't think a teacher should put down students because he thinks they're stupid.

investigator

You've had that experience.

student

Well, once in a while.

student

So you don't notice it. There's lots of ways you can say it.

investigator

Oh there's lots of ways to tell you you're dumb?

student

Yeah (much agreement and laughter).

The students reported an ability to perceive genuineness in their teachers. They looked for congruence in the communication of behaviour and feelings. They perceived empathy and respect and also perceived a lack of it at times.

student

Well, there's like a, say if he's asking you a question or something in class and you want a little bit of time to think about it. You know the answer, you know, but you want to elaborate on it he'll kind of brush you off and go to someone who he knows knows the answer. So it's, you're sitting there going, "what should I do?"

student

It's patience mostly.

student

Giving you reaction time, time to get your thoughts together.

student

They don't let you.

student

It seems whoever gets the answer fastest is the smartest.

student

(Much agreement)

student

Yeah. (laughter) It takes me a little time to get things.

(laughter)...several times. I don't get time to do that in class.

student

What Mitch says, when you miss out like that, then you can barely get by.

investigator

It can't feel very good.

student

No.

investigator

And its not that you don't want to learn.

student

No, I want to learn!

investigator

What would help.

student

Patience.

From the perspective of the grade eleven students the lack of positive regard included the inability to relate with empathy and respect.

student

I had this teacher last year in math and he always said, "well you guys are gonna work in a gas station for the rest of your lives, or you're gonna be stupid" and...

student (interjection)

And you're gonna work in gas stations for the rest of our lives and we're stupid and it really put us down, our self-confidence, it was really hard.

student

That's really mean isn't it?

As the study definition states, the communication of positive regard leads to an accepted understanding of another's inner world which, in turn, communicates respect and facilitates self-esteem. As the students explained, from their perspective, the reverse was also true.

student

It really put us down.

student

Yes, pissed the whole class off. I mean, at the end of the year I bet you almost half the class was gone. They never came or he just said get out, I don't want you back. Or, because of his attitude. Just because we were modified, we were stupid and we were going to work in gas stations the rest of our lives and tell us what's bad. I remember he told one guy, "you're stupid, get out of my class and don't come back again. You don't bother working." I always thought he was doing work but he thought he was stupid.

investigator

You mean this kid wasn't stupid?

student

Yeah. I knew he has, can, be smart but!

investigator

Well, it appears they've been called stupid but you guys know they're not stupid.

student

Yeah, but he was just teaching everything like he didn't give you a chance to . Like he didn't have patience at all . Like there was abuse all the time and then, it never used to bother him.

student

He'd, everyday he didn't go back and review it. When it came time for the test he'd get back at you and say what you guys do is crappy and, just!

student

I know the teacher Mark is talking about. I had him last year too. And there was one student in the class and he managed to kick him out three times in one year. He wanted to learn. He kept coming back and saying I'm going to learn. Teacher didn't want him back. I think it's a matter of he has to build up the self-confidence of his students.

investigator

The teacher has to do something that allows you to have self-confidence.

student

Yeah

investigator

What could the teacher do?

student

Well, I mean just treat us with a little bit of respect.

student

Yeah, respect.

student

Being stupid, working in gas stations the rest of your lives!

The students continued the interview and identified genuineness, as authentic communication reflecting that the teacher presented himself or herself as what she or he seemed to be.

student

The worst teachers I had are usually at the front of the class and there's almost a barrier between them and the class. They don't understand what's going on in the class and the class doesn't understand what's going on with them. And if no one were in the class they'd still be teaching the same thing (laughter). They'd still be going on.

student

Like they're programmed.

student

But the best teacher I've had is grade 9 science. He controlled the class and yet he was a friend with every person in the class. There was never any person I knew who was left out or didn't answer a question. And he let us talk a little, like he and if you want to talk a bit more about that situation. And yet there would be a point when he would say, whatever. You know, be quiet, this is what you gotta do and it's time to get it done. And everybody did it because they respected him because he let them talk, he let them have more room. So when he said something they knew it was important.

student

And he was dynamic too.

student

Because he enjoyed it, that teacher, I think.

student

Yeah, I had him last year and he was awesome.

student

He was a really good teacher.

student

He had enthusiasm

student

Yeah, he was like a teacher that was happy about his job, he loved being here all the time.

student

I think that's what respect kinda is, their enthusiasm. I mean he explains a bit and he's jumping all over the place and doing this.

The students perceived that they were empowered by the genuineness and congruence of their teachers. They felt their learning opportunities were enhanced in a safe atmosphere where they felt powerful. This apparently resulted in a perceived sense of enhanced cognitive competency.

student

Also when he, when you asked him a question he wouldn't answer you because he wanted you to try and explore and learn it yourself and then he'd go "discuss it with your neighbor or something and try and figure it out." Or he'd give you a hint or sort of hint at what it was about but he wouldn't say exactly outright say it because he thought for the learning process to happen it was easier if he sorta made you think about it. And it worked because everyone in the class could usually think about it and if you didn't understand it you ask a question, even if the question to him seemed stupid he wouldn't actually ever say it. But say, "well, that's not actually very relevant but I'll give you the answer." And he'd tell us about it anyways so he never made you feel bad if you said something wrong.

student

No matter what you said in that class, it was accepted.

student

Yeah, he liked learning, cause he learned from us while we were learning from him.

student

The teacher learns also and he'd say that. He'd say, "I'm not sure. Why don't we figure it out together."

student

I think like respect and stuff, is enthusiasm because its contagious. If they're happy and excited about being there then you're like, "Oh, it must be really good, what's going on?" So then you're kinda excited to be there too and then you respect them for like being interested and having enthusiasm. Because I think the worst teachers I ever had have kinda been like "Well, you know, I'm here doing my job

and I get paid and it's got a good pension plan and that's why I'm a teacher and I've got a long summer holiday and that's why I like teaching." Its' not like I really like teaching and I think you guys are exciting and, you know. ' It seems to be the good teachers are young.

student

Yeah, the ones that are just out of school.

student

Cause they work so hard and they do so much stuff.

student

They're so excited about, they feel like they're still in school themselves.

student

I mean there's still older teachers that have that, that really enjoy it but I think the majority of the best teachers are young teachers. Cause they're not, they like it and they're happy about being there and they want teaching, they want you to learn. And they're glad when you learn. They're not like "Yeah, you're outta my class and I don't have to deal with you anymore" but they're happy.

student

They're not tired. And they know you as a person. Some don't know you outside the classroom. They only know you by your seat number...but they don't know you outside of the classroom.

student

They'll talk to you when they see you outside or in the hall, "what are you doing this weekend?"

student

They have interest in you as a person, not you as just a grade that they have to give.

student

Because some of them, some teachers, you just occupy a desk and the next class someone else occupies the desk and it doesn't matter who you really were as long as you showed up for class. Like they couldn't care and they'll just lecture. It's all kinda monotone and "I have to be here and that's why I'm doing it." There's other teachers, it's like, you know, they're excited that it's you. They're excited about what they're teaching and they're excited and it seems like they care about you learning it and if they care about you learning it they're more likely to teach it to you how you understand it.

The perceived genuine communication of empathy and respect translates in students' experience as positive regard that enhanced learning opportunities.

student

And then you care about learning.

investigator

So it's, let's see if I got it, that it's the relationship between you and the teacher that facilitates learning.

student

uh hum

student

Because people were talking about different learning styles but if the teacher, the young teacher, if they know, like they're talking about your mom, your dad and how you're having a fight or whatever. They're more interested in you and how you'll learn it so if it takes to read it out loud if you learn by hearing, then they'll do that. Or if it takes you staying after school and discussing it or just talking to you then they'll do that.

student

They'll adapt to you.

student

The thing is that if the teacher cares for you and you care for the teacher, what they're teaching you know is important to them so you want to learn for the teacher as well as for yourself. So that's the way, how a caring teacher can help you learn, through that, to motivate you.

student

Whenever, all the teachers I've enjoyed and the ones I haven't enjoyed are the ones that kinda arrived at 8:30 and they're outta here when the 3 o'clock bell goes. They're there but they don't care about the students. A lot of the teachers I liked I'm friends with. They'll come to me to talk to you, like if they see you in the hall they'll start a conversation or something but there are teachers who walk right by like they've never seen me before, you know. Its not, I don't feel bad about it but I wonder why can't they even acknowledge

that I'm there kinda thing. But uh, you see a teacher out there, he always used to be, he'd be there early every morning in case I had problems in class, or after class, and it wasn't so much the problem I had with the work in class, even if a problem I had outside of school. He used to help me and other friends with their problems, you know. A lot of times it's not really the academic, they're stressing it but they're also concerned about you as a person. You know, you know they're there.

The conclusion of the interview focused on the impact of the relationship students had with their teachers and how that relationship affected their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. One student wondered how teachers could be taught to be understanding.

student

I just think the teachers that are best are ones that have relationships with the class..

student

I feel like if the student and the teacher have a relationship the student will want to come to class because they don't, so that's why all these kids are skipping because. You know, "Why am I here?"

investigator

So for you the most important thing is the relationship between you and the teacher.

student

And if he doesn't do that then why bother to come to class because I'm not learning anything. That's why there's so many kids dropping out of school because it's impossible and you feel stupid. Maybe more teachers that understand students better.

investigator

Maybe more teachers that understand students better. More teachers that are willing to have a relationship.

student

But how do you teach that. What course can they take in university that's going to teach it?

From the perspective of this grade eleven group, teacher-student interactions which enhanced their learning demonstrated: empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect and were self-esteem enhancing. These conditions are congruent with classes at all three levels.

Adult Class Interview

From the perspective of the adult students, teachers who build rapport, communicate their liking of students, and provide personalized attention enhance learning opportunities in the classroom. These students stated an ability to perceive whether teachers were genuine, enthusiastic, fair, respectful (to everyone) and demonstrated a "belief in students." The adult students perceived that a fear of rejection or ridicule led to an unsafe learning environment. The students also saw the necessity for accurate perception of the students' level of understanding and ability.

As noted in Chapter Three, this class interview took less than forty-five minutes because it was started late and ended early due to shortened

periods in the high school. The adult classroom was located adjacent to a bank of hallway lockers and the noise made it difficult to communicate. The six adult students gave sixty responses. As presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, most of the student responses had an investigator response but in some cases a second student built on the first student's response. In one case there were three student responses in a row. The responses were often short and sometimes expanded upon after the investigator response. All of the students gave responses. One student was less responsive than the others who contributed equally. As was the case with the grade eleven student responses, the adult responses appear in the order in which they occurred to retain the flavour of the interview and to demonstrate the flow of student perceptions.

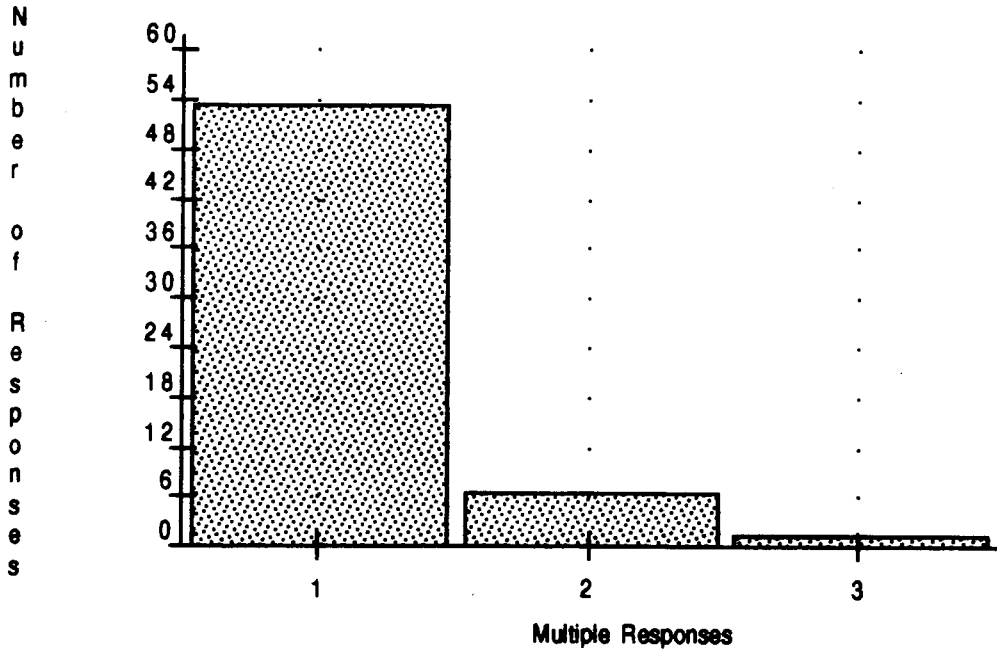


Table 6.1
Number of Multiple Responses - Adults

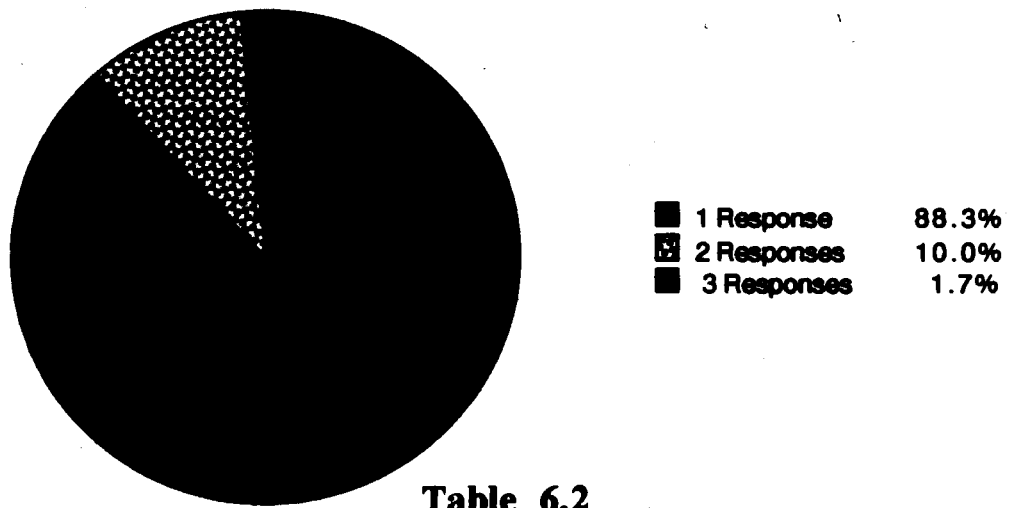


Table 6.2
Percentage of Multiple Responses - Adults

The adult students began the interview with discussion of empathy and positive regard as communicated genuinely by teachers in a manner which they perceived as respectful.

student

Allowing you to ask questions if you're not clear, and not making you feel you're taking up the teacher's time. Like ah, making that clear at the beginning.

investigator

It's really important for you that the teacher makes it real clear to you that you can ask a question without feeling like you're taking up too much of the time.

student

Or not asking a stupid question.

investigator

Or not even asking a stupid question. It's very important for you that you ask any question you want without being made to feel stupid.

student

A teacher for me has to sit down and be willing to spend at least an hour on something that's worth it and not complain about it until I learn it.

investigator

The teacher has to spend enough time until you're comfortable, real comfortable, and you need to not get any sense that that bugs the teacher at all.

student

Right.

investigator

That they're just there with you, they stay with you until you feel you've learned it.

student

Uh-hum.

student

No time pressure.

student

I work better with a teacher who's patient than someone who gives you vibrations that they're impatient with you. For me I work best with a teacher that's patient.

investigator

And you have a sense, though, when somebody's impatient.

student

I guess you feel like...and that makes me kinda wonder, "well!"

investigator

And there's something that the teacher does that causes you to feel "ooh, they're getting impatient here, I better hurry up, I'm stupid."

student

It creates that mind block too. Where the teacher is more open and encourages you in the class.

investigator

Maybe you could tell me more about what a teacher, what it is a teacher does that lets you know that teacher is impatient.

student

They give looks, the teacher looks at you, um, not really listening to what you're saying, to the question.

From the perspective of these adult students empathy was necessary for learning enhancement. The accurate perception and communication of understanding and acceptance of students' feelings and behaviour was perceived to contribute to their learning.

student

I think what she's saying is that a lot of people find that they don't get what they want and they're trying to see a certain way and they're trying to get the teacher to help them see it that way. So they're trying to get help in certain areas, whether it's Math or English and they want to get right down to the root of the problem and sometimes they don't know, or I've found I don't know how. And then they have to show me over and over so sometimes you feel maybe the instructor has not gone far enough maybe they thought you're ahead of

where you are and maybe you need to go more to the basics with certain things.

investigator

Now you're willing at that point to say maybe the instructor hasn't gone far enough.

student

Or gone too far, thought I was more ahead or thought the other way around.

investigator

So is there timing then? Something about what helps you to learn then, is something about the teacher, kind of knowing where you're at, being able to read where you're at more accurately.

student

Well sometimes a person themselves don't know how to explain where they're at if they haven't done a certain problem like in math for instance.

investigator

What could keep you from learning, or what could help you to learn then, is if you have a teacher that actually almost was able to tell better than you were where you were at.

student

Yeah, to some degree.

investigator

If they could kinda intuit.

student

Or sometimes, sometimes it's hard to explain to a teacher where you need help so it's, like sometimes they'll give you, your formula or something and work out a math problem and certain teachers have a natural knack, they can show you and you catch on right away whereas others have a different style of the way they approach.

The adult students reported experience of teacher empathic responses were responses which demonstrated positive regard. From the perspective of the interviewed adult students, positive regard was perceived to communicate respect for the student as a person and enhance the relationship between the teacher and students.

student

It does seem like math class is where the kids seem to not be getting anywhere with math and the teacher teaches it well but he doesn't make it fun for them to learn and he doesn't create a way that they can pick up on it in a much easier format, simplifying a lot of things.

investigator

You have something to say about this also.

student

Exactly. When a teacher can build rapport with her students I like that for me. I learn better under a teacher that I can have a rapport with, someone I can go to and say "hey, I need help" and that person will make time for you. Some teachers are too busy. Like the impatient, "don't bother me" type of...

student

...Yeah, that's what I've well heard from a lot of people in the past, like when I went to high school the kids said a certain teacher presented the course really nice and the way that they like the teacher and they also liked the way that he made it fun for that class to learn whereas certain other teachers they taught math very well as well but certain kids sort of felt they weren't attended to the way that they could grasp what they were learning.

student

Like Vince, it's not so much having fun but it's interesting and all that, quite easily. I find it really boring if I don't like the teacher, no point in spending any time at it.

The adult students articulated their belief that non-controlling behaviour on the part of the teacher created a safe atmosphere and gave power to learners. The adult students perceived an increased sense of competency when empowered by the teacher.

student

Well in Socials 9 I have to say it was a cool teacher and he would split up the class learning about communism and he would say "OK, this half is communism and this half is democracy. Where'd you want to be?" I jumped up and went over to the democracy side, I'm not staying here. And he said "OK." It's just like it's interesting . I can learn.

investigator

It created an activity where you could have some freedom in that classroom.

student

Yeah.

Adult students indicated an ability to assess genuineness and congruence as teachers' feelings of dislike for students were demonstrated behaviourally.

student

Well I had a grade 9 teacher, a math teacher that just hated me and we hated each other actually. And he was always doing stupid things like call my dad or whatnot whenever I would do something silly in class. I was just like, I just hated the guy and I never learned anything. I'd just sit there and look at him and not do a thing. I'd just do it to piss him off. If I liked the guy, like I passed all the classes of the ones I like, the ones I didn't like the teachers I just never passed them.

investigator

The personality got in the way and you were real clear that this person didn't like you.

student

Oh, I knew he didn't like me and he knew I didn't like him!

investigator

How do you tell that?

student

He walked into the classroom and he would tell me to shut up and sit down or get out within two minutes of not even saying anything. Or he blocks you out of the classroom for another two days because you're two seconds late.

Adult students also perceived teacher communication of empowerment, respect, and positive regard, including making content personally meaningful and fun, as esteeming and as enhancing their learning opportunities in the classroom.

student

A very positive teacher, someone who comes across and says "I believe in you, I care about you, I know you have the talents even if you don't believe you have the talents," you need to hear positive feedback from the teacher. That is important to me anyhow.

investigator

And that'll help you learn.

student

Oh yeah. And also working on my own attitude towards math or towards whatever, whatever I have trouble with.

investigator

Working with the teacher, you yourself, working with a teacher who believes in you.

student

Yeah, and working on myself too, my attitude towards it is also important. I do well at something I find challenging and I can make it challenging for myself even if the teacher isn't.

student

Or if someone is boring, ooh, I have trouble.

investigator

Boring.

student

Boring, yeah. I have trouble learning from a teacher that doesn't have any umph to their voice, that doesn't take an interest in their subject and you know they don't care about their subject. Because I've had teachers that really cared about their subjects and you can tell from their attitude towards it. I mean.

student

I had a science teacher my last years in school. Old, short, Chinese or Japanese or whatever, voice was exactly the same, didn't matter if she was telling about a nuclear bomb going off or flowers growing. It was UHUUHUUHUUH and it was, I'd walk into class sit down and go to sleep. That was like my science class, the teacher hadn't said anything to me so what's the point of going to class.

investigator

What would help you now, in contrast to this teacher that put you to sleep, it's not what you wanted, might be good for some evenings when you wanted to go to sleep, but what would help you Ed, help you to learn better? If you could have your ideal.

student

Just be interesting, have the teacher be interesting.

investigator

Interesting.

student

Not so much an interesting subject. Like personally I really don't care for social studies but yet I had a socials teacher where I passed the class.

investigator

And what do you attribute that to?

student

Just the guy was interesting. Made the class, made jokes in the class. He was a fun teacher so to speak.

investigator

Can you tell me more about fun? I have a hunch that's more, my guess is he wasn't just a clown, that there was more substance to it?

student

Well he wasn't a clown but it was like he made jokes, we were allowed to make jokes back and we were allowed the conversation to go off-track and after a while get back on and whatnot. It wasn't the exact same thing boring monotone.

investigator

It sounds comfortable and it also sounds like there was give and take in the classroom almost.

student

Oh yeah, oh yeah....

student

Somebody who'd leave me alone when I know what I'm doing.

investigator

You also need to be left alone. Its interesting isn't it? You need somebody with you until you learn it and then you want to be left alone when you know what you're doing.

student

Cause if I don't know what I'm doing and have trouble with it I'll come to you, don't come to me.

investigator

OK, so leave you to decide when you need it.

student

Well, I feel that, like Ed was saying earlier, sometimes the teacher can be very emotionally upbringing to the whole class and generally just the way about them is that ease, and they create their own atmosphere, their students feel very enthusiastic about the teacher and there is no prejudice against any students or any kind of hatred whatsoever so every student is treated like it's a big family. That's the way I've seen most teachers but there's always a few teachers where there can be, a certain teacher that seems like everybody in that classroom may respect him but doesn't like him. They may say the teacher teaches very good but he's almost sort of arrogant about his way of doing things or he might just be very grumpy with the students or he may just pick on certain people.

As the younger students had reported, the adult students also perceived that positive regard or teacher ability to relate in a special empathetic manner, led to an accepted understanding of their inner world which communicated respect and facilitated self-esteem.

student

Yeah, everyone is not, even if they're not really good at learning, maybe the teacher will take them aside and even if that, like I had trouble with certain teachers because I wasn't good at learning math and they didn't, they wouldn't get nasty with me and say "well, you failed this or didn't do well on that" they would just try to help you as much you can and treat you the same as the kids who were A students. So it's a respectable atmosphere for everyone.

student

Well, like most everybody else, I think a teacher should be interesting, find different ways of doing not, not right straight out and out wrong. Make a game out of it, especially if you're in, I guess history or science or things like that because there's so many ways that you can teach by making it a game which people always pick up easier when you make it a game or something out of it like that. A teacher should be open to the whole class and not like Greg said, everything gets said in one voice, there's got to be some kind of, you know, different outlet through their voice or you can lose your interest, not because you want to, it just happens. The teacher should be interesting.

Once again, conditions perceived by adult students are congruent with the findings from the younger students. From the perspective of this class of adult students, teacher-student interactions which enhanced their learning demonstrated: empathy, empowerment, genuineness, positive regard, respect, and were seen as self-esteem enhancing.

Summary Of The Findings

In summary, the findings of this study on student perceptions of teacher student interactions which enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom are consistent with numerous other studies which examine teacher student interactions and their relationship to student achievement and performance and their correlation with self-concept (Farley, 1981;

Gaffney and Anderson; 1991; McAllister, 1990; Wells, 1987). The students interviewed perceived their self-esteem and learning opportunities to be both enhanced and inhibited by teacher student interactions.

The data from this study are also congruent with other research which indicates that self-concept and self-esteem are related to one's beliefs about one's effectiveness and competence; and hence are related to a sense of empowerment (French, 1985; Miller, 1981, 1983; Wassermann, 1977, 1987).

This study found that the four groups of interviewed students wanted to perceive themselves as able and competent and made an effort to obtain success, and in doing so, formed a basis for their self-concept and self-esteem. Wells (1987) and Gaffney and Anderson (1991) maintain that good teacher-student interactions are crucial to effective learning because a teacher qualifies as a more capable other, providing support for a students. The findings of this study provided anecdotal evidence that supportive teacher student interactions were perceived to enhance learning opportunities.

This chapter presented the findings from the study. The findings were presented in part as students' quotes from the interviews which were categorized according to "meaning units." The "meaning units" reflected aspects of interactive communications which students perceived to enhance learning opportunities in the classroom: (a) empathy, (b) empowerment, (c) genuineness/congruence, (d) positive regard, (e) respect and (f) self-esteem. Conclusions, implications and suggestions for further study are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

This study was designed to examine the perceived impact on students' learning of teacher student interactions, from the perspective of students, from four different levels of education. Four groups of students were interviewed: a grade 3 class; a grade 5/6/7 split class; a grade 11 class; and an adult class. Naturalistic observation was combined with the use of interview based research to elicit student perceptions through anecdotal accounts. This research model was used because it allowed important aspects of teacher student interactions to be uncovered and did not limit student responses.

This study examined students' awareness and perceptions of teacher student interactions. A review of the literature showed a strong relationship between teacher student interactions and certain dimensions of learning that lie outside of traditional curriculum tasks, but that nevertheless impact on learning performance. These include student self concept, self esteem and feelings of empowerment.

The findings of this study were predicated on four assumptions. The first assumption was that teaching falls within the class of helping professions. A second assumption was that teacher student interactions may range between being therapeutic to being pathological. There was also the assumption that there was validity to student perceptions. It was also assumed that while the conditions conducive to positive self concept, self esteem and empowerment may be necessary for the enhancement of learning opportunities in the classroom, the presence of these conditions alone may not be sufficient in the promotion of student learning.

In spite of investigator efforts to remain non-judgmental and maintain neutrality, the study was also limited by the personal perceptions and selective attending of the investigator. It is also important to note that among the four groups of students interviewed, students articulated their responses in different language, and with varying levels of complexity. The study was further limited by the size of the sample which prevents the results from being generalized to other teaching situations.

Bearing in mind the limitations, the data allow certain conclusions to be drawn about the nature of teacher students interactions and their impact

on student learning. The study reveals that within the interpersonal interactions in the classroom lie messages with powerful impact on learners. These messages are part of the hidden curriculum and they teach messages, attitudes and values that go beyond the stated educational goals, and are likely to be enduring.

Conclusions

Researchers have examined the concept of the hidden curriculum from many perspectives. The research literature revealed that hidden curriculum does exist in classrooms; students are aware of it; and it impacts students in positive and negative ways. However, student perceptions of this process had not been studied in depth. Consequently, the examination of students' perceptions of teacher student interactions and their perceived effects on student self concept and self esteem were central to this study's examination of those conditions that enhance or inhibit learning opportunities in the classroom. It is important to note that these conclusions are limited by the assumption, reported earlier in the thesis, that there is validity to these student perceptions.

The three hypotheses examined in this study were:

1. Students not only are aware of the hidden curriculum, but they are also able to identify the lessons of the hidden curriculum which occur outside of traditional subject learning.

2. The messages and lessons of the hidden curriculum are communicated both verbally and non-verbally in the teacher student interactions in the classroom.

3. The messages of teacher student interactions affect students' learning opportunities in the classroom since they are intimately related to their self concept and self-esteem in both positive and negative ways.

Data gathered supported the first hypothesis. Students were not only were aware of the hidden curriculum, but they were also able to identify the "lessons" of the hidden curriculum which occurred outside of traditional subject learning. No evidence was gathered that indicated that they were unaware of or unaffected by the hidden curriculum.

Data gathered supported the second hypothesis. Students reported that the messages and lessons of the hidden curriculum were communicated both verbally and non-verbally in the teacher student interactions in the classroom.

The third hypothesis was also supported. Students reported that messages of teacher student interactions affected their own and their classmates' learning opportunities in the classroom. Students claimed they felt the impact of teacher student interactions on their self-concept and self esteem in both positive and negative ways. In addition, teacher student interaction was perceived as enhancing and inhibiting their learning opportunities in the classroom.

Aspects of teacher student interactions which students perceived to enhance or inhibit their learning opportunities in the classroom were seen to be related to:

- (a) empathy
- (b) empowerment
- (c) genuineness/congruence
- (d) positive regard
- (e) respect
- (f) self-esteem

Implications

There are several implications that are drawn from the study of student perceptions of the teacher student interactive process. First, teachers, as helping professionals, are better served when they are cognizant of the ways in which their teaching strategies and personal style impact on students' self-concept and self esteem and thereby contribute to their empowerment. The data reveal an important relationship between the teacher as person and the manner in which the teacher interacts with students, and therefore plays out the hidden curriculum. The more teachers are clear about what they are doing and saying in the act of "teaching," the more they may be able to use that awareness to the benefit of their work with students.

Second, the therapeutic potential of teaching includes the promotion of human learning, as well as the promotion of personal growth and the development of positive self concept, self esteem and empowerment. This growth appears to be intimately related to how the teacher interacts with

students. Such a relationship has implications for teacher's own needs, values and beliefs, which may benefit from introspective examination in the teacher education process. For example, student responses also revealed that teachers who liked teaching, who liked students, who communicated respect for students, and who created positive and safe environments in their classrooms also enhanced their learning.

Third, students indicated that the relationship developed by teachers with each student is an aspect of the learning process. Students also indicated that a teacher's non-authoritarian orientation is also learning enhancing. Such findings also have implications for the teacher's growing awareness of the role he or she is playing in establishing that relationship and in establishing the classroom climate.

In other words, the more teachers are clear about the messages they are giving students in their verbal and non-verbal behaviours, the more they are aware, and able to use that awareness in beneficial classroom interactions with students. This awareness includes knowledge of self from many perspectives including how the antecedents of personality, family and schooling background, professional training, and needs, values, beliefs and attitudes interact with powerful socializing influences on

students, other teachers, administrators and parents. Such findings have important implications for teacher training and staff development.

Finally, students (Grade 3 and above) are able to tell us what helps or impedes their learning. Such findings have important implications for research. Possibly students should be given the opportunity to express themselves in a forum that facilitates expression in their own "voices."

Recommendations

Because this study attempts to give a voice to the students, the recommendations that follow appear, as much as possible, in students' voices without interpretation. They are presented as a way of bringing this chapter to conclusion.

The grade three students reported that a teacher enhances learning opportunities when she repeats instructions, explains, tells, shows how and helps "*without minding*." They also reported that when a teacher praises, encourages effort, provides opportunity for practice and "*sticks up for me*," learning opportunities are also enhanced. The children in grade

three reported learning is enhanced when teachers makes things fun and interesting.

The grade 5/6/7 class reported that teachers could enhance learning opportunities if teacher student interactions were: free of "*put-downs*" and rejections, positive and patient, and sensitive to student moods. Learning enhancing interactions also included: suitable explanations; trust and belief in students; honoring of individual differences; and giving power and responsibility to students. Students reported that their learning opportunities were enhanced when teachers made the classroom environment: relaxed; comfortable; "*safe*;" and low stress. Learning opportunities were perceived to be enhanced when teachers were also perceived to: promote interactions and relationships among students; make content and curriculum interesting; provide choices and student determined direction.

The grade eleven students reported that learning was enhanced when teachers were encouraging, supportive, and praised efforts. Learning opportunities were inhibited when the students felt the teacher was criticizing or putting them down. Students also indicated a need for the teacher to: accept and honor student thinking and student responses; to

be interested; respectful of other students; and to provide explanation at an appropriate level.

The grade eleven students perceived their learning to be enhanced by teachers who were: dynamic, enthusiastic, friendly, accepting, caring, patient and not power or dominance oriented. The students reported that teacher ability to personalize the teacher student relationship, their interest in students as individuals, and a genuine enjoyment of teaching and students promoted: learning, student cooperation, safe expression of ideas and opinions, and student self-evaluation.

The adult students reported that teachers who build rapport, communicate their liking of students, and provide personalized attention enhance learning opportunities in the classroom. These students reported an ability to perceive whether teachers were genuine, enthusiastic, fair, respectful (to everyone) and demonstrated a "*belief in students.*" The adult students reported that a fear of rejection or ridicule led to an unsafe learning environment. The students also saw the necessity for teachers' accurate perception of the students' level of understanding and ability.

Suggestions for Further Study

Suggestions for further study include two questions:

1. How might teachers respond to these findings?
2. What are the possible implications for teacher training?

Appendix A
Ethics Approval

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

VICE PRESIDENT
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS



BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: (604) 291-4152
Fax: 291-4860

August 10, 1990.

Ms. Patricia E. Kitchener
#903 - 1450 Pennyfarthing Drive
Vancouver, B.C.
V6J 4X8

Dear Ms. Kitchener:

**Re: Student Perception Of Aspects Of Teacher -
Student Interactions Which Enhance Or Inhibit
Learning Opportunities In The Classroom**

This is to advise that the above referenced revised application has been approved on behalf of the University Ethics Review Committee.

Sincerely,

Manlyn Bowman, Acting Chair
University Ethics Review
Committee

cc: Dr. S. Wassermann
Dr. S. Shapson

Appendix B
Teaching for Thinking Responses

NAME _____

Coding Sheet**A. Responses that Inhibit Thinking****a. Responses that bring closure:**

Agrees/disagrees with student's idea _____

Doesn't give student a chance to think _____

Tells student what s/he (teacher) thinks _____

Talks too much/explains it his/her way _____

Cuts student off _____

Other closure responses _____

b. Responses that promote fear:

Heckles/is sarcastic/puts down idea _____

B. Responses that Limit Student Thinking

Looks for single, correct answer _____

Leads student to "correct" answer _____

Tells student what to do _____

Gives information _____

C. Responses that Encourage Thinking**a. Basic responses that encourage re-examination of the idea:**

Saying the idea back to student _____

Paraphrasing _____

Interpreting _____

Asking for more information, e.g. _____

"Tell me a little more about that," or "Help me to understand what you mean" _____

b. Responses that call for analysis of the idea:

Give me an example _____

What assumptions are being made? _____

Why do you suppose that is good? _____

What alternatives have you considered? _____

How does (that) compare with (this)? _____

How might that data be classified? _____

What data support your idea? _____

c. Responses that challenge:

What hypotheses can you suggest? _____

How do you interpret that? _____

What criteria are you using? _____

How would those principles be applied in this situation? _____

What predictions can be made based on that data? _____

How would you test that theory? _____

What new scheme/plan can you envision for that situation? _____

d. Accepts students idea non-judgmentally:

I see _____

Thank you _____

D. Responses unrelated to Debriefing the big ideas

Classroom/behavior management responses _____

Speech mannerisms _____

Other _____

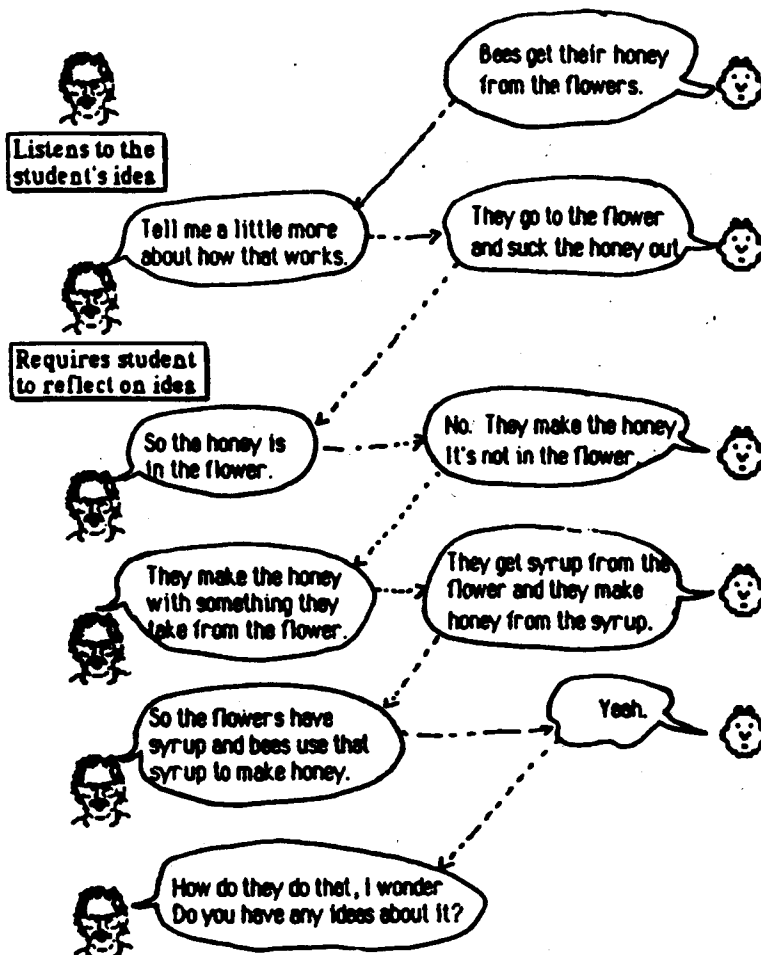
Appendix C
Teaching for Thinking Responses That Promote Reflection

Responses that promote

Reflection

A TEACHING FOR THINKING RESPONSE:

- ◆ attends carefully to what is being said
- ◆ works with the student's idea so that the student is helped to reflect on that idea



A Teaching for Thinking RESPONSE IS ALWAYS NON-JUDGMENTAL

It does not evaluate or judge the student's idea.

It does not prize or reward the idea.

It never implies or suggests that the student's idea is right or wrong; good or bad.

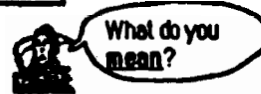
It never agrees or disagrees with what the student has said.



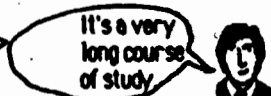
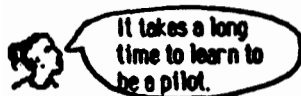
A Teaching for Thinking RESPONSE COMMUNICATES RESPECT FOR THE STUDENT, AS WELL AS FOR THE STUDENT'S IDEA.



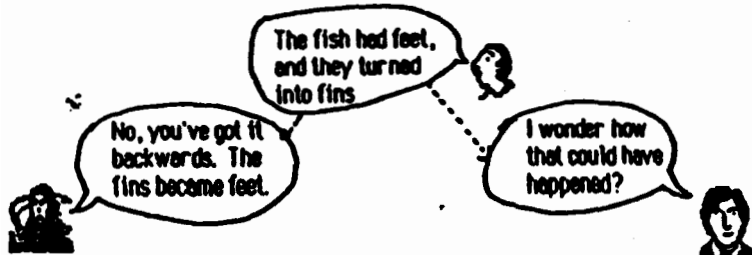
It invites, rather than insists.



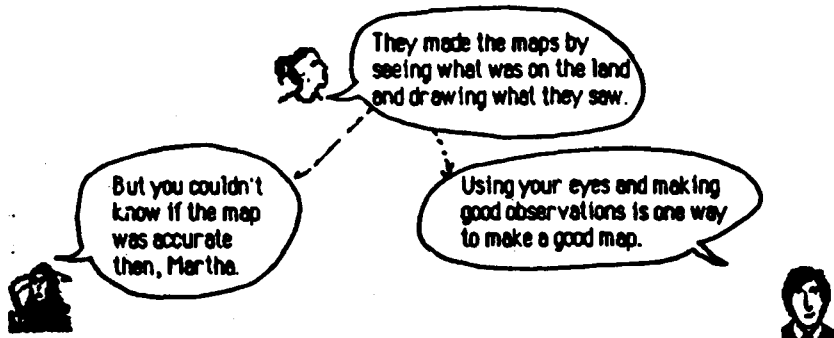
It shows that the teacher has heard what the student has said.



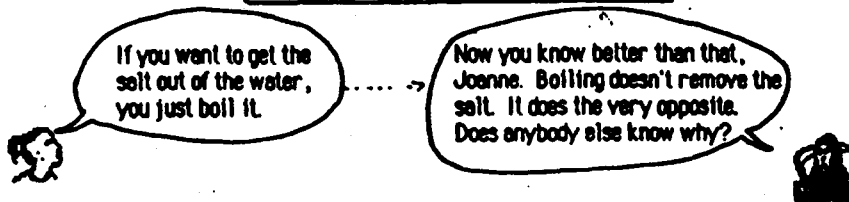
It shows that the teacher wants to help the student to work with that idea, rather than dismiss it or correct it.



It values and appreciates the student's idea. The student's idea is the one that is worked with. The teacher doesn't give the student his/her own ideas.



It never rejects the student's idea as wrong or silly or inappropriate.




A Teaching for Thinking RESPONSE:

- ◆ communicates to the student that you are *listening* to him or her
- ◆ communicates that you have *respect* for the student, and for his or her ideas
- ◆ provides a "cognitive mirror" through which the student is called upon to examine thoughtfully his or her statements
- ◆ requires that the student assume ownership and responsibility for his or her ideas
- ◆ promotes cognitive processing
- ◆ promotes an interactive dialogue that calls for higher order thinking and the examination of *meaning*

THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO RESPOND IN A Teaching for Thinking DIALOGUE:


A basic response consists of "saying back" the student's idea.

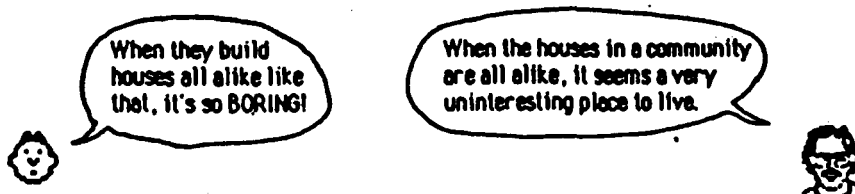
 *This type of response hardly departs from the student's statement. It attends and accurately reflects the student's idea, by capturing the key words of the student's statement. The "saying back" is not done mechanically, but naturally. It is always respectful.*

The basic response is a very productive way of helping the student to hear the idea "played back" and to think about what he/she has said.



Another type of response paraphrases the student's idea.

 *This response departs somewhat from the student's statement. In doing so, the teacher risks misinterpreting the meaning. However, when the paraphrased response is accurate in capturing the student's meaning, it is very productive in enabling the student to work with his/her idea, and come to a deeper understanding of the implications of the statement he/she has made.*



A teacher may also interpret what the student is saying.



In interpreting, the teacher "reads into" the student's statement considerably more than what has actually been said. Good interpreting requires the most thoughtful and accurate attending, as the teacher risks making an inaccurate interpretation.

When the interpretation is accurate, it allows the student to gain new insights into his/her thinking.

When they build houses all alike like that, it's so BORING!

A community where all houses are built on exactly the same model seems very unappealing to you. You wouldn't like to live there.

Would I like to live there? Wait a minute...???



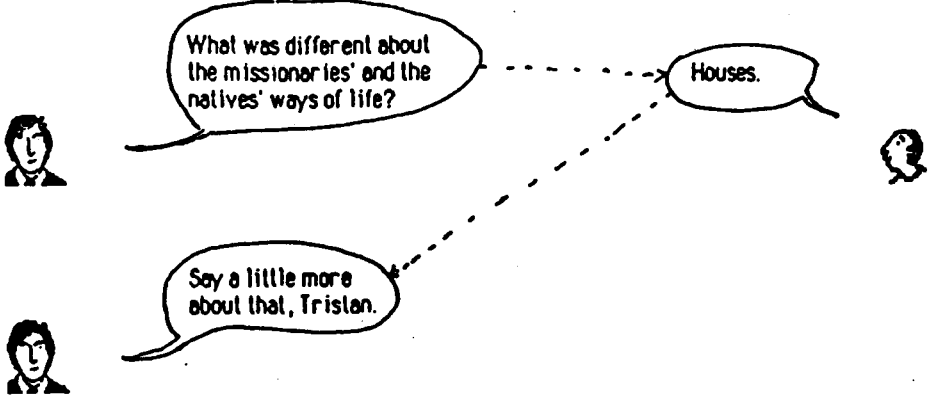
Responses that interpret may also include "reading into" non-verbal behavior and affect.

When they build houses all alike like that, it's so BORING!

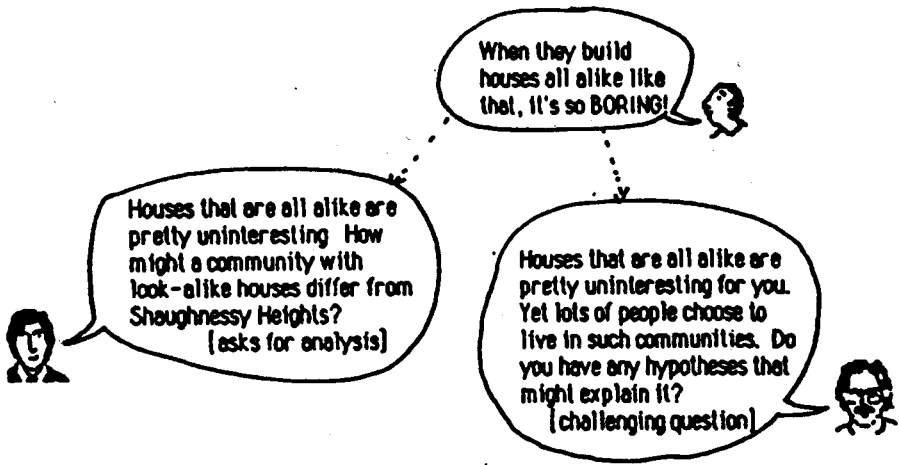
It's so boring, you hate the thought of living in such a community.



The teacher may also ask for more information. This is done when the teacher wants the student to elaborate, to say a little more, about his or her idea.



Teaching for Thinking responses also include asking for analyses, and challenging questions. These latter two ways of responding are used much more selectively. They are interspersed sparingly within the "saying back," paraphrasing, and interpreting responses, which are the mainstay responses of the Teaching for Thinking interactive dialogue. When analysis and challenge are used, the conditions of non-judgmental acceptance, attending and respect are always present.



The keys to an effective Teaching for Thinking dialogue lie in the teacher's ability to attend, to respond respectfully, to invite the student to reflect on his/her idea, to pace the interaction so that the student feels safe and unthreatened in offering his/her ideas. The teacher also allows the student time to reflect and time to formulate his/her ideas. In listening to the response the student makes to the teacher's question, the teacher begins to perceive how the student is able to process, and to conceptualize. The responses that follow reflect the teacher's growing understanding of how best to enable the student to think. In all of these interactions, the teacher is ever mindful of keeping the dialogue focused on the "big ideas" of the lesson—those important aspects that are worth studying and examining. When all of these occur, Teaching for Thinking is advanced.

Appendix D
Teaching for Thinking Responses That Train in Attending

A. Training in Attending: Guidelines for Responding

In order for interpersonal skills to be effective, it is critical that the reflective practitioner be able to attend thoughtfully and perceive accurately the message that is being sent. This implies the full use of all your senses at the sharpest level, in "tuning in" to and apprehending what the other person is saying.

Your ability to attend thoughtfully and perceive accurately -- to apprehend -- increases when the following conditions are met:

1. You are able to make and hold eye contact with the person who is speaking.
2. You are able to listen to and communicate respect for the other person's ideas.
3. You are able to free yourself from the need to evaluate the other person's idea, in either tone or word.
4. You are able to avoid commenting on the other person's idea reactively and/or presenting your own idea.
5. You are able to make meaning of -- to apprehend -- what the other person is saying.
6. You have an awareness of tone of any affect (verbal or non-verbal) being communicated by the speaker.
7. You are especially aware of indicators of stress being shown by the speaker.
8. You can formulate responses that accurately and sensitively reflect the meaning of the speaker's statements.
9. You are able to make the other person feel safe, non-defensive, and non-threatened throughout the interview, through your responding and attending behaviors.

over. >

B. Training in Attending: Guidelines for Debriefing the Interview

When you have completed each practice session, use these questions to help increase your awareness of the effect of your attending and responding behaviors.

- 1. To what extent did the other person feel respected? What did you do to communicate respect?**
- 2. To what extent did the other person feel listened to?**
- 3. To what extent was the reflective practitioner able to tune into the ideas being expressed? What responses are examples of this?**
- 4. To what extent was the reflective practitioner aware of the non-verbal dimensions of the other person's statements? What responses were used that demonstrated this awareness?**
- 5. To what extent was the reflective practitioner aware of the other person's feelings, and sensitive to signs of stress? What responses are examples of this? How did you use that knowledge in your next response?**
- 6. To what extent was the reflective practitioner able to formulate responses that sensitively and accurately reflected the meaning of the other person's message? What responses are examples of this?**
- 7. What was the effect of this practice session on the other person's feelings? ideas?**
- 8. What was the effect of this practice session on the reflective practitioner?**

Appendix E
Request for Permission Letter to School District

Pat Kitchener, M.A. (Candidate)
#903 - 1450 Pennyfarthing Drive
Vancouver, B.C.
V6J 4X8

September 20, 1990

Dr. Mary Lyons
Superintendent of Schools
School District # 40 (New Westminster)
835 - 8th Street
New Westminster, B.C.
V3M 3S9

Dear Ms Lyons:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and I am also a counsellor/educator with 15 years experience. To fulfill part of the requirements for my Master's degree I need to interview students about classroom learning, specifically related to teacher-student interaction.

May I impose on you to set up for me interviews in four classrooms. I would like represented students of a wide range of age and abilities. In order to achieve the widest spectrum of response may I request that I be allowed to interview one each: elementary, intermediate and secondary and an adult education classroom?

I am very sensitive to the needs of both the teachers and students. Therefore, I will endeavour to be non-intrusive. I expect that the interviews will last no longer than 45 minutes. The discussion will examine student perceptions of the factors which enhance or inhibit classroom learning. In no way is this an investigation of teacher competence. The children will not be identified in any way and I will destroy the videotapes when I am finished.

I will be most happy to make the results of my study known to you and the participating teachers and classes. I thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

P. Kitchener, M.A. (Cand.), R.C.C.

Appendix F
School District Permission Granted Letter

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 40 (New Westminster)
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
P.O. BOX 790
NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.
V3L 4Z8

September 20, 1990

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In accordance with Guideline 1a of S.D.#40's Policy E.5.1 (Research and Other Projects in the Schools) I approve of Pat Kitchener's proposed research.

The Principals and teachers in the schools that Pat intends to contact will decide if they wish to participate in the research, and parents must agree, in writing, to their children participating.

Mary Lyons, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

ml:ila

cc: J. Hannah
D. Knox

E. PROGRAMMES AND INSTRUCTION

5. DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

1. Research & Other Projects in the Schools

Guidelines:

- a. The Principal Researcher or Project Director will present a detailed proposal of the study/project to the Superintendent for approval.
- b. The Principal of each school contacted must give approval to the project.
- c. Teachers in the project school must be supportive of the project and agree to participate.
- d. The Principal and staffs involved in specific projects are aware of the amount of students' and teachers' time required to complete the project and consider it appropriate.
- e. Parents are informed of the nature of the study and have an opportunity to respond.
- f. Parental approval, through a signed release, must be obtained before any child may participate.
- g. All children, teachers, classes and schools involved in a research study project are assured of anonymity during the study and in the published data and the interpretation of the data.
- h. A copy of the results of the completed study or a report of a project is presented to the District.

E. PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION

5. DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

1. Research & Other Projects in the Schools

The Board recognizes the role of valid research and other projects in the development of educational theories and practices and acknowledges the need of researchers to work within the schools.

Before Research and other projects are considered for approval by the Board they must be sponsored and supervised by a recognized post secondary educational institution or a recognized Research Institute, or must be a component of approved research by district personnel.

Research projects must have the support of the Human Ethics Committees or of committees with similar responsibilities of the respective institutions.

Board Approval: 82-6-22

E.S. 15

Appendix G
Teacher Release Form

Teacher Release Form

I agree to allow Pat Kitchener from Simon Fraser University to interview and videotape in my class to help her in her research project. I understand that any observations, tapes or notes made in my class will be kept strictly confidential, and that I or the children in my class will not be identified in any way.

(teacher signature)

(date)

Appendix H
Letter to Parents

October 31, 1990

Dear Parents:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and I am also a counsellour/educator with 15 years experience. To fulfill part of the requirements for my Master's degree, I need to interview students about classroom learning, specifically related to teacher-student interactions.

With your consent, your child's teacher has kindly agreed to allow me to interview and videotape in his/her classroom; I will be making one visit. Your child will not be identified in any way. I will be interacting with your child in a group discussion. I will destroy the videotapes when I am finished.

If you have any concerns regarding this project, please contact Dr. Jaap Tuinman, S.F.U. Dean of Education. Likewise, if you would like more information about my thesis research, you may phone me at home: 732-0407.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sign this portion and return it to the school if you do NOT want your child to be in the classroom while I am interviewing. Alternative arrangements will be made for him or her.

(signature of parent or guardian)

(date)

Appendix I
Alternative Activity Option Statement

(teacher's optional statement to students during interview phase)

Class:

A student from Simon Fraser University will be visiting today to interview our class about classroom learning. She will use videotape to record the discussion.

If any of you feel uncomfortable about this, please let me know, and I will make other arrangements for you.

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