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Effects of Standardized Testing on Teachers' Emotions, Pedagogy and Professional Interactions with Others

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**EFFECTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTING ON TEACHERS' EMOTIONS, PEDAGOGY AND
PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS**

AMELIA LOUISE BRADY

**Bachelor of Arts and Science
Bowling Green State University
December 1989**


**Master of Education
Ashland University
December 1999**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN URBAN EDUCATION: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
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CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY
April 18, 2008**

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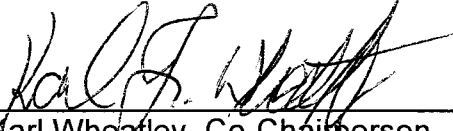
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College of Education
and the College of Graduate Studies by



Rosemary Sutton, Co-Chairperson

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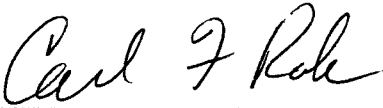
Curriculum and Foundations



Karl Wheatley, Co-Chairperson

04/04/2008

Teacher Education



Carl F. Rak, Methodologist

04/04/2008

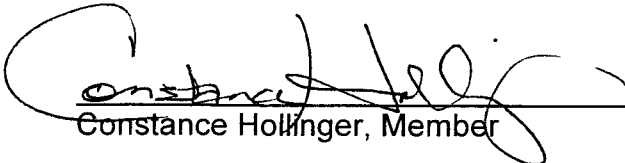
Counseling, Administration, Supervision, and Adult Learning



Linda Pallock, Member

04/04/2008

Curriculum and Foundations



Constance Hollinger, Member

4/4/08
04/04/2008

Psychology

DEDICATION

To my loving husband, Dan who encouraged me every long
step of the way. His belief in me gave me the strength to persevere.
His sacrifices made my dream come true. Thanks for all your love.

EFFECTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTING ON TEACHERS' EMOTIONS, PEDAGOGY AND
PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

AMELIA L. BRADY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the relationships among high-stakes testing, the practice of teaching and teachers' emotions. Through an inductive approach the emotions, pedagogy and interactions with students, colleagues and parents are examined to determine the possible impact testing has on teachers' professional lives and philosophies.

Methodologically, there are two components to this study; interview and observation. Data is collected through individual interviews conducted twice with each of the six teacher participants followed by two classroom observations. A group interview at the end of this study should add to the validity and afford the teacher participants an opportunity to meet and share experiences. Member checks and fieldnotes add insight and validity.

Findings of this study indicate that high-stakes testing both positively and negatively impacts curriculum, teachers' emotions and the professional interactions teachers have with others. Since testing is such a basic component of our current educational system, this study indicates the need for further investigation into the current mode of testing and possible alternatives. Findings also support the need for further study into teachers' emotions as they relate to their professional lives.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For almost three decades teachers and school administrators have operated under mandated testing coupled with new and ever-changing standards. Much research has been done to study the impact these tests and standards have had on students and their learning (Crain, 2003; Dawson, 2003; Kordalewski, 2000). However, very little attention has been paid to how this testing situation and the establishment of state and federal standards have affected the teachers. There is surprisingly little research into how standards and tests impact teachers' emotions, their teaching methods, beliefs, and their interactions with their students, colleagues, and parents.

Teaching is a career filled with emotions. The life of a teacher in the classroom is highly charged with feelings involving not only those influenced by and directed towards others, but also regarding the beliefs and value systems teachers hold dear. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of the profession that has been neglected as a subject of study. "By implication and omission, teachers' emotions are not a topic deemed worthy of serious academic or professional consideration" (Nias, 1996, p. 299). This void in research is in need of addressing since feelings affect professional efficacy and the development and exercise of competency (Nias, 1996).

As a result of an increased demand for accountability, teachers and administrators began taking these tests and standards seriously, not always because they believed in the tests' ability to improve instruction, but rather for "political reasons" (Stakes & Rugg, 1991). From a political perspective, states appealed to teachers based on their professional values, their desire to do well by their students, and their endeavor to be competent professionals (McDonnell, 2004). Nevertheless, the implementation of such high-stakes testing was not always based on scientifically founded reasons. Much of the support from politicians and other proponents on utilizing test results occurred because testing was a low cost method of holding teachers and schools accountable, which was the goal of many reforms (McDonnell, 2004). States saw testing as an effective policy instrument, which could be implemented quickly and controlled efficiently (McDonnell, 2004). Testing is relatively inexpensive when compared with other reforms such as smaller classes or teacher training (Linn, 2000; Resnick & Resnick, 1992). Despite this cost and time advantage, some still debate the effectiveness of using testing to identify advancements made in education. After some sixty years of extensive international research on school testing, the policy of emphasizing test performance in order to improve education has never been sufficiently validated to satisfy educators (Stakes & Rugg, 1991).

Purpose of Study

Teachers are at the center of this debate and have a vested interest in its outcome. Testing and standards appear to be a permanent part of today's educational arena and, since teachers are obliged to work under these guidelines, it is important for educational research to examine if testing and standards influence teachers' lives in the classroom.

The purpose of this study is to determine the existence and the degree of this impact. Through this examination, I hoped to learn whether teachers report that testing has changed their teaching methods and influenced their beliefs about curriculum. Like most adults who are functioning in a workplace, teachers feel a variety of emotions throughout their day. I was interested in finding out if and how teaching under the mandates of testing and meeting content standards is related to teachers' emotions and may thus influence their interactions with their students and colleagues.

Research Questions

The overarching question of this study is:

What are the relationships among high-stakes testing, the practice of teaching, and teachers' emotions?

Specific questions related to the overarching question:

1a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in teaching methods and curriculum.?

1b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

2a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any changes do teachers report in their interactions with students?

2b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

3a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in interactions with administrators, other teachers, and parents?

3b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

Significance of Study

It is out of both a personal and professional concern that I have developed an interest in this work and have thus formulated these working questions. As a junior high language arts teacher for twelve years, I was required to administer the 9th Grade Ohio Proficiency Test to my 8th graders. This experience began the formation of my current opinion regarding the validity and merit of standardized tests.

I have also experienced testing from a different professional perspective. For the past three years I have been employed by a small, private university as a field supervisor working with pre-service middle school teachers. In addition to this supervisory role, I have been an adjunct professor for seven years at this same university with the responsibility of teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the education department. These experiences have placed me in numerous urban and suburban middle schools in Northwest Ohio throughout the academic year, while my university teaching has provided me an opportunity to work with teachers who are dealing, on a daily basis to some degree, with standards and testing.

In my personal and professional interactions with pre-service and practicing teachers, I became aware of a growing concern of teachers regarding the constraints many feel from the pressures of testing and the impact testing has not only on student learning experiences and outcomes but on their own emotional and professional lives. I have heard very disparaging comments from teachers when discussing the status of their professional lives and the loss of autonomy they once enjoyed in their classrooms due to the implementation of mandated tests and the lack of teacher input in their development.

There is disagreement in the literature about the costs and benefits of teacher autonomy. Hirsh (1996) argued against the importance or benefit of teacher autonomy as he believes teachers often misused any autonomy they have been permitted. In his book *The Schools We Need* (1996), he claimed when teachers have the autonomy to offer thematic or project-oriented instruction, they failed to teach their students the most basic elements of the different subject matters and thus loss intellectual coherence. He further stated that “the modern mode of education so dominant in our schools has coincided with the decline of academic competencies” (Hirsch, 1996, p. 9).

In contrast, Ryan and Grolnick (1986) reported that autonomy-supportive teachers encouraged their students to develop self-determined agendas which would naturally increase student interest and involvement. Granting greater autonomy also increases student initiatives and intrinsic motivation while strengthening their self-regulation (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). With this type of teaching comes a greater perceived academic competence in the students (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986) as they gain a greater conceptual understanding of the material studied (Flink, Boggiano & Barrett, 1990).

Reeve, Jang, Carroll, Jeon and Branch (2004) found that teachers who are denied autonomy and the opportunity to be autonomy-supportive of their students develop into controlling teachers. The increased pressure brought on by high-stakes tests compels some teachers to assume a more controlling method of teaching despite their personal philosophy and beliefs regarding effective and excellent teaching (Pelletier, Seguin-Leveque & Legault, 2002). This controlling pedagogy has teachers leading the curriculum to such an extent that they define what students will think, feel, and do (Reeve, et al., 2004). With this loss of autonomy may arise a sense of helplessness in the

students (Dweck, 1999; McNeil, 2000). Frequently, to reinforce this mode of instruction, teachers tend to offer extrinsic rewards or sanctions and often resort to the use of pressuring language. Research has found that extrinsic rewards or negative sanctions do little if anything to encourage intrinsic motivation in students (Kohn, 1993). Yet who can question the teachers' rationale when their very jobs are often at risk over negative test results?

I have experienced this teacher need to control first-hand. While in the field, some of the cooperating teachers working with my student teachers made statements such as "your student can't do any real teaching until after standardized tests are completed." In my graduate classes some of my students have said that although they would love to implement some of the progressive teaching techniques we have discussed in class and believed that their students would benefit from them, having fun while learning, these same teachers felt compelled to teach in a more traditional way in order to prepare their students for testing. In both instances it was apparent that these teachers felt that testing required such preparation that it impacted or changed their preferred teaching style. Either by direct statement or implication, these teachers indicated that they did not have confidence that a lock-step method of teaching used to promote positive test scores necessarily offered their students the best quality education. These teachers would argue with Hirsh's statement that "...an accomplishment gained through diligent mentality is more productive than learning-is-easy, joyful mentality...more productive for both students and teachers...more satisfying" (Hirsch, 1996, p. 230). In my field work and college teaching, I have not witnessed such satisfaction occurring when teachers were forced to work with imposed controls and testing pressures. This situation has created a

real concern for me. It heightened my interest to investigate whether this lack of confidence in lock-step method of teaching was held more generally by other teachers, in other buildings and systems, teaching in different circumstances. It led me to wonder about teachers' emotions and practices under the mandates of required standardized testing.

Delimitations

Due to time and financial restraints and because of personal concern with local education, I have limited my research to an area of Northwest Ohio. For this study I interviewed and observed six middle school teachers in both relatively poor and affluent school districts. I expected my participating teachers to vary in the length of their teaching experience, in their personal backgrounds, gender, subject matter, and professional philosophies regarding teaching.

Limitations

Although it is hoped that this study will offer some insight into teachers' emotions, their interaction with students and colleagues, and their preferred choice of teaching methods, there are recognized limitations. The teacher participants were not randomly selected but rather chosen on the basis of the particular districts in which they taught and the fact that they were middle school instructors. Due to these criteria, there are limits to the level of generalization that could be realized. Another acknowledged limitation is the small number of participants which may further limit generalization. However, my desire is to examine in depth the impact testing and accountability has on teachers' emotions and pedagogy. It seems more plausible to be able to achieve this goal by limiting the number of participants thereby giving me more time to spend with each

one. It is hoped what is lost in the breadth of participants will be offset by the depth of knowledge gained.

The final limitation is the lack of physiological measures. Many researchers have argued the necessity to include such measures in order to more fully comprehend emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Whereas I acknowledge this contribution to gained knowledge, due to financial and logistical restraints, these physiological aspects will not be discussed.

Definitions

Standards: This term is used to indicate both official requirements and numerically determined thresholds of acceptable outcomes (Kordalewski, 2000). These standards are related directly to student and teacher actual performance and are the basis for mandated testing. In the development of national standards, policymakers, whether they be committee or faculty, make use of what Kordalewski (2000) identified as the demanding and informing theories. These theories posit a belief that demand will result in behavior that conforms to them and that higher student achievement will occur once students and teachers are informed of the demand (Kordalewski, 2000). Politicians and policymakers produce standards on paper with the hope that they will have an impact in the classroom.

Accountability: When a person is held accountable they are “subject to having to report, explain, or justify; responsibly answer” (Random House Dictionary, 1971, p. 10). Accountability in education is hoped, by some, to be achieved through the use of student testing. The results of student testing have become the basis used to rate not only student academic achievement but also teacher effectiveness. These test results are often

published so a community can be made aware of their school district's level of achievement. What was once used as one of a battery of tools to indicate the need for intervention, now testing has become the sole measure of student and teacher level of achievement. With this increased use of test results to enforce accountability has come increased pressure to improve those scores. Some would question at what cost to teachers and students.

Emotions: Derived from the Latin *emove* to move out; to stir. Emotions are multicomponential processes involving appraisals, subjective experiences, physiological changes, emotional expression and action tendencies (Lazarus, 1991; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). As is common in many if not all professions, teaching is an emotional career. Although some would have us believe teachers are just machines who can be programmed or dictated to, teachers are professionals who have deep feelings regarding their teaching and students (Hargreaves, 1998). Teachers' positive emotions include pleasure over the progress they make toward achieving their set goals (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In interviews teachers often talk about the joy, satisfaction, and pleasure they associate with their chosen profession (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In addition to these positive feelings, teachers also experience negative emotions, such as frustration and anger which are brought on by many sources and are associated with goal incongruence or pressure from outside influences which often limit their efficacy (Kelchtermans, 1996).

It is vital that research address the emotional lives of teachers since these feelings "may affect teachers' intrinsic motivation, attributions, efficacy beliefs, and goals" (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 338). This study needs to consider not only the personal

lives of teachers, which is affected by their work, but also must take into consideration the workplaces where they spend so much of their time and energy.

“In an age when the work of teachers is being reconstructed all around them (often in ways that make it more difficult) over-personalizing and over-moralizing about the emotional commitment of teacher without due regard for the contexts in which teachers work (many of which are making teachers emotional commitment to students harder to sustain) will only add to the intolerable guilt and burnout that many members of the teaching force already experience” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 836).

High Stakes Tests: “The current emphasis on high stakes testing results from standard-based reform and is largely an extension of three decades of testing with a new emphasis on higher standards and greater academic achievement” (Pedulla, Abrams, Madaus, Russell, Ramos & Miao, 2001, p. 10). In many states large scale tests are widely used in the decision making process related to promotion, graduation, or enrollment in advanced or remedial classes (Carpenter, 2001). Proponents of this level of emphasis, such as Eva Baker, co-director of the National Center for Research on Education, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) believe high stakes testing can be invaluable in helping to diagnose gaps in learning and can be utilized in a systematic improvement of education (Carpenter, 2001). However, the American Psychological Association cautions that, although testing is an important component in evaluation of student achievement, if testing is used as a single measure of performance, there can be unintended adverse consequences (apa.org/releases/tsting.html). Despite the fact that there is surprisingly little empirical evidence on the effects of high stakes testing, there is some evidence which suggests that this type of testing produces higher student achievement especially in states where schools are strongly punished or rewarded according to their students’ test results (*The Balanced View*, 2003).

On the other side of this debate, critics have expressed concern that high stakes tests, when not implemented appropriately, may draw an inaccurate picture of student achievement and unfairly jeopardize students and schools that are making a genuine effort towards improvement (Carpenter, 2001). Often this may result in the loss of accreditation for the school, loss of funding, or even being taken over by the state. Gratz (2000) warned that stress over tests can decrease student motivation and create higher levels of competition. There is some evidence that proposes that high stakes tests limit the scope of instruction and student learning (Abrams, Pedulla & Madaus, 2003). These critics also posit that pressure on teachers to improve student performance on tests impact both student and teacher motivation and decrease morale (Abrams, et al, 2003).

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made and will be addressed throughout this research:

1. There are interconnecting areas of teachers' lives: cognitive-emotional and personal-professional (Day & Leitch, 2001). Assumptions which can be made regarding these areas include:
 - Emotional intelligence is at the heart of good professional identity since success in life is dependent on one's ability to accurately reason about emotional experiences and then respond in emotionally adaptive ways (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 2000)

The definition of emotional intelligence, a term originated by Wayne Payne (1985), varies but is generally accepted as an ability, capacity or

skill to perceive, assess and manage the emotions of one's self and of groups (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotional_intelligence).

Mayor and Salovey (1997) developed a framework of emotional intelligence which includes four branches:

*perception, appraisal and expression of emotions (basic information-processing skills consisting of feelings and moods)

*emotional facilitation of thinking (ability to harness emotional states along with their effects towards varying ends)

*understanding and analyzing emotional information (recognizing that terms used to describe emotions are categorized and form sets)

*regulation of emotions (emotion-regulating skills enables one to engage in mood maintenance and mood repair strategies).

It is important that one develops their emotional intelligence in order to have the ability to form a strong professional identity.

One's professional identity refers to the influence of conceptions and expectation of others. In the case of teachers what they find important in their work and lives based on their experience in practice and their personal background help shape their professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, Verloop, 2004). This professional identity is developed over one's lifetime as an ongoing process (Beijaard, et al. 2004).

- Emotions are indispensable in decision-making (Damasio, 2000).

Although intuitively many think that negative emotions more often impact the decision making process resulting in inappropriate, irrational

decisions, there is a growing body of research that indicate positive affect can equally impact this process. Isen (1993) posits that positive emotions affect cognitive processes by enabling a person to recall positive memories and past results in addition to actually influencing the way material is organized in one's mind often in a more flexible way. "Feeling your emotional states, which is to say being conscious of emotions, offers you flexibility of response based on the particular history of your interactions with the environment" (Damasio, 2000, p. 133).

- Emotional health is crucial to teaching over the course of one's career. A teacher's day is filled with both positive and negative emotions which can be influenced by decisions being made that often carry moral consequences. Teachers deal with real life situations where they have no choice but to act, to decide what to do and then do it (Kelchermans, 1996). Without an awareness of emotions and a maintained positive emotional state, teachers are in danger of burn-out, a work-related syndrome stemming from an individual's perception of a significant gap between expectations of successful professional performance and an observed, far less satisfying reality (Friedman, 2000). Burn-out can cause such maladies as exhaustion, depersonalization, and unaccomplished goals (Friedman, 2000). If this syndrome develops to a critical point, a teacher may decide to leave teaching altogether. "Studies show that as many as 50 percent of teachers leave the profession by the 5th year of teaching" (Kelly, 2005, p. 1).

- Emotional and cognitive health are affected by personal biography, social context, and external factors.

Teaching is done at the intersection of one's professional and private lives.

It is not a career in which one can separate these two areas of everyday living. "Good teaching cannot be reduced to techniques: good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (Palmer, 1998, p. 10).

Emotions play a key role in teaching both because of the teacher's relational orientation and the high investment of self in one's work (Carlyle & Woods, 2004). Since stress is brought about by a combination of personal, organizational, and societal factors (Carlyle & Woods, 2004), it is imperative for teachers to nurture positive emotional and cognitive states. This positive outlook can be realized by practicing emotional regulation which in turn will help teachers reach their goals and develop healthy, productive relationships with their students (Sutton, 2004).

2. Throughout their day, teachers engage in functional and dysfunctional uses of emotions (Winograd, 2003). This researcher defines functional uses as those that alert teachers to problems so they can effectively take action. Dysfunctional uses reflect situations where emotions like anger or disgust do not lead to action but rather to blaming themselves, students, parents, or the system (Winograd, 2003). Teachers have a societal image to maintain as they are expected to be kind and considerate yet stern and demanding (Hargreaves, 1998). The realization of functional and dysfunctional uses of emotions will certainly have an effect on the

societal image expected of teachers. This assumption will be a valuable consideration and focus as teachers' emotions are examined throughout this study.

The pressure imposed on teachers to improve standardized test scores often causes them to face an emotional and cognitive dilemma. They may and sometimes do replace preferred teaching methods, which they feel would encourage the development of critical thinking skills, with more rote learning methods in the hope of improving specific test scores (Firestone, Schorr, & Monfile, 2004; McNeil, 2000; Plitt, 2004). This dilemma can cause teachers to have feelings of anger and loss of positive self-efficacy.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Perspective-Testing

Although external, mandated testing is currently a phenomenon in education, it is far from a new concept. The power that testing has to affect teachers, students, and curriculum has been acknowledged as far back as the 16th century. A Protestant, German teacher, Philip Melancthon, wrote in his *De Studiis Adolescentum*: “no academic exercise can be more useful than that of examination...to whet the desire for learning...enhance the solitude of study...animate the attention to whatever is taught” (as cited in Orfield, 2001).

Our nation has a history of testing with two interdependent strands: intelligence testing as those developed and administered by Alfred Binet and achievement testing which experienced its first wave of popularity from 1890-1930 followed by a resurgence in the 1960's. Although advocates of both types of assessments argue that testing did contribute to educational processes, neither type have led to instructional improvement or enhanced the breadth of student learning (Corbett, 1991). Rather testing has often been used as a criterion for class assignment, a source of information for the public, a form of “quality control” to promote higher achievement in the classroom, and as an incentive for

teachers and students to improve their performance (Corbett, 1991; O'Connor, 1992; Resnick & Resnick, 1992). The assumption made by reformers was if state and federal powers set goals and created new educational frameworks for curriculum and assessment (typically in the form of standardized testing), then instruction would become more demanding (Cohen, 1996).

A pioneer in achievement testing was Edward Lee Thorndike (Resnick & Resnick, 1992). In his publication of *Educational Psychology* (1903), Thorndike described the types of tests that were thought to be best for predicting academic success. In his later publication, *Introduction to the Theory of Mental and Social Measurements* (1904), he proceeded to outline basic principles that served as a foundation for much of the modern day testing movement (Corbett, 1991). Thorndike's principles had much success with the rapid implementation of his subject-matter tests. Since his tests were widely used, he was able to influence what was taught and how it was taught, as well as setting the criteria for evaluating and standardizing the process (Resnick & Resnick, 1992). This standardization gave educators an easy method of sorting students based on their test outcomes and ultimately the control of educational mobility (Gratz, 2000). Thorndike also initiated the idea that tests should be administered in all content areas for all grades. This use of tests led to the notion of test norms (Corbett, 1991). Thorndike further gained support from universities that established bureaus of educational research which further impacted the growth using achievement tests.

Society was ripe for this type of educational reform. Standardized testing became a vital tool for keeping school system administratively efficient and locally accountable (Hatch, 2002). Despite the fact that they may not be as effective in an educational setting,

this type of testing utilized the basic values and techniques of the business-industrial world. With the demographic explosion of the times came an increase in school enrollment and an expansion of curriculum offerings. Schooling became a massive undertaking where people did not know or trust each other and therefore a need arose for providing public, non-personal knowledge of how well the system was performing (Resnick & Resnick, 1992). Testing provided schools with a tool efficient in sorting students into certain academic tracks of study. Some students were destined for college prep classes while others found themselves locked into a course of general studies. Also occurring at this time was an articulation between high school and college. By using standardized tests, universities could assess high school certification for student admissions (Corbett, 1991; Resnick & Resnick, 1992).

The second wave of popularity of achievement testing came in the 1960's. At this time there was also a shift in who would set the standards educators should meet, from local practitioners to state policy makers (Corbett, 1991). With this shift of responsibility for setting standards also came a change in the predominant use of tests, changing from pedagogy to policy, with test scores being used as the sole barometer of a school district's success or failure. Resnick (1980) identified four different pressures contributing to its increased use and emphasis. First, federal legislation was forcing states to take more responsibility to provide special services for low SES and minority children. There also existed a pressure to create a program of national assessment, resulting in the establishment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A third pressure was the use of managerial approaches stressing objectives, cost-benefit analysis and production outcomes being promoted by the federal government. Finally, there was

litigation contending a more equitable distribution of school resources including desegregation and school financing (Corbett, 1991).

In the mid 1980's, there were many concerns about the quality of education being offered to American youth. These concerns emanated from many different segments of society including federal agencies, business, parents, and politicians. Many people believed schools were not adequately preparing K-12 grade children, at a reasonable cost, for success in a changing global economy (Ladd, 1996). Unlike the beliefs in the 1970's, experts in the mid-1980's believed that basic cognitive skills were more important predictors of wages six years after high schools (Ladd, 1996). Skills of high school graduates at the time did not meet the needs of employers nor were the graduates considered prepared with the flexibility needed in today's economic market to be able to change jobs (Ladd, 1996). The global business market was demanding higher levels of education in their employees. As indicated by test results, the U.S. students were lagging behind international children in both math and science causing serious concern in the business world as it questioned the level of competence potential employees could be expected to possess (Gratz, 2000; Ladd, 1996). This type of report deepened the public's interest and concern regarding the educational system and increased the demand for stricter accountability from teachers, schools, and districts.

In conjunction with this serious concern regarding the efficiency of the U.S. educational system, there occurred a cut-back in federal aids to schools. This resulted in a sort of "Catch 22" situation. The federal government was demanding an improvement in student achievement and at the same time cutting back on the necessary moneys needed to address this concern. This financial change resulted in more fiscal pressure on state

and local school agencies (Ladd, 1996). In response to this pressure, the trend was to limit per pupil spending supported by the fact that test scores of U.S. students had remained relatively constant at the same time per pupil spending had increased. One argument stated that the resources provided by the increased spending were not reaching the majority of students due to increases in funding to special education students (Ladd, 1996). The Americans with Disability Act in the 1980's brought about this discrepancy with those children identified as needing special educational resources receiving approximately twice as much as the average student.

In addition to a decrease of federal funding, there was a dramatic shift in the governance of American education with federal agencies having less of a direct influence on educational reforms and the states becoming more involved than ever before (Gratz, 2000). This state influence was realized with state governors, legislatures, state boards and state educational agencies beginning to have a direct influence on the core curriculums and instructional activities (Corbett, 1991). Although proponents of this shift to increased state influence believed it would improve student levels of academic achievement, opponents would argue there were unexpected and more negative ramifications than positive results. Many reforms were driven by political ideology rather than educational purposes (Gratz, 2000).

In response to this emphasis on standardized testing, the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy was formed in 1987. The purpose of this commission was to examine the use of testing and other assessments in schools, workplaces, and the military. The chairman of the commission, Bernard Gifford, identified standardized test as fallible, at best imperfect predictors of real-life performances (Gifford & O'Connor, 1992). The

commission also cited incidents in which the use of arbitrary test scores resulted in unfair treatment of individuals and certain groups (Gifford & O'Connor, 1992). The National Research Council cautioned against making educational decisions based solely on one test score (Gratz, 2000). Often current practices of testing have stood in the way of efforts to identify and develop talent and to improve the functioning of key social institutions (Gifford & O'Conner, 1992).

Despite the possibility of the negative impact incurred by testing, calls for better performance are almost always accompanied by an increase in testing (Resnick & Resnick, 1992). When complaints about testing arose, put forth by those identified as defenders of the status quo, the results usually were only slight modifications being made in the testing (Pipho, 2000). "Rarely (has there been)...a sustained consideration of the possibility that the very idea of using testing technology as it has developed over the past century may be inimical to the real goals of educational reforms" (Resnick & Resnick, 1992, p. 37). Regardless of the criticisms that have been voiced as to the wisdom or advantages of relying on tests, the practice of testing has continued and in fact, has grown. With this growth in the use of testing has come an increase in the level of stakes associated with those tests.

Accountability

Mandated testing in U.S. schools was not originally high-stakes. At its inception most states hoped to establish low-stakes testing with the intention of using the test results as a basis for improving educational quality and student achievement (Cimbricz, 2002). Low-stake tests were also utilized to identify individual student weaknesses so

intervention could be initiated. From 1973 to 1983 the number of states using minimum competency tests went from 2 to 34 (Lin, 2000; Pipher, 2000).

With the conception of a more complex and public accountability system the low-stake tests of the early 1990's which had been used in-house to evaluate the then current academic programs, evolved into the high-stakes tests of the late 1990's carrying significant or direct consequences (Cimbricz, 2002). As many as 23 states had attached explicit consequences to test results such as funding, assistance from outside experts, and the loss of accreditation (Cimbricz, 2002). Thus the birth of high-stake tests took place.

The late 1980's and early 1990's saw an expansion of the use of test results for accountability purposes. This new system of accountability was composed of three major components (Elmore, Abelman & Fuhrman, 1996). The primary emphasis was on measured student performance which was the basis used for school accountability. The second component was the creation of a rather complex system of standards by which student data could be compared by school and locality. The implementation of a system of rewards, penalties, and intervention strategies made up the third component (Elmore, et. al., 1996). The No Child Left Behind act (NCLB) mandated the implementation of a test-based accountability system that includes standards (expected performance levels), assessments (measuring student achievement), annual progress goals (comparing performance to increasingly tough targets) and incentives (rewards and sanctions designed to change behavior and promote improvements) (Hamilton & Stecher, 2004). NCLB requires that students be taught by qualified teachers using proven practices but leaves the control of curriculum, instruction and school organization in the hands of the local school districts. However, one can wonder how much influence these high-stakes

standards have on the local decisions being made. Throughout the late 1990's and continued into 2000 new uses for high-stake tests were in place resulting from the public and governmental demands for more accountability. Test scores became the common currency for this accountability (Cohen, 1996).

This new system of accountability increased pressures on teachers, administrators, and districts due to the public venue utilized to publish and compare test scores. "Simply making test scores public creates some pressure to work to improve them through the mix of professional pride, concern of top administrators communicated to teachers, and public demand "(Firestone & Schorr, 2004, p. 12). This public notification took many forms. Newspapers regularly published test results school by school. Teachers cited cases of specific schools which posted their test results in the main corridor for public record. Test scores were topics of faculty meetings and parent/teacher conferences. Even cases of individual parents have been observed posting their children's school results in their homes. The public began to question possible reasons or people responsible for the differences which existed in test results from one school to the next. Where once the focus had been input regulation such as the number of books in a school library or the percentage of certified teachers, the new emphasis was on student performance (Cohen, 1996; Elmore, et al., 1996).

Content Standards

Expanding educational opportunities in the U.S. had altered the way Americans looked at education. Over the last 200 years school enrollment in the U.S. has expanded faster than any other country (Labaree, 2001). From 1890-1940 high school enrollment doubled every decade followed by college attendance becoming the norm for American

families (Labaree, 2001). “The U.S. educational system is a congeries [a collection of several bodies in one mass] of 100,000 schools in 15,000 independent local governments, 50 state governments and 100’s of intermediate and specific district governments and several federal agencies and countless private organizations” (Cohen, 1996, p. 102). With this growing number of children attending school the focus was to expand the quantity of access rather than the quality of education provided. As a result we have established an educational system based on attaining grades, credits, and degrees rather than acquiring substantive knowledge (Labaree, 2001). This rapid growth and the quality of education became a concern for politicians, the business sector, and parents. This was the educational climate that prompted Americans to take a long, hard look at their educational system.

Along with the increased emphasis on accountability and the use of high-stakes testing, states and policymakers began examining exactly what our children should be taught. Up to this time there had been very little dialogue regarding fundamental curricular issues, what the ultimate academic goals should be, what new knowledge should be included in the curriculum, or old knowledge deleted (Brady, 2000). When asked what children should be taught, policymakers and politicians answered, ‘What those of us who are educated know’ (Brady, 2000). This vague response became the philosophical underpinning of the standards movement. Unfortunately it does not answer what this specific knowledge is or how it should best be acquired.

It has been posited that standards would address two major concerns: economic and educational disparity. Proponents of standards, or *standardistos* as coined by Susan Ohanian (1999), see standards as a means of creating more competition which they

believe will lead to improved academic performance. Standardists also profess to be concerned about the disparity found in education between high- and low- performing students. They see standards as a solution to this disparity, one that will benefit poor and minority children. Although this is a worthwhile goal to hope to achieve, opponents caution that the relentless drive toward ever higher standards for everyone only serves to widen the performance gap between and within schools (Gratz, 2000).

During the 1980's the conservative presidential administration vowed to the American public to return the control of schools to the states and school district localities (Cohen, 1996). What occurred, however, seemed to be the reverse with the Reagan administration exerting "an impressive nationalizing influence on public education" (Cohen, 1996, p. 99). The proponents of standards supported this nationalizing trend while encouraging educational reforms to focus on the basics with an emphasis on the outcomes rather than the input.

This shift in focus led to the process of developing content standards by 1997. The hope was to establish common expectations in the arts, language arts, foreign language, math, science, and social studies of what students should know and be able to do upon completion of high school (Cohen, 1996; Ladd, 1996). The 'systemic reform' proposed during the Clinton administration that followed held certain assumptions. Reformers believed "if the state and federal agencies set ambitious goals and created new educational frameworks, curriculum and assessments, then instruction would be more demanding" (Cohen, 1996, p. 100). Content standards provide clarity to teachers of *what* content and skills should be taught at each grade level and the *how* to teach them.

Systemic reform also required schools and school systems to be held accountable for student progress towards achieving their goals (Ladd, 1996). At the local level this meant school boards needed to set outcome goals and provide financial, technical and professional support to achieve goals (Ladd, 1996). This level of accountability has led to the development of both performance and operating standards. Performance standards, as defined by the Ohio Department of Education, are concrete statements of *how well* students must learn what is set out in the content standards. These are indicators of quality that specify how adept or competent student demonstration must be.

Operating standards define the expectations and guidelines that school districts, communities and families need to follow to establish conditions for learning. By adhering to these standards the goal is to create the best learning conditions for meeting student needs and achieving state and local educational goals and objectives, in other words the bottom line. The new systems of accountability which are being designed have a strong parallel between education and business according to Susan Fuhrman (2004). In her work regarding accountability, Fuhrman posits a “theory of action” which underlies these new accountability systems. This “theory of action” is based on several assumptions. One assumption states that if clear content standards are developed by each state, especially in the areas of math, reading, and science, with defined rewards and sanctions for student achievement, teachers and administrators will work more diligently to improve student achievement. Standardized tests, accurately aligned with content standards, are considered valid, reliable, and sufficient measures of student achievements eliminating the need for additional means of measuring teacher and school performance.

A third assumption of these new accountability systems according to Fuhrman (2004) states that meaningful consequences, both positive such as teacher bonuses and negative such as denial of student graduation will encourage teachers and students to work harder. This increased effort will in turn improve the existing student/teacher interaction in the classroom. The final assumption indicates that there will be minimal unintended consequences if these accountability systems are implemented and work as designed. Rather than narrowing the focus of instruction to just test taking skill, instruction will actually improve which in turn will positively affect graduation rates (Fuhrman, 2004).

Emotions

Despite the belief held by some that emotions and feelings are at the core of human experience, emotions have long been neglected as a legitimate topic for serious study. When considered at all...”emotions were regarded as unwanted influences which deflected us from the path of objectivity...forces to be controlled, if not, sublimated” (Munchinsky, 2000, p. 802). In the school of Western thought, there existed a dualism of reason/emotion. These two concepts were considered binary opposites, not a neutral equivalent pair (Boler, 1997). Rather, this pair represented a hierarchical relation in which one term, *reason*, was valued more than *emotion*. Western philosophy has maligned and neglected emotions and has actually seen it as a symptom of deviance (Boler, 1997). As far back as ancient Greece, emotions, passion, were regarded as animal-like yet common to all humans. This idea continued to be recognized centuries later. ‘Everyone has experience of the passions within himself, and there is no necessity to borrow one’s observations from elsewhere in order to discover their nature’

(Descartes, 1649/1989). However common these feelings were in humans, people were expected to control these undesirable feelings through reason (Lazarus, 1991). In the 1960's this concept that emotions should be subjugated by reason was reversed. People in this time period were considered overly constrained and were encouraged to 'get in touch with their emotions' (Lazarus, 1991). This idea continues to enjoy support today from experiential and humanistic therapeutic schools (Lazarus, 1991).

As stated by Sutton (2004), emotion has been a major area of theoretical and empirical study in psychology for more than two decades. In reviewing many studies conducted over this time span in which observers in Western cultures judged emotion shown in facial expressions, Ekman reported every investigator found evidence of six emotions: happiness, surprise, fear, sadness, anger and disgust combined with contempt (Ekman, 1992). The basic emotions theories posited by researchers such as Ekman (1992) and Izard (1971) predict the universal occurrence of a small number of emotions and suggest that there exist a limited number of pre-wired emotion categories in the form of neuronator programs or circuits (Lewis, 2000). Although basic emotion theory has had a significant influence in shaping current day cross-cultural psychology of emotions, there are limitations recognized with this approach (Mayne & Bonnano, 2001). The focus of study had been questioning *if* an emotion can be found across cultures but neglected to question to *what extent* that emotion may be cross-culturally similar. The research of basic emotions does not consider ways in which particular contexts result in particular patterns of responses (Mayne & Bonanno, 2001). In studying possible emotional responses, this approach had a narrow focus in cross-cultural research neglecting the emotional practice which is important to understand (White, 1994).

Studies conducted have identified specific types of emotions commonly held by humans and also acknowledged the role that culture and social learning has on emotions which include: control of expressions, symbolic representation of emotional experience, how one evaluates emotion-relevant situations, and the attitude held about one's emotions and how one copes with one's emotions (Ekman, 1992). It may be the recognition of these cultural and societal influences which led to the development of the componential model of emotions.

In the quest for cultural variations in the components of emotion, researchers considered emotions as multi-componential in nature rather than unitary, elementary entities (Mayne & Bonanno, 2001). This componential approach postulates that the emotion process is a complex of changes in various components which include cognitive and motivational processes (Scherer, 2000). This component process model allows researchers to go beyond classic linear models and evaluate potential emotion phenomenon (Scherer, 2000). This model as described by Scherer (2000) has emotion defined as a sequence of state changes in each of five-functionally defined-organismic subsystems occurring in interdependent and interrelated fashion. These systems are as follows:

- Cognitive system (appraisal)
- Autonomic nervous system (arousal)
- Motor system (expression)
- Motivational system (action tendencies)
- Monitor system (feeling)

(Scherer, 2000, p. 70)

What seems unique with this model is the recognition of the dynamics of emotions, the ever occurring changes in emotions based on the event and the person's appraisal of it.

“Some of these theories lean toward what one might call *fuzzy set* approaches, postulating a large variety of different emotional processes, with the more frequently occurring configurations amendable to identification and labeling” (Scherer, 2000, p. 71).

Rather than systems, Mayne and Bonanno (2001) identified the components of this model. The components would generally include: an antecedent event; appraisal; physiological changes; change in action readiness; behavior; change in cognitive functions and beliefs; regulatory processes (Mayne & Bonanno, 2001). Whether identified as systems or just components, this approach seems particularly useful in educational research. Teachers do not work in a vacuum but experience many emotional events throughout their day in the classroom. In studying their interactions with their students, there are many opportunities to analyze emotions with this componential model.

An example of an antecedent event which could typically occur in the classroom may involve disruptive behavior from a particular student. Since the teacher has an agenda that is being followed with specific goals to be achieved in a given class period, disruptive behavior would deter the class from reaching that goal and obviously needs to be addressed by the teacher. The next step would be the appraisal the teacher makes of the situation. “Appraisal is an evaluation of the significance of knowledge about what is happening for our personal well-being. Only the recognition that we have something to gain or lose, that is, that the outcome of a transaction is relevant to goals and well-being, generates an emotion” (Lazarus, 1991, p. 354). In the proposed scenario, the well-being the teacher takes into consideration is not only her own but also that of her students.

Appraisal is an important step in this model because it is at this point that the teacher will experience an emotion, perhaps in this case anger or frustration, and this emotion may influence her course of action.

Once the appraisal is made, the teacher may experience any number of physiological changes such as a more rapid heartbeat or sweaty palms. Her physiological reaction may very well depend on the amount of teaching experience she has or severity of the disruption. The teacher, regardless of the length of her professional experience, will then be at a point when she needs to take some form of action. The teacher behavior that takes place would hopefully be in harmony with the appraisal made. Depending on the emotion elicited by the event and the appraisal made, the resulting behavior may be a verbal reprimand, a written warning, or having the student leave the classroom for a given period of time.

The next component, very important for teachers to take into consideration, is being open to a change in cognitive functions or beliefs. With the number of students teachers typically deal with in the course of their day, it can be difficult at times to be aware of extenuating circumstances or outside forces which may be influencing a particular student's behavior. In certain cases what would be considered as purposeful misbehavior or disruptive action on the part of a student merely to cause havoc in the classroom may in actuality be a cry for attention or help. I have personally experienced this in my teaching on the junior high level. One student who transferred into our school at mid-year after having been expelled from a local public school seemed determined to interrupt my language arts class as often as possible. What I originally interpreted as an attempt to be the "class clown" who could easily get things off-task, actually was a cry

for help because he could not read at grade level. Rather than receive positive attention from me to address his lack of reading skills yet appear to be “dumb” to his new classmates, he opted to get negative attention for his behavior. With a change in my belief from the thought that he was just a troublemaker who needed to be disciplined to the realization that he needed more individualized attention in developing better reading skills, I was now able to reappraise the situation. No longer did I get frustrated and react to the negative behavior, but rather I worked with him and his special education tutor to enhance his repertoire of reading strategies. This is an important component for teachers to remember because it makes us aware that things are not always as they seem.

The final component identified by Mayne and Bonanno (2001) is that of the regulatory process. Emotion regulation is the unconscious and conscious processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they express them (Gross, 1998a). “The hierarchical processes of self regulation involve longer time spans, more extensive networks of meaningful associations and interpretations, and more abstract or distant goals” (Sutton, 2004, p. 380). Self regulation can be observed in the ‘display rules’ followed by teachers. This notion of ‘display rules’ was coined by Ekman (1973) and refers to rules imposed by organizations. Organizations can only specify the emotions that are *publicly expressed* rather than those that are *privately felt* (Ekman, 1973). “It is important to realize that displaying emotions-even (or perhaps especially) emotions one does not feel-requires a certain amount of emotional energy...or emotional labor” (Humphrey, 2000, p. 237). Teachers have a public image to maintain in society. Not only do teachers utilize self regulation to maintain their public image, they may regulate emotions to assist them in attaining their goals.

In a study conducted by Sutton (2004), findings indicated that the strategies teachers use to regulate their emotions fell into two categories: preventative (antecedent-focused) and responsive (response-focused). The preventative strategies requiring deep acting involved selecting and modifying situations, attention deployment and cognitive change. The responsive strategies occurred after the emotion was initiated and involved surface acting (Sutton, 2004). These included such activities as deep breathing and self talking. Teachers in the study indicated they used self regulation frequently to regulate negative emotions, to achieve positive outcomes, to enhance their relationship with their students, and because that was what they were taught to do in school as teachers (Sutton, 2004). The majority of these teachers also acknowledged that emotion regulation was paramount in achieving their daily teaching goals since negative emotions both in themselves and their students can be counterproductive. The study also suggested that “teachers whose idealized emotional self image and effectiveness goals are compatible are more likely to successfully regulate their emotions” (Sutton, 2004, p. 387).

This study supported my own beliefs of how important cognitive change is to teachers. Not only do teachers have to be aware of situations their students are dealing with both in and out of school, they also need to address their own cognitive positions. The teachers interviewed stressed the importance for them to use attention deployment strategies before school by engaging in conversations with colleagues, sitting quietly, or in some cases working out (Sutton, 2004).

Regulatory practices of teachers have also been studied to determine how they affect teachers’ selection of management strategies. The work done by Leung and Lam (2003) used a regulatory–focus theory developed by Higgins (1997) in which he

identified three self-state representations: the actual self (attributes one believes one possesses), the ideal self (attributes one ideally possesses), and the ought self (attributes one ought to possess). Another related study found that individuals with actual/ideal discrepancies experience more dejection-related emotions such as shame, vulnerability, and disappointment. Those individuals with actual/ought discrepancies experienced more agitation-related emotions such as fear, anxiety, apprehension, and tension (Higgins, Roney, Crowe & Hymes, 1994). The results in the Leung and Lam (2003) study indicated that teachers working in a promotion-focus environment used strategies of praise and reward to encourage students. Those teachers working in a prevention-focus environment utilized more negative strategies such as imposing punishment on unsuccessful students (Leung & Lam, 2003). Studies such as these emphasize the importance of teacher self regulation and how influential it can be on teachers' emotions in the classroom and their choice of management strategies.

There have been some inroads made into the study of emotions in teachers. In a 1996 edition of *Cambridge Journal of Education*, researchers such as Kelchtermans, Jeffrey, and Woods gave their findings from their extensive interviews and observations with teachers from various school settings. These findings reported the passion teachers hold for their pupils, professional skills, and their colleagues. They also found teachers have strong feelings about the structure of their schools, their dealings with administrators and parents, and how policies, often which they had had no voice in forming, will affect themselves and their students. If these emotions are rooted in cognition as assumed by some such as Lazarus (1991), then emotions cannot be separated from the perception of affectivity or judgment (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996;

Kelchermans, 1996). This relates to the componential approach previously discussed. It is vital for teachers to understand their emotions and the affect events and appraisal have in their formation since the action they take is often in response to what they feel and experience.

To better their understanding, teachers also need to be aware of cultural and societal influences that have helped to shape those feelings often at an early age (Nias, 1996). Ones' gender, age, race, ethnicity, personality, and life circumstances also influence the development of emotions (Nias, 1996). Once teachers come to a fuller awareness and appreciation of their emotions, their formation and their affect, changes can be made in them when necessary and self regulation can be better practiced.

Concerns about Testing

In these contemporary times there rages a debate over Melanchthon's philosophy and Thorndike's theory of testing. In *Raising Standards or Raising Barriers*, authors Madaus and Clarke (2001) posited four principles that explain the potential impact of such tests on what is being taught. The first principle states "the more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision making, the more likely it will be to distort and corrupt the social process it is intended to monitor" (Madaus & Clark, 2001, p. 93). Considering this first principle would cause one to question the validity of standardized test results.

The second principle claims that a "necessary condition for measurement driven instruction is that of valued rewards or serious sanctions are perceived to be triggered by test performance" (Madaus & Clark, 2001, p. 93). This issue of reward or sanctions has been addressed in Maslovaty's 2002 article published in *Studies in Educational*

Evaluation. This position is further supported by Alfie Kohn (1999) in his book, *Punished by Rewards*. He posited that evidence strongly suggests tighter standards, additional testing, tougher grading or more incentives will do more harm than good. Teachers tend to increase the control they have over their students in direct proportion with the amount of pressure they experience from administrators. These subtly controlled environments can lead to less self-regulation and achievement on the students' part and could ultimately result with children becoming more dependent and less intrinsically motivated to learn.

The third principle claims that "when test stakes are high, past tests come to define the curriculum" (Madaus & Clarke, 2001 p. 94). When this occurs, a teacher may provide actual test items as practice or "cloned" items of actual test material. Such practices can be detrimental not only to student learning, but also to future test results since such skills may not be transferable from one year's test to the next (Popham, 2001). Serious consequences resulting from test scores for both teachers and students have led some teachers and districts to actually cheat on standardized tests as witnessed in the New York City public schools and Massachusetts system in 1999 (Pipho, 2000).

Finally, the fourth principle cautions against "teaching to the test" (Madaus & Clarke, 2001, p. 94). When teachers succumb to this temptation, the focus of instruction, study, and learning can become so narrow as to be detrimental to other necessary skills. This narrowed focus encourages more teacher or text driven instruction. When teaching becomes teacher/text "telling", students' mental process dwindles to recall and eliminates the need for them to engage in higher level processes (Hatch, 2002; McNeil, 2000; Resnick & Resnick, 1992). Unfortunately, this practice is becoming common in

classrooms with more than a 60% minority population where great pressure is applied to raise test results (Orfield, 2001).

In examining the concept of statewide testing, one needs to be aware of how this type of reform fits into the political culture. Such programs reinforce the idea that learning is knowledge attainment (Corbett, 1991). However, is information learned for a particular testing situation the type of knowledge which is most desirable and beneficial for our children? E.D. Hirsh (1996) would argue the need for a basic core curriculum which induces grade readiness and thus enables all to learn. He believed, as supported by other conservatives, that instruction should be subject matter to the whole rather than any individualization (Hirsh, 1996). However, fact-based curriculum does not teach critical thinking skills such as relationships or cause and effect (Brady, 2000). Politicians also like the fact that test results generate reports that are publically consumable (Corbett, 1991). Simple skills that are tested are easier to report and for the public to understand than higher level thinking skills. With statewide testing, comparisons of districts and schools are generated which are of general interest to the public (Corbett, 1991). These comparisons provide a ready means by which the public can compare communities without considering the validity of the tests. Finally, a yearly testing cycle provides a close fit to political cycles of elections (Corbett, 1991).

Concerns about Content Standards

These imposed standards impacted the curriculum of the very young. Studies found that expectations once held for students in the primary grades were now pushed down to preschool and kindergarten students (Hatch, 2002). This development had early childhood specialists worried that children at this age were typically not developed to a

level that would allow them to meet these standards. Previous to this time, educators viewed this stage of education as one during which individual student needs and developmental stages were observed and addressed. Now the emphasis shifted from identifying individual concerns to achieving particular academic outcomes. This focus is often in conflict to what teachers understand to be best practice of teaching these young children (Hatch, 2002). Alfie Kohn has also voiced his concerns regarding implementing rigorous standards at such an early age:

“Skills develop rapidly and differentially in young children, which means that expecting everyone of the same age to have acquired a given set of capacities crates unrealistic expectations, leads to a one-size-fits-all teaching, and guarantees that some children will be defined as failures at the very beginning of their time in school” (Kohn, 1999, p. 89).

Most educators will readily admit that they support standards; however, if standards are to succeed they must be appropriately designed, provide fair tests, with reasonable implementation, and be used to recognize student improvements not imposing sanctions as punishments (Gratz, 2000). To encourage an environment where authentic learning is more likely to occur, a school system would be wise to develop a strong internal accountability system which incorporates the local culture. Such a system, which was a precursor of external systems, gains its power from a staff that agrees on what is expected of children and helps each other to meet those expectations (Firestone, Schorr, & Monfile, 2004). This same type staff seeks out appropriate help to enable them to do their best for their students and works together as a co-operative unit to improve their teaching practices (Firestone et al., 2004). Such a system will naturally increase a staff's sense of ownership and responsibility. Internal accountability systems tend to have broad support from the public and teachers when they are tied to accountability and it is clear

what the expectations for all are. It would also indicate that the district respects those teachers as capable professionals who should have an input to curriculum decisions. If this internal accountability system has strong leadership it will be better able to work with an external system imposed by state or federal agencies.

Such internal systems would certainly include classroom standards that relate directly to students' and teachers' actual performances, providing a guide for what they find worthy of doing and considering (Kordalewski, 2000). Unlike official standards that originate outside the classroom and are developed by people who have had no personal encounter with the teacher or students, classroom standards are developed through an interaction of those in the learning environment. Teachers guide the students in pursuing new standards and show them how to achieve them while students' effort and product signify what is being accomplished by the collective classroom effort (Kordalewski, 2000).

Although internal and classroom standards seem to be the logical system to adopt in our educational program, states continue to be the source of the standards we must live by. With this being the case, those developing these standards have much to consider. Standards developed from outside the building or districts are typically initiatives on paper which their advocates hope will have an impact in the classroom (Kordalewski, 2000). Without knowing the particular children or teachers who will be working with the set standards, it would be wise for policymakers to follow some general guidelines for their standards. It should be clear that standards need to be grounded in core academic disciplines and actually attend to what children know and what they can do (Gratz, 2000). In developing standards, policymakers need to keep in mind that they are the ends not the

means; they are not there to prescribe teaching methods, strategies, or substitute lesson plans (Gratz, 2000). Competition can still be achieved when students are compared to the standards and not each other.

Conception of Reform

Once the status of testing shifted from low-stakes to high, national associations and foundations adopted a method of operation described as “reform by comparison” with standardized tests as key components of this high pressure strategy (Corbett, 1991). This reform was identified by three key characteristics: an increase in educator accountability for student performance especially at the building level; the establishment of uniform indicators of school outcomes primarily in the form of measures of student cognitive outcomes; and political motivation to have schools succeed (Corbett, 1991). The theory behind this type of reform was that educator accountability and uniformity in expectations of student outcomes would trigger the ultimate reform weapon, public pressure (Firestone et al., 2004). Unfortunately, this pressure produces a narrow local focus, the use of short-term strategies for scoring well, repetitive drills, and crisis-oriented decision making all of which are detrimental to the providing an opportunity for real learning to occur (Corbett, 1991; Firestone et al., 2004; McNeil, 2000). It is posited that combining accountability, uniformity and political motivation will decrease the probability of improvement being achieved at the local level (Corbett, 1991). Despite the belief held by CEO of IBM Louis Gerstner, Jr., educating is not the “distribution of information” (Brady, 2000, p. 651). “Real teaching involves altering of the image of reality in the minds of others, a challenge inherently far more complex than those presented by rocket science” (Brady, 2000, p. 651).

What has often happened is that setting standards and implementing reforms have been done hastily for political reasons rather than educational concerns. The movement has massive political and corporate backing (Brady, 2000). Politicians have accelerated the implementation of reforms despite complaints of fairness and the need to go slowly with reform (Gratz, 2000). Tests and standards often fail to meet professional standards though they do make political headlines. Once the reform fails to bring about the positive changes promised, politicians demonize teachers and students for causing the failure. Supporters of traditional pedagogy and extensive testing blame the gap between students' scores on incompetent students who lack intellectual capital and ineffective schools (Hirsh, 1996). Is this really where the blame should lie when students, educators and schools had little, if any, input into the development of these reforms? Should someone's political ambitions really be a consideration when the education of our youth is in the balance?

Teachers' Emotions

Teachers are bombarded with emotionally charged events and encounters throughout the course of their day. Their actions and feelings influence the place in which they work and the people they work with. In the role as teacher, they are constantly interacting with others, pupils, administrators, colleagues, and parents. Therefore, not only do teachers need to be aware of their own emotions, but they need to be sensitive to how others feel and react. In their dealing with pupils, teacher must be able to help students direct their feelings into culturally appropriate channels. "Teachers not only experience the emotionality of 'people work,' but they often carry the responsibility for it

quality” (Nias, 1996, p. 294). Schools consider this role of teachers as an important part of student learning.

Not only do teachers have the responsibility of dealing with their own emotions and those exhibited by others, they invest themselves deeply into their work. For teachers, their school often becomes the site for their self-esteem, fulfillment and their vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996). Their self-esteem is closely linked to their self-efficacy in the classroom. When freely allowed to practice their teaching skills, these professionals can experience great joy and self satisfaction. It is important that teachers be given the freedom to teach in such a way that is consistent with their belief and value system. “The depth of teachers’ feelings, especially when their practice is challenged, reflects not an immature emotionality but rather...their attachment to their own moral values and priorities despite...the normative isolation in which they often work” (Nias, 1996, p. 297).

“Self-beliefs of efficacy play a key role in the self-regulation of motivation” (Bandura, 1993, p. 128). A teacher’s efficacy beliefs can have a dramatic influence on her students. “Students who end up being taught by teachers with a low sense of efficacy suffer losses in perceived self-efficacy and performance expectations in the transition from elementary school to junior high school” (Bandura, 1993, p. 142). In his work Bandura also stresses the importance of a person’s perception of control over their environment as it affects their efficacy. He identifies two aspects related to this; the level and strength of personal efficacy to produce changes by perseverant effort and creative use of capabilities and resources; and the modification of environment involving the constraints and opportunities provided by the environment to exercise personal efficacy

(Bandura, 1993). This perceived control over their environment can have either positive or negative impact on self-regulatory factors. With pressures imposed by standards and high-stakes testing, teachers may feel they have less and less control in their classrooms. When teachers experience this loss of control their level of efficacy decreases. “Teachers who lack a sense of instructional efficacy show weak commitment to teaching and spend less time on academic matters. Burnout in academe is not at all uncommon” (Bandura, 1993, p. 134).

When teachers are denied this freedom, they report a loss of self (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). Teachers interviewed by Jeffrey and Woods (1996) reflected on this type of loss. With the introduction of new professional requirements and policies, teachers experienced doubt and confusion. When they were no longer allowed to make decisions regarding their own teaching practices, these teachers reported feeling deprofessionalized and less confident (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). They saw themselves go from the status of professionals to that of technicians (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). “If deprofessionalism is to work, teachers need to feel they have failed as professionals and to stop thinking and reflecting as professionals” (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996, p. 330). Is this a healthy emotional environment to which we subject teachers?

Another study in teachers’ emotions conducted by Carlyle and Woods (2004) presented more insight into this topic. This current work found “negative emotional climates are typical of the new educational regime that is driven by the value of the market, competition, managerialism, heavy duty accountability, instrumentalism, and technical rationality” (Carlyle & Woods, 2004, p. 26). Although many studies have identified education as one of the most stressful occupations, and while time and effort

has gone into researching this topic, little benefit or relief has resulted. “While stress is acknowledged as a multi-dimensional and multi-leveled phenomenon, involving micro (personal), meso (organizational), and macro (structural) factors...much research on stress has treated these three elements as discrete entities” (Carlyle & Woods, 2004, p. xi). This approach seems to be more linear than would be desired. Since, as Carlyle and Woods (2004) suggested that stress is an outcome of both social and psychological influences, it would seem more beneficial to use the componential approach in this research. The three elements as defined by Carlyle and Woods (2004) all provide events which would trigger appraisal and action reactions.

When examining the negative emotional climate as put forth by Carlyle and Woods, it is important to consider what Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) has categorized as existential emotions including guilt, shame, and anxiety. Of particular interest in the case of teachers, anxiety is an emotion that often plagues those working with children. Anxiety can be identified as state or trait anxiety. Lazarus (1991) defines state anxiety as an unpleasant emotional arousal when an individual is faced with threatening demands or dangers. A prerequisite for the experience of this emotion is a cognitive appraisal (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1991). Trait anxiety reflects the existence of stable individual differences in the tendency to respond with state anxiety in the anticipation of threatening situations (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1991).

Worry is a cognitive component of the anxiety experience and often reported by teachers. Individuals respond by worrying to a threat of eminent danger and their perceived lack of competence to counteract the threat. Thus it has been found that worry is substantially related to performance and negatively correlated with perceived self-

efficacy (Schwarzer, 1996). An individual may lose their sense of self-efficacy if they do not feel competent to cope with challenging demands. This emotional state of anxiety and worry can often be identified with teachers who are facing academic changes and reforms.

In *The Courage to Teach* (1998), Palmer posited the need teachers have for a strong identity. “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). He believes that when we glorify the ‘method of the day’ those who teach differently end up feeling less valued and forced to conform to norms or methods not their own. When this happens, teachers’ vulnerability increases and they lose heart and begin to disconnect from students and content material in an effort to reduce that vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996). Palmer rallies teachers to take action for themselves. “Authority is granted to people who are perceived as authoring their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role with great remove from their own hearts. When teachers depend on the coercive powers of law or technique, they have no authority at all” (Palmer, 1998, p. 33). This belief in identity was supported by work done by Day and Leitch (2001) as they examined the role of emotion in educators’ lives. “Maintaining an awareness of the tensions in managing professional identity is part of the safeguard and joy of teaching” (Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 403). We are currently experiencing a great migration from the teaching profession. One wonders how many wonderful teachers we lose each year and how long we will permit this deprofessionalism to continue. Teachers not only need to be treated as professionals, but they need to step up and demand that they be given the respect and consideration their profession deserves.

Many studies have found that teachers' emotions have an impact on students and the potential achievement that occurs in the classroom. Although content knowledge and clarity of presentation are accepted as important traits of an effective teacher, the emotional state of the teacher can have an even more dramatic impact on learning (Woolfolk, 2004). Teachers who maintain a warm, friendly attitude are liked more by their students. Enthusiastic teachers encourage their students to increased attentiveness and class involvement (Woolfolk, 2004). Teachers' self-efficacy is seen as a personality trait highly correlated with student achievement, since teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy work harder and persist longer when students are struggling (Woolfolk, 2004). This efficacy is self-perpetuating, growing with each real success (Woolfolk, 2004). When teachers have a perception of control, their self-efficacy and self-determination are positively influenced. This strengthening of efficacy could be the antidote to teacher burnout.

The stress that teachers experience, often on a daily basis, can be detrimental to their identity and idealized self image. Cynicism can set in which will lead to a depersonalized attitude towards work and involvement will be minimized (Friedman, 2000). As a teacher's identity deteriorates, it goes through a three stage process (Carlyle & Woods, 2004). At the first stage there is a separation from the personal identity which has been developed over time. Feelings of un-accomplishment are accompanied by a growing sense of inadequacy and a loss of confidence (Friedman, 2000). After the teacher goes through the second stage of 'hitting bottom,' she will begin to make decisions at the third stage of reconstruction. These decisions may result in returning to

the original position, changing schools or leaving the teaching profession all together (Carlyle & Woods, 2004).

I have experienced this situation in a study I did in my qualitative class at Cleveland State University. While interviewing three middle school teachers regarding their emotions and the pressures they experienced, one teacher stated he actually changed grade levels in order to enjoy more autonomy in his classroom and less pressure for his students to succeed in testing situations. He shared how difficult this decision was since he liked working with this age level of children but felt his method of teaching and the interaction he could otherwise enjoy with his students was curtailed because of pressures from administration. His emotional state at the time was so negative that he had actually thought of leaving teaching despite the fact that he had worked very hard to gain his certification.

Research into this phenomenon of burnout is occurring. Teachers are the largest homogeneous occupational group that is being investigated in burnout research (Pines, 2002). The emphasis in this type of research is on job-related variables based on the assumption that burnout is related to organizational variables more than personal ones (Pines, 2002). Pines' study indicated that class size is significantly correlated with burnout in teachers, but also recognizes that role ambiguity, role conflict, overload, lack of voice in decision making and public pressure are all relevant variables that can influence teacher burnout. When dissatisfaction grows in the workplace, a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion occurs (Pines, 2002). Friedman suggested two distinct pathways leading from the emergence of stress to burnout: a cognitive pathway, involving a sense of personal and profession un-accomplishment and an

emotional pathway that evolves from an initial sense of overload followed by emotional exhaustion (Friedman, 2000). It is at this point that many teachers choose to leave the profession rather than further suffer from this situation. The loss of personal and professional identity has affected their ability or will to continue in their profession.

Summary of Literature Review

After reviewing the literature there seems to be good reason to further investigate the state of our educational system in regards to testing, standards and possible effects they have on teachers. Over the last three decades many political and educational experts have endeavored to improve the education we provide for our youth. The reliance on student test results has increased during this period. There are two schools of thought as to the efficiency and validity of this use of testing and the appropriate weight affixed to them.

The resulting reforms and development of new policies have created higher academic standards, raised expectations for student academic achievement, and increased accountability for both districts and classroom teachers. Although some would argue that these reforms have often been politically motivated and in some cases poorly implemented, they have been enacted with the best of intentions and with a sincere concern for the welfare of our youth.

The reforms and the development of new educational policies, however, have raised questions and concerns. This is dramatically apparent in the establishment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). “The NCLB Act, perhaps the most important federal education law in our nation’s history, is at war with itself” (Ryan, 2004, p. 932). The primary goals of this act are to increase academic achievement across the board while

eliminating the achievement gap between students from varying backgrounds. Those in favor of this act praise these lofty goals and the resulting tough accountability systems which have emerged. Those opposed argue that the heavy emphasis on testing and the inevitability of teaching to the test will actually lower expected standards and ultimately increase the gap between students based on class and race (Ryan, 2004).

With the passage of NCLB and other educational reforms there has also been an increased emphasis on test-based accountability for districts and teachers. Test results have gone from what was once considered low stakes tools used in-house to determine the need for intervention with individual students to high stakes status which result in rewards or sanctions. With the increased accountability has come pressure on teachers and districts to make improvements on test scores, which are then used to indicate whether a quality education is being provided by our schools.

The literature further indicates that these new policies and reforms have an impact on teachers' emotions and pedagogy. The question remains to what extent they have impacted teachers and whether it is generally in a negative or positive way. Therefore there seems to be a legitimate reason to determine the influence of these reforms and the potential impact they have on teachers, their emotions, and the pedagogy they choose to implement in their classrooms.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

As stated in chapter one the purpose of this study is to come to a better understanding of the possible impact testing and meeting standards has on teachers' lives in the classroom. In order to begin the construction of this understanding, I first shared my topic with my advisors, Dr. Karl Wheatley and Dr. Rosemary Sutton. In an effort to develop questions for my study and ultimately for my teacher interviews, we discussed elements of teaching which might be impacted by testing. Many of my resulting interview and research questions address teachers' goals and pedagogy, their relationships with their students, and their perception of how testing has impacted their teaching and emotional state. The research questions I will address are:

The overarching research question:

What are the relationships among high-stakes testing, the practice of teaching, and teachers' emotions?

Specific questions related to the overarching question:

- 1a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in teaching methods and curriculum?
- 1b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

2a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in their interactions with students?

2b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

3a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in interactions with administrators, other teachers, and parents?

3b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

Through classroom observations, the collection of artifacts and documents, teacher interviews, and a focus group interview, it is my intention to fill an apparent gap in current educational research. Although many studies have focused on the impact testing and standards have had on students, there are few that have studied this phenomenon from the teachers' perspective. Recognizing teaching as an emotionally charged profession requiring personal commitment and involvement, I feel the state of teachers' emotions is an important area for study.

In this third chapter I will present my stance as a researcher including any and all existing biases. I will also describe the sites, participants, and method of data collection to be utilized in this study. My proposed method of data analysis and the method used to establish credibility and validity of my study will also be discussed.

Research Perspective

I recognize I approach this work with a strong bias against standardized testing and the implementation of mandated content standards. My own experiences as a junior high teacher for twelve years faced with the task of preparing my students to pass the 9th Grade Ohio Proficiency Test has definitely influenced my opinion of external testing. Despite the fact that our students generally did well on these tests with no special

preparation or curtailment of our curriculum, I believe these tests were intrusive and the antithesis of my personal teaching philosophy. I hold that assessment of students' achievement and comprehension should be authentic and aligned with learning. I do not recognize the type of testing mandated by the state of Ohio as fitting my definition of authentic. Rather these tests require rote memorization and very little higher level thinking skills.

Through conversations with at least five of my colleagues, I determined this was the general feeling of other teachers in my building. Despite the fact that was very little pressure from administrators to focus teaching specifically on test material, the implementation of these tests eliminated one whole week of valuable instructional time. My colleagues and I all felt that projects, reading and normal interactions with our students were sacrificed during that week of test taking. We found it difficult as teachers and role models to inspire our students to do their best when we placed very little credence in the value and importance of these external assessments.

Research Approach

Therefore, I do come to this work with a definite stance I have developed towards standardized testing. In an effort to further define my stance on the subjects of study, I have given much thought to my personal response to both testing and standards as I examined the literature and talked to my colleagues. As stated, I worked in a middle school building where the mandated state testing represented more of an interruption to my normal schedule than a threat to my teaching position. Through my work at the university level teaching masters' classes, however, I have become aware of how unique my situation was in comparison to my students who currently teach in public schools.

Their resentment and frustration over testing was apparent and caused them much anguish which they shared frequently in our classes. These situations shared by many teachers have encouraged me to develop this study and examine more in depth the impact tests and content standards have on today's educators.

As I continue to question the value of state mandated testing, the researcher part of me realizes I need to take an open-minded stance in order to be able to gather and analyze data that truly represents my participants' opinions combined with mine yet without being overly influenced with my biases. I recognize this may be a challenge for me; however, I am confident a constructivist approach will produce more reliable, honest data. Assuming an open-minded, cooperative approach to this study will hopefully provide teachers with an opportunity to state their personal feelings regarding testing and standards without having to qualify them in any way.

Considering my biases and my interest in this topic, I have tried to take this constructivist, interpretive approach in order to learn from and with my participants. Proponents of this persuasion believe that the most effective means of understanding the complex world of lived experiences is from the perspective of those who have lived it (Schwandt, 1994). The focus of an interpretative approach is on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Klein & Myers, 1999). It entails attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them, in this study the teachers and me (Klein & Myers, 1999). The inquirer endeavors to understand the meaning of those lived experiences, which in this study means the teachers and me. As posited by Crotty (1998), "meaning...is not discovered but constructed. Meanings are

constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (pp. 42-43).

Constructionists posit that there exist multiple realities that are inherently unique since they are constructed by individuals who experience them from their own vantage point (Hatch, 2002). In an attempt to understand these realities or meanings, the inquirer must clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of the social actors (Schwandt, 1994). Using this approach will prohibit me as researcher from being distant or objective, but rather will enable me to be an active participant in the construction of realities with the six teachers who so generously share their time and feelings with me through our discussions, observations, and interviews both individually and in group. Artifacts such as school policy and standards will also be examined and discussed and add a richness to the data gathered.

Important to this construction of meaning will be the use of hermeneutics. Defined by Webster as the ‘theory and methodology of interpretation, especially of scriptural text’, through the works of researchers such as Dithy and Gadamer, hermeneutics evolved into an approach often used in research of topics beyond biblical writings. Fundamentally derived from the German idealist philosophy, the concept of hermeneutic tradition is one that posits that spiritual knowing and positivistic-pragmatic knowing are opposed to each other (McAuley, 2004). This approach believes knowledge of human beings is gained through life itself, not theory.

Gadamer, who furthered the development of hermeneutics to its contemporary stage, stressed the primary principle of this approach, hermeneutic circles which suggests we come to understand a complex whole from preconceptions about meanings of its parts

and their interrelationships (Klein & Myers, 1999). By developing a preliminary understanding of the parts, the whole will consist of the shared meanings that emerge from the identified interactions between the parts. It is the harmony of all the parts with the whole that is the criterion of correct understanding (McAuley, 2004). Hermeneutics recognizes that prejudices are a necessary starting point of our understanding; however, the suspension of these prejudices is imperative if we are to begin to understand the whole (Klein & Myers, 1999). The researcher's preconceived notions and prejudices combined with the research itself goes through changing, developing stages of interpretation on the road to a more complete comprehension of that being studied (McAuley, 2004). Therefore, while I hope my biases do not overly influence my participants' responses, they will be a variable that is important in this study and one to be considered in analysis.

Sites

This study is to be conducted in both public and private schools located in different districts in Northwest Ohio. The implementation or emphasis on testing should vary between public and private schools and therefore by including both, it is my intention to indicate any contrasts in practices or attitudes which may exist.

One criterion used in choosing schools is the percent of students on free/reduced lunches. A number of schools studied will have over 50% of their enrollment receiving free/reduced lunches while the rest will be below this 50% mark. The rationale behind this criterion is to enable me to examine any differences in practices or performance which may exist due to the SES level of the student body. Studies have indicated that in

schools which have a high proportion of low SES and minority students tend to focus more on testing and test preparation than more relatively affluent schools (McNeil, 2000).

A second criterion considered is the current academic rating the school has earned based on past test score results. In schools where test results are below standard, teachers may feel forced to reduce the quality and quantity of material covered in order to raise the test scores (McNeil, 2000). The pressure felt by teachers in highly successful schools may come from the desire of parents and staff to keep the academic standards from falling.

Through the examination of schools from different settings including rural, small city and urban, I hope to determine if those settings have an impact on the chosen teaching methods and emotional reactions from the teachers. Although the primary focus of this study is the teachers, the student body and the location of the community will also be variables which may have significant influence on the emotions teachers experience and their choice of pedagogy. The information indicated as the basis for choosing school sites will be verified in the initial interview with teachers through the use of a demographic questionnaire. (See appendix 1)

Participants

The participants for this study will not be chosen randomly, but rather will be a purposeful sampling chosen on the basis of specific factors such as gender, various lengths of teaching experience, their grade level and subjects taught (Morse & Richards, 2002). The length of their teaching experience is assumed to possibly make a difference in their beliefs regarding and their acceptance of student testing. More recently certified teachers in Ohio have been required to pass three mandated Praxis tests which may or

may not make these teachers more accepting of their students being tested. Since more experienced teachers have not been subjected to these specific teachers' tests their stance on student testing may vary.

Figure 1. Schools and Participants

School	Name	Gender	Education	Age	Years Experience	Subject taught and level
St Ann's Private Enrollment: 494 % minority: 6% % free/reduced lunches: 13% Est. Parent Ed: B.S/High School Academic Rank:N/A	Jill	Female	Masters	46+	20+	Math Science 5 th
	Tammy	Female	Masters	36-45	14	Language Arts 5 th
Lincoln Public Enrollment: 372 % minority: 54% %free/reduced lunches: 100% Est. Parent Ed: High School/GED Academic Rank: Continuous Improvement	Ann	Female	Masters	25-35	6	Language Arts 6 th
	Rob	Male	Masters	36-46	22	Math 6 th
Central Public Enrollment: 1401 % minority: 1.6% % free/reduced lunches: 33% Est. Parent Ed: 15.1% college or more Academic Rank: Effective	Dee	Female	Masters	36-36	7	Comprehensive Language Arts 7 th & 8 th
	Walt	Male	B.S.+150 hours	46+	33	Reading, Spelling, English, Literature 8 th

The amount of testing varies with grade levels and schools. Testing is an important part of the fifth, sixth, and eighth grade curriculum and therefore teachers of

these grades will be most directly impacted by student test results and thus included in this study. Since standardized tests are not administered in some parochial schools, I have included two teachers from that setting to give a more balanced view of educational settings.

Further criterion in choosing participants will be the subject that they teach. Due to time restraints, I will include teachers of language arts and math. Participants will be both male and female teachers since studies indicate that there is a difference in emotional reactions between the genders. It is my intention that by selecting teachers with various lengths of teaching experience I will be able to construct a more comprehensive and richer interpretation of the reality of what occurs in education today.

Method of Data Collection

I will gather my data through classroom observations, teacher interviews and a focus group interview with all the teachers. The following is the timeline for this collection:

Figure 2. Timeline

November	November	December	March	March	March	April
Classroom Observations	Teacher Interviews	Analysis/ member check	Classroom Observations	Teacher Interviews	Analysis/ member check	Focus Group interview/ Analysis

Classroom Observations

I will conduct classroom observations during both the first and fourth quarters of the school year. As defined by Merriam (2002), “observational data represent a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account obtained in an interview” (p. 13). Classroom observations will provide me with an opportunity to

experience the day-to-day practices and behavior of my teacher participants (Waddington, 2004). Another purpose of the classroom observations is to come to a better understanding of the setting and social phenomenon experienced from the perspective of my participants (Hatch, 2002). It will allow me to discover how the teachers understand their setting as well (Hatch, 2002). By observing the teachers in their own classrooms, I may be able to note situations or interactions that teachers take for granted or sensitive information they are reluctant to share and therefore would be less likely to surface during our interviews.

As suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1984), I intend to be a “complete observer, one who merely stands back and ‘eavesdrops’ on the classroom proceedings” (p.15). Through this observational stance I hope to gain insight that will help me determine whether the teachers’ actual behavior and practices in the classroom are consistent with their responses to questions asked later during our interview.

Through this first-hand experience in the classroom I will also be able to note such things as posters and other physical or verbal reminders provided for students regarding the upcoming tests and determine the level of importance implicitly or explicitly attached to the tests. Through this opportunity in the classroom, I will be able to ascertain if any incentives or sanctions are being imposed on students by the teacher. Are students rewarded or positively recognized in some way for completing work specifically designed to prepare for the test? Likewise, are there negative consequences for student lack of participation? This may be data that is not otherwise collected through teacher interviews yet will add valuable insight into answering the posed research questions.

It is my intent through the second set of observations to determine any changes which may occur in the classrooms in the way teachers conduct themselves and present their lessons the second half of the year due to the immediate pressures imposed by testing. Statewide tests have been identified as being very reductive and unreflective encouraging teaching to the test (Apple, 1993). In response to the pressures of improving student test scores, some teachers teach defensively as defined by McNeil (2000) as “having students comply with course requirements...which have been reduced by the teacher in order to gain minimal participation with minimal resistance” (p.12). With more student compliance and less challenging material to cover, the intended outcome would be improved student test results. This form of defensive teaching may or may not become apparent through observations.

Through these observations I will note any apparent tension displayed by teachers and perhaps transmitted to students. This may possibly be observed in teachers’ actions such as being curt or short with students or their unwillingness to address students’ questions lest they stray too far from their topic. There may also be verbal reminders as to the importance of successfully preparing and completing the test.

In addition to following the form developed to direct my focus during the observations (see appendix 3), I will also keep fieldnotes during these experiences. As defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), fieldnotes are “the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks over the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study” (p.107). Through the use of fieldnotes, I will ensure a more thorough record of what I have observed and the responses of the participants. In the descriptive portion of my observational fieldnotes, I will endeavor to present a

portrait of any of the subjects who may be relevant, including any pertinent physical displays such as facial expressions or bodily gestures, reactions or specific speech patterns. Body language and speech patterns can be important clues to help interpret the emotions experienced by the teachers or students in the class. I will also record details regarding the physical setting of the classroom which may have been influenced by the events or activities occurring. Has the seating arrangement of the students been altered perhaps into a more traditional form such as straight lines? Are students more restricted in their actions such as stricter application of classroom rules i.e. no talking or permission denied more often to use the restroom during instructional time?

My fieldnotes will include a reflective part in which I will record my “speculations, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, prejudices, and impressions” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 121). This reflective portion of my notes will be embedded in the descriptive data and therefore designated and kept separate by brackets (Hatch, 2002). This type of note-taking will also enable me to record patterns that might be emerging and provide a place to write a note to myself regarding what may need to be done later. This will be an important and useful section of my notes during the analysis stage of the study. Here I can note emotional or non-verbal reactions of teachers otherwise lost. Often emotions cause a physical reaction such as an eye roll, head shake, a sad/happy facial expression. These will be important elements to include in my work of interpreting the data. As stated in Bogdan and Biklen (1992), this reflective part of the fieldnotes will enable me as a researcher to be “extremely conscious of one’s own relationship to the setting and the evolution of the design and analysis” (p. 121). I anticipate that this section

of my notes will also be very useful in determining any modifications that may be needed in the design and pointing out areas that need further investigation.

As I observe, I will include in my fieldnotes a running record or tally of repeating patterns of behavior or comments that are relevant to my research focus. This tally will enable me to more clearly analyze the data gathered and increase the validity of my conclusions. For example, I will tally how often the importance of the 'test' is specifically mentioned during instruction or that the material presented is the type 'found on the test'. I can also note any physical display (head shakes, frowns, thumbs up etc.) accompanying these remarks which may give some indication of the teachers' emotional state.

Teachers Interviews

Data collection for this study will also be achieved through two semi-structured, informal interviews with individual teacher participants one held in the fall and the other in the spring closer to testing culminating with a focus group interview in April. Interviews have long been recognized as an important tool used in qualitative research. "The interview is an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed. When performed, the interview text creates the world, giving the world its situated meaningfulness" (Denzin,2001, p.25) which fits with my constructivist stance. Interviews are considered an "economic means of getting access to topics that are not routinely available for analysis, to get people to think out-loud about certain topics" (Rapley, 2001, p. 317).

The use of interviews is intended to gather descriptive data in the participants' own words which will enable me as the researcher to develop an understanding of how

these teachers interpret their teaching situations and emotional states. I will employ an informal format since this will allow for a deep, textured picture to emerge as the data is gathered (Rapley, 2001) while also utilizing a more semi-structured format in order to provide all participants the opportunity to address the same set of themes through my questioning them from a list of prepared questions (Potter, 2003).

Introductory and exploratory interviews conducted in the fall will allow me to develop a rapport with each teacher, gather demographic information regarding the building and student body, and establish the teachers' emotional state. I will clarify with the teachers that the interviews will be spaces of interaction (Rapley, 2001). The purpose of these interactions is to learn teachers' beliefs and possible concerns and add them to my own stance and the knowledge I have gained through a literature review. Each interview will be conducted on the school site, will be tape recorded, enhanced by my fieldnotes and last approximately 30-45 minutes. It is my intention that by conducting the interviews at the schools the teachers will be more comfortable in their familiar surroundings. Tape recording the interviews will free me up from trying to write every word, allow me time to take fieldnotes and to develop appropriate follow-up questions to add more depth to the responses. The time element is another aspect I will be sensitive to since the interviews will be held after a long day of teaching. If an interview looks like it may exceed the 45 minute period, I will offer to come back to complete the process. That way neither the teacher nor I will feel rushed which should result in gaining more complete responses.

The prepared questions for each interview segment have been developed with a specific focus in mind. The questions used in the first set of teacher interviews are

intended to gain general information from a historic perspective. I will ask teachers to share their ideal teaching practices and the goals they hope to achieve. In addition there are questions addressing the possible importance and impact standardized tests and standards may have on these practices and goals. During these initial interviews I also hope to gain insight into the type of relationships these teachers have with their students, colleagues and parents. Teachers' expressed emotions will be a focus throughout these prepared questions and the impromptu ones that occur (See appendix 2). It was my intention while developing these questions to keep them neutral rather than value-laden to avoid potentially influencing the teachers' responses. In addition to my prepared questions, teachers will be encouraged to add any information they feel is pertinent.

After the initial introductory and exploratory interviews have been transcribed, analyzed, and examined by member checks done by the teachers, additional interviews will take place in the spring quarter. It is intended that these subsequent teacher interviews further address the topics of testing, pedagogy, interactions with students and emotions experienced by the teachers closer to the time of actual testing. The set of questions developed for this second set of individual interviews are designed to address these topics with a more current, day-to-day focus rather than historic. Questions will relate to what is happening in their classrooms now and the emotions that are being experienced. The teachers' responses from these interviews will be compared to their initial responses to determine any changes teachers may be experiencing. Despite the use of these predetermined interview questions, participants will again be encouraged to share specific events or emotions from their teaching. "Good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondent's perspectives" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992,

p. 97). This type of data is imperative to my research since it will provide insight into teachers' perception of their daily experiences and the emotions they feel. As stated in Kvale (2002), the purpose of interview inquiries is "directed toward the interpretation of meaning, unfolding the complexities of the participants' answers and not forging them into predetermined categories for subsequent quantification" (p. 284).

In order to utilize interviews most effectively it will be necessary for me to follow some guidelines which address the role and demeanor of the interviewer. It is important to develop a good, working rapport with the teachers being interviewed. This can be enhanced by making eye contact and an occasional nod or smile. Focused follow-up questions will indicate to the interviewee that I am listening, interested and finding what they have to say relevant and valuable (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003).

Another recommended way to establish a sound working relationship is to acknowledge that there are no right or wrong answers (Legard et al., 2003). The interview will be conducted in a neutral, non-judgmental manner which should encourage honest, forthright responses from the teachers.

As an interviewer I need to be able to guide the talk, promote questions for the purpose of clarification and provide opportunities for silence (Rapley, 2001). Silent periods in an interview will give the teachers a chance to think about their responses and not feel rushed or tempted to respond with the first thing that comes to mind. Given a good length of wait time the teachers would realize their opinions or perceptions are valuable data that they should give serious thought to. Wait time will also benefit me as the interviewer since it will give me time to decide which part of their previous response

should be addressed in a follow-up question and also allow more time for writing fieldnotes.

In my role as interviewer I will also need to be aware of my responses and reactions to teachers' answers. Refraining from commenting on answers will avoid seeming to be judgmental. Summarizing is also dangerous since any attempt may be partial or incorrect (Legard et al., 2003). Rather than attempting to summarize a more appropriate response would begin with a statement such as "Let me see if I understand this correctly..." Even extraneous remarks such as 'Right' 'Okay' or 'Yes' can encourage the interviewee to shut down since what was said appears to be sufficient (Legard et al., 2003).

As suggested in Bogdan and Biklen (1992) in addition to the recorded and typed transcripts of the teacher interviews, I intend to also keep fieldnotes throughout the interview process. By utilizing this strategy, I will be able record gestures, facial expressions, and other body language that the teacher may exhibit but the tape recorder cannot pick up. By recording this visually observed aspect of the interview I will be able to make a more thorough interpretation of the teachers' responses and reactions.

Credibility and Validity

Merriam (2002), pointed out there is still much discussion and debate regarding how the concept of validity applies in qualitative research. Kvale's proposed way of considering validity seems most appropriate for this study. Kvale posited validity as the skills a researcher employs to think critically during data analysis and dialogue with others; and notes *pragmatic* validity referring to any real-world changes which are a result of the research (Kvale, 1996). In regards to internal validity Merriam suggested the

question “How congruent are one’s findings with reality?” (Merriam, 2002, p. 25). She further explains that in qualitative research, “the understanding of reality is really the researcher’s interpretation of participants’ interpretation or understanding of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 2002, p. 25). It is through the interviews with teachers and classroom observations that I will gather the data utilized to develop this interpretation.

Internal validity will be strengthened through triangulation, the use of a number of methods to check the ‘integrity of, or extend inferences drawn from the data’ (Ritchie, 2003, p. 43). One method of achieving triangulation is multiple data collection, which for my study will include teacher interviews, classroom observations, fieldnotes, school documents such as policy and standards, a focus group interview and member checks. Using this strategy will promote a more thorough interpretation of the data and result in more reliable findings and conclusions. As stated in Ritchie (2003), triangulation is a “means of investigating the convergence of both data and the conclusions derived from the” (p. 43). “The security that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 44). This is the goal of my study, to gather data from the teachers through their words and actions regarding their stance on student testing and add it to my personal stance and the knowledge I have gained through my literature review.

As stated during my study I will conduct a members’ check, providing each teacher with a copy of the fieldnotes and transcripts from our interviews and my fieldnotes from the observations so they may make corrections or offer any clarification. These member checks will be conducted after each interview and observation before I

make my initial analysis to ensure that the transcripts and that the comments recorded in fieldnotes have captured the essence of events or reactions observed. Member checks will also be conducted after my final analysis to enhance that a thoroughness has been realized in my interpretations.

In an effort to enhance credibility and generate data with a high(er) ecological validity (Willig, 2001), I will also conduct a focus group interview. Since this group will be comprised of the teacher participants and me, it can be defined as both homogenous (all of us sharing key features) and concerned (all of us having a stake in the subject matter) (Willig, 2001). Used as a supplemental source of data, this interview will provide the teachers an opportunity to interact with each other and jointly construct meaning regarding our topic. My role during this group interview will be that of moderator whose task it will be to welcome participants, introduce them to each other, provide the topic for discussion and to gently steer that discussion so that we will remain focused on our topic (Willig, 2001).

Data Analysis

After considering the various approaches to analysis generally employed in qualitative research, I have decided the most applicable for my study is inductive analysis as posited by Hatch (2002). This type of analysis will allow me to search for patterns of meaning across the data sets gathered so general statements about the phenomenon under investigation can be made (Hatch, 2002). As the analysis progresses, it will “move from looking for patterns across individual observations, then arguing for those patterns as having the status of general explanatory statements” (Potter, 1996, p. 151).

Inductive analysis will keep me interacting with the data through continued readings and rereadings in order to identify frames of analysis, levels of specificity within which the data can be examined (Hatch, 2002). These frames of analysis will relate to my three areas of examination in this study: teachers' emotional responses, their practices and strategies employed and their interactions or relationships with their students, colleagues and parents. Once these broad frames have been identified, I will create domains based on the semantic relationships discovered within the frames of analysis (Hatch, 2002). These domains will be coded using a common system of categories (Spencer, et al, 2003). A complete analysis within each domain will be achieved through a thorough examination of the data looking for examples that both support the domain or that actually run counter to it. Those examples that do not fit may lead to some interesting new ideas or concerns. This examination will allow a look for depth and complexity both within and across the domains. At this point of the analysis themes should emerge existing across domains which show linkage of the data (Hatch, 2002).

Once the analysis of the data has been completed to this stage, I will create a master outline expressing relationships within and among the domains (Hatch, 2002). I will include with this outline data excerpts which support the key elements of the outline. This will give me a clear, organized picture of the data to be referenced during my interpretation of it. Once the analysis has been completed, I will ask the teachers to partake in a member check to assure thoroughness and to enhance the ultimate interpretation of the data.

Summary

My goal in chapter one was to introduce my area and purpose of study which is teachers' emotions and classroom practices and interactions with others and how they may be impacted by standardized testing and standards. Following in chapter two I presented a review of literature which addresses teachers' emotions more generally and a historic perspective of the development of standards and the use of standardized testing in our schools. The literature review indicated to me the need for additional study in this area.

The focus of chapter three has been to present the procedures I intend to implement to complete this study. I have described the criteria used to choose the school sites specifically the percentage of students on free/reduced lunches and academic ratings including both private and public schools. Teacher participants include 5th and 8th grade teachers of math and language arts where testing is most intense. The length of teaching experience will also vary among the participants. These criteria were established to provide opportunities to examine different teaching situations in order to gain a more balanced picture of educational settings. The methods of data collection will be through classroom observations, fieldnotes, semi-structured teacher interviews, and a focus group interview. My biases and stance have also been defined. Though I do have some strong negative beliefs regarding the value of student testing, it is my intention to maintain an open-minded attitude during my interaction with my teacher participants to avoid influencing their responses. The hermeneutic approach explained in this chapter will provide a framework through which I can develop theory and a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study. I will analyze my data through inductive

analysis utilizing a coding system to organize data and indicate patterns and relationships. Validity and credibility will be established through the use of triangulation including the observations, individual and group interviews, fieldnotes, and member checks. It is my belief that the design of this study and the methods proposed are appropriate and sufficient for answering my research questions.

For the sake of clarity and organization I will present in three separate chapters a profile of each school, including teaching practices and interactions I have observed and the possible effects testing has on each school and teacher participant. Comparisons and conclusions will then be addressed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL PROFILE: CENTRAL PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Research Questions

The teacher interviews along with the classroom observations I conducted have provided me with rich data regarding teachers and their emotions, pedagogy and professional relationships. These topics were generated from my three research questions:

- 1a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in teaching methods and curriculum?
- 1b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?
- 2a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any changes do teachers report in their interactions with students?
- 2b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?
- 3a) With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in interactions with administrators, other teachers, and parents?
- 3b) How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

It was based on these questions that I developed three sets of teacher interview questions.

The first set of teacher interviews utilized the same questions with all six teachers. (see form 2) Based on their personal responses, I then developed and asked more

individualized questions for each of the three buildings in my study when I conducted my second set of interviews. (see forms 4-6). For the final group interview all six teachers were present and I asked another set of questions for the focus of our group discussion. (see form 7). It was my intention that by using various methods and sets of questioning I would obtain richer data which would be more individualized to each building's teaching situation.

Once the interview tapes were transcribed and my observation and field notes organized, I was able to study the data in an effort to identify common themes related to my research questions. In an attempt to organize my data and isolate common themes, I used large sheets of plain white paper with headings identifying interview questions asked and listing teachers' responses and direct quotes under the appropriate columns. I followed this pattern for each teacher and each interview. In addition to teachers' responses, on the same page I also highlighted events or comments observed in the classrooms and my personal reactions gleaned from my field notes. Observational fieldnotes provided information otherwise not available through my interviews such as observed physical gestures, facial expressions or the tone of voice the teachers used with their students during class. This organizational strategy proved to be very helpful in my identification of themes, including similarities and differences among my teacher participants and their teaching.

The Building: Central

Central Public Middle School is a rural school with an enrollment of 1401 students. Of the student body, 30% were receiving free/reduced lunches and 1.6% represented minority races. This school was currently operating at an effective academic

ranking. By achieving this ranking, the faculty and parents believed they were successfully implementing their mission statement: "Success for all students."

My participating teachers said in an effort to achieve this lofty goal, the staff and administration had also developed a vision statement which reflected their desire to provide "a place where staff and students excel, parents and community care keeping focused on what they label PACE: professionalism, accountability, collaboration, and expectations." The teachers reported a high level of collaboration existing between teachers and administration. There was a team effort achieved in this building through daily meetings of level teachers who gathered to discuss curriculum and any current problems. As Hargreaves (1994) noted, such collaboration can be seen as "promoting professional growth, internally generating school improvement, and implementing externally introduced changes" (p.165). In the case of Central, it appeared to be a means through which they hoped to achieve their expectation of continuing to maintain their current effective academic ranking.

To further enhance this collaborative environment, Central became a participant in *Making Middle Schools Work*, a nation-wide program developed by the Southern Education Regional Board (SERB). This program was designed to assist states, districts, and schools as they examine their expectations, their methods of instruction, and the most effective ways to teach teens. *Making Middle Schools Work* is a school improvement initiative emphasizing the teaching of a rigorous academic core of subjects, supported by a strong relationship between students, parents, teachers and administrators. This program further promotes the importance of administrative involvement. Besides regulating and providing time for common planning periods for teachers' collaboration,

administrators also provided professional development opportunities specifically aligned with a well-developed school improvement plan. The mission of *Making Middle Schools Work* is to create a culture of high expectations and continued improvement in preparing students for high school. The faculty and administration believed that this goal was directly aligned with Central's mission. Central's participation in this program was further strengthened by their cooperative work with their affiliated high school which had implemented *Making High Schools Work*, a program also designed by SERB.

This school was situated in a small rural area a few miles outside the city limits where everyone seemed to know each other. Once the smaller area schools were consolidated into what was now Central, the community built a common campus for their elementary, middle and high schools and their board of education offices. Since all three schools were at the same location, it made it easier for teachers and administrators from different levels to meet and share ideas. The middle school and high school shared the same building which the teachers felt provided a sense of continuity for both teachers and students. This comfortable, familiar atmosphere was observed in both the classrooms and in the halls between classes. Teachers stood outside their rooms between classes, chatting with their colleagues and students. Some students greeted or high-fived teachers as they made their way to their next class.

Teacher Participant: Walt

Communication with Parents and Colleagues

Although both participating teachers at Central were involved with the *Making Middle Schools Work* program, their beliefs about how much it had affected their personal teaching varied. Walt, who had been teaching for thirty-three years, stated he did

not feel that this program had changed his teaching in many significant ways, except for the level of communication that it required. He now had to post times he was available for student conferences on his classroom door and list his homework assignments on the school website. Walt's communication with parents had increased in what he felt was a positive way through the posting of school notes on the website. Although he had been a resident in this community for many years and had either gone to school with or taught some of the parents of his current students, Walt stated this increased access to teachers and their courses of study had a positive effect on communication between faculty and parents. Further efforts to communicate with parents during this current academic year resulted in middle school teachers being advised that they needed to conduct at least twenty parent-teacher conferences. This step was seen as another positive opportunity for Walt to communicate with the parents of his students.

Walt noted how this high level of communication also existed between teachers and administrators. He said their principal of the past two years had an open-door policy, even though he admitted that sometimes what teachers said "falls on deaf ears" (I #1, p. 6). For the most part, however, the administration was "supportive, present, but not smothering" (I #1, p. 6). Walt described a friendly, hands-on approach to teachers by the principal who tried to address their needs. In this past year a teachers' lounge had been created where they can relax and have coffee between classes. The principal also attended teachers' planning sessions on a regular basis to lend advice and support.

Walt felt one-on-one communication among staff was generally good. He believed this level of communication between staff was somewhat dependent on the individual persons, their personalities and needs. The daily level meetings for staff

promoted cooperation and communication among the teachers and Walt saw this as a positive step.

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

When asked about the curriculum, Walt stated he had tried to keep his methods of teaching fairly consistent throughout his teaching career. "I know what I can do, what I do and what I know...use the benchmarks as guides...pick all the tests I use...and look at old tests" (I #1, p. 1). However, he admitted that the pressure of standardized testing had impacted his teaching. Walt said "I have to teach these things....that test is out there staring you in the face...I have to prepare my kids for that...I want them to do well" (I #1, p. 2). When talking about the test, Walt observed "...there's a lot of stuff that we view as being absolutely absurd and ridiculous to have to do" (I #1, p. 9). He questioned if there was actually a difference in what teachers were told by their administrators they had to do and what was actually stated in the No Child Left Behind Act. Content standards "come down from the top...and everybody, administration, the state...puts their own spin on it, their own interpretation" which he felt caused confusion and frustration in the actual classrooms (I #1, p. 9). When asked about the impact of the current testing situation, Walt stated that in his opinion, it had created "...more of a serfdom, royalty and we peons are working in the trenches" (I #1, p. 9). He continued "when administration gets blamed for poor test scores the teachers vent their frustrations, which in turn causes administration to lose respect for the faculty" (I #1, p. 10). Although Walt seemed keenly aware of the impending test, during my observation of his class he rarely referred to it except to point out how questions may be written on the test and the importance of students being able to support their answers with references from the text

since this strategy was frequently seen in standardized tests. He believed that much of what he taught, such as having students supporting answers with examples from the text, was not a deviation from what he would normally cover even without it being needed for success on the test. During my observations, he did an effective job of weaving necessary skills and information throughout his instruction and then made minor references that these might also be useful facts to remember when taking the test.

He stated that “administration is [also] much more concerned...I feel they are worried about what we are doing and the test scores” (I #1, p. 1). Due to this concern new practices had been put in place. Over the past four or five years he had been observed annually at least once by administrators. This was a new development for the teachers in this building since observations in past years were done much less frequently. Despite the pressure from the test Walt acknowledged was present in his daily teaching, he emphasized that “regardless of the test, I want my students to learn, to have a balanced education...they need both what the teacher sees as necessary in addition to the material on the test” (I #1, p. 2). He also stated that he felt middle school teachers seemed less pressured than elementary teachers. He based this assumption on the fact that his wife and daughter, both elementary teachers, shared with him their worries about all the new programs they were constantly implementing in hopes of improving their test scores. Despite the pressure from tests, this teacher did not seem to be overly concerned. He believed his professional experience had shown him that “things in education all cycle around...the test will pass...and there’s no sense in getting all worked up for it” (I #1, p. 10). He stated that his main goal in teaching was preparing his students for life.

Teacher/Student Relationship.

Throughout our interview, Walt stressed the importance of “relating to his students...making contact...seeming real” (I #1, p. 5). The connection Walt had with his students was evident throughout my classroom observation. He appeared comfortable with his class, teasing about the literature they were studying and allowing students to share personal experiences that related to the story. Along with a mutual display of respect exhibited between teacher and students, there was a discernable level of established discipline that was expected to be followed by all students. Since students followed the rules of discipline that were in place, no disciplinary actions were observed during my school visits. Walt said their students were generally well-behaved and cooperative. This may have been true because in addition to the day-to-day discipline practiced by teachers in their individual classrooms, Walt said their assistant principal, in charge of student discipline, was teacher-supportive while dealing fairly and swiftly with student problems. The support from administration was appreciated by this teacher who said “[it] makes our job easier if you have good discipline from that end” (I #1, p. 6).

Despite pressures of testing and meeting content standards, Walt stated he was content in his teaching position, so much so that he decided not to retire this year when he was eligible, but rather had opted to continue teaching for another couple of years. His relationship with his students and the support he had from administration seemed to have influenced this decision. Walt seemed happy in his role as teacher. His confidence in his time proven abilities to relate to his middle school students and provide a clear presentation of the language arts material was evident in the classes I observed. Walt had his materials for class organized and ready to use. He paced his instruction well giving

his students ample time to think before responding. From their observed demeanor it was apparent that the students felt comfortable responding to his questions or sharing their personal opinions.

The strong student/teacher relationships at Central were exemplified by Walt who apparently knew about his students' extracurricular activities. While observing I noted how Walt greeted his students with questions about how their particular sporting activities were going or what they were doing in student council. Walt appeared to want to let his students know who he was and that he related to their lives. This teacher also used humor throughout the class, drawing students in and making them feel comfortable in the classroom setting. Much of the material displayed on Walt's classroom walls was humorous. Some of the displays were set up so the students could even interact with them by adding to their creation. For example, one bulletin board was decorated with a Christmas tree that students decorated for whatever season they were currently celebrating. At the time of my last observation in April, the tree was decorated with Easter bunnies and eggs!

Second Interview and Observation

In an attempt to form a more accurate picture of this teacher's work and relationships with others in his building, the initial interview and classroom observation were followed up with another interview and observation the week before standardized tests were administered. When observed in late March, Walt's demeanor with his students continued to be relaxed and comfortable. Throughout the week prior to my visit, he said he had begun more intense and continuous review and practice for the upcoming tests using a state-prepared test booklet, *Buckle Down*. When questioned how this type of

instruction affected his teaching, he reported using this test booklet was in keeping with his normal curriculum. As an example Walt said typically throughout the last academic quarter, if his language arts class finished their current work, for example the completion of a novel on a Thursday or Friday, he would have his students work with the test-preparation workbook rather than begin a new novel right before a weekend.

Testing

Despite the pressure to utilize test preparatory material and the desire on his part to complete the booklet before the actual test, Walt continued to display his laid-back, “no worry” attitude towards the upcoming tests. Unlike his own feelings, he noted how some of his colleagues “are worried about how the kids will do [on the test] because they are afraid for their jobs and what’s going to happen with the school...younger ones mostly” (I #1, p. 6). Despite his current confidence, he said he could relate to these younger teachers’ emotions as he acknowledged he had felt stronger, more negative, anxious emotions as a younger teacher himself. At this point in his career and life, however, he felt “it’s better to be more positive...[and] in the long run to look at the big picture, at what you’re doing...and to keep trying” (I #1, p. 2). Perhaps the fact that Walt was a seasoned teacher who was close to retirement eased any pressures he may have felt. His confidence in his abilities and teaching routine may have also played a role in his positive attitude. “I’m going do this [test] review and I’m going to teach what I’m supposed to be teaching...but I’m not worried or uptight” (I #1, p. 7). When asked if his emotional state changed at all throughout the academic year, Walt said he felt his emotions were fairly balanced throughout the academic year. “You just sort of plunge ahead and you just do it.”

This is not to say that Walt did not acknowledge experiencing some emotions related to testing.

He felt “you get a little uptight...[but] it’s not so much the testing itself, it’s kind of the reasoning behind it and the fact that you *have* to do it...your frustration and anger because of feeling a certain amount of futility having the ultimate goal that *all* students will be successful in an academic test situation” (I #1, p. 2).

Some of his students ... “are going to be mechanics and brick layers and electricians and carpenters...we need these [trade] people” so he felt that the type of standardized testing that is currently in place in our country is not as important for them as for students who may be college bound (I #1, p. 10). For the most part, however, Walt supported some type of testing for his students. In both interviews he cited the type of testing that has been the norm for some European countries for many years. He believed this type of testing that indentified students’ strengths and possible career goals to be very useful. In his opinion testing of this design had a positive purpose and could be beneficial to students, the teaching staff, administrators and parents.

If given the opportunity to make changes in the No Child Left Behind Act, Walt responded by saying any changes should focus on increasing parental responsibility. “The kids’ behavior and success comes also from home” (I #1, p. 3). He believed it was unfair that so much of the accountability was placed on the shoulders of the school and principals and they were “punished if all kids don’t score well” (I #1, p. 5). He recognized the influence parents and home life could have on the academic achievements of his students. He also acknowledged that as a language arts teacher he could have only so much control on that home life and the impact it could have on his students.

Team Collaboration

During our interviews, I asked Walt his opinion of the quality of communication among staff members. Although he reported the quality of interaction was high, he believed that team teaching meetings, held daily in his building throughout the academic year, was another area that should be addressed to develop better ways of utilizing this time. He stated a solid team effort had not yet been fully realized in this middle school. Walt acknowledged that sometimes other [teachers] were not “pulling their weight...aren’t doing stuff” (I #1, p. 5). He added that there were benchmarks and content standards that were expected to be followed and that sometimes “you have to have faith that they’re [other teachers] doing their thing” (I #1, p. 5).

In his opinion other changes could also be made to enhance the team effort of the building. Although he acknowledged that communication had improved through their meetings, he did not feel the need to meet daily with just his grade level team but would rather meet with seventh grade teachers at least once a week to increase continuity in the language arts curriculum.

Teacher Participant: Dee

The other teacher in this building, Dee, had less teaching experience than Walt. This mother of two came to teaching after first working in law enforcement. Once she had received her degree for this career and practiced it for a few years, she decided to go back to college to get certified to teach and ultimately completed her master’s degree in education. When Dee started her teaching career seven years ago, she said she was given much freedom in the development of her literature curriculum, choosing her materials and deciding which methods would be most effective with her 7th and 8th grade language

arts students. Although she admitted her choice of teaching style was very structured, she felt her students then had more opportunities for personal creativity and to experiment with many different modes of learning. With the implementation of testing and state content standards, Dee felt “methods are more often guided by the text which matches up with standards.” As a result, she reported her students’ activities revolved more around scripted activities rather than student creativity. Although Dee acknowledged the benefit of adding direction and continuity through the use of content standards, she also felt it narrowed her choice of teaching methods. She stated she had eliminated previously planned independent and class choral reading in order to free up more time to address skills specifically named in the standards and that would appear on the yearend test. Dee indicated that she believed this more narrowed focus of learning had negatively impacted her students’ opportunities for free thinking and creativity.

Choosing Teaching Material

Dee also cited more current constraints due to the influence high school teachers had been given on the materials and methods she could use in her teaching. They had been allowed by administrators the final say on which textbook she would use in her 8th grade class. Despite the fact that she personally felt the text was not arranged in a logical way, it dictated what would be read in her classes. In addition, she had to change from teaching parts of speech holistically, her preferred method, to more explicit instruction due to high school teachers’ preference. High school teachers would also have an impact on how she utilized her language arts period in the coming academic year. At the time of our first interview, Dee had just been notified that next year she would have to use twenty minutes of each of her language arts classes to teach careers since high school teachers

were no longer willing to teach this in their curriculum. This loss of freedom to utilize chosen materials and class time as she saw fit was a real concern for her since Dee felt it increased the amount of vulnerability she experienced in her teaching. Dee appeared to be experiencing three sources of vulnerability as described by Kelchtermans (1996); at the micro-level (classroom) struggling with the limits her teaching was having on student learning due to the constraints she felt had been imposed on her; in her dealings with principals and colleagues; and with educational policy makers. This feeling of vulnerability is a concern since it can profoundly affect job satisfaction and the quality of professional performance (Kelchtermans, 1996). Her frustrations and negative feelings were evident in her tone of voice and expressions while discussing these changes. While discussing these changes, Dee expressed her anger and seemed a little defeated since she was not given any opportunity to discuss the choices of material or an option of whether or not to teach careers. Dee indicated that operating under what she considered a restrictive situation had caused her much frustration and concern.

Test Impact on Curriculum and Teaching Methods

When asked about the influence testing had on her pedagogy, Dee believed that testing had impacted her teaching. Despite the impact Dee acknowledged, during my classroom observation she made no reference to any test or possible test situations and there were no posters on the walls regarding tests. Although there were no overt signs of this impact, it had however, affected Dee's choice of teaching methods. Since standardized testing required students to read silently, she had incorporated more silent reading in her instructional time. In order to prepare students to read more comprehensively in a silent fashion, Dee reported she had spent the first eighteen weeks

of school teaching students strategies to make them more proficient in this style of reading. Dee indicated that this method of instruction was not one she would have freely chosen; rather she would have preferred more interaction between herself and students during their reading time, teaching strategies in a more holistic method as situations arose. She reported she also taught more strategies in note-taking since these too were needed to succeed on the test. "I hate to say it, that's all that seems to matter, that they be successful on the test" (I #1, p. 3). Although she had incorporated these prescribed strategies into her teaching to achieve better test scores, she claimed she did so against her professional judgment.

In addition to this acknowledged intrusion in her teaching, Dee had other concerns regarding the test. She pointed out that it was unfair for staff and parents to view the test results as the sole responsibility of one teacher. While taking the test the students were drawing on knowledge that they had accumulated over the last six years of their academic lives, not just the current year's curriculum. Another aspect she felt was not considered when reviewing the test results was the particular group of students tested, and their individual interests, abilities, weaknesses and strengths. Regardless of her best efforts, Dee felt she did not have total control over the variety of talents and weaknesses her students brought to the classroom or variables that could affect their test taking abilities.

Teacher/Student Relationships

Similar to Walt, Dee indicated and displayed great rapport with her students. She used terms like "outstanding" and "unique" when describing the 7th graders she worked with. The students were "totally here to learn...we can joke...laugh...it can be fun...but

we can still be focused and accomplish what we need to do” (I #1, p. 4). I found this to be the case throughout the hour and a half I observed Dee. Her students were on-task, cooperative and seemed eager to participate. Dee provided her class with age-appropriate materials that were effective. The atmosphere in the classroom felt relaxed and comfortable with an air of mutual respect exhibited between students and teacher. Dee greeted students warmly as they entered her room. She was prepared in advance so all her attention could go towards welcoming her students. In some instances she asked students specific questions about their extracurricular activities. Students responded in a friendly, comfortable manner. They settled in quickly and eagerly awaited the reading of the next chapter of the book *Crash*, which Dee read aloud to them at the beginning of each class. Once class discussion began, students appeared confident that their responses would be received in a positive manner and that their opinions mattered to her. Dee did point out that her 8th grade class was not quite as responsive or cooperative and that she had to be more disciplined during their instruction. With the 8th graders, Dee reported she felt less inclined to allow them the level of autonomy her 7th graders enjoyed in her language arts class.

Communication with Colleagues and Parents

When asked about relationships with other faculty members, Dee echoed the same positive attitude as Walt’s regarding communication in the building. She praised administration for their support and stated there was excellent communication within her team of teachers. She said she was “really pleased this year...working with the best team ever” (I #1, p. 5). In addition to her daily meetings with her team, Dee and other team teachers met regularly with 6th grade and high school teachers in order to achieve more

continuity in their instruction and curriculum. Dee believed testing had not negatively impacted communication with parents either, but rather had increased the amount of material the school sent out to them. The parents of this district, in the opinion of this teacher, were however “complacent about test results...don’t see it as a huge issue” (I #1, p. 7). This may be the result of this school’s effective academic ranking; test results had been positive and therefore the teachers and school were viewed as being successful.

Impact of Testing and Content Standards

Through the responses Dee gave during our interview, it became apparent that there were many aspects of her current teaching position that she had positive feelings about: her team of teachers, administrators and for the most part the students with whom she worked. She expressed how helpful some of the strategies she had learned through the *Making Middle Schools Work* program had been in her instruction. However, there were also restraints and responsibilities as a result of testing that she found frustrating and demoralizing. Dee said she regretted the loss of freedom she once enjoyed in planning her language arts curriculum and choosing teaching methods she believed would be more conducive to encouraging student creativity. Dee stated:

“When I first started at Central I had nothing...blank slate...no textbooks, novels...I created my curriculum from scratch based on stuff we did at my university...there was a lot of creativity involved. Students were doing different modes of learning more often. Much of the learning activities now, reading and writing are pen and paper instead of other creative things. The kids don’t like it either. The kids like it when they’re allowed to show their own creativity instead of being mandated what they’ll be doing” (I #1, p. 1).

Although both the teachers recognized being affected by the impact of testing and content standards, neither made much, if any, reference to them in their teaching at this time of the school year. Students were encouraged to participate and take chances in

class. Dee told her students “wrong thoughts won’t be criticized...always a way to change wrong answers” (I #1, p. 4). Students were expected to do their best at all times for the sake of learning and to better themselves and maintain an orderly conduct in their behavior.

Second Interview and Observation

At the time of my second interview with Dee, she seemed to be much more affected by the upcoming tests than Walt. When asked what emotions she was currently experiencing, she responded:

“I *used* to feel teaching was a lot of fun and feel happy about it...light-hearted...because it was creative and adventurous...and right now, I feel stressed out of my gourd. My right eye is twitching horribly...it is stress...very stress-filled” (I #2, p. 1).

Dee believed the increased stress level common with the other teachers in her wing of the building and those on her teaching team. “All of my colleagues are on edge right now” (I #2, p. 1). Dee related that the pressure of the test had certainly impacted the teachers at the 8th grade level, in that everyone had been using the test-preparation booklet, *Buckle Down* and “tons of booklets being made for achievement” for the last three weeks and had shared their frustration over this with their colleagues (I #2, p. 5). “I think pretty consistently it seems that people feel, including myself, like we’re stopping teaching to teach to all these tests skills or what’s going to be on the test” (I #2, p. 5). Only one 8th grade teacher, to her knowledge, had not abandoned his normal curriculum. The 8th grade science teacher told Dee that he refused to set aside his curriculum for the test material.

Impact of Testing on Teacher Relationships

When asked about the impact of testing, Dee indicated that not only have the impending tests impacted her language arts curriculum but she expressed how it had affected her interaction with both her colleagues and her students, especially her 8th graders. She said that their lack of concern regarding test scores “makes me feel like they are complacent and they need to be pushed and shoved and told how to do things. It’s a bad attitude” (I #2, p. 1). She felt this situation certainly was not in keeping with her desire for creativity and adventure in her students. Dee’s cited that the 8th graders felt since the test scores did not represent “a grade in the grade book...[they] don’t affect them going into high school” (I #2, p. 7). This seemed to Dee especially true this year since the test was being administered so late in the academic year. The results were not expected to be returned to the schools until mid-June. This complacency and lack of concern regarding their test scores caused Dee some aggravation. She cited feeling frustration when trying to deal with these negative student attitudes and the “pressures to get things done in preparation for the test” (I #2, p. 7). Dee stated that it made her feel then, more than ever, that “her kids are letting their education slip through their fingers” (I #2, p. 7).

Dee acknowledged that by all means not every 8th grader had this attitude but “there are obviously students that I have that have no interest in here, they have no buy-in to their education” (I #2, p. 7). She stated she was trying hard to stress the importance of the test results because she realized the community judged the school and her teaching based on these scores. She told her students that “last year’s poor performance does not accurately portray their abilities and presents a false picture. I told my students you’re not

the least educated, you're not stupid" (I #2, p. 6). She reported how it was difficult for her to emphasize the importance of a test that she herself did not fully support or recognize as a valid tool to represent the academic achievements made in her classroom. This further added to her frustration which then affected how she dealt with colleagues. She said that normally if staff was talking outside her classroom door it did not bother her. During this more stressful time she found she closed her door more often to keep distractions for herself and her students to a minimum and this made her even more frustrated with the situation.

Dee continued to express her concerns regarding the test and their impact on her teaching and their building. "Our middle school didn't do well last year and this class [the 8th graders] is back again and they don't care...so it takes away everything" (I #2, p. 1). Regretfully, she found herself "to be short with them" (I #2, p. 1). She found she could not be as relaxed or natural with them in class because she was focused on increasing their motivation to do well on the test and believed she was not making much progress. She said the frustration she experienced made her want to interact with the 8th graders less.

Summary

Goals

Dee and Walt indicated they shared the same goal in their teaching; to prepare their students to be reliable, capable citizens. Through their teaching and interactions with their middle school students they endeavored to provide a strong knowledge base of content material and effective role models of successful adults.

Teaching Methods and Materials

Dee and Walt both reported a positive result of testing was the school's adoption of the program *Making Middle Schools Work*. The implementation of this school improvement initiative included daily work sessions attended by both faculty team members and the principal. At these sessions the participants discussed strengths and weaknesses in their academic program. The team teachers from different grade levels met periodically to enhance school-wide continuity of instruction.

Impact of Testing on Methods and Materials

When asked to what extent testing had impacted their teaching methods, Dee and Walt reported feeling different levels of intrusion by the test. For Walt, using test-preparation materials or reviewing test-related material seemed to cause very few changes in his normal day-to-day instruction. He stated he felt no real anxiety regarding his students' performance on the state tests.

Dee, on the other hand, reported a more negative impact on her choice of teaching methods. She stated, because of the test, she used more direct teacher instruction than she normally would. Dee also felt she taught some skills out of sync of her normal teaching schedule in order to better address test-related material. Dee admitted that this intrusion caused her a heightened level of frustration and anxiety.

Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

In response to the question regarding the quality of interactions with colleagues and parents, Dee and Walt believed the level of one-on-one communication had increased with the implementation of *Making Middle Schools Work*. Parents were kept current on student work through teacher postings on their website. There was an increase in the

number of parent/teacher conferences each teacher was required to hold. Both teachers reported that teachers and administrators shared concerns and suggestions regarding curriculum and instruction on a daily basis. The principal in this middle school building, though very aware of the test, had been identified by Dee and Walt as one who also cared about his teachers and their professional and personal well-being. Both teachers found his approach when dealing with his staff was supportive and hands-on.

Impact of Testing on Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

Both Dee and Walt agreed that communication with parents had actually increased because of testing. Parents were kept more informed of their children's progress by going to each teacher's website to check on current assignments.

Cooperation and communication among staff members had also improved due to the necessity to discuss methods that could improve test scores. However, Dee mentioned she felt that personal interaction with staff may have decreased some since she found she more often closed her door during class to cut down on typical interruptions by other staff members.

Interactions with Students

In their day-to-day interactions with their middle school students, Dee and Walt said they enjoyed a good relationship with them. They were observed to be friendly and open with them both inside and outside the classroom. These teachers used humor and personal anecdotes to make their teaching and learning environment comfortable and relaxed.

Impact of Testing on Interactions with Students

When asked to consider how the pressures of testing may have impacted their teacher/student relations, Dee and Walt again expressed different levels of impact. Walt, who taught 7th graders, felt no negative impact on his interactions with his students. He found the students cooperated with him as much as they prepared for the upcoming test as they did dealing with any language arts topic. The relaxed, comfortable give-and-take between Walt and his 7th graders was observed even the week before testing.

Dee expressed concern over what she identified as a negative impact on her relationship with the 8th graders. She found their cavalier attitude towards the upcoming test aggravating and frustrating. This student attitude made Dee want to interact with these 8th graders less than she typically would. She remarked on how her efforts to motivate them to exert more effort seemed to fall on deaf ears. Dee cited a heightened level of anxiety and concern due to the lack of student effort combined with the pressures exerted by administrators to raise student test scores.

Dee and Walt agreed that their professional interactions, curriculum and teaching methods were impacted by the implementation of standardized tests in their schools albeit to different degrees of intensity. Dee expressed a much more negative impact both on her teaching and her emotional response; whereas, Walt retained his calm, unruffled demeanor.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL PROFILE: LINCOLN

The Building

The second school in my study, Lincoln Elementary, is an urban school located in a residential neighborhood in the poorest section of the city. Much smaller than Central, Lincoln had an enrollment of 372 students of which 54% were a minority and 100% received free/reduced lunches. At the time of this study, this elementary school was operating under a continuous improvement academic ranking which had resulted in an intense focus on raising standardized test scores. The pressure of the high stakes attached to the mandatory standardized testing was evident throughout this building and had precipitated changes in the day-to-day operations. All teachers were required to post daily on their chalkboards the grade level indicators (GLI) developed from the content standards' benchmarks. They referred to GLI's throughout their lessons and stressed to their students the importance of achieving the goals of the GLIs. Another change reported had taken the form of administering three practice tests annually with the student results posted in the teachers' lunchroom. This level of testing is consistent with findings in Abrams et al. (2003), which found 51% of teachers operating under the pressures of high-stakes tests, assess their students more often. Both the vice principal and principal graded

students' tests and then had individual conferences with each student to discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Curriculum was based solely on state content standards and benchmarks and ultimately the mandated tests. The developed curriculum was adhered to by all eleven elementary schools in the district. Unfortunately, both teachers felt not all teachers in all the buildings followed the curriculum map in the same sequence which often caused problems when students transferred from one building to another, a common occurrence in this district. This, however, was not the case at Lincoln which Ann and Rob both agreed was very organized and structured. Both of these teachers said, "We have a literacy team and math team to make sure our teachers are doing what they are supposed to be doing."

Despite the pressure to improve test scores, which was evident throughout the building, this school had somehow succeeded in maintaining a positive environment where teachers, administrators and students were striving together daily to achieve higher academic results. They adhered to this central mission and had developed a sense of unity and continuity designed to reach their goals. Teachers and administrators voiced pride in their work and a dedication to their students. They worked under the guidance of their mission statement which teachers had a part in developing and which was posted just inside the main entrance of the school: "We will ensure an environment conducive to learning so that every child has an opportunity to reach his or her full potential." This attitude permeated throughout the building. They echoed this sentiment in their school expectations developed around their mascot BEARS: **Be safe** **Exhibit responsibility**
Act respectful **Resolve problems** **Succeed academically**

The positive attitude displayed by the staff in this building was also found in their students. The children I observed throughout the days I was there were very focused, well behaved and seemed excited to attend class. They were respectful to each other and their teachers and were on task throughout the lessons. It was apparent through their actions that they sincerely attempted to follow their school pledge: "I will **act** in such a way that I will be **proud of myself** and others will be **proud** of me too. I came to school to **learn** and **I will learn.**" Regardless of pressures and economic hardships, the students, as well as the teachers and administrators as a whole seemed happy to be in this building, working with each other.

Teacher Participant: Ann

In order to gain a deeper understanding of this school and how standardized testing had affected individual teachers, I worked with a language arts teacher, Ann, and a math teacher, Rob. Ann was married, a mother of two and a seven year veteran teacher with a masters' degree. She was drawn to this building through the encouragement of Rob who had been her high school volleyball coach. When asked how she felt about her current teaching position, Ann replied..."I'm really lucky to get to teach in this building...[it's] not for every teacher...only the select belong here" (I #1, p. 13). Her loyalty and pride was observed in her words and interactions with staff and students. She said she was driven to help the students "catch up" in the fundamental knowledge they lacked lest her fear of losing either their "tireless" principal or having the school closed become a reality. These possible losses seemed to supersede her own personal job security which she never once mentioned throughout the course of this study. Her dedication to her profession and her students was evident in everything she did. She was

the kind of teacher who arrived early to make sure she was prepared for her day and to be there in case any of her students needed to talk with her. She served on several committees in her building and was active in her teachers' union. Ann was the kind of teacher we all want for our children, driven to succeed, competent and really present in her classroom and with her colleagues. Her attitude displayed how much she truly cared about the people around her and through her actions she let them know that.

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

When asked about her curriculum and teaching methods, Ann acknowledged the dramatic changes that had taken place in the school over the last seven years due to standardized testing. "It has changed tremendously...six years ago we just had suggestions on how to test...then when new state standards came out...and our district was at the academic warning level, we had to make a change" (I #1, p. 2). Ann had an active part in some of these changes. She was on the curriculum planning committee for social studies. Although each content committee made curriculum decisions, other teachers' input was welcomed so that weaknesses could be addressed or suggestions for improvement made. She liked having this type of outlined curriculum to follow; however, she voiced her objections to mandatory testing and quizzing that took place regarding the content covered and the high stakes that were attached to the test results. Despite the need to address content standards and prepare for testing, she felt she had freedom in her teaching methods and "is given the space to teach how you would like" (I #1, p. 4). Her freedom of choice was, however, impacted by administrators, the principal and instructional coaches who indicated to teachers the preferred teaching methods to be used, for example reciprocal teaching. Not only was it observed that Ann implemented

this form of teaching, but students were made very aware of the method through posters on her classroom walls explaining the technique in addition to her oral references to it during the observed lessons.

Teaching Methods and Materials

A concern addressed in this study was how standardized tests affected pedagogy and teaching methods implemented in the classrooms. Despite the low economic level of this school, or perhaps because of it, the use of technology had increased thanks to grants made available. Ann was able to utilize technology in the form of a Smartboard© which she said she used almost daily. This was the case in the lessons I observed. Though she said she had struggled to teach herself how to use this form of technology, she appeared very adept at programming a well organized and informative lesson in this format. In the lessons I observed, not only did Ann direct this form of instruction, but she had students interact by coming forward to add answers to the work displayed on the board which kept them engaged and attentive.

The freedom to come to the front of the room was an obvious deviation from the norm. During my observations the students were in their assigned places, told when to open their books, to follow along with their finger while reading and were never out of their seats except to write on the Smartboard©. Ann stated that due to the amount of content there was to cover, the pressure of the upcoming test and the particular students in the building, the students were allowed very little autonomy in the classrooms. “They are asked to sit up and make eye contact with us...some kids don’t get a lot of sleep” (I #1, p. 7). Ann continued, “my kids are as smart as anybody else...[they] don’t have the life experiences...they start from so far behind...we’re just getting them caught up” (I #1,

p. 8). Feeling the pressure to get the students caught up to a higher academic level, Ann expressed the need to conduct a very controlled and structured class. This teacher demonstrated an awareness of her students' limitations and strengths and thus utilized teaching methods that she believed would help them establish a solid work ethic such as teacher-directed instruction and reciprocal teaching. While being observed, she was very demanding of her students, yet was still able to maintain a positive atmosphere in which to work.

In addition to the availability of technology, Ann also indicated that teachers in this building had freedom in choosing the materials they used in the classroom. Their choices were based on "what will best prepare their students for the standardized tests," which some would argue actually put a severe limit on those choices. Despite the influence testing may have had on their choice of educational materials and some of their teaching methods, Ann felt she had a high degree of autonomy in her classroom. She acknowledged that in a great part this sense of autonomy came from their principal. Ann stated that the administration respected them as professionals and therefore supported their academic decisions.

Teacher/Student Relationships

Although Ann shared with her colleagues the common school goal of preparing her students for the test, she expressed concern regarding how these tests affected her interactions with students. Operating under the pressure to improve test scores, she reported she sometimes felt she did not have adequate time during class to interact with her students as much as she would have liked. She indicated that she displayed less patience in her wait time when questioning in the class. "If a kid can't answer it like that

(she snaps her fingers), I need to help him or get someone who can so we can move on...and it's horrible to say" (I #1, p. 9). Ann reported that this behavior ran contrary to the way she felt she should and would respond without the pressures of high stakes testing and sometimes made her uncomfortable in her day-to-day dealings with her students.

It became obvious during my observations and interviews that despite this language arts teacher's concerns, Ann had developed a special bond with her students. "They come up to me, they hug me constantly...I love my kids...yet I'm strict," Ann said (I #1, p. 6). When asked about discipline in the classroom, Ann commented: "...they (the students) know when it's time to learn and to laugh" (I #1, p. 6). Most teachers in this building, including Ann, used the Cantor system of discipline which included denial of privileges for infractions against school rules; for example not turning in homework. The Cantor system of discipline was developed by Lee Cantor and has evolved since the mid 1970's when assertive discipline was beginning to be used in an educational setting. The Cantor system's basic principle is "I can succeed." The staff believed this disciplinary system seemed consistent with other practices and beliefs held by their school as it fit so well with their school motto and student pledge. This model of discipline promotes positive classroom climates, fosters high quality student-teacher relations, strives to improve student self-concepts, and promotes positive teacher attitudes, perceptions and expectations. Within this model is the belief that as a teacher you have the right to determine what is best for your students and to expect compliance to appropriate classroom behavior which is needed for learning to take place for all. No student should

prevent the teacher from teaching or keep others from learning. This was evident in Ann's language arts classroom.

Ann commented "I kick kids out of class if they are not listening...I don't have time to discipline someone when I have this much to get done in this amount of time, so I can't concentrate on one student when I have others I have to teach" (I #1, p. 8).

She felt that this system of discipline had been proved successful as misbehavior was not a typical problem in the classroom.

Ann put relationships with her students at the "top of my joy list." Her rationale as she reported was:

"If I don't have a relationship with my students, they won't give me the time of day. How can you expect someone to actually listen to everything you have to say and take in everything you say when you're not willing to let them in your life?" (GI, p. 8)

Ann stated she relied on her feelings and intuition when dealing with her students. "We are very protective of our students. We are here to give them a feeling of safety and caring" (GI, p. 8). The students Ann dealt with on a regular basis often did not come from nurturing or academically successful homes and were reluctant to open up to teachers. It was posited by Fried (1995) that teachers may realize improvements by working with these students through the students' own experiences, feelings and opinions. In an endeavor to learn more about her students and make improvements in their school achievements, Ann asked the students questions about themselves. She said she was careful not to make these questions too personal, but she clearly demonstrated through her actions and words that she was interested in them and their lives inside and outside the classroom. One particular time stood out in her memory. When questioning one student, the student's response was why was her teacher Ann "in her business." Ann

replied, "That's my job. I'm here to teach you all about life and how to be a better person...I don't want you to have friction with anyone and be miserable" (GI, p. 8). After this honest response on Ann's part, she said she found her students willing to be more open to forming a relationship with her. She said students often approached her with stories or to share things that happened to them outside her classroom. She also found that they became more willing to take part in whatever Ann was doing in class. She noted specific times that student participation increased and students were less distracted during class. Despite the fact that Ann felt she had always been very aware of her students' living situations and their reluctance to interact with others, she found this incident to be a real revelation into how her students would respond to someone who showed them that they mattered and were important.

Ann reported that the relationships she developed with her students brought her much joy and satisfaction.

"I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. Every school has their problems, every school has their kids. There's one kid in every class but the satisfaction every day I get from just helping one or two of these kids who so desperately need it ...some days it breaks my heart. I love my days as a teacher...it doesn't matter what I get paid...I love my students" (GI, p. 15).

She related how other teachers in her building had successfully developed similar relationships with their students as well. For instance, when students in her building were making Mother's Day cards, several of them made one for their respective teachers.

Interaction with Parents and Colleagues

When asked if the issue of testing had affected Ann's interaction with parents, she did not find it had any apparent negative impact. She felt that her rapport with parents "has really blossomed...80% of parents attended conferences this year" (I #1, p. 11). She

also expressed that “as her teaching experiences grew, her confidence with dealing with parents improved” (I #1, p. 11). She felt she was more comfortable in regularly calling parents with both positive and negative reports regarding their children. This seemed to be in keeping with the school personal in general which reported to make a concerted effort to keep parents informed and aware of academic concerns and issues.

Although increased responsibilities related to testing did not seem to have affected teacher/parent relations, Ann felt it had a deleterious effect on her interactions with her colleagues. “I don’t leave my room all day,” Ann lamented (I #2, p.9). She related a time when a teacher on another floor of the building was hospitalized and most of the staff was unaware of the situation until after the teacher returned because they did not have time to socialize with each other or even hold a conversation. It was apparent that on one hand the test united these teachers around a common goal, to improve test results, while at the same time the pressure it put on the of teachers’ personal time had deprived them of an important component of teaching, sharing with their colleagues, forming more of a bond with each other. Without the opportunities available for these encounters to take place, the teachers may lack the caring environment in their building that is needed to form relationships which provide support and aid from their colleagues (Noddings, 1992).

Second Interview and Observation

Emotions Regarding Testing

Ann was revisited, observed and interviewed the week before the actual state-mandated testing took place. She reported that for her this was a very stressful time in teaching. She expressed concern that for some individuals in the school district and

community, her students' test scores only reflected the quality of her teaching and ignored other existing variables that impacted the scores such as the students' home lives and their lack of basic academic knowledge. She shared in our interview that when she and her administrator were reviewing last year's test results, she became very upset over comments made by her administrator which she misinterpreted as directed at her rather than the students' achievements. "I mean I seriously was so upset because I thought they (administrators) thought I wasn't doing my job. I was emotional...I probably did cry. I put everything into my job...[deal with] constant emotions going on" (I #2, p. 3).

Although the curriculum in this building was acknowledged to be designed and focused almost entirely around the test throughout the academic year, explicit test preparation was now observed as paramount in Ann's language arts classroom. This is consistent with many studies which found standardized testing narrows the curriculum (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000; Hatch, 2002; Pedulla et al., 2001). For the past several weeks, she said she had been utilizing test-preparation materials including *Buckle Down* and spending what she felt was an inordinate yet necessary amount of time instructing students on menial skills such as how to accurately fill in the bubble on multiple choice test questions. This is consistent with similar findings in Abrams et al. (2003) which found 63% of teachers interviewed used specific test preparation materials developed commercially or by the state and 85% of the teachers taught specific test taking skills.

Ann commented that as the test date approached, she "is starting to feel more stressed" causing an internal conflict as similarly reported in Pedulla et al. (2001). Although she said she understood on an intellectual level that education was an ongoing process requiring the efforts of many teachers from year- to-year, on an emotional and

professional level she “feels personal responsibility to have her students pass their reading test this year” as also seen in findings in Clabaugh (2003) (I #2, p. 3). In addition to this shared teacher responsibility, she was also cognizant of personal variables which her students bring into the classroom that were out of her control. “I’m positive, always positive but you just don’t know how these kids are going to wake up in the morning” (I #2, p. 4). Ann’s students often faced economic and societal hardships that could and did negatively impact their learning, level of concentration and ultimately their testing ability. Since Ann believed she had no way of influencing or eliminating these variables, she experienced much apprehension and stress regarding their effect on her students’ test scores and her professional image despite her best efforts and encouragement in the classroom (Clabaugh, 2003).

Impact of Testing on Teaching Methods and Schedule

In addition to Ann’s emotional state, she indicated that the impending test also had negatively impacted her teaching pattern, pedagogy and schedule. She cited several examples such as delaying a writing assignment she would typically teach that time of year until after the test in order to free up more time for test preparation. “I’m just going over questions...more test questions...over strategies” (I #2, p. 7). Testing had also caused Ann to eliminate some group work she would normally have students participate in since she felt more direct instruction was needed to improve her students’ test scores. In addition, Ann said she delayed teaching certain concepts such as summarizing until right before the test because students need to be proficient in this skill for the test and “it’s the first thing kids forget how to do” (I #2, p. 7). It was apparent that because of testing, Ann felt she had lost some autonomy when it came to choosing when and how to

teach certain skills as evidenced by the changes in her schedule. Ann shared how she regretted the need she felt to postpone her students' writing assignment and the lack of time she had available for group work for her language arts students. If she truly had the freedom to choose, she would have preferred to offer her students these activities which she saw as clearly more authentic and conducive to academic and personal growth as compared to the test-related material. Ann acknowledged feeling some consternation over these schedule changes because in her mind the skills were being taught out of the preferred order for better comprehension or with little regard to the students' immediate needs.

Teacher Participant: Rob

Rob was the other teacher at Lincoln who agreed to be part of my study. This veteran math teacher had been teaching for twenty-two years, most of those at Lincoln. He is a father and a coach and equally as dedicated to his profession as Ann. Rob, too, has earned his master's degree in education. Teaching in the same building with Ann, Rob had similar feelings regarding his teaching position and the children he worked with. He shared how teaching had not been his first choice of careers. "But once I did it, I knew it was me, I knew this was what my calling was" (GI, p. 15). After teaching his first four years in another district, he transferred to his current assignment and said he was probably hired into that building because he was a male and it was "the roughest building in the district." He originally questioned this assignment but discovered:

"But once I was there for a year or two, I was like, this is me. This is where I belong...I am one of the few positive male role models that they have ever had in their lives...I'm very conscious of that and I work with it a lot...I love it" (GI, p. 15).

His dedication and satisfaction were evident in the fact that he has been teaching in this building for so many years. In order to further his rapport and contact with the children, Rob coached basketball which he felt allowed him to work with his students in an entirely different venue.

Challenges with Students

Rob's goal of making his students aware of the need to be educated had brought him joy, yet he related how this goal was not always easily accomplished and thus caused him some frustrations. Since Lincoln was operating under an academic ranking of continuous improvement, Rob said he was very aware of the need and pressure to adequately prepare his students for the test which was the main focus of his daily instruction. However, Rob expressed that this personal goal in teaching was to prepare the students to be productive citizens. The majority of parents whose children attended Lincoln had less than or the equivalence of a high school education. Rob related how he often faced the challenge of encouraging students to surpass the educational level achieved by their parents. In an effort to instill the importance of a good education at the home level, both Ann and Rob had taken it upon themselves to tutor parents who were preparing to take the GED test. They had even recruited some of their 5th grade students as tutors for their parents. They stated it was their hope that by their example and efforts their student and their parents would come to appreciate the benefits they could realize through education.

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Contrary to studies that indicate that standardized tests may actual curtail curriculum, Rob felt that rather than "eliminating anything...I think it's expanded the

curriculum a little bit. With the test and the new math series, *Everyday Math*, adopted specifically to improve test scores they (the students) actually cover topics they hadn't in the past" (I #2, p. 7). Rob utilized a variety of materials and methods in his math class. During the two classes I observed he too used the smartboard © throughout the lesson. He admitted he felt he was still a novice with this device but he was excited about continuing to learn more about its use and provide more opportunities for his students to interact with it. With the Smartboard© there was a handheld device that allowed the teacher to move around the room while continuing to write things on the board. During my observation, Rob was trying to learn how this device worked, much to the delight of his students. Since he often made mistakes with it during the lesson, the students seemed to enjoy sharing their knowledge about the correct use the device. Rob took their input good naturedly and encouraged their advice.

In addition to the Smartboard© portion of his lesson, Rob used the textbook and *Buckle-Down* since he felt this test-preparation supplement "breaks down everything that they could possibly see on the test into a workbook format" (I #1, p. 4). Rob remarked on how the test had a positive impact on materials he used stating he could get "whatever he feels he needs that will improve the test results" (I #1, p. 5). Rob displayed a realistic understanding of his students and their academic abilities. It was apparent throughout my observations that it often took great effort on this teacher's part to prepare the students for the test. Part of this effort involved setting aside instructional time to utilize test preparation materials. However, unlike Ann's reaction to this interruption in her teaching schedule, Rob expressed confidence that this preparation and review of test questions fit nicely with his normal math curriculum and did not cause him to deviate from his regular

course of instruction. One reason for this level of confidence may be that the course of study he utilized in the 6th grade math program may have been aligned more closely with test material.

Teacher/Student Relationships

This veteran math teacher appeared comfortable with his students and his interactions with them. His demeanor in the classroom was laid-back yet encouraging, leading his students to follow suit and feel free to participate. During my first observation in Rob's math class, there was one student who continued to call out answers and to "think aloud" about the concepts being discussed. Rob acknowledged his responses in a positive way the first few times he chimed in but eventually asked him to please raise his hand so others had a chance to think and participate. We talked about this incident afterwards during our interview. When I commented on how bright this boy was, his answers were always right, Rob chuckled and agreed. He commented on how "math-smart" this boy was and how until recently never really participated like that. Rob said he was pleased over the progress this student had made in his acquisition of math skills and said he was trying hard not to discourage his enthusiasm in class. This positive attitude toward his students was evident in all his exchanges with students before and during his class. He greeted the children as they entered his room and inquired about what they had done over the past weekend. He talked sports with some and made sure others had finished their breakfasts that morning. He was casual yet professional with his students.

In response to my question regarding his emotions in the classroom, Rob said his laid-back attitude and demeanor in school was just part of his general personality typical of the emotional state in all facets of his life. "I am not an emotional person...(I'm) at

ease...I don't have extremes...I'm not a high-strung person"(I #2, p. 4). Rather than letting the test or the day-to-day pressures to cover a multitude of math concepts effect his interactions or dealings with his students in a negative way, Rob said he tried to stay on "an even keel so the kids will too. You want your kids to be a reflection of how you are. So I don't try to get them like real revved up or real down" (I #2, p. 5). When asked, he could not cite any instances when he felt he treated his students differently because of the impending test. Rob indicated he did not feel that mandated testing negatively affected his relationship with his students; rather he felt it actually gave them a common goal to work towards. Rob remarked when he did feel pressure from his teaching duties, like Ann, he found comfort in talking to his colleagues or his wife, who is also a teacher in another district.

Interactions with Parents and Colleagues

In our interview, I asked Rob to describe his professional relationships with parents and colleagues. Rob felt parents, for the most part, had responded positively to the school's efforts.

"Despite some bad test results, parents keep their kids at this school because they know you'll take care of them. A lot of parents don't have high school diplomas...some feel intimidated by school because they didn't do well...but the bottom line is most of our parents want to see their kids succeed" is how Rob put it" (I #1, pp. 8-9).

He did, however, feel that parents' personal educational experiences sometimes made communication with them more difficult, but he did not think that put a damper on his efforts with parents. As previously indicated through his efforts to tutor some parents, Rob demonstrated that his dedication to this school and community went beyond just the children in his class. His actions indicated his belief that in order to reach his students and

make a difference in their lives, he often needed to address and remedy some of the parents' problems as well.

In addition to his positive relationships with the parents, Rob felt he had developed a very strong working relationship with colleagues and administrators in the building. When asked about discipline, Rob agreed with Ann that discipline problems were more likely to occur during lunchtime or on the playground rather than in the classroom. The lack of classroom behavior problems seemed to be a result of not only involved teachers but involved administrators. Rob said both the vice principal and principal "regularly come into their classrooms and observe or teach." During my observation of Rob's math class, a parent of a student who had caused some problems came in unannounced to talk to the teachers and the principal automatically covered the class and continued the instruction with very little interruption in the presentation. "I love working with them (administrators). They are very teacher-oriented, they're kid-oriented and provide opportunities for excellent communication with all" was the way Rob described these two women (I #1, p. 3). He pointed out that this was a big change from the past administrators who had gone "by the book...teachers had to make an appointment...teachers were **told** what they were expected to do...to the current open door policy...where teachers' opinions are now asked for and valued" (I#1, p. 7).

Second Interview and Observation

When I came back to Lincoln the week before the mandated tests would be administered there was a sense of urgency with both students and teachers because "the test" was the focus of their day and little was allowed to interfere with it. The test "guides everything...I hate that kind of pressure...I don't think its real fair to my students...my

colleagues...to administrators,” stated Rob (I #1, p. 3). As similarly found in Abrams et al. (2003), the majority of teachers interviewed felt teachers and administrators should not be evaluated based solely on test scores. Although he expressed these strong feelings regarding the high-stakes aspect of testing, Rob’s demeanor seemed otherwise composed about the impending test. Despite his personal composure, Rob described how his teaching was impacted by testing in an unexpected way this year. The 5th grade math students were not performing well on the practice tests they had taken in the Fall. In January, Rob’s principal asked him to take over the 5th grade math classes and this caused some conflict between Rob and the 5th grade math teacher. Although Rob agreed to take on the additional teaching load, he regretted the fact that it caused hard feelings with his colleague. He said he felt he could and actually did make a difference just because “he was a new face- brought the students to the math concepts from a different angle.” This additional teaching assignment added extra planning for Rob to do but indicated to what personal lengths this staff was willing to go to in order to improve test scores.

Interactions with Colleagues

One aspect of Rob’s teaching that we mentioned in the first interview was team teaching. Rob elaborated on the importance of this teaching style during our second interview. Even though these teachers did not have leisure time to spend with their colleagues, they did work well together in coordinating their teaching goals. This was reflected in the buildings’ emphasis on team teaching within individual classrooms. Rob expressed a very positive attitude to having another educator in the classroom with him during instructional time. He said he had almost always team taught at Lincoln and found this allowed him to be more creative in his teaching. Not only did Rob believe this

teaching arrangement positively impacted his teaching, but he found it beneficial for his students because it provided those struggling with two instructors who were able to immediately address any difficulties they experienced during instruction. In his opinion two teachers in the room enhanced student understanding of the concept being taught and clarified the expectations the teachers had for students. Ann expressed similar feelings and she and Rob both agreed that team teaching had helped to improve test scores because it afforded them more time for practice on test questions and skills.

Emotions Regarding Testing

When asked about testing, Rob expressed mixed feelings regarding the state-wide mandatory test. One aspect he did not agree with was the high stakes attached to it. "It can be a death sentence for a building...it is so negative...we're kind of under the gun. We know how important these scores are to us...we have to work harder with our student clientele" (I #2, p. 10). In general, however, Rob expressed a slightly more positive attitude toward the test than his counterpart, Ann. He believed that the test had not caused any competition between teachers but rather had encouraged the staff to strive towards achieving a common goal. "It really is our driving force behind this building" (I #2, p. 10). Although Rob did not agree with the high stakes attached to the test results, he felt the test had caused the staff to change the way they taught for the better. He believed there was more continuity in teaching methods being utilized and more collaboration between faculty and administrators.

Summary

Goals

Ann and Rob expressed their determination to provide their underprivileged students opportunities to develop intellectually and emotionally. Believing the primary purpose of education was to prepare children to become productive, competent adults, they both worked on committees to develop appropriate curriculum to reach that goal. Their teaching styles, instructional time frames, and materials had all been cooperatively designed by faculty and administrators to accomplish this task. They both expressed confidence in administrators who provided requested teaching materials and teachers offered support to each other. The staff worked towards common goals as they met on a regular basis to share ideas and effective teaching methods and to discuss ways of improving student test scores.

Teaching Methods and Materials

Both Ann and Rob utilized technology, textbooks and test-preparation materials during their instructional time. Their observed teaching styles were similar in that they were primarily teacher-directed with students enjoying very little autonomy in the classes I observed. Throughout these observed classes, the students were kept in their seats, focused on the material being studied. Cantor discipline rules were adhered to with obvious positive results since no discipline problems were observed. Both teachers felt they had a high level of autonomy in their teaching. Rob said and Ann agreed, "I know I have autonomy in my classroom. I can basically do what I want to do as long as I get results" (I #1, p.5).

Impact of Testing on Methods and Materials

Through our interviews, Rob and Ann shared different opinions when asked how testing impacted their choice of pedagogy. Ann reported her teaching methods and schedule had been altered because of testing. As an example, she related how she had rearranged the order of when she taught certain skills and conducted more teacher-directed instruction rather than providing cooperative learning opportunities. Though Ann said she saw this as a necessity to adequately prepare her students for the test, she also acknowledged that this situation made her very frustrated and anxious. She believed her students would have benefitted from cooperative learning.

Rob stated that he felt his pedagogy and scheduling had actually been improved by testing. He found through the use of test-preparation materials, he taught more math concepts than he had previously done. His math curriculum seemed to him to be closely aligned to the test and thus he found little need to rearrange his teaching schedule.

One positive result of testing that both teachers agreed on was the block scheduling their school had adopted to give teachers more time to prepare students for their math and language arts tests. Ann and Rob reported having their students for an uninterrupted hour and a half provided them with the time they needed to adequately cover their content material.

Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

In response to my question regarding their interactions with colleagues and parents, Ann and Rob both agreed they were typically positive in nature. In some cases, Ann and Rob had found they had to work through the parents' aversion to education based on their own negative school experiences, but ultimately they were very concerned

and involved in their children's education. These teachers believed they had developed good relationships with parents through conversations, their positive dealings and successes with the children and by offering their help to parents preparing to take the GED test.

The level of strong parental support they had worked hard to build and maintain was exemplified last year. Rob said, after their school test scores were down from the previous year, several parents moved their children to other buildings in the district. However, after several months in the other buildings, parents became aware that their children's teachers in those buildings did not seem to have the same level of concern as the ones they left behind at Lincoln. As a result, the majority of those children were brought back to Lincoln to finish the school year. Rob said he felt they came back because parents realized how dedicated the Lincoln teachers were to their students.

The relationships with their colleagues were also a positive aspect. Ann and Rob's recognized in their teaching situation. Although both teachers remarked there was not adequate time in the day for idle conversations with other teachers, they did come together regularly to work on academic issues. Ann and Rob also worked in team teaching situation and believed that always having another teacher with them to assist while they taught benefitted both their teaching and their students' learning.

Impact of Testing on Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

Despite the fact that Lincoln had been operating under an academic emergency ranking, Ann and Rob reported testing had not had an adverse affect on relationships with parents who continued to recognize the care these teachers had for their children and the

efforts they put forth to educate them. Ann and Rob agreed that communications with parents had increased due to testing since it generated more reports being sent to parents.

They reported that testing had a similarly positive impact on staff one-on-one communication. The necessity to improve test scores led teachers in this building to support each other both during and after staff meetings, share talents and materials and rally around their common goal of improving student test scores.

Teacher/Student Interactions

As with the teachers described by Hargreaves (1998), Ann and Rob recognized “that building an emotional understanding with their students is essential to successful academic learning” (p. 845). The development of relationships between teachers and students was acknowledged as being difficult for Ann and Rob to achieve since their students were sometimes reluctant to trust adults. Through daily questioning, sharing and conversing with their students, Ann and Rob felt they were able to demonstrate to their students that they cared and could be relied on to be there for them. Once they had this trust established, these teachers cited examples of how their students came to class prepared to learn, participated more and began to show signs of developing emotional maturity. They found that their students became less defensive and more open with teachers and each other. I observed students sharing personal experiences with both teachers between classes with some students initiating conversations with Ann and Rob. During the classes I also observed a high level of respect and helpfulness the students showed each other.

Impact of Testing on Teacher/Student Relationships

When asked if the pressures from testing had any influence on these relationships, Ann and Rob expressed different opinions. Ann believed this pressure curtailed or impeded her normal interactions with her students. With so much content material to cover prior to the administration of the test, Ann felt she had less time to personally respond or converse with her students. Even discipline problems, though few, were swiftly referred to the principal lest class time be spent dealing with them. This lack of time to personally deal with students, Ann said, made her feel anxious and uncomfortable. She relished a strong emotional tie she had developed with her students and wanted to maintain the relationships she had worked so hard to develop.

Rob reported much less impact from test pressures on his relationships with his students. He felt the upcoming test had become a common goal that he and his students worked towards cooperatively. He found the three practice tests had actually become a form of friendly competition between some of his students and a means of impressing their math teacher. Rob's calm demeanor regarding the upcoming test was one he wanted his students to emulate. Even when observed the week before the test, he remained relaxed and friendly with his math students and they seemed to reflect his attitude and enjoy the class and each other.

CHAPTER VI
SCHOOL PROFILE: ST. ANN'S

The Building

The third school, St. Ann's, unlike the other schools studied, is a parochial school and part of the educational system of a large Catholic diocese. They had an enrollment of 494 students made up of 6% minority with 6.8% receiving free/reduced lunches. This building, located in a residential area of a small city, was one campus of three under the title Central Catholic Schools, the result of three area parochial elementary schools merging five years ago. All three campuses were also affiliated with a central Catholic high school. The student population came from homes in which most of the parents had earned either a high school diploma or a bachelors degree. This school further differed from Central and Lincoln in that it did not operate under the pressures of an academic rating or high stakes tests. Instead, St. Ann's administered the Terra Nova test which was used as a diagnostic tool to determine their students and curriculum's strengths and weaknesses. The Terra Nova was administered annually in October to assess student growth and for purposes of comparison with other students at the same grade level in other districts within their diocese. Since there were no high stakes associated with this type of testing, the students and teachers seemed to regard it as a positive opportunity to

assess their school's performance and make necessary changes or improvements. It seemed to fit their mission statement which is: *Different by Design*. They presented themselves as an "academic, faith community with a sense of purpose...modeling a moral life...and providing an environment where students feel safe to be and to learn." The sense of community was observed throughout this building.

This was a close knit community of learners and staff. Although scheduling and the demands of content to be covered in each class prohibited much cooperative teaching between teachers or classes to take place, the teachers in this building regularly gathered to establish expectations for each grade in an effort to promote continuity in their instruction. The staff was eager to share concerns and support for each other.

The staff in this building was supported by an active, concerned principal. She was a veteran elementary administrator who was highly regarded by both teachers in this study, conducting business with an open door policy. Prior to the beginning of the academic year, the principal sat down with each teacher and discussed their yearlong curriculum plans, how they would be implemented and what she could do or provide in ways of materials to aid the teacher.

Teacher Participant: Tammy

The two teacher participants from St. Ann's, Tammy and Jill, have had similar teaching experiences, educational backgrounds and have been colleagues for the past fourteen years. Tammy was a mother of three and had been teaching at St. Ann's for fourteen years. In addition to teaching full time, she had also earned her master's degree in education. Typical of many teachers in this school, Tammy had changed teaching assignments often over the course of her career at St. Ann's. The changes in assignments

were partially due to the high rate of turnover in teachers and also because of the merger five years ago of the three Catholic elementary schools in this city. This situation had resulted in Tammy teaching 5th, 7th & 8th grade science and health, and language arts. Although these changes in duties had caused Tammy some consternation and a lack of continuity, she believed it had broadened her repertoire of teaching expertise. Once she had become immersed in her assigned classes, she reported that she had been able to make the necessary adjustments and flourish in her classroom.

Teacher/Student Relationships

Tammy enjoyed what she described as a solid, positive relationship with her language arts students. When asked about her current teaching position and the children she worked with, Tammy said she “loves her job...can’t imagine being anywhere else even for more money” (GI, p. 1). This statement could be considered meaningful because it came from a Catholic school teacher who traditionally gets compensated at a much lower pay scale than her counterparts in public school. She was observed to be very focused on her students and their well-being as illustrated by her continuous encouragement for them “to do their best...to learn the building blocks of the subject” (I #1, P.4). Her classroom walls were covered with posters reminding students that their best efforts were always expected. In our interview she shared how she told her students that “if you do your personal best and you still don’t get a good grade, at least you have that sense of pride that you did your best” (I #1, p. 4). These expectations which are posted and discussed, set the tone for her classroom--that it was a work session during which specific objectives would be addressed with everyone’s full participation and best effort expected. She believed that this type of statement sent a very different, more

positive message than those related to the pressures of high stakes tests which her counterparts in public school faced and which she did not personally support. She stated that she was glad that her school did not administer such tests since in her opinion they did not accurately reflect her students' accomplishments.

This encouraging attitude was coupled with a friendly, comfortable demeanor Tammy shared with her students. During the observed classes, the atmosphere in her room was organized yet open to class discussions with the students exhibited a freedom to participate. The students were observed as being comfortable with Tammy, sharing a mutual level of respect. The students responded well to Tammy's instruction while freely sharing opinions and personal anecdotes which usually related to the topic at hand. Even when students got off-task in their actions or words, Tammy listened patiently and then brought them back to the topic. This teacher provided a safe environment in which students felt comfortable and confident in sharing their work and ideas.

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

As at Central and Lincoln, St. Ann's curriculum was based on the state content standards; but St. Ann's also included additional standards designed by their diocese. Tammy expressed her support of these content standards and believed they offered appropriate guidelines for her teaching. This school had developed a report card listing the content standards, which Tammy was happy with and felt it helped her to stay focused on standards throughout the year. This type of reporting also kept the parents informed on the progress their students were making quarter to quarter.

Although Tammy did not have the benefit of a Smartboard© in her classroom, she did utilize a computer in her instruction. During one of my observations of Tammy's

language arts class, she projected the format used in their current writing assignment. Tammy was very adept with this type of instruction and offered tips to her students on how to better utilize this technology when they went to the computer lab since their classrooms did not have computers available for student use. In addition to the computer-led portion of her lesson, the students worked from their texts and their on-going writing portfolios. There was continuity in the lesson as the students continued to work on a writing piece they had begun during a previous class. The students were at different stages of development in their assignments, and Tammy offered individual help and advice to the students during this work session. The class was comfortable and active as students freely shared their work and ideas with each other and Tammy.

As demonstrated above, this teacher utilized many different methods of instruction. Tammy responded when asked about her curriculum, she “likes the students to have a well-rounded language arts curriculum incorporating different traits of reading and different modalities of learning” (I #2, p. 2). She also wanted her students to be comfortable and enjoy writing. Tammy supported her belief in the benefits of using different pedagogy by citing research she had recently studied concerning the function and development of the brain. She found the research results supported the importance of teachers utilizing many different modalities in their teaching to reach their students and enhance their comprehension.

Communication with Parents and Colleagues

Tammy responded with mixed emotions when asked about her interaction with colleagues and parents. Despite her appreciation for the high level of communication and cooperation enjoyed among staff and administrators, Tammy voiced her frustration over

the lack of time afforded teachers by administrators to develop interdisciplinary units of study with other teachers. She stated during many of their teacher in-services the staff talked about how to develop such units but then they were not given the time during the school day to actually meet with other teachers to design the work. If such units were to be developed, the administrators expected the staff to meet on their own time. The teachers indicated that this was difficult to achieve because of other duties expected of them such as conducting after school tutoring sessions and monitoring detention time. In addition to the time needed to form units, Tammy felt the school did not provide adequate materials needed to teach these units in an effective, comprehensive way. Tammy said she regretted this lack of time and materials since she appreciated how beneficial this type of instruction would be for their students' comprehension and growth.

When asked about her relationship with administration, Tammy stated there was very little pressure from the principal. She found her principal to be both teacher and student friendly and someone who was always willing to listen to her staff of teachers and come to their aid when the need arose. Other than stepping in to give assistance when requested, Tammy indicated that the principal allowed the teachers a high level of autonomy in their choice of materials and teaching styles utilized in their instruction. Tammy said she appreciated the time her principal spent with her at the beginning of the academic year, sharing ideas that would improve Tammy's long range plans.

Since Tammy had taught at St. Ann's for several years at many different grade levels, she described the good rapport and reputation she felt she had with the parents of her students. Citing many instances over the years, she remarked on how she had taught siblings from the same family so parents were familiar with her and how she operated

and taught. She freely shared her time with parents to answer questions or give educational advice.

Second Interview and Observation

The second teacher interviews and classroom observations were held at the same time in this building, but unlike the other two schools in the study, St. Ann's was not preparing for standardized tests. Their testing, the Terra Nova tests, had been completed in October with results already available for use by teachers. Although Tammy was not experiencing the same types of pressures as the public school teacher participants at this time of the academic year, she did acknowledge feeling some anxiety. Tammy said her frustration dealt with issues outside her classroom. She was concerned over the lack of continuity in teaching assignments within the building. As previously stated, since the three Catholic schools in this community merged five years ago, there had been changes in teaching assignments almost annually, and Tammy shared her worried that teachers were not always given adequate input into what those assignments might be. As the end of the academic year approached, Tammy was concerned what her teaching assignment would be for the following school year. While teaching language arts this year, Tammy had developed much of her own curriculum and teaching units and wondered if she would have the opportunity to use them next year. Being a busy mother of three young children, if her teaching assignment for the next academic year changed, she feared she might not have ample time to prepare for a different position which caused much concern for Tammy. To this teacher's credit, however, her frustrations were not apparent during the instructional time with her students which was observed following our interview. She teased with her students and maintained a positive, supportive attitude throughout the

language arts lesson I observed. If anything, Tammy's interaction with her students was more comfortable and relaxed than when I observed at the beginning of the school year. The rapport and respect she had developed with her students was apparent through her actions and words.

Although this school did not utilize the state-wide testing system, when asked her opinion of standardized tests and the No Child Left Behind Act, Tammy had strong objections. Tammy's daughter went to public school and she did experience this form of assessment.

"My daughter is in first grade in a public school and testing is all they seem concerned about. Who cares? I want her to learn, I don't want her to pass a test. I think testing is one aspect of a whole picture...only one tool to measure learning. I think we're depending too much on these test results, and I think it's ridiculous. We're forgetting that not every child learns the same, therefore, they should not be assessed the same" (I #2, p. 4-5).

Tammy's attitude regarding testing carried over to the Terra Novas test that her school utilized. Tammy said she saw it as just one tool she could use to improve instruction and address the individual needs of her students. Tammy did not express any frustration regarding the Terra Novas, however. "I don't feel pressure from the results. I guess I don't feel pressure because I think our students do well" (I #2, p. 1).

Teacher Participant: Jill

Jill, a mother of three and grandmother of two, started her teaching career as a preschool teacher. Following this experience, she came to St. Ann's twenty years ago. Like Tammy, Jill has had several teaching positions at St. Ann's including language arts, social studies and was currently teaching math which she said was her favorite subject to teach. Jill has been an active member of the St. Ann's faculty. Over the years she had

single-handedly initiated school-wide activities which often included parents, grandparents and older siblings. Her enthusiasm was endless and reportedly often rubbed off on other teachers despite their demanding schedules and sometimes reluctance to get involved. Jill was a mother of four and grandmother and like Tammy had earned her master's degree in education while continuing her duties at St. Ann's.

Teacher/Student Relationships

The relationship this teacher had with her students was described by her as comfortable yet professional. She believed that it is important that her students did not mistake her as a friend but respected her as their teacher. Jill mentioned how she always referred to her students by their proper names, not nicknames, despite the request by some students to do otherwise. She stated that she was there to teach her students in a safe, supporting environment in which there was a certain level of participation and respect that was demanded. Jill commented: "I don't tolerate lying. I don't tolerate disrespect" (I #1, p. 3).

Tammy and Jill both echoed the sentiment that relationship with students was key. They remarked how they spent more time with the children during the day than their parents do. Jill said, "My kids, my joy" (GI, p. 1). Jill stressed with her students the importance of forming a bond with the teacher and other students in the class. She told them that for the academic year they were "family" and that family members gave mutual respect and help to each other. This family theme permeated throughout this small Catholic school in large part thanks to Jill. Teachers and administrators made efforts to bring students from different grades and levels together at a variety of school functions throughout the academic year with Jill usually at the forefront in these efforts. Over the

years Jill had initiated such school-wide activities as Bless the Pets Day, Tea for the Mothers, and Hoagies for the Fathers. She worked cooperatively with the 8th grade teacher to have her students celebrate the 8th graders' day of Confirmation. Her students and the 8th graders also were secret pals over the season of advent prior to Christmas.

When asked her stance regarding discipline, Jill felt her discipline had changed with age and experience; she said she was stricter as a “younger teacher...[now] you have to allow for them being kids...I don't want robots...I want them to be able to think” (I #1, p. 5). With this in mind, Jill was observed actively encouraging her math students to add to the class discussion or ask clarifying questions when necessary. She believed that her students became familiar with her teaching style and expectations since this school loops the classes. Jill expressed how beneficial it was to loop students from one year to the next, teaching the same students for two consecutive years as it added continuity to her instruction and a joy from interacting with the same children from one year to the next. She went on to say it had a positive impact on the relationship she was able to establish with her students. “ I always want that teacher/student relationship ...you can guide them farther...you've become a part of their lives” (I #2, p. 1). She opened up her life to her students by sharing personal experiences and being honest with them about her feelings. She reacted to them in genuine, unique ways. Jill expressed her pleasure in her students' achievements during the class I observed, as she put on a funny hat to celebrate the good math tests of her students that she was passing back to them. She exhibited a delight in their sharing about the activities that interested them both in and out of the classroom. When her students talked about “math revelations” that took place, when she saw that “light bulb go off” for them, she reveled in her students' successes. Another

example was when the class had been discussing constellations with her class, and one student shared how excited she was when she had seen the Big Dipper the night before. Jill said she was thrilled that this student had put her newly gained knowledge to practical use outside the classroom. Throughout the observed lessons, she reminded her students “you know this...use your math knowledge.” Her encouragement to them was endless. She also stressed how important it was for them to understand or ask their questions because the math concepts they were learning today would be built on tomorrow and in years to come. She said it was her intent to emphasize for them the continuous nature of their learning and point out its authentic purpose.

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

When asked, it was found that Jill’s opinion regarding content standards both from the state and the diocese differed somewhat from Tammy’s. Although she too agreed they offered an established guideline for her math curriculum, she felt the standards “only cover the basics...our school and students are capable and should be expected to achieve higher” (I #1, p. 1). This belief was exemplified in her expressed enthusiasm for the new, more challenging math program she used which emphasized investigation and the use of higher level thinking skills. Jill stressed the importance of her students knowing the concepts, achieving mastery, thinking and making connections and not being “worried about a test.” According to Jill, this program seemed to have motivated at least twenty-two of her students to voluntarily attend after school tutoring which she conducted. In her opinion these students were eager to improve their personal math skills “they want more math...more confidence in their math abilities,” even if it means giving of their own time to do it (I #1, p. 11).

Jill also utilized computer instruction in her classroom. The day I observed she was trying to introduce a new math program on the computer and quite frankly was not having much success. Much to her delight, her students stepped up and offered their computer expertise to work the program. This was typical of how this teacher reacted to difficulties in her classroom; she admitted her lack of skill, laughed about it and graciously accepted her students' assistance. Her expressed goal was to make her students confident and comfortable as part of their classroom "family" and in their quest to become lifelong learners.

Another aspect of teaching the whole child voiced by this teacher was the utilization of many different modes of teaching to address the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Jill stressed the importance of having an opportunity in the classroom to utilize different pedagogies.

The way she put was: "basically I love teaching, but I also love teaching different ways and new ways and just continuing to keep the students going and searching and probing. Those little moments of real learning, I love. They're real golden nuggets" (I #2, p. 2).

Both of these teachers voiced their desire to have their students gain self-confidence in their respective subjects and develop a real joy in learning. They expressed their concern that their students become lifelong learners and not just ones that prepare for specific assessments.

In her quest to educate the whole child and provide some authentic life experiences, Jill supported the continuation of what she referred to as "intervention time." Over the past academic year, teachers in her team had conducted mini-lessons with the students dealing with material sometimes related to, yet in some ways always extending, their established curriculum. Jill said topics covered this year included such things as

French lessons, table manners and art appreciation. Jill voiced her hopes that these mini-lessons would be continued and expanded to other topics next year. Jill related that it was due to the level of communication, the extended personal efforts of the teachers in this building and the support of the administration that these sessions had become a reality.

Communication with Colleagues and Parents

When questioned about the degree of communication with colleagues and administrators, Jill stated it was at a good level. She described her principal as “very upbeat, awesome, very supportive.” She shared during our interview how her principal commented to her: “Do what you can, keep to that, you know what you have to teach” (I #1, 8). Jill said that her principal continuously demonstrated her faith in her teachers’ abilities through her non-intrusive support. Another positive aspect regarding the principal commented on by this teacher was her rapport with the students. “She knows them all by name...talks to them rather than yelling at them yet gets her point across” (I #1, p. 7). Jill pointed out a similar, positive working relationship between teachers and the principal. Jill shared how the principal dealt with the teachers fairly and allowed them the freedom to teach in a style that was effective and comfortable to them.

Although Jill noted that she also appreciated how well their staff communicated and supported each other, she agreed with Tammy that they needed to be able to develop more cooperative learning experiences with other teachers. Despite the lack of cooperation from administration in this endeavor, developing master units was a goal of Jill’s. “With everything you have to teach and do, it’s hard to bring it all together, but I think that really is a goal of mine.” It was apparent through her comments during our

interview she was already visualizing how she could integrate math, science and language arts in next year's curriculum.

After twenty years of teaching at St. Ann's, Jill expressed confidence that she had achieved a high level of effectiveness in her dealings with parents. Jill remarked: "Every once in a while you get a parent that is ...maybe not thinking the way you're thinking...but I haven't had much trouble with parents" (I #1, p. 9). Jill had made the effort to clarify the new math program and answer questions regarding it in meetings with parents. She said she felt that she dealt with the parents as patiently as she did with her students perhaps because, she admitted, she too was also learning about the new math program and realizing the benefits that could come from it. In addition to math meetings and conferences, parents had come to know Jill from their participation over the years in all the school activities she had planned to include them in their children's education. As a veteran teacher at St. Ann's, Jill had taught multiple children from the same families so they were familiar with her and her mode of education. Jill's colleagues and principal reported that if you asked any student who their favorite teacher had been throughout their years at St. Ann's, the majority would answer "Mrs. Jill."

Testing

As previously stated, this Catholic school used Terra Nova testing to improve their curriculum. In addition to this more immediate purpose, the diocese also used the test results to compare the schools in their districts. Jill expressed concern over this comparison and the pressures issued from their principal and administrator to constantly increase the percentiles their students achieved. Although the test was not a paramount focus in their teaching at the beginning of the academic year, Jill stated the reporting of

the current test results had the administration conducting a closer scrutiny of the buildings' achievements in fourth quarter. This pressure, as reported in our interview, ran contrary to Jill's educational philosophy.

She stated that: "education's goal should be to get the best out of each student...despite their personal level. Pressures from what need to be covered and mastered interfere with education being fun. I mean don't expect them (students) to do things that they are too frustrated with...I think a lot of students don't want to come to school because I think in part sometimes they're just...it's just too much...we expect so much all the time. Your real joy of learning should be fun" (I #2, p. 4).

Jill echoed Tammy's frustration with the pressures of standardized tests and felt that they deterred students from the joy of learning and were not conducive to developing students into lifelong learners. They believed that the use of standardized tests was an impediment that limited curriculum and narrowed the students' focus. They agreed that they would rather have students master the content material to use as a building block for continued instruction and learning.

Summary

Goals

Jill and Tammy agreed they were both focused on preparing their students to enjoy a productive adult life in which they will continue their love of learning and growing intellectually. Both teachers shared how they set high expectations for their students, discussed them regularly and provided many opportunities for their students to reach them. They offered encouragement and challenges throughout their well planned lessons for their students to excel as was noted throughout my observations.

Teaching Methods and Materials

Jill and Tammy agreed that teaching in a small Catholic school had both benefits and drawbacks. One benefit they both acknowledged was the high level of autonomy they were given. “Teachers want sufficient autonomy and control over their own work to be able to feel that in their teaching they are communicating their own values and personalities” (Fox, 2006, p. 267). These teachers felt they were given freedom in their educational decisions regarding teaching materials and methods. They said they based their choice of teaching methods on their students’ needs and what best fit their teaching style. The autonomy to make these choices was supported by their principal who voiced her faith in their professional decisions. Without the pressure to prepare students for standardized tests, Jill and Tammy felt they were able to choose materials they believed were designed to enhance their students’ higher level thinking skills as exemplified by the math program Jill utilized. Both teachers appreciated the guidelines that State and Diocesan standards provided, although Jill expressed her concern that they did not set high enough expectations that she felt their students were capable of achieving.

The lack of certain technology in their classrooms could be considered a drawback, as neither teacher had Smartboards© or computers for individual student use. They did however have a computer available for teacher-directed instruction which they both utilized. As previously stated, these parochial teachers also were monetarily compensated at a much lower rate than their public school counterparts. However, this did not seem to be a great concern for either Jill or Tammy.

Impact of Testing on Methods and Materials

Although Tammy and Jill did not operate under the pressures of standardized tests, they agreed that the Terra Nova they administered annually did cause them some stress. Jill expressed her concern that administrative pressures to raise students' percentile each year would focus students' attention more on the test and deter them from the joy of learning. Without the need to prepare students for a mandated test, there was no obligation to incorporate test-related materials or to defer teaching certain concepts to a later time in the academic year as found in the public schools.

Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

In their words Tammy and Jill taught with a staff that focused on common goals and worked together in many different capacities to provide a nurturing, productive environment for their students. The sense of community in this school encouraged the staff and students to take a personal interest in each other. Their principal had been proven supportive and encouraging to her teachers. She indicated her interest in their teaching without being intrusive.

Although the teachers would have liked to be able to work together to create more interdisciplinary units of study, they utilized what sharing time they did have to provide their students with unique seminars in which they were exposed to creative and useful topics of study. They had also established a curriculum that provided continuity in content from year to year. One would guess, based on Jill and Tammy's enthusiasm and creativity, they will eventually be able to find a way to develop more cooperative lessons.

Tammy and Jill were confident that they had established good communication with parents. They communicated regularly with them and kept them abreast of their

children's progress. Jill held parent meetings to help them understand the new math program being taught. Both of these teachers had been teaching at St. Ann's for several years so the parents knew them either personally or through their professional reputations. Because the school provided many opportunities for parents to come into the school for several activities, they were able to interact with the teachers more often. Through this level of interaction, Jill and Tammy believed the parents came to know the teachers who worked with their children and relied on the effectiveness of teachers' academic efforts.

Impact of Testing on Interactions with Colleagues and Parents

Jill and Tammy felt that the impact of testing was less apparent at St. Ann's since their form of assessment was different from their public school counterparts. The Terra Nova test was more of a low stakes test used to improve classroom curriculum and track student's individual progress from year to year. These test results were not published locally, yet they were made available to parents. Tammy and Jill did not feel that parents used these test results to judge the quality of instruction these teachers provided.

They did agree that the one-on-one communication among St. Ann staff members was slightly affected by the test. Once the test results were returned to the school, teachers and administrators met to review them and make necessary adjustments to their curricula. Test results were also examined to see how St. Ann's students performed in relationship with other schools in this Catholic diocese.

Teacher/Student Relationships

Both Jill and Tammy commented on their strong relationships with their students. They referred to them as "their joy." Through their observed words and actions they

encouraged their students to be the best they could be. Tammy often commented to her language arts students on how important it was for them to put forth their best efforts even if it did not always result in producing the best product. The pride they gained from trying their best, she believed would enhance their self-esteem. An emphasis in their interactions with students was focused on cooperation with and caring about each other. Jill called them “family” and stressed the importance of being a cohesive unit that helped and encouraged each other.

Impact of Testing on Teacher/Student Relationships

It was reported by both teachers that the Terra Nova test did not impact their teacher/student interaction; however, there were stressors which sometimes did. Tammy and Jill worked with students who often came from more affluent homes. The majority of their parents were college educated and able to provide their children with more enriched childhoods including vacations, outside educational opportunities and material advantages. Although both Tammy and Jill agreed these advantages enhanced their students’ lives and education giving them more prior knowledge and personal experience to draw from, they also felt that the parents tended to “pamper” them. For these reasons the teachers found that their students were easily bored and wanted to be “entertained.” Tammy expressed her resentment to this student attitude and how difficult it sometimes was for her to deal with her students.

I found this student attitude to be evident during my classroom observations. Jill and Tammy seemed to have to work hard to achieve their students’ full attention. During my observations in both classrooms the students were easily distracted and frequently off task. There was an ongoing chatter among the students during instruction although they

were easily brought back to task when teachers addressed their inattention. There was evidence of a shared respect between teachers and students and an ultimate desire for cooperation. Although Tammy often felt frustrated with her students' attitude, she stated her students "usually know what the expectations are, and if they meet those expectations they're good, we're good" (I #1, p. 4).

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Study Purpose and Methods

The overarching question and purpose of this study was: What are the relationships among high-stakes tests, the practice of teaching, and teachers' emotions? In an effort to answer this larger question, I gathered data through specifically designed research questions. Within chapters 4, 5 & 6 I presented teachers' responses to these questions, gathered through their words and actions. In this chapter, using a constructivist approach, I will integrate the common themes as well as the individual differences that emerged in regards to relationships teachers have with students and colleagues, their teaching philosophies and emotions and how these aspects of their professional lives may have been impacted by testing and content standards. While examining these themes and differences, other variables will be considered such as the length of teaching experience, gender differences, types of testing administered, and the student populations. Like most adults who are functioning in a workplace, teachers feel a variety of emotions throughout their day. I was therefore particularly interested in finding out if and how teaching under the mandates of testing and meeting content standards was related to teachers' emotions.

In an effort to ascertain the effects of testing and standards on teachers, I conducted two sets of teachers' interviews, two classroom observations and referred to my personal fieldnotes. Once data was collected, I utilized a constructivist approach in examining the data for similarities or differences among the six teachers. Using this approach allowed me to be an active participant with the six teachers as we constructed meaning regarding our teaching and educational relationships especially concerning testing, standards and teachers' emotions.

Summary of Findings Findings Chart #1

	IMPACT OF TEST ON TEACHING METHODS	IMPACT OF TEST ON CURRICULUM
Lincoln High Stakes Test Rob-Math Ann-L.A.	Rob:*Reciprocal teaching *Little change in math-positive response *Used Smartboard© *Teacher-directed instruction Ann:*Less use of cooperative learning -Negative response *Use of technology-Smartboard© *Increase in teacher-directed instruction *Reciprocal teaching School-wide:*Receives more input from administrator regarding appropriate methods	School-wide: *Test preparation material used *Predominately test-driven *GLI's posted and referred to daily *Adopted <i>Everyday Math</i> to raise test scores *Administers 3 practice tests *Established block periods for tested areas of study *Staff works with a curriculum advisor
Central High Stakes Test Will-L.A. Dee-L.A.	Will:*Teacher directed *Consistent throughout career *Neutral response to test impact Dee:*More teacher-directed since test *Use of less cooperative learning *Some computer presentation *Less large group reading in class	School-wide: *Adopted <i>Making Middle Schools Work</i> *Standards-driven *Greatly influenced by high school *Test preparation material used
St. Ann's Low Stakes Test Tammy-L.A. Jill-Math	Tammy and Jill: *Encouraged to try new/different teaching methods *Practice brain-based instruction *Some computer presentation *Reported freedom of choice in methods *Positive teacher responses to test *Cooperative learning encouraged	School-wide: *Influenced by State and Diocese standards *Reported more freedom of choice *Test used as diagnostic tool to improve curriculum *Extra-curricular seminars taught

Findings Chart #2

	IMPACT OF TEST ON INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS	IMPACT OF TEST ON INTERACTIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND PARENTS
Lincoln High Stakes Test Rob-Math Ann-L.A.	Rob: *Positive teacher response *Test is common goal for teacher and students *Students see practice tests as friendly competition Ann: *Negative teacher response *Test interferes with classroom discipline-causes frustration *Hamper development of teacher/student interaction-worrisome	School-wide: *Test is common goal for staff *Increased communication between staff and parents *Staff supports each other in academic efforts *Less personal interaction among staff-causes sadness *Increased phone calls to parents *Test published locally
Central High Stakes Test Will-L.A. Dee-L.A.	Will:*Reported no change in teacher/student relationships *Endeavor to relate to all students *Increased communication with students-posted office hours Dee:*Negative impact on teacher/student relationships *Frustrated with 8 th graders' cavalier attitude towards test *Reports being less patient	School-wide: *Test is common goal for staff *Increased communication among staff through <i>Making Middle Schools Work</i> *Increased communication with parents-test results reported -provide websites for parents *Test results published locally *Parents are reported complacent
St. Ann's Low Stakes Test Tammy-L.A. Jill-Math	Tammy and Jill: *Reported no impact on teacher/student relationships *Strong ties to students * Students encouraged to form family-type commitments to each other	School-wide: *Minimal impact on communication with parents *Results given to parents not published locally *Staff meets to discuss test results as diagnostic tool to make curriculum decisions

Findings

When I began this study, I assumed that the teachers and schools I worked with would share the negative opinion of standardized tests that I held to be true. I certainly did not accept the premise that students and teachers could only improve

their academic experience through accountability and the consequences that were attached to it. This issue of rewards or sanctions has been addressed in Maslovaty (2002).

“The more we try to measure, control and pressure learning from without, the more we obstruct the tendencies of students to be actively involved and to participate in their own education. Not only does this result in a failure of students to absorb the cognitive agenda imparted by education, but it also creates deleterious consequences for the affective agenda of school. Externally imposed evaluations, goals, rewards and pressures seem to create a style of teaching and learning that is antithetical to quality learning outcomes in school, that is, learning characterized by durability, depth and integration.” (Ryan and Stellar, 1996, as cited in Maslovaty, 2002).

Going into this research, this quote fairly stated my basic beliefs about testing. Recognizing my strong biases against testing, I chose a constructivist approach in an effort to give more credibility to my results. I did not want my personal feelings regarding testing to influence my interactions with teachers or my findings. I believe that utilizing the constructivist and hermeneutic approach served me well. It allowed me to examine the parts, add my feelings and construct a whole with my teacher participants. As I examined my findings and identified common themes I believe I was able to do this with a more open mind to the recognition and appreciation of the unexpected.

My findings were in some instances expected but in others were very surprising and enlightening. I found that not all my teacher participants or buildings shared my pessimistic outlook on testing, even high stakes tests. Some of my teacher participants responded with a more positive attitude than I expected.

One of the most surprising and unexpected findings of this study was the impact that high stakes tests had on one school in particular, Lincoln. This building,

which serviced the lowest SES families in the study, had experienced unsatisfactory test results for the past few consecutive years. When faced with the possibility of some negative sanctions, the staff and administrators came together in a remarkable effort to improve these scores. Their academic year was guided exclusively by standards and the upcoming test. They administered three practice tests in the course of the year to prepare their students. Most of their daily instruction was designed to raise students' test results. I would have expected with this type of emphasis on the test and the stress it caused the teachers and staff that the atmosphere of the building would have been one of doom and gloom. Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

Every time I entered the building, I was greeted with a positive, invigorating attitude. The common goal of preparing their students to succeed on the test had rallied these teachers and students together. Everyone I encountered from the principal to the teachers to the students themselves seemed genuinely happy to be there and to be part of the endeavor. They all seemed to be giving their best effort towards reaching their goal. The principal sang the praises of her staff while they reported on how tireless and supportive she was towards them. It was apparent that the faculty and principal held the welfare of the children as their first priority. They all realized that successful academic achievements were the best means of improving these children's lives and preparing them for adulthood. They used the emphasis on raising test scores as a means of achieving this goal. Despite the concessions some reported making in their choice of methods or material and the perceived unfairness

of the sanctions they faced, the teachers were truly dedicated to each other and their students and expressed the joy and privilege they felt working in this building.

Conclusions

Tests Impact on Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Based on the teachers' reports, I have come to the following conclusions.

High-stakes testing seems to have had a greater influence on the development of a school's curriculum than low-stakes tests. One way this influence was manifested in this study was the adoption by both public schools of externally generated programs specifically designed to improve test scores. Lincoln and Central had implemented such educational initiative programs developed by external agencies, *Everyday Math* and *Making Middle Schools Work*. The teachers at Lincoln and Central had no input in the development of these programs nor were they given a choice in participating. High-stakes testing therefore seems to have affected these teachers' decision-making process when it came to their curriculums. Despite this effect, both sets of public school teachers indicated that the programs' implementation had been met for the most part with teacher support, have had some success in raising student achievement levels, and had also increased communication among colleagues and with parents. These teachers reported they supported these programs as they seemed to better align their teaching with the test and address the concerns that their students achieve a higher level of proficiency.

Adopting programs developed by outside sources is not new to public education; however, the findings of this study indicated that currently the greatest concern when considering the adoption of a program seemed to be with its ability to

raise test scores rather than address other aspects of education, such as individual student needs. Administrators in this study responded to the pressures of accountability by adopting those programs which promised to positively impact student test results.

Impact on Daily Instruction

In addition to the adoption of specific educational programs and courses of study believed to be beneficial in a school's attempt in raising test scores, data also indicated that day-to-day instructional time was impacted by the pressure of the test. All four public school teachers said that as the date of the test approached, they put aside their normal curriculum and focused more on test-related material, a practice similarly found in other studies (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000; Moore, 1994; Pedulla, et al., 2001; Smith, 1991). For example, Moore (1994) found that 97% of the teachers interviewed reported increasing their instruction towards test objectives while 75% reported that they stopped teaching all together those subjects that were not tested. During my second visit to the schools, one week before the test was administered, it was observed that all four public school teachers were using test-related material such as *Buckle Down* almost exclusively in their classroom instruction. Although some of the teachers reported they did not object to the use of these materials since they seemed to fit their normal curriculum, others concurred that the time set aside for test preparation had limited or curtailed certain teaching methods, teacher/student interactions, or student projects that they would have otherwise been utilizing in the effort to provide students opportunities for higher level

thinking or cooperative learning (Abrams, et al., 2003; Kohn, 2000; McNeil, 2000). This is a practice commonly found in other studies.

As previously reported, Lincoln, the school in this study with the lowest test scores to date and the poorest student population, had developed their daily instruction entirely around the test and standards. It has been found in other studies that in many poorer schools which typically service a large population of minority students, testing and test preparation becomes the curriculum and actually lowers the quality of the students' education (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Hatch, 2002; McNeil, 2000). "The assessment routine operating in a classroom will tend to dominate the kind of work the students do" (Fox, 2005, p. 46). Based on this evidence, it appears that high-stakes tests severely limited the curriculum in these schools.

Lower level work was the focus of learning in these four public school classes during the weeks prior to the test administration and thus had students practicing familiar problems or test-relevant material with little new information gained (Fox, 2005). Not only does testing cause teachers to alter their teaching methods or preferred schedules, but it has been found that teachers frequently simplify content, reduce the number of informational sources students use and severely limit student interactions (McNeil, 2000). Rote instruction, which was observed being practiced as test-preparation, does not promote a full understanding or motivation to learn the content material (Elmore, 1995). This is a serious concern since studies indicate that minimal expectations can lower student self-image and reduces the effort they give their academic work (Fox, 2005; Spillane & Louis, 2002). As a result of decreased student effort, teachers may then alter the types of assignments they give students

making them less demanding or meaningful (Spillane & Louis, 2002). Some teachers may also adopt the use of specific components of teaching methods based on the needs of the students as identified by standardized test objectives (Boardman & Woodruff, 2004). For example, in the wrap-up stage of a lesson, teachers may eliminate higher level thinking questions because they are not on the test, or use test terminology rather than strategies so their students will not get confused (Boardman & Woodruff, 2004). With this practice in place, one could then question how and when students will develop the ability to address higher level thinking situations that they will face in the real world.

Thus it is a conclusion of this study that high-stakes testing often becomes an impediment to the teachers' main goal, which is to prepare their students intellectually and emotionally for adulthood and to develop in them the intrinsic motivation needed to be lifelong learners. Studies indicate that standardized tests can cause tension between the teacher's need to respond to testing demands and actually addressing what teachers believe is important for their students to learn (Black, 1994; Smylie, 1999). Public school teachers in this study reported similar findings. It can be concluded based on the public teachers' comments that high-stakes testing often takes precedence over a teachers' personal teaching philosophy.

Contrary to their public school counterparts, the parochial teachers reported that the low-stakes test they administered had little impact on their teaching methods or curriculum. They both believed they had the freedom to teach a more diverse curriculum in whatever manner they deemed most effective to ensure student participation and comprehension. Rather than choosing teaching methods that would

enhance their students' performance on one test, both parochial teachers said they chose methods and academic curriculums that they believed would lead their students to develop lifelong, higher level learning skills. Although state and diocesan standards were adhered to in the development of their academic program, the curriculum, as reported by these teachers, was allowed a broader focus.

Based on this evidence, the conclusion can be drawn that the level of testing can have an impact on the curriculum and the instructional methods teachers utilize. A further conclusion can be made that students in public schools may not be receiving the same kind of education as their parochial school counterparts. It would appear that parochial schools are at an advantage in their freedom to address a broader curriculum. This brings into question an educational practice of implementing tests that limits the teaching practices and scope of curriculum of public school teachers. Since many children who are educated in public schools have little choice of the school they attend, one could question the propriety of imposing the level of testing and accountability that hampers their teachers' choice of teaching methods and limits their area of study.

The Impact of Testing on Teachers' Autonomy

Another aspect of teaching which may be impacted by the test is autonomy, "defined as the recognition of teachers' professional prerogatives to exercise judgment over the teaching they do within their own classrooms" (Maslach & Leiter, 1999, p. 301), that these six teachers reported they were allowed. Although the public school teachers believed they were given a high level of autonomy in their choice of teaching materials and methods, findings indicate that their choices were dependent

on how well the material and methods would prepare their students for the high-stakes test. Some of the choices found in this study included the acquisition of Smartboards© in hopes of improving instruction and ultimately raising students' scores and working with curriculum coaches who made strong suggestions on appropriate teaching methods.

As similarly found in Pedulla et al. (2001), 60% of teachers interviewed based their choice of teaching methods and materials on the effects they would have on the mandated test. High-stakes tests seemed to have had a direct impact, and in some cases, a limiting effect on the materials and methods used in the classrooms.

High-stakes testing also appeared to negatively impact the public schools' classroom environments and thus the teachers' sense of autonomy. As a result of the severe level of accountability, public school teachers in this study conducted very controlled classrooms which offered little room for deviation from the planned daily agenda, which Myhill and Warren (2005) would identify as a teaching agenda rather than a learning one. As similarly found in Myhill and Warren (2005), when observed these teachers appeared to attempt to make learning interactive by involving the children through questioning, but they often failed to respond to specific pupil responses, largely because of their need to adhere to their planned objectives or GLI's for the lesson. This type of teaching offers little opportunity for scaffolding with students (Myhill & Warren, 2005). Based on this observed evidence, it appears that high-stakes testing rarely allows teachers to deviate from their lesson plans or tolerate any interruptions in achieving that goal. It also limits the level of teacher interaction or modeling that can take place during instruction.

A positive impact of testing on autonomy as reported by the Lincoln teachers was the establishment of block periods. The eighty-minute periods were found advantageous as it allowed the teachers the time to cover more material, use a variety of teaching methods, and to address students' individual needs. In addition to the lengthened class time, there were always two teachers in the class to interact with and help the students. However, to gain the needed time for these extended block periods, other subjects that were not the focus of testing had been assigned shorter periods. It has been found that pressures to improve student test results does force teachers to give greater attention to tested content areas than those areas not tested (Abrams, et al., 2003; Pedulla et al., 2001). Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that high-stakes tests even impact less tested areas which in turn could cause teachers of those subjects more anxiety. In addition to anxiety, teachers may also find it difficult to focus students' attention on subject matter that they know will not be tested to the same extent as those appearing on the standardized test. When so much emphasis is placed on tested areas such as math and reading, it may be challenging for teachers of other subjects such as science or social studies to impart to their students the importance of these content areas.

The advantage the parochial teachers, Jill and Tammy, seemed to have had over their public school counterparts was their freedom to deviate from their planned lessons. In the observed classes, both teachers allowed and encouraged their students to ask questions, give opinions and examples of content being discussed, to share with their peers throughout the lesson, and even get off-task to some extent. They believed they had created an environment of learning where give and take between

the instructor and student was common place and benefited all. There seemed to be comfort level that allowed these teachers to stop and address those ‘teachable moments.’ “Classrooms should be places in which students can legitimately act on a rich variety of purposes, in which wonder and curiosity are alive, in which students and teachers live together and grow” (Noddings, 1992, p. 12). Low-stakes testing appeared to allow more autonomy to these teachers.

Although some studies such as Ryan and Grolnick (1986) would support this higher level of autonomy, others would argue that autonomy in the classroom can cause teachers and students to deviate from their objectives and goals. In some instances teachers may stray too far from their original goal or lack the ability to redirect their students’ attention back to the point of instruction. Hirsh (1996) posited that teachers often misuse any autonomy they are permitted. He argued in his book *The Schools We Need* (1996) that when teachers utilize thematic units or projects as a means for instruction, they often neglect to teach the basic elements of the different subject matters and thus lose intellectual coherence. It would appear that having a higher level of autonomy may require a fine balancing act by the teacher between allowing students to wander from the topic while still being able to cover the necessary material and return to their original focus.

Impact on Communication with Others

Another result of testing as reported by the teachers was an increase in the level of communication occurring within buildings and between school staffs and parents. The communication the teachers had with each other allowed them to voice their concerns and help each other cope with the daily pressures. Both public school

teachers acknowledged more staff meetings took place to discuss curriculum and test preparation methods. It was reported that principals seemed more available to teachers and more knowledgeable about each teacher's course of study. One could conclude therefore that with increased emphasis on testing and accountability comes the need to communicate more regularly with each other and parents to ensure the appropriate understanding and implementation of academic concerns.

The participants believed that teachers and administrators in their buildings were doing a better job keeping parents informed of their child's academic progress. Though the teachers all agreed that testing increased their communication with parents, none of them reported any negative feedback from parents regarding test scores. Individual children's scores were mailed to parents and public schools' results reported by grade and subject were made public record. High-stakes tests made what was once considered an 'in-house' matter a public issue. This gave rise to some concern on the part of the teachers. Although test scores were made public record, teachers were rarely given a venue in which to discuss them or in some cases to defend themselves. All the teachers seemed concerned that their teaching expertise may be called into question if their students tested poorly, yet none of them reported any specific negative reactions from parents to date.

It was a concern for these teachers that high-stakes tests also focused parental concern on one testing situation rather than the complete picture of a child's overall achievements. The only strengths or weaknesses that were indicated were those identified through the test. In some cases this may have resulted in giving parents an inaccurate picture of their child's total accomplishments or progress. This may lead to

weaknesses not being identified and therefore not addressed. The teachers seemed aware of this situation and made efforts to address any concerns they had regarding student total progress when they communicated with parents.

The two parochial teachers reported typical communications with parents dealt with addressing individual student's weaknesses, discipline concerns, possible intervention strategies, and the explanation of new academic programs. Since low-stakes test results were only one way of reporting to parents their child's progress, it may be argued that these parents had a better idea of their strengths and weaknesses than the parents of public school students.

These parochial teachers found that a major concern for their parents, even though their children were still in middle school, was how well their children were being prepared for higher educational opportunities. The majority of the students who would continue their education through high school at St. Ann's would eventually attend college. Parents were concerned that their child would be accepted in the best possible university. It is noted that the low-stakes tests remained a private matter between staff and parents and did not become a forum for public discussion. Therefore, a particular teacher's professional reputation was not based on the results of a single test but rather the overall accomplishments and progress made.

The Relationship of High-Stakes Tests and Teachers' Emotions

There was a consensus by all teacher participants that teaching is an emotionally-charged profession. Although the degree and types of emotions varied with the participants due to personal backgrounds and living experiences, they all acknowledged experiencing some emotional responses in their everyday teaching.

When asked to describe their general emotions regarding teaching the participants unanimously replied the greatest and most prevalent was joy. This feeling of joy has been recognized in numerous studies as a necessary component in teaching (Fried, 1995; Izard & Ackerman, 2000; Noddings, 1992; Palmer, 1998). “Joy heightens an openness to experience” (Izard & Ackerman, 2000, p. 258). This emotion can contribute to strengthening social bonds (Izard & Ackerman, 2000). As these teachers typically chose to focus more on the positive affects of their careers, it was evident to me through my conversations with and observations of these teachers that they exemplified what Hargreaves (1998) labeled “good teachers,” not well-oiled machines but passionate beings who had deep feelings about teaching, their colleagues and their students.

Interactions with Students

All reported having strong emotional ties to their students and experiencing great joy in their interactions with them, although they could often be significantly and typically emotional in nature. The teachers acknowledged that they worked hard at developing and maintaining good working relationships with the children even when it was difficult. “The act of teaching is highly interpersonal and rests substantially on the teacher’s sense of care and compassion” (Smylie, 1999, p. 69). Studies indicate that these relationships develop because of the amount of personal investments teachers make and are imperative not only for the positive affect it affords the teachers but for good, effective teaching to occur (Van Veen & Slegers, 2002).

One common theme shared among these teachers regardless of the type of testing done in their schools, was that they invested themselves wholly in their teaching. They demonstrated their commitment to their students through their words and actions. It was apparent that these teachers realized the importance of developing an emotional bond with their students without becoming sentimental or too emotionally involved, a situation which can actually cause more harm than good (Hargreaves, 2000). All six teachers in this study exhibited both types of caring towards their students as posited by Nias (1999): affective which refers to affection, love and empathy; and thoughts/actions which are demonstrated in concern, anxiety and support. Demonstrated by their actions and words it would seem that the teachers in this study realize both types of caring obliges teachers to act in their students' best interest (Nias, 1999).

This study examined the different ways teachers' perceived that testing impacted their emotions and sense of joy. The data reported by these teachers indicated that for some of them these pressures had an adverse affect on their relationships with their students making them less open with their students, vulnerable, and more inclined to be short with them. Teachers who work under such levels of pressures report that their time and energy is consumed by anxiety and anger and causes them to alienate themselves more from their students (Berliner & Biddle, 1991; Borko, Davinroy, Bliem & Cumbo, 2000). Based on teachers' responses, it can be assumed that high-stakes testing caused a level of anxiety in some of the teachers that impeded the development of rich relationships between teachers and students. For the teachers in this study who found this to be true, they expressed regret and

frustration. “Since teaching involves the building up of relationships and the working out of an ethos, teachers feel both vulnerable and personally engaged in what they do” (Fox, 2005, p. 267).

Not only are teacher/students relationships essential for teachers’ personal and professional satisfaction, studies show that a lynch pin in sustaining, enhancing or decreasing motivation in students is very often the teachers and their interactions with their students (Atkinson, 2000; Frederickson, 2001; Reeve et al., 2004; Wentzel, 1997). Wentzel (1997) posited that “students will be motivated to engage in classroom activities if they believe that teachers care about them” (p. 411). In the same study, Wentzel (1997) also found that “students who perceive their teachers to be supportive are motivated to do well because they experience less distress and negative affect when presented with academic and social challenges at school” (p. 412). Based on the participants’ actions and the reviewed studies, it would appear that the efforts public school teachers made in forming relationships may be the direct result of the teachers’ desire to prepare their students for the test. If their students are relaxed and motivated, they experience higher test results. Therefore, some of the teachers believed the tests had a positive impact on their relationships with students.

In comparison, the two parochial school teachers did not operate under the pressures of high-stakes tests and therefore did not report the same level of anxiety as their public school colleagues. Without this higher level of accountability, they felt they were able to teach in a manner that promoted a strong relationship with their students based on mutual concern and a desire to become learners rather than prepare for a test. Both teachers expressed how hard they worked to maintain a strong,

consistent working relationship with their students. This concept was further supported by Noddings (1992) who suggested academic objectives could only be met if students were provided with caring, supportive classrooms. Such perceived support from teachers can have a direct link to student interest in school (Wentzel, 1996). Based on this data, it may therefore be concluded that high-stakes tests had more of a deleterious effect on motives for teacher/student relationships. Impaired or forced teacher/student relationships may then have further negative impacts on learning.

Another aspect of teaching that was reported in this study to be affected by testing was classroom management. Based on teachers' responses in this study, one may conclude that this lack of time to interact appropriately with students affected teachers emotionally by increasing their anxiety and frustration. Despite the effort to maintain a positive attitude towards students, the public school teachers were observed to allow no interruptions or misbehavior and led very teacher-directed, focused classes. Through our conversations, the teachers made it apparent that this was not the environment in which they would have chosen to conduct their lessons.

This finding is similar to that in Abrams et al. (2003) which found 76% of the teachers interviewed reported testing led them to teach in ways contrary to their own beliefs about sound educational practices. "When vocationally and professionally committed teachers are put under pressure from meso or macro forces to act in ways that appear contrary to their values and so to their sense of identity, they feel stress" (Nias, 1999, p. 225).

As found in other studies, one of the shifts teachers are making in their work is having the public display of student achievement replacing classroom management

as a measure of teacher effectiveness (Miller, 1999). It is further concluded from the data that the amount of content to be covered also limits the time a teacher could give to individual students or to respond to their needs. As found in Kohn (2000), this behavior is typical of teachers who are pressured by the test. He posited that standardized testing causes teachers to be less likely to address 'teachable moments,' attend to students' social and moral development and allow time for student play (Kohn, 2000).

Responses to Testing Pressures

Although all four of the public school teachers acknowledged their pedagogy, curriculum, and interactions with students were impacted by testing and the pressure to raise test scores, it caused different degrees of anxiety and concern for these teachers. This disparity could be the result of several variables. One such variable is the gender difference. The two male participants reported feeling much less anxiety or stress as compared to that reported by the two female teachers. This is similar to findings of studies dealing with teaching and gender differences (Bolton, 2007; Due Billing & Alvesson, 2000; Lewis & Simpson, 2007; Woods & Jeffery, 2002). Stereotypically, female teachers are seen as caring and committed, whereas, the emphasis for male teachers is control and performance (Woods & Jeffery, 2002). If one accepts this stereotyping of teachers, it would follow that Dee and Ann would be expected to respond in a more emotional manner than Rob and Walt. However, some would argue that these gendered emotion codes are not a static category but an enactment (Bolton, 2007). "The concept of 'gendered emotion codes' highlights that teaching cannot be split into a 'his and hers' of symbolic resources; it is not either

feminine care and commitment or masculine control and performance but a complex human dynamic involving both” (Bolton, 2007, p. 19). Teachers can draw upon and enact a complex web of ever-shifting gendered emotion codes that draw from the symbolic and material (Bolton, 2007). Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) posited that masculinity and femininity are not fixed but constantly changing and are culturally and historically dependent on meanings we ascribe to them. Based on this assumption, then, both men and women are capable of acting in what may be labeled masculine and feminine ways based on instrumentality as well as feelings. (Due Billing & Alvesson, 2000). Findings from this study and others examined would lead me to conclude that it is more relevant to look at individuals rather than base assumptions of emotional responses strictly on gender.

The findings from this study also seem to indicate that the more the subject matter was aligned with the test, the less anxiety it caused the teacher. Rob stated, for example, that his math program included a wide variety of concepts that would also appear on the test and thus allowed him to reach short term goals in his instruction such as isolated skills or the knowledge of specific facts and functions. These math concepts were easily testable and indicated a certain level of growth and student improvement thus causing the teacher less anxiety. “It is easier to measure efficiency than effectiveness, easier to rate how well we’re doing something than to ask whether what we’re doing makes sense” (Kohn, 2000, pp. 3-4). This would be similar to other findings that teachers pressured to improve test scores often adopt performance goals rather than learning goals (Fink, et al., 1990). If this is the case, as it appears to be, we can conclude that Rob’s emotional state regarding his teaching would not be

negatively impacted to any great extent since the goals to improve test results were consistent with his personal teaching goal (Hargreaves, et al., 2001).

As found in Myhill and Warren (2005), Rob's classroom context may possibly be identified as product/knowledge oriented (short term growth) rather than process/understanding (long-term growth). "Concepts such as intrinsic motivation and intellectual exploration are difficult for some minds to grasp, whereas, test scores, like sales figures or votes, can be calculated and tracked and used to define success and failure" (Kohn, 2000, p. 3). Through our discussions it was apparent to me that Rob was concerned about his students' intrinsic motivation; however, since he was not given the time to address and develop this level of motivation, he was comfortable working towards the current short-term educational expectations that were being asked of him and his colleagues. The development of intrinsic motivation in students also seems to be prohibited by high-stakes testing and the need to prepare for it.

Upon examination of the data, I have further concluded that the various lengths of their teaching careers may have also influenced how these teachers emotionally responded to the pressures of testing. Biklen (1995) posited that we measure careers by the stages one goes through, the training required and the amount of success achieved. As one progresses through these stages of change, the way one thinks and responds also changes (Biklen, 1995). Rob and Walt have been teaching almost two decades longer than Dee and Ann and have seen educational reforms come and go and thus have had more experience working through academic changes. "The human dimension of understanding educational change is both intellectual

(figuring out what change means) and emotional (the ability to see the reason for change) in nature” (Hargreaves, et al. 2001, p. 118). Dee and Ann appeared to be able to deal with the changes in education better on an intellectual level rather than an emotional one. Since veteran teachers Rob and Walt have experienced more reforms and changes in education, they may be better able to predict their merit, impact or outcome and thus react less emotionally. “Degree of control and predictability of events are central to the experience of the stressfulness of events. If you can predict an event, you can prepare for it, and in doing so, reduce its impact” (Zautra, 2003, p.41). The differences in these responses would lead one to assume that more effort is needed to educate and support newer teachers through educational reforms.

Rob and Walt were both close to retirement and this may have also influenced the degree of emotion they experienced. The intensity of emotions depends on cognitive concepts such as the degree of fear over losing one’s job (Ratner, 2000). Since neither of these teachers was fearful of job loss, they did not experience this particular anxiety. This may also account for the high level of anxiety Dee and Ann were experiencing. They were looking forward to teaching for many years to come and, although they did not specifically mention worrying about their futures in the teaching, they had voiced concern over the public’s opinion of their professional abilities as reflected by their students’ test scores. Low test scores are often interpreted as a lack of teaching expertise and cause teachers shame (Board & Woodruff, 2004). This data leads one to question the validity of basing a teacher’s expertise, professional success and ultimately their jobs on the results of a single test

without taking into consideration other variables which can impact a students' test taking ability.

Similar to other veteran teachers, Rob and Walt have seen educational reforms fail because of insufficient planning or because the reform ideas had little merit to begin with (Alvey, 2005). Despite frustration over working through numerous reforms, both remarked how they had gained a sense of accomplishment and confidence in their teaching over the years despite changes and reforms imposed on them. "The blend of distressing circumstances and positive affects gained by small wins along the way can create a unique product: an increased sense of personal efficacy. Those beliefs in oneself strengthen resolve and enhance adaptation" (Zautra, 2003, p. 77).

One could argue that Rob and Walt may have developed a stronger self-esteem and sense of efficacy in their long professional lives than their female counterparts who have had less experience dealing with academic changes. "The level of self-esteem one has appears to be a crucial factor in how people respond to stress regardless of their personality type" (Hafen, et al., p. 489). An important part of self-esteem is self-efficacy "which is your perception of your ability to do a specific task; your belief in yourself; the conviction that you can manage adverse events" (Hafen, et al., p. 491). Teachers need a strong sense of efficacy which is "achieved through development of cognitive capabilities and self-regulatory skills for managing academic task demands and self-debilitating thought patterns" (Bandura, 1993, p. 134). "Efficacy beliefs are likely to reduce both anticipatory anxiety and the psychological distress that accompanies the stressors" (Zautra, 2003, p. 77).

The two male teachers through their longer teaching careers may have learned to modify extreme levels of emotions and had found this helped them and their students to stay more focused. Studies indicate that some teachers actually modify their emotions and encourage their students to do the same so that they stick to their goals and do not get sidetracked by emotional outbursts (Schutz & Pekron, 2007). It may be concluded in this study, based on teachers' comments that this may be the case for some of the teacher participants.

From the data gathered, I concluded that the level of testing can also have a direct impact on the emotional state of the teacher. Due to the low-stakes level of the Terra Nova, parochial teachers reported it had very little impact on their emotions. Since the Terra Nova did not impose sanctions or issue rewards, there was not as much stress associated with the results. Neither teacher reported feeling their job at St. Ann's was in jeopardy because of poor test scores, nor were students tracked to specific educational programs based on their test performance.

Teachers' Goals

The data collected in this study indicated that, despite the differences in their teaching assignments, all six participants acknowledged common goals they shared for their teaching. They described their ideal teaching situations were those that would allow them to teach to and reach their professional goals. The school environment in which these men and women taught therefore could affect their endeavors to reach their goals by either enhancing or hampering their chances for success. "Teachers' emotions are inextricably bound up with the basic purpose of schooling-what the purposes are-what stake teachers have (and are asked to have) in

them and whether the working conditions of teaching make them achievable or not” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 841). Goals can be defined as subjective representations of what we would like to happen and what one wishes to avoid (Fink et al., 1991; Schutz, Crowder, White, 2001). They are the transitive points for our understanding of constructs such as cognition, motivation and emotions (Schutz & DeDuir, 2002). For emotions to emerge, the person-environment transaction needs to be seen as having some goal relevance or importance (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002).

Teaching Communities

Another common theme that emerged from the data is that all six teachers appreciated the sense of community among their staff and students in their respective buildings which enhanced their sense of joy in their teaching. They reported their schools were places where staff and students focused on achieving common goals, an important aspect that can impact learning. From the data it can be concluded that this concept of community is important to these teacher participants as they worked at instill the joy of cooperation and learning in their students and themselves. “Authentic productive partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding are needed to move education forward and outward” (Dingham & Scott, 1998, p. 394). Commonly held goals with agreed upon means of achieving them enhance the organization’s ability to plan and achieve them thus enriching the experience of teaching (Rosenholtz, 1991). This is not always an easy task for pressured educators albeit a necessary one to achieve academic success.

A goal commonly reported by all six teachers was to help their students develop an emotional maturity. These teachers had somehow managed, to varying

degrees, to emphasize both the academic and emotional components of education in the daily instruction. They diligently prepared their students to take the mandated tests because that was what was required of them but acknowledged that this was not their primary aim in their teaching. Unanimously, they stated their main goal was to prepare their students to lead productive, enriched adult lives. It was apparent based on research and these particular teachers' actions and responses that strong relationships among educators and their students is imperative to successful education.

As Hargreaves (1998) pointed out, educational reform is dominated by the emphasis on knowledge and skills development and often ignores the emotional elements. However, part of addressing the needs of the whole child includes educating them as emotional and social beings as well as intellectual ones (Hargreaves, 2001). The wider social mission of teachers is the emotional relationship with students and the emotional qualities they hope students develop (Hargreaves, 2001). "Teachers need to establish an emotional link to motivate the students to participate actively in the learning process" (Labaree, 2000, p. 229). Dingham & Scott (1998) found the intrinsic aspects of teaching positively influence teachers' satisfaction. When teachers are able to provide a supportive environment which provides opportunities for students to modify attitudes and realize self-growth, teachers' sense of satisfaction increases. This satisfaction was significantly associated with mental well-being so that the more satisfied teachers were also less stressed (Dingham & Scott, 1998). "Emotions are an integral part of the educational activity

setting and therefore an understanding of the nature of emotions in the school context is an important goal” (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002, p. 130).

With less pressure on the parochial teachers to set aside time to prepare students for test, these teachers utilizing the low-stakes test believed they had more opportunities to relate to their students’ emotional development. Throughout their interactions with their students, these teachers emphasized to their students the importance of helping each other, to believe in their own strengths and to work through their difficulties. Both teachers worked on the development of a positive self-esteem in their students. The public school teachers shared this concern for the development of emotional maturity in their students; however, they reported frustration over the fact that they did not have as much time as St. Ann’s teachers reported having to adequately address that need.

These teachers, despite the variance in their student clientele, shared the belief that another goal of education is what Labaree (2001) had labeled ‘democratic equality.’ Within this supposition, the school is seen as the instrument used to produce competent citizens by providing a shared level of competence and a common set of social experiences and cultural understandings essential for effective democracy (Labaree, 2001). These teachers and their schools were making a gallant effort to achieve this type of education for their children. Throughout my observations, I noticed how no child had been singled out by these teachers either for undue ridicule or excessive praise. The students were all treated in a fair and respectful manner in all three schools both in the observed classrooms and in the halls between classes. There was an observed and maintained level of respect between

faculty and students. Based on the teachers' observed behavior, I assumed this was an important concept for them despite obstacles they may face. "Teachers' sense that they have a personal relationship with and moral obligation to children and their parents is constantly overridden by an official spirit of contractualism that they do not endorse and over which they have little control" (Nias, 1999, p. 227). The type of teaching which promotes equity for all was identified by these teachers as most important and vital for their students. Yet this type of teaching was not nearly as possible when these teachers felt pressured to teach to the upcoming test.

Although each of the three schools had their own unique set of problems and challenges, another commonality reported by these teachers is that they felt they were already teaching in their ideal situations. They all shared that there was no other school at which they would rather be teaching, although there were some things they would change or add to make their teaching situations truly ideal such as unlimited financial support for materials or more opportunities for fieldtrips. They reported feeling, for the most part, that their efforts and talents were recognized and appreciated by administrators and parents. From their expression of satisfaction with their teaching positions, one could conclude that the level of support teachers get can make a remarkable difference in their teaching and attitude. Without exception, these men and women were happy to be teaching in their respective schools and found satisfaction in their chosen career of teaching.

Impact of Standardized Testing on Goals

These teachers expressed their concern over the futility of expecting all students to be proficient at the same time and at a predetermined level of achievement

measured by a common, statewide test. Despite the fact that these teachers felt this was an unrealistic expectation, the pressure exerted by administrators and the state to achieve it, often obliged them to alter their teaching methods and curriculum to address test material. This practice reinforced the findings by Apple (1993) that statewide tests have been found to be reductive and unreflective. Therefore, it would seem that high-stakes testing is the antithesis of these teachers' goal to teach the whole child.

“First to be sacrificed in a school or district where rewards or punishments attend the results of such testing is a vibrant, integrated, active, student centered kind of instruction. The more prominent and relevant the test becomes, the more difficult it is for teachers to invite students on an intellectual adventure, to help them acquire the ability and desire to solve realistic problems in a thoughtful way” (Kohn, 2000, p. 31).

In comparison, the parochial teachers would seem to have a better chance than their public school counterparts at preparing their students to be lifelong learners. Without the pressure of teaching to a test, they reported more autonomy in their classrooms to address their academic goals. Rather than stressing with their students the importance of performing well on a test, they emphasized the importance of their students doing their best. Students were told that even if their best efforts resulted in mediocre grades, they would have the satisfaction that they had tried their best. They were assured that this level of effort was just as important as achieving high marks. The lack of the pressure to prepare students for the test, as reported by Jill and Tammy, also gave these parochial teachers more time to attend to their students' social and moral development (Kohn, 2000).

Emotional Regulation

High levels of emotional control and the use of display rules were evident while observing these six teachers. Through our interviews, the teachers freely shared their personal frustrations with pressures, testing, students' attitudes and unanswered questions regarding teaching assignments for next school year. They were all stressed to some degree about something related to their teaching and shared with me how upset they often were. To their credit however, when observed, not one of them displayed anything but enthusiasm and a positive attitude when they went back into their classrooms. Not only did they do a commendable job controlling their own emotions, they persisted in building their students' confidence in their testing ability and eased any negative emotions the students displayed such as anxiety or worry. They all explicitly stated their confidence in their students' ability to be successful in achieving high test scores or in learning the content material.

Similar to the teachers in Sutton (2004), the six teachers in this study acknowledged they used one strategy in particular, attention deployment, in their attempts at emotional regulation. This strategy involves focusing on the positive and talking, or in some cases, venting to colleagues (Sutton, 2004). Despite the fact that the teachers could not always guarantee their students' emotional state when they came to school, most pointed out that they came prepared with a positive attitude. Ann said it for all, "I'm positive...always positive." All the teacher participants stated they frequently talked with their families or colleagues about their problems in the classroom concerning students, curriculum or the day-to-day pressures they faced. Studies indicate that a high level of social support whether it comes from

administrators, peers or family can help ameliorate the stresses of teaching (Schwarzer & Greenglass, 1999). Rob and Walt were both married to teachers so they felt they had naturally sympathetic sounding boards with whom to share their teaching-related stresses. The female teachers in the study mentioned how they frequently shared frustrations not only with their husbands but with other teachers in their buildings. It was important for these teachers' emotional well-being that they were able to talk about their concerns and feelings. Discussing emotions with others can help teachers interrogate the marginalization of teachers, examine vulnerability, look at emotional experiences from another point of view and make better relationships with students (Zembylas, 2004). However, it is also important that teachers do not allow themselves to spend too much time concentrated on just the frustrations of their profession. A teacher's negative attitude can often become the prevailing influence over their daily actions. A strong teaching community would be one that encourages teachers to also routinely share the joys of their profession as well as the frustrations.

The coping mechanisms teachers use in regards to their emotional experiences may vary. In order to achieve an emotional balance in their interactions with students, teachers consciously use what Ekman and Friesen (1975) identified as display rules which provide standards of behavior associated with cultural and moral aspects of emotions (Sutton, 2004). Studies indicate emotional regulation goals and strategies need to be utilized by teachers in order to be more effective in their classrooms (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Zembylas, 2004). The use of display rules seems to be appropriate for teacher use for maintaining a positive public image which

is a serious concern for teachers. Teachers are perceived by the public and themselves as professionals who should be in control of their emotions and those of their students.

Implications

Strong Teaching Communities

One implication that has resulted from this study is the need for schools to begin or in some cases to continue their efforts in establishing strong teaching communities for their teaching staff. All the teacher participants noted that the sense of community and sharing common academic goals was beneficial to their achievement of those goals. The importance of the communities of colleagues these buildings and teachers had been able to establish is a very important component in education. Hargreaves (1994) emphasized the need for schools to develop communities in which colleagues work collaboratively to set their own professional standards and then work together drawing on their particular strengths and talents to achieve success. These communities work under the guidance of mission statements which “mitigates the guilt-inducing uncertainties of teaching by forging common beliefs and purposes among the teaching community...which strengthens teachers’ sense of efficacy...builds motivation” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 168). This type of collaboration builds a culture among teachers, “a relationship which is the most significant aspect of a teacher’s life and work” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165). An establishment of collaboration and collegiality is necessary for promoting professional growth among teachers which in turn will generate school improvement

even when working with reforms that are generated from external forces (Hargreaves, 1994).

Another benefit from building strong communities of teachers may be the decrease in teacher burnout. Despite the common occurrence of this phenomenon, the teachers in this study did not seem to suffer from this malady. It is perhaps because of their success in building supportive communities that they were able to avoid this growing problem among educators. Many studies have been conducted regarding the frequency of teacher burnout (Burke & Greenglass, 1995; Friedman, 2000; Pines, 2002). As put forth in Burke and Greenglass (1995) burnout consists of negative attitude changes such as reduced work goals, less personal responsibility from work outcomes, less idealism, greater emotional detachment from clients, work alienation and heightened self interest (p. 1359).

When asked how they dealt with the stresses that were inherent in teaching, the teachers all said they went to their colleagues for strength and guidance. The communities they had forged in their buildings had allowed them to keep that joy in their teaching despite pressures from external forces. They enjoyed the content areas they taught and the students in their care. They worked well with their colleagues and took great pride in being part of their individual schools. None seemed so stressed as to even consider leaving teaching in the foreseeable future.

In today's current academic environment, teachers report experiencing increases in pressure from administrators, parents and society to improve test scores to deal with their daily workload and the level of accountability expected of them. Many readily admitted to feeling frustrated, angry, tired and underappreciated at

times. Teachers need to be able to rely on each other to give aid and comfort to each other when needed.

Testing

It is further implied by this study that those making educational policy decisions need to examine the benefits and/or detriments of utilizing either high-stakes or low-stakes testing. The data presented in this study indicates that high-stakes testing often had a more deleterious effect on methods, curriculum and student/teacher interactions than low-stakes testing. “Even when there’s agreement regarding quality education, there is concern that testing instruments and technology do not accurately measure or provide reliable data on a school’s delivery of education” (Linn, 2000, p. 8). Since 1920 we have depended on the technology of testing that relies on standardization and on the assessment of proxies for knowledge and application instead of actually evaluating the extent to which we truly understand and can apply what we know (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1992). The focus of such testing is on the narrow domain of knowledge, often rote memorization, which is typically easier and cheaper to test than to assess how students can utilize what they have learned (Popham, 1993).

Proponents of standardized testing seem to also agree that the current form of testing being done in our schools needs to be redesigned. In Gerstner (2001), proponents claim new tests include open-ended questions, writing samples, problems involving solving complex math and opportunities for students to critically examine literary techniques. Although they believe that more challenging tests will initially result in lower test scores, they posit this type of testing will ultimately lead to better

teaching and greater student learning (Gerstner, 2001). The bottom line for proponents of testing is that some sort of testing is necessary for identifying educational problems.

Opponents to standardized testing argue:

“Standardized tests can’t measure initiative, creativity, imagination, conceptual thinking, curiosity, effort, irony, judgment, commitment, nuance, good will, ethical reflection, or a host of other valuable dispositions and attributes. What they can measure and count are isolated skills, specific facts and functions, the least interesting and least significant aspects of learning” (Ayers, 1993, p. 40).

Based on the findings of this study and previous educational research, a more ideal assessment program may be one that does not carry serious sanctions or rewards. Some thought needs to be given to more authentic assessment which can be one positive tool to be used to determine students’ understanding and educational growth. “An authentic test confronts students with contextualized, complex, intellectually challenging tasks that represent knowledge in a given discipline” (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 319). As found in Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (2000), teachers support assessment that provides valid, reliable feedback to improve and expand student learning. Authentic assessment may best be designed by the teachers who taught the material and who know their students and their current academic progress. Since teachers’ designed assessment would be more directly correlated to the material taught, parents would be given a more realistic evaluation of their child’s progress and accomplishments. Rather than having tests imposed externally at odd times of the year, authentic assessments designed by teachers would be part of the natural learning environment (Gifford & O’Connor, 1992). “Given commitment,

leadership, and support, many teachers are quite capable of designing creative, authentic assessment programs; and when such programs are explained to parents, may parents will choose them over standardized multiple-choice tests” (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 320). The teachers in this work agreed that this type of testing can be a useful tool to determine student achievement, talents and interests.

Educational Reforms

Another area that needs further consideration is that of educational reform. In an effort to improve this assessment situation, numerous educational reforms have emerged over the years. Some would argue that many of these reforms have failed since too often they were driven by political ideology rather than educational purposes, and were implemented too fast or too rigidly (Gratz, 2000). Most would agree that educational reform is a difficult task to achieve. “The challenge within the educational system is to find the specific strategies and policy levers that will change enough parts of the complex educational system to increase student learning” (Ladd, 1996, p. 5). That appears to be easier said than done.

The direction of educational reform is in the forefront of discussion again this year. President Bush is asking Congress to re-enact the No Child Left Behind Act. At the very least many proponents of this education act are encouraging a rewrite of NCLB despite the fact that many parents, teachers and administrators already feel trapped by and unsure of this piece of legislation. Although the goal of this act is to ensure all students will be proficient in reading and math by 2014, adversaries of this act argue that the gains proposed by NCLB have not been realized nor can they be in the future. In fact, according to a 2006 article by Stan Karp for *Rethinking Schools*,

every one of the 50 states has introduced legislation rejecting all or part of NCLB. At the close of 2006, in our nation 10,000 schools were on the NCLB list of schools which need improvement and have thus been sanctioned in some way. In addition, nearly 23,000 schools failed to meet their AYP, adequate yearly progress goal in 2006 which put them in jeopardy of being added to that list (Karp, 2006). In order to remedy this negative situation, more testing is being implemented. According to Education Sector, a Washington, D.C. research group, 11.4 million tests will be added to the already 33 million tests administered (Karp, 2006). Next year all grades three through eight and once in high school will be tested in math and language arts. If testing and sanctions have not proven effective in the past five years, why would anyone think that an increase in testing would be considered the reasonable or successful solution?

An area of concern is teacher implementation of educational reforms and thus requires further study. One could argue the specific reasons why, but teachers are often responding inappropriately to these reforms or reverting back to what they already know and do which only widens the gap between school and the ever changing world (Hargreaves, 1995). Although it is imperative for teachers to prepare their students for entering that world as responsible, competent adults, the current educational system and recent reforms have failed to empower teachers to complete this task. Rather than treating teachers as knowledgeable professionals who are capable of making decisions regarding their students' needs and the design of their particular curriculum, current educational acts such as No Child Left Behind have tied teachers' hands and de-professionalized them. "Teachers' work...has been

defined and their powers of discretion delimited by the technical controls of standardized tests, teacher-proof curriculum packages and guidelines, and step-by-step models of teaching imposed from above subjugating teachers to a deskilled labor process” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 26). When faced with this type of control, teachers’ resistance becomes a real impediment to both teaching and learning. Hargreaves (1994) criticized this use of singular models of teaching expertise since they create inflexibility among teachers and takes away their opportunities to make proper discretionary judgments in their classrooms. Others agree that it leads to a narrowing of techniques utilized by teachers.

As posited by Berliner and Biddle (1995), for educational reforms to be successful, they should include ‘bottom-up strategies.’ This would involve educators organized into communities of learners who discuss problems, propose change, provide appropriate environments to implement change and generate procedures to study effects of change (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Most teachers want the freedom to make their own decisions, improve, innovate and take risks and are willing to assume responsibility for their decisions (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). “Teachers need the power to ensure that learning can progress, unhindered, in their classrooms and they need at least a degree of autonomy over the direction of their own personal and professional development” (Fox, 2005, p. 270). When teachers are given the power and freedom they need to conduct their classes to meet their students’ needs, they will enjoy more satisfaction and success in their work.

The success of educational reforms requires that teachers not only play a prominent role in its development, but they need to believe in its validity and have

faith that reforms will treat all parties, students, teachers, administrators and parents fairly. They need to be well versed on how to correctly implement new innovations and new curriculum, the time to implement it most effectively, and have the support of administration in doing so (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

Academic Accountability and Standards

This study also indicates the need to reexamine the level of accountability associated with current testing and the mandated content standards imposed on educators.

Teachers voiced their concern that although they are the primary people held accountable for student test results, there are variable outside their control that can negatively impact those results. "Educators should be held strictly accountable for their knowledge, professional competence and diligence. But it's dishonest and destructive to hold them accountable for things beyond their control" (Clabaugh, 2003, p.163). Within current educational reforms, test scores are used by politicians as the common currency of accountability to make aggregate judgments about teachers' performance, programs, schools, districts and even statewide education (Corbett & Wilson, 1991). Standardized tests and accountability have become the inseparable language of educational reform. As posited by Elmore, Abelmann and Fuhrman (1996) "the new educational accountability is comprised of three components: 1. Primary emphasis on measured student performance as the basis for school accountability; 2. Creation of relatively complex system of standards by which student data can be compared by school and locality; 3. Creation of a system of rewards, penalties and intervention strategies" (p. 65). This system of accountability

has shifted the focus from input regulations (such as, the number of books in the library, the per cent of certified staff) to a model emphasizing results using rewards and sanctions to move schools to higher levels (Elmore et al, 1996). Some educators argue that this coercive accountability can undermine and marginalize the role of intrinsic motivation which has been recognized in this study as a goal of teaching (Hess, 2002). This type of accountability can be seen to hold teachers at the mercy of unsympathetic, increasingly demanding set of external forces over which they have no control and very little input.

Marketed as a positive improvement in education, those opposed to high-stakes testing see standards in a different light. “Standards are seen as an infringement of individual liberty and efforts to impose them run into a classic American response: Don’t tell me what to do” (Labaree, 2001, p. 29). One would question how standards could be written without the element of sanctions or rewards being an essential part of their design.

As the No Child Left Behind Act is currently being reviewed and reconsidered for renewal, possible changes have been proposed by those in politics, education and the business sector many dealing with the level of accountability which would be appropriate. For example, test proponent and CEO of IBM, Louis Gerstner, argues: “There’s no successful institution in the world that pursues a strategic direction without establishing performance benchmarks and continuously measuring progress” (*Prism Online*, 2001). He supports more challenging standardized tests, higher performance standards, and more accountability for teachers and schools. He believes this course of action will bring more equity to education.

Opponents would argue with Gerstner's stance. Kohn (2000) posits that "tougher standards and accountability actually lowers meaningful expectations insofar as it relies on standardized testing as the primary measurement of achievement. While poor kids fill in worksheets to raise test scores, they fall further behind affluent kids who are likely to get lessons that help them understand ideas" (p. 38).

As the debate continues over the appropriate standards and level of accountability, we as a society have to consider what are our educational aims and ideals. As found in Siegel (2004):

The history of educational thought is littered with suggested aims of education. Fostering creativity, producing docile workers or good citizens, maximizing freedom, or individual happiness, developing religious faith and commitment and fostering ideological purity are just some of the many educational aims that serious educational thinkers have proposed (p. 220).

In an attempt to understand the different positions, one could look to the work of Douglas (1960) as he presented his theory x and theory y of management in *The Human Side of Enterprise*. Theory x assumes that people (for this discussion, students) on a whole dislike work and must therefore be controlled and threatened before they work hard enough. It further assumes that people prefer to be directed and usually dislike responsibility. It follows that theory x managers (for our example teachers) are characteristically result-driven, intolerant, aloof, one-way communicators and unhappy. Applying this theory to education, high-stakes testing proponents would be more attuned to theory x.

Opponents of high-stakes testing would be more prone to accept theory y which posits that expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as

play and rest. That people (students) readily accept and often seek responsibility. Theory y managers (teachers) presume trust as they enable and empower their students to participate and create. This theory also supports Siegel's "four reasons for thinking that critical thinking constitutes a fundamental educational ideal: respect for students as persons; self-sufficiency and preparation for adulthood; initiation into the rational traditions; and democratic living" (Siegel, 2004, p. 222).

Standards by some are often considered useful guidelines that can improve the instruction's focus, but the one-size-fits-all mentality is arguable to others. Susan Ohanian, an opponent of standardization, posits that a standard-based approach assumes education can be prepackaged and delivered without regard for the individual needs and interests of the learner (Hatch, 2002). She further claims that accountability systems regarding standards operate as if individual differences should not exist; that if you do not fit the mold, there is something wrong with you (Hatch, 2002).

Jonathan Miller-Lane, a Middlebury College professor of teacher education, is an example of an educator who agrees with the teachers in this study and supports the notion that the government should set high standards but not standardization (Bzdega, 2005). This was a common concern voiced by all six participants. Although these six teachers agreed that like any professional they should be held to a high set of standards, they also concurred that individual schools should be allowed to meet standards in a manner and pace that fits the individual needs of each student (Bzdega, 2005).

Teachers struggle with the fact that academic standards can narrow the focus of teaching and ignore some developmental needs of individual students (Hatch, 2002). This narrowed focus on academic outcomes can cause conflict in teachers between what they know is best for their students' long-term academic growth and what is narrowly prescribed by a test-driven standard (Hatch, 2002). Opponents see "standards-based curriculum as predicated on the delimitation of curriculum content and on deskilling of teachers" (Smythe & Dow, 1998, p. 297). Some argue that this problem exists because the current standards states utilize are written from a corporate mentality rather than a sound educational, research-based ones considering what Sergiovanni (2000) would refer to as the lifeworld.

"Instead of standards and accountability being derived from the needs, purposes and interests of parents, teachers and students in each school, the standards and accountability systems determine what the needs, purposes and interests are and script the behavior of teachers and students accordingly. However, when the lifeworld (cultural meanings and significance of education) dominates, testing reflects local passion, needs, values and beliefs. It remains vigorous and true but not standardized" (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 88)

"Prevailing patterns of educational change and reform have been criticized for their top-down, standardized, bureaucratic application across entire systems in ways that neglect the purposes and personalities of individual teachers and the contexts in which they teach" (Hargreaves, 1995, p. 253). In place of, or in addition to external accountability systems, internal accountability system specifically designed for their individual school or district could be developed with teachers' input. This type of system would allow schools to acknowledge and respect the local culture and concerns of their students and families (Firestone, Schorr, Monfile, 2004). Through the workings of an internal accountability system, staff would agree on test score and

proficiency expectations, methods to achieve those expectations, and means of asking for and giving assistance to each other (Firestone, et al., 2004).

Professionalism of Teachers

Another implication of this study, based on teacher responses, is the reexamination of the role teachers have in the development of standards and determining best practices for teaching their particular students. In order for standards to be more effective, meaningful, and educationally useful, many feel it is imperative that teacher and other educational experts have a substantial role in their development and implementation. “External fixes will not come soon enough to sustain passion of people who care about teaching...as scholars and teachers we have to remember...when teachers depend on the coercive powers of law or technique, they have no authority at all” (Palmer, 1998, p. 33). People struggle against pressures from external controls (Woolfolk, 2004). Therefore, to make the content standards pertinent to their individual teaching situations and specific school districts, it is important that teachers be part of their development so they can address the particular cultures and needs of their students. Meaningful, deep changes can only occur when teachers are intimately involved, have a clear understanding and shared common norms of change (Sergiovanni, 2000).

“Improving instructional capacity has to be the central target of school improvement initiatives” (Spillane & Louis, 2002, p. 88). Teachers have first-hand knowledge of their students’ culture, strengths, and weaknesses. In addition to this personal expertise they possess, it is imperative that teacher preparation provides them with the skills “to determine the best teaching practices, to become

diagnosticians of student learning problems and friendly critics of school cultures that promote or inhibit teaching, learning, and their own profession growth” (Costigan & Crocco, 2004, p. 9).

“Multiple and flexible conceptions of teaching excellence are...grounded in and arise from collective wisdom in the community of teachers... acknowledge the provisional and context dependent character of the knowledge base of teaching...respect and leave space for teachers’ discretionary judgments...permit gradual and selective adaptation and integration of new approaches without wholesale rejection of old” (Hargreaves, 1995, p. 61).

The 1996 National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) generated a report called *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*. This report emphasized the importance of quality teachers and good teaching to improve performance in public schools. This commission stated the success of reform rests on preparing and retaining quality teachers and creating environments in which teachers can teach (Costigan & Crocco, 2004). Once the teachers have been provided with a quality education themselves, the educational system has to demonstrate faith in them and support their work. Many would argue that current educational changes and reforms de-professionalize and depersonalize teachers. Costigan and Crocco (2004) report that “teachers’ professional judgments have been hemmed in by new strictures promoted by performance standards, assessment rubrics and learning objectives imposed by different education authorities” (p. 29).

School improvement must begin with the recognition that anything which diminishes teachers’ flexibility and autonomy and ignores their need of self-development and recognition has no chance of succeeding with students. “Schools will have to provide better, more professional working environments for teachers if

those schools are to become better environments for students to learn in” (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 340).

If education is to be effective, teachers, schools and professional organizations need to take an active part in the discourse concerning it. However, “It is not only up to teachers and administrators to figure out and work for what they hope for: it is up to parents, students, policy makers, labor and business leaders, politicians and media as well” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 127). With a concerted effort by all the players in the realm of education, our nation should be able to devise a reliable system of accountability that is fair to all. “Educational systems, governments and society need to acknowledge their collective responsibility for the current extrinsic factors giving rise to worrying levels of teacher dissatisfaction and the erosion of teachers’ intrinsic motivation” (Dingham & Scott, 1998, p. 393). “The most valuable and most costly part of an educational system are the people who teach. Maintaining their well-being and their contribution to student education should be a primary objective of educational leaders” (Maslach & Leiter, 1999, p. 303).

For many teachers in our society their level of commitment to their profession and their students remained high.

“Public educators have opted to enter a field with limited material incentives. Some of them—due to temperament, training or professionalism—have a deep rooted and personal attachment to the ideal of public education and may respond to competition [encouraged by accountability] not out of the self-interest that conventionally powers markets, but out of a commitment to this ideal” (Hess, 2002, p. 50).

This quote is true not only for the four public and two Catholic school teachers in this study, but for a multitude of teachers who practice their trade daily. They are all committed to providing the best possible education for the students in their care. If we

as a society can rely on their training and support their teaching, we may very well have the schools we want and that our children deserve.

This study emphasizes the need to help teachers maintain the level of commitment they initially bring to their teaching. Armed not only with a vast amount of knowledge of their content material, teachers come to this profession with a passion for teaching (Fried, 1995). As described by Fried (1995), a passionate teacher “has the quality of caring about ideas and values, this fascination with the potential for growth within people, this depth and fervor about doing things well and striving for excellence...”(p. 17). Unfortunately, it is often difficult for teachers to maintain this fervor when working under the pressures of testing and imposed standards that they had no part in designing and often do not see as effectively improving education. Loss of this passion can impact teachers’ work since emotions, cognition and action are integrally connected (Hargreaves, 2000). Teachers may begin to question themselves and just what their identity is in teaching. “...in modernistic school systems, sustaining and realizing the self has been a constant struggle for teachers, whose purpose, commitment and very desire to teach has been persistently obstructed and undermined by the bureaucratic structures in which they work” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 30).

Education and Societal Changes

Among several works examining education and teaching is Hargreaves’ (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times* which presents a unique view as to possible changes and directions that may improve our current educational situation. The central proposition in Hargreaves’ (1994) work states: “challenges and changes

facing teachers and schools are not confined to education but are rooted in a major sociohistorical transition from a period of modernity to one of postmodernity” (p.23). Hargreaves describes postmodernity as a social condition comprised of patterns of social, economic, political and cultural relations. Our world is changing rapidly with more global issues to be considered and more cooperation between nations necessary. It is with this in mind that that, we as a society, need to examine our educational system and devise a means of improving it for our educators and our children.

Future Studies

The stated limitations of this study are areas that need to be addressed in further research. The teacher participants of this study were all middle grade teachers. Their experiences and anxieties may vary from teachers of other grade levels. This was previously indicated by Walt whose wife and daughter both teach in lower grades. He shared how often new programs and procedures were introduced at their level of teaching and felt they were much more impacted by educational changes than he was at the middle school level. Elementary level teachers have voiced their concerns that their younger students are often expected to master skills or content that are beyond their intellectual or developmental maturity. They fear this may cause their students frustration and ultimately affect their motivation to learn. High school teachers are another category that was not represented in this study. They currently administer a test that could prohibit their students from graduating.

In addition, the teachers in this study taught either math or language arts. Further study should research how testing and standards affect teachers of other content areas. How do teachers of subjects that are not the prime focus of testing, for

example science or social studies, feel about having their class time reduced or the subject they teach regarded as less important? As indicated in this study, testing can impact different content areas in various ways and intensity.

The students who were taught by the teacher participants of this study were all members of regular classrooms as opposed to those students who have been identified as special education students. Further study is needed to determine how teachers of special needs students are impacted by mandated testing. The emotional lives and reactions of these teachers may also vary from those teachers studied. Studies should be conducted to determine how standardized tests affect not only the teachers and students but the impact they have on the curriculum and the development of IEP's for these students.

Since there is a plethora of educational programs being designed and marketed under the auspices of improving our children's education, it would be prudent to conduct research into their validity and effectiveness. How often are teachers or educational experts part of their design teams? Is the money being spent by schools districts on these programs being used to its best advantage for both teachers and students? Could the moneys being spent on these programs be used more wisely by school districts?

Although some studies have been conducted in regards to teachers' emotions, this is an area that needs further exploration. Researchers such as Hargreaves (1995) posit that teaching governed by increasing accountability and bureaucratic control can increase the level of guilt teachers' experience. This intensification of demands and controls can fill up the scheduled time in the classroom to such an extent that teachers

are left with no time for caring about their students and their welfare (Hargreaves, 1995). It interferes with their passion for teaching, with their goals and aspirations for being in the classroom in the first place. When levels of guilt are at an extreme, teachers can experience overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety which may lead to burnout, cynicism and exiting the teaching profession all together. Over the recent numbers of years we have lost too many teachers. "Burnout in academe is not at all uncommon" (Bandura, 1995, p. 134). Currently the teaching profession is the largest homogeneous occupational group that is being investigated in burnout research (Pines, 2002). This is not a situation which society should ignore but rather it should be taken into serious consideration when changes in educational policy are being made. Good teachers are not a commodity that is easily replaced.

Further studies into the differences regarding the quality of education being offered by private schools and that of public schools are also needed. Despite the claims of No Child Left Behind that one of its goals is to bring equality of education, many would argue that it has widened the gap between the classes. Rather than spending time trying to figure out how to improve the validity of a single test, we need to focus on providing all of our children an education that will serve them to become contributing adults in our society.

The business sector of our society recognizes the importance of education as the key player in getting the next generation ready to participate in this global society and this concern has certainly influenced changes and reforms in education. This is another area that needs to be researched to determine how business can contribute to the education of our children.

We also need to do more research into the current coping methods used by some teachers. Unfortunately, many teachers and students cope with the present situation in education by what Fried refers to as ‘playing the game of education.’ “The particular offense of playing the game of education lies in the disengagement of our intellect and our feelings from tasks that deserve to be taken seriously; tasks like writing, reading, thinking, planning, listening, researching, analyzing, performing, applying, evaluating” (Fried, 1995, p. 102). Playing the game becomes a necessary evil when what is considered important in education is making the grade, passing the test. We become satisfied with the limits this puts on education rather than expecting students to be able to think for themselves, to become lifelong learners with an intrinsic desire to learn. “We play the game because it is the only game most of us can afford under the conditions of compulsory education which is often under-funded, undermined and overwhelmed” (Fried, 1995, p. 103). This situation of unreasonable demands and constraints forces many in education to reduce teaching to survival (Hargreaves, 1994). Teachers and students strive to just get through the day with as little hassle and interruption as possible with any serious learning becoming the victim that is sacrificed. It makes it very difficult for teachers to be able to define and defend their worthwhile selves and preserve the passion they originally brought to their teaching career. It deprives the students of the opportunity to develop their own creativity and helps to form many negative attitudes in both teachers and students towards learning. Since this is not the ideal or desirable work situation for most teachers, many who are caught up in ‘the game’ develop a sense of guilt in their

teaching. Guilt experienced in moderate levels can have a positive impact on motivation and innovation (Hargreaves, 1995).

We also need to consider how to utilize the expertise and knowledge our teaching force possesses. If teachers are to have an active part in the development and implementation of educational reform, means of involving them have to be devised.

The education of our children may be the single most important task we have as a society. If our children are our future, we as a society have to make sure that they have the best opportunities for a full, rich education. Faced with global changes and technological advances we need to make sure our children are prepared for tomorrow. When considering the current issues and possible reforms of the future we have to address the needs of the students but also the teachers. They are at the forefront of education. They are the professionals who deal with the children on a daily basis and who are in the best position to address weaknesses and help in the development of our children's strength. Educators on all levels need to have input into changes and policies that deal with the academic issues. Drawing on local resources and educational experts should only make our educational decisions stronger.

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APPENDIX

Form 1. Demographic questionnaire used in first teachers' interviews

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____ DATE _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

TOTAL ENROLLMENT _____ %MINORITY _____

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ON FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES _____

EST. LEVEL OF PARENTS EDUCATION _____

FAMILY MEDIAN INCOME _____

ACADEMIC RANK OF SCHOOL _____

NUMBER OF STUDENTS YOU TEACH _____

SUBJECTS _____

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE _____

HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED _____

AGE RANGE (25-35) _____ (36-46) _____ (46+) _____

EMPHASIS OF TEST RESULTS AND HOW (OR IF) THEY ARE REPORTED

TO THE COMMUNITY (EXPLAIN) _____

Form 2. Questions for first set of teacher interviews

Questions for Teacher Interviews and how they relate to the research questions

Questions will be posed based on classroom observations in addition to those listed.

Research question #1

With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teacher report in teaching methods and curriculum? How are any changes associated with teachers' emotions?

How is curriculum developed for your class?

How do you decide what type of methods to use in your class?

How do you feel about the amount of autonomy you have in your class?

How often do emotions effect your academic decisions?

Describe your ideal teaching situation

Research question #2

With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in their interactions with students? How are any changes associated with teachers' emotions?

What kind of rapport do you feel you have with your students?

How would you describe the climate of your classroom on a daily basis?

Do you feel your discipline policy is consistent throughout the year at both testing/nontesting times? How are classroom conflicts addressed?

Research question #3

With the increased emphasis on high-stakes testing, what, if any, changes do teachers report in interactions with administrators, other teachers, and parents? How are any of these changes associated with teachers' emotions?

How would you describe the level of communication in your building among colleagues and with administration?

How is rapport established with parents? Climate of current rapport?

Do you feel comfortable communicating your feelings with colleagues and administrators?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Form 3. Focus for all classroom observations**FOCUS FOR OBSERVATIONS**

Classroom—physical arrangement

- Student desk formation
- Posters, slogans, pictures, instructional materials on walls
- Proximity of teacher's desk to students

Classroom—climate

- Amount of autonomy allowed students
- Sense of comfort, motivation, encouragement for students
- Student encouraged participation level to raise hands, respond when called on
- Freedom to move around room, go to restroom, use materials in room, collaborate with fellow students

Students—attitudes

- Positive/negative display towards materials, presentation, teacher, other students
- Curiosity, interest level, participation
- Amount of time on-task
- Response to teacher co-operative, belligerent, neutral, respectful

Teacher—attitude

- Engaged in positive, negative, neutral manner
- Displays a sense of being relaxed, confident, unsure, or harried
- Prepared for presentation
- Maintains a positive, negative, neutral attitude towards students
- Makes eye-contact, gestures, other body language conveying messages to students

- Employs a variety of instructional methods
- Responds to students' answers or work in a supportive/non supportive, neutral manner
- Manner encourages/discourages student full participation
- Teacher's personal attitude towards standardized tests implicitly/explicitly stated to students
- Reminds students (never, frequently, infrequently) about testing and possible content that will be on tests
- Interactions with students before/during/after class
- Any interactions with colleagues/administration before/during/after class
- How is humor used in the classroom?
- Attempts to reduce student anxiety

Form 4. Questions for second set of teacher interviews**Interview @ Lincoln**

1. You've gone to more open classrooms with co-teachers.
 - Has this affected your teaching?
 - Student learning?
 - Has this affected your relationships in any way with other teachers?

2. What emotions do you associate with your teaching?
 - Do these change over the semesters of the school year?
 - As the test approaches?
 - In what ways do you cope with your emotions associated with teaching?

3. Some teachers feel autonomy is important in the classroom is important whereas other do not. How do you define your autonomy in the classroom?
 - Do you feel you've modified any of your methods you typically use since our last interview?
 - If so, why?
 - If so, how do you feel about that?

4. Do you feel your interactions with students, colleagues or administrators have changed since our last interview?
 - If so, how?
 - If so, why?
 - How do you cope with the changes?
 - Some teachers tell me their interactions change as the test approaches. Is that true for you?

5. NCLB is due to be rewritten this year. How would you revise it?

6. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Form 5. Questions for second set of teacher interviews**Interview @ St. Ann's**

1. What emotions do you associate with your teaching?
 - Do they influence your interactions with your students?
 - Colleagues?
 - Do these change over the semesters of the school year?
 - In what ways do you cope with your emotions associated with teaching?

2. Do you have specific goals you'd like to reach in your teaching?
 - What in your current teaching situation will help you reach them?
 - Hinder them?

3. Since you don't have the pressures from high stakes testing, what pressures do you have in your daily teaching?
 - How do you cope with them?
 - How do they affect you?

4. NCLB is due to be rewritten this year. How would you revise it?

5. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Form 6. Questions for second set of teacher interviews**Interviews @ Central**

1. What emotions do you associate with your teaching?
 - How do they affect your interactions with your students?
 - Colleagues?
 - Do these change over the semesters of the school year?
 - In what ways do you cope with emotions associated with teaching?

2. NCLB is due to be rewritten this year. How would you revise it?

3. You meet on a regular basis with your team teachers.
 - Is this important to your teaching?
 - Advantages? Disadvantages?
 - Do you feel it impacts your relationships with other teachers?

5. Have there been any changes in your building since our last interview?
 - Your classroom?
 - If so, how do you feel about the changes?

6. Do you feel your interactions have changed with your students, colleagues, or administrators since our last interview?
 - If so, how?
 - If so, why?
 - Some teachers tell me their interactions change as the test approaches. Is this true for you?
 - How do you cope with any changes?

7. Is there anything you'd like to add

Form 7. Questions for Group Teacher Interview

In Fried's book *The Passionate Teacher* he defines a passionate teacher as one "having the quality of caring about ideas and values, fascination with the potential for growth in people...helping kids do more than going through the motions." He said most teachers start out this way but many lose it along the way.

Ques: What do think about that statement?

Do you agree?

Did you feel that way when you started?

Do you still or has that feeling changed?

Ques: How important is your relationship with your students?

Do you feel testing or other recent teaching demands impact the type of relationship you want to have with the students?

Ques: What brings you joy in your teaching?

Do you feel this has changed over the years in this profession?