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A Study of Teachers' Views of Death Education in the Mattoon, Illinois School District

Ann R. Miller

Eastern Illinois University

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A Study of Teachers' Views of Death Education

in the Mattoon, Illinois School District

(TITLE)

BY

Ann R. Miller

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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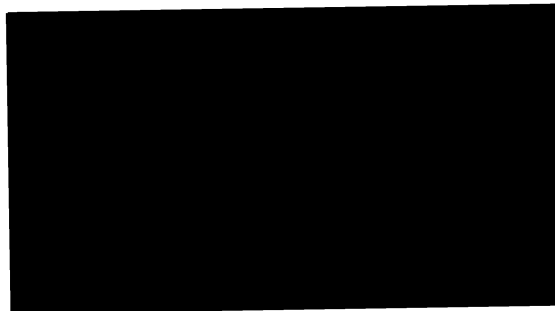
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A Study of Teachers' Views
of Death Education
in the Mattoon, Illinois School District
by Ann R. Miller
Eastern Illinois University

Abstract

Teaching children how to cope with death experiences so that they will not ever suffer from prolonged grief is the responsibility shared by all of society. Along with church leaders and parents, teachers, too, must help teach death education. The purpose of this paper was to explore how well equipped teachers are with adequate training and resources to teach death education in the schools. Also, to explore how concerned teachers are with this area of education.

This study was done through the use of a three-page questionnaire which was developed by the writer. The questionnaire was given to all teachers in the elementary, junior high and senior high schools in the Mattoon, Illinois school district. The results of the questionnaire were tabulated to show absolute frequencies and relative frequencies of each item. Pearson correlation coefficients were performed to show relationships in teachers' attitudes with their personal knowledge of death. Coefficients of determination were given where significant correlations were found.

The results of this study indicate that these teachers report that they feel inadequate in their training and resources for dealing with death education. However, teachers in this study said they were open and positive about teaching death education in the classroom.

The implications are that colleges could provide programs in training teachers to deal with death education. Schools could provide inservice and workshops to better train teachers to teach death education.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The topic of death is a subject we think about and know something about, but do not talk about openly. Society has tried to deny the existence of death by keeping the subject hidden in the closet. Skeletons in closets eventually are discovered and likewise death will be discovered by those whose curiosity may be peaked.

Although we may want to know more about death, it is not a popular topic of conversation at cocktail parties (unless expressed via humor). So we gain much of our knowledge through private conversations with our peers. Many times our peers do not know any more than we do or may, in fact, be misinformed, thus, giving us misconceptions.

More importantly this subject is highly personal. It is difficult to discuss death without committing one's own emotional feelings and values. Because it is such a sensitive area it is often avoided.

Unfortunately, subjects that cannot be dealt with openly and honestly result in a society of uneducated people in these specific areas. How can we help our young people deal with death and dying situations if we adults are not equipped to handle them?

As a guidance counselor in a junior high school the writer is astonished at the number of students who have experienced a significant loss through death. The writer is even more appalled at how some families have dealt with (or not dealt with) grieving children. When there is a death in the family many people feel it is the adults who suffer the greatest. There is somehow the misbelief that children suffer less because they know less about the real significance of death. Working with children everyday as the writer does, one could not be farther from the truth. Children, in fact, may at times grieve even more than their parents if the child has not adequately worked through this grieving process.

By the time the students attend the junior high school they are twelve years old. Numerous children are suffering from guilt, regret, fear or other emotional grief reactions resulting from a death of a loved one that happened years earlier. Why should these children suffer from poor mental health so long? Why has no one helped these children regain a normal life after their loss?

Who is responsible for helping our children cope with death? Death is a societal problem. If people are left to grieve for extended periods of time with no professional assistance, these people may develop poor mental health. Mental health is likened to physical health in that it must be nourished in order to grow properly. If people suffering from poor mental health are not helped to regain their normal mental health, then these people may not be productive to our society.

Our society has left the education of the delicate subject of death and dying to be handled by parents, religious leaders and educators. Some will argue that educators should not be responsible for dealing with such personal matters. They may believe that this final stage of life should be dealt with only in the home or in the church. Some parents do not have adequate knowledge with helping their children cope with a death experience, while other parents may not be capable of helping their children because they themselves have not yet fully worked through their own grief. Some children do not have the support of a religious advisor to teach them and help them adjust. In these cases, who is left to help? Parents have always turned to the schools for support and help in teaching their children. The writer does not believe we have the right to turn our backs just because the subject is a little sensitive. Educators, while not totally responsible for the death education of our children, share some responsibility with the rest of society to help maintain the mental health of our children.

Certainly counselors and social workers are trained to deal with grieving children and assisting their families. In the school district in this study, they have one school social worker and no

elementary school counselors. There are six hundred students at the junior high school and only one counselor. As one can see it is impossible to provide adequate services to all these children without the assistance of the classroom teachers.

This paper has attempted to examine whether teachers are equipped with adequate resources or the knowledge to properly handle educating our children to cope with a death situation. The writer, also, wishes to show teachers' attitude about this subject and find their concern for this subject. This investigation was carried out through the use of a survey done with the teachers in one school district.

In doing this study the writer will become aware of the needs of our professional educators. The writer feels as a counselor of a school system it is her responsibility to provide whatever information, resources or assistance she can to helping the teachers meet their needs and the needs of the students. Working together educators can better help our children develop a more positive mental health. Thus, creating a more healthy, happy and prosperous society.

Background Information

Death is not a new subject that has just recently been discovered. It is part of the process of living. Life and death have existed since the beginning of time. Yet our general knowledge of death seems to be less now than it was one hundred years ago.

Children today are more separated from death experiences than their ancestors of yesterday. The reason for this is the long-distance between families and the absence of extended families. Children do not have the chance to watch their grandparents' aging process and to develop close relationships with their families.

Another reason children are separated from death is that death has been taken out of the homes. In the 1800's when a person died

it was usually in the privacy of their own home with their family and close friends standing by. Now people are taken away to hospitals or health care homes to spend their dying days. Staying in places where small children are not allowed (Gordon-Klass, 1979).

Funeral visitations and services used to be held in the family home. Members of the family would take turns sitting with the body in the parlor until the time of burial. Family members would dress and clean the body in preparation for the final celebration. Children were all part of these traditional rituals. Today the body is quickly removed to a funeral home where others see to the preparations. The family now takes the place as the onlookers rather than the participants. While modern hospitals and funeral homes certainly provide needed services and are able to make compliances with today's laws, they take away a learning and sharing experience that once helped a family work through their grief (Gordon-Klass, 1979).

Sara Bennett Stein writes "1 out of every 20 children will face death of a parent and almost every child will face death of a pet, relative, neighbor, or friend". Death has not diminished, just our involvement with it has (Ordal, 1980).

We downplay death to protect ourselves and others. We do not use the word "dead" in our society because we cannot handle it. We think it is too painful to say "Uncle Harry is dead." Instead, we use euphemisms such as saying "Uncle Harry passed away" or "has gone to his final resting place." On legal documents we do not put that our father is "dead," we state that he is "deceased." Even medical doctors avoid talking of the dead by saying the patient "expired." We use euphemisms to soften the blow and protect ourselves from the harsh reality and finality that death signifies.

Euphemisms do not give accurate descriptions and result in misconceptions and fears. Telling a child that the dead person has "gone to sleep forever" is making a false statement and may create a fear in the child that will disrupt his own sleep patterns (Grollman, 1983).

We discuss death through humor and by playing language games. "He is happier in heaven" makes survivors feel guilty because they could not provide the happiness that the dead person needed. "God only takes those that are good." So what are we doing here? Humor and games are types of coping mechanisms like denial that adults use to cope with death (Grollman, 1983).

Very young children think that death is reversible. That death is really not the end. Children, as they grow older, believe that death happens but not to them. Most adults do not come to the realization that they, too, will die (Grollman, 1983). Part of this is denial on our parts to face our own mortality. The uncertainty and the fears we have leave us with unpleasant thoughts. Adults who have been able to come to terms with their own death are able to communicate about death in a positive and healthy discussion.

Teachers and parents should not wait for a certain age to discuss death. The time for teaching about death will present itself in it's own way as when a little boy's dog dies or when a child hears a news broadcast on the radio of an airplane crash or when a child finds a dead bird on the sidewalk or sees someone die on a television show. Those are the times to take advantage of the opportunity to teach about death and how to cope with it. Unfortunately, because thinking of death is unpleasant, people often turn away to happier thoughts.

The movie "Old Yeller" is a very popular film shown in literature classes. Tears come easily to our eyes when Old Yeller dies. The distressed feelings in the students' hearts do not always go away when the lights are flashed back on. Yet teachers often ignore those tears and sad faces to get on with their literature lesson. When this happens those teachers are really not paying attention to the needs of their students at that moment.

We routinely shelter children from death and dying thinking we are protecting them from harm. Maybe we are wanting to protect

ourselves as well. However, we do them a greater disservice by depriving them of the experience (Kubler-Ross, 1975).

It is no wonder given the confusion of the society in which we live, that our confusion about death is passed on to our children. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross states that making death and dying a taboo subject and keeping children away from people who are dying or who have died may be creating a fear that need not be there (Kubler-Ross, 1975).

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross goes on to state that "people are born with only two natural fears - one is of falling and the other is of loud noises." Fear of death is learned. Our society has taught our children and adults to fear death. One way we learn to fear death is through various religious practices (Kubler-Ross, 1981). One study done on a college campus showed that religious attitudes often frightened them and disturbed them as children rather than consoled them. Yet parents, teachers, and others leave the educating of death to the religious leaders (Glicken, 1978). One should take the child's normal curiosity as an opportunity to teach about death. The child's reaction to death must be handled with warmth and understanding.

Also, "this same study discovered that children who were taught a particularly graphic view of hell as a place they might go if they misbehaved often suffered neurotic states of anxiety and a greater fear of death as adults." Some children in this study viewed death as a form of punishment or wrong doing (Glicken, 1978). We need to teach children that death results from physical, not psychological causes.

The emotional responses children have with the death of a loved one are varied. Initially accompanying the shock and disbelief is a sense of conclusion and an inability to function with the same speed and accuracy as normal. This may be followed by emotions of anger, fear, guilt, shame, despair, futility and loss of self-esteem. Hunt points out in her study that there is

often a reduction in one's energy level, problems with feeling no longer in control, and the inability to make emotional attachments with others (Hunt, 1984). People have a great need to talk of the dead one - especially recalling memories. This is in essence trying to retrieve what is now lost and gone forever. This is known as separation anxiety and a fear of one's own survival and unknown future (Hunt, 1984). This concern is especially great in children and adolescents. When a parent dies the child may fear what will happen next or fear the loss of the surviving parent. A decline in grades, changes in behavior at school or at home, eating or sleeping habits, or the child's personal relationships are some manifestations of the emotional reactions.

Childhood bereavement is a serious personal crisis that can have serious consequences for later adult life. However, there is a "normalizing" effect that is evident when comparing with similar age children who have experienced divorce during the same period. Contrasting homes divided by divorce and homes divided by death show that those of death are still able to meet the needs of the children and remain more cohesive than those divided by divorce. Children of both emotional distresses indicate more medical difficulties as well as emotional than those children not having these experiences (Menig-Peterson, 1978).

The bereaved child often feels alone and isolated among peers and at school. Other children do not know how to handle it either, so they avoid talking to him about it. Likewise, some teachers may not know how to discuss the topic of death and avoid the subject as well.

When discussing death with a child, parents, teachers, or counselors should listen to what he says. Ask if you can help and follow through on what you are told.

In order for parents, teacher, and counselors to help children with their grief, it is important to know at what maturation

level and cognitive ability level the child is functioning. A first grade teacher must understand that a six year old is more readily to discuss death in a violent and emotional, threatening way. They may threaten to "blow you up" in a moment of anger.

Early elementary teachers need to be aware that children ages five to nine often personify death. They talk of the "boogieman" or "ghosts". A second grader may want to talk of the details of death. They are concerned with coffins, graves and funerals.

A nine or ten year old is quite capable of understanding the full intensity of death. These children are ready to discuss death as an adult would.

Children age four to twelve use "nonverbal symbolic language" best when explaining death. Play therapy using dolls, pictures, drawings, teddy bears, et cetera. Adolescents and adults use "symbolic verbal language" (Menig-Peterson, 1978 and Dehisle, 1981).

Kubler-Ross believes that to discuss dying with those people we love and cherish is the only natural thing we should do. "Yet to break the chains around us that our society has created in dealing with death is an awesome responsibility. To accept this responsibility will help us develop a sense of 'inner and outer peace' with ourselves" (Kubler-Ross, 1981). Why wait until our final days to achieve this? How rich our world would be if we could teach our children to understand, communicate their feelings, and to accept death as another stage of life.

Chapter 2

Method

Subjects

Participants in this study were teachers in the Mattoon Community Unit #2 school district in Mattoon, Illinois and St. Mary's parochial school in Mattoon, Illinois. All certified teachers teaching grades K through 12 were asked to participate. Also, participants included teachers in special areas such as learning disabilities, educably mentally handicapped, speech, music and band classes as well as physical education classes. Social workers, counselors, school psychologists, teachers at the Armstrong center for trainably mentally handicapped, students and teachers at the Treatment and Learning center for behavior disorder students were not included in this survey. These groups were not included in this survey because all of those persons have received special training to help children deal with crisis situations. The writer felt that having them participate would give biased results. Permission to conduct this survey among the teachers was given by the assistant superintendent of schools in Mattoon.

Teachers were not paid to participate in this survey. They volunteered to participate after being told that the purpose of the questionnaire was to help write this thesis concerning the relationship between teachers' views of death and teachers' views of death education in the classroom. A total of two hundred forty - five (245) teachers were asked to participate in this survey. One hundred forty six (146) chose to participate and complete the questionnaire. A total of thirty-five (35) participants were male and one hundre eleven (111) participants were female. The reason for this discrepancy is that a majority of teachers are female in the Mattoon schools.

The age level of the participants varied. A total of fifty-eight (58) participants were between the ages of thirty-one and forty (31-40); forty-six (46) participants were between the ages of forty-one and fifty (41-50); and thirty (30) participants were over fifty (50). Only twelve (12) participants were under thirty (30).

Instruments

A three-page questionnaire developed by the writer was given to all teachers who participated in this survey (see Appendix for sample of the questionnaire). The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part A deal with demographic information that was used to obtain general background information about the participants. Questions included age, sex, grade level taught and religious preference of the participant. Also, participants' experiences with having had a significant loss through death. A total of twelve items were included.

Part B of the questionnaire dealt with subjective information about the educator's personal views of death. Participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with various concerns relating to death. A total of twenty-three items were included in this section of the questionnaire. These were compiled by the writer based on specific topics concerning death that the writer had acquired knowledge of in her research.

Part C of the questionnaire dealt with subjective information about the teacher's views of death as educators. Questions here were concerned with how comfortable teachers are with teaching their students about death. Information was obtained as to whether the teacher feels he/she has ample resources to aid his/her teaching of death.

Procedure

The questionnaire was passed out to each teacher through their school mailboxes. A cover letter explained the purpose of the questionnaire and how the results would be used. (see Appendix for a copy of the cover letter). Upon completion of the questionnaire teachers sent the questionnaires back to me. The questionnaires were then taken to the computer department in the Student Services building at Eastern Illinois University where the results were tabulated. Every response by every participant is included in the results in this paper.

Chapter 3

Results

The questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the month of May. Sixty per cent (60%) of the people who were asked to complete the survey did so. Being an educator myself, the writer realizes that by the month of May teachers are experiencing burnout and are anxious for summer vacation. More paperwork is not always welcome. Yet sixty per cent (60%) found the time to participate in this survey.

The results of the questionnaire were tabulated in two ways. First, each item in the questionnaire was categorized in absolute frequency and relative frequency of the total responses from the total number of questionnaires.

Secondly, Pearson correlation coefficients were done correlating four items in Part A with each item in Part B and each item in Part C. As there were a great many equations doing the frequencies and the correlations the writer chose to respond to the data which show specific information that will either support or negate the hypothesis of this paper. A coefficient of determination will be given for each correlation that is discussed in this paper. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in tabulating these results.

Frequencies

The frequencies for sex and age categories have been stated previously. The frequency for grade level was scattered showing that responders participated from all grade levels (Table 1).

In the category of religious preference, seventy-five point three per cent (75.3%) of the responders said they were protestant showing an absolute frequency of one hundred ten (110) and twenty-seven (27) (eighteen point five per cent, 18.5%) were Catholic. It was noted that while one point four per cent (1.4%) said they were Moslem, Buddhist or other religious persuasion, no responders

said they were of the Jewish faith. Only seven (7) people (four) point eight per cent (4.8%) left this item unanswered. Thus, ninety-five point two per cent (95.2%) of the people responded they had a religious affiliation (Table 2).

TABLE 1. -- Frequency of Grade Level

What grade level do you teach? A) K-3 B) 4-6 C) 7-8 D) 9-12

Grade Level	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
K-3	43	29.5
4-6	20	13.7
7-8	35	24.0
9-12	44	30.1
Blank	4	2.7
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 2. -- Frequency of Religious Background

What is your religious background? A) Jewish B) Protestant
C) Roman Catholic D) Other than above (Moslem, Buddhist, etc.)
E) None

Religion	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Jewish	0	0
Protestant	110	75.3
Roman Catholic	27	18.5
Other	2	1.4
None	0	0
Blank	7	4.8
Total	146	100.0

Participants not only stated that they had a religious affiliation, but that they attended church or religious services. sixty-five (65) people (forty-four point five per cent, 44.5%) stated they rarely missed services, thirty two (32) people (twenty-one point nine per cent, 21.9%) stated they frequently attended while still nineteen (19) people (thirteen per cent, 13%) stated they attended occasionally. Only twenty-three (23) people (fifteen point eight per cent, 15.8%) stated they seldom or never attended religious services. The non-responders may not have responded this way, however (Table 3).

TABLE 3. -- Frequency of Church Attendance

How often do you attend a church or religious service?

- A) rarely miss B) frequently C) occasionally
D) seldom E) never

Church Attendance	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Rarely miss	65	44.5
Frequently	32	21.9
Occasionally	19	13.0
Seldom	20	13.7
Never	3	2.1
Blank	7	4.8
Total	146	100.0

One note of interest in this questionnaire was that most people participating in this survey said they had a close significant person in their life die. An absolute frequency of one hundred forty (140) with a total percent of ninety-five point nine (95.9%) teachers having experienced the death of someone close to them. Only six (6) people which was four point 1 per cent (4.1%) had not experienced a close loss due to death (Table 4).

TABLE 4. -- Frequency of Having Had a Close Significant Person Die

Have you ever had a close significant person in your life die?

A) yes B) no

Having Had Person Die	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Yes	140	95.9
No	6	4.1
Total	146	100.0

The first death experience that the teachers stated they had were primarily that of their parents or grandparents. An absolute frequency of sixty-one (61) people (forty-one point eight per cent, 41.8%) had lost their parents while forty-nine (49) people (thirty-three point six per cent, 33.6%) people had lost a grandparent. Five (5) people (three point four per cent, 3.4%) people lost a sibling, seven (7) people (four point eight per cent, 4.8%) had lost a close friend and three (3) people (two point one per cent, 2.1%) had lost a child (Table 5).

TABLE 5. -- Frequency of Relationship of Dead Person to the Responder

Who was the first close significant person to you who died?

A) parent B) sibling C) grandparent D) close friend
E) child

Relationship of Dead Person	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Parent	61	41.8
Sibling	5	3.4
Grandparent	49	33.6
Close Friend	7	4.8
Child	3	2.1
Blank	21	14.4
Total	146	100.0

Another fact obtained from this survey was that almost half of the participants said they were twenty-one or older when they had their first experience with the death of a close friend or relative. An absolute frequency of sixty-nine (69) people (forty-seven point three per cent, 47.3%) were twenty-one or older while the next highest age group was six to ten years old with an absolute frequency of only nineteen (19) people (thirteen per cent, 13.0%) (Table 6).

TABLE 6. -- Frequency of Age of Responder at Their First Death Experience

How old were you when you had this first death experience?

- A) 1-5 B) 6-10 C) 11-14 D) 15-18 E) 19-21
F) older

Age at First Death Experience	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
1-5	6	4.1
6-10	19	13.0
11-14	14	9.6
15-18	11	7.5
19-21	14	9.6
Older	69	47.3
Blank	13	8.9
Total	146	100.0

The fact that so many teachers here had already experienced death and the feelings of grief may help them to understand the need for helping others work through their grief. They may be more in tune to the needs of their students during this time than those teachers that have not ever grieved over the death of a

loved one before. Also, as many of these teachers experienced death at a relatively young age may help them see the need to be prepared for this crisis situation.

The last questions in Part A dealt with the cause of death of the responder's loved one. Only eight (8) teachers said they had lost someone as a result of suicide and seven (7) teachers said they had lost someone as a result of murder. Some participants stated they had lost someone through accidental death showing an absolute frequency of forty-one (41) people (twenty-eight point one per cent, 28.1%). Most teachers who had had someone close to them die stated that they had lost them through a death due to natural causes. This showing an absolute frequency of one hundred thirty-nine (139) people (ninety-five point two per cent, 95.2%).

Part B of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher's personal views of death education. Teachers stated that they felt they understand the significance of death and it's societal practices. An absolute frequency of sixty (60) people (forty-one point one per cent, 41.1%) responded that they strongly agreed that they understand the significance of death and it's societal practices while sixty-three (63) people (forty-three point two per cent, 43.2%) responded that they agreed.

Although these teachers stated they felt they understand death, they were not as certain that all their questions about death had been answered. An absolute frequency of forty (40) people (twenty-seven point four per cent, 27.4%) stated that they disagreed that all their questions had been answered and thirty-nine (39) people (twenty-six point seven per cent, 26.7%) were uncertain. Thirty six (36) people (twenty-four point seven per cent, 24.7%) agreed to this statement. The remaining thirty-one (31) participants were distributed among the two extremes of the scale being strongly agree or strongly disagree.

Most teachers stated they felt comfortable with talking to their families about someone who had died and about death in general.

Statistics of teachers feeling encouraged by family to discuss someone's death showed an absolute frequency of one hundred twelve (112) people (seventy-six point seven per cent, 76.7%). (Table 7). Teachers who felt comfortable with discussing death in general with their family were one hundred eight (108) in absolute frequency and seventy-three per cent (73%). One hundred thirteen (113) of the teachers (seventy-seven point four per cent, 77.4%) felt comfortable in crying with grief while in the same room as their family.

TABLE 7. -- Frequency of Teachers Feeling Comfortable in Talking With Their Families About Someone Who Has Died

I feel encouraged by my family to talk about someone who has died. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Teachers Feeling Comfortable with Discussing Someone's Death with Their Family	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	62	42.5
Agree	50	34.2
Uncertain of No Opinion	17	11.6
Disagree	15	10.3
Strongly Disagree	1	.7
Blank	1	.7
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 8. -- Frequency of Teachers Feeling Comfortable in Talking
With Their Families About Death In General

I feel comfortable in talking with my family about death in general. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Teachers Feeling Comfortable with Discussing Death with Their Family	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	50	32.4
Agree	58	39.7
Uncertain of No Opinion	16	11.0
Disagree	19	13.0
Strongly Disagree	3	2.1
Total	146	100.0

The results of this questionnaire indicate that teachers stated they believe they learned about death from religious leaders and parents. Only four (4) people felt they had obtained their education in death by teachers. An absolute frequency of one hundred eight (108) people (seventy four per cent, 74.0%) teachers said they learned of death through religion. Eighty-seven (87) people (sixty-six point four per cent, 66.4%) stated they felt their parents had contributed to their education. On hundred twenty-seven (127) people (eighty-seven per cent, 87.0%) disagreed that teachers had given them any instruction in the area of death education. The numbers of religious leaders and parents overlap here. This may indicate teachers feel their education of death was a combination of the two groups of leaders.

Teachers in this group, also, reported that they felt children should participate in the societal and religious practices of death. An absolute frequency of one hundred thirty-one (131) of the people (eighty-nine point seven per cent, 89.7%) surveyed reported that children should be allowed to attend the funeral of someone they love. In addition, an absolute frequency of one hundred twenty-seven (127) teachers (eighty-seven per cent, 87.0%) said children should be allowed to attend a funeral visitation as well.

The participant's view of death as positive or negative showed mixed confusion. In responding to their viewing of death as dark, ugly and scary fifty-four (54) people (thirty-seven per cent, 37.0%) marked strongly disagree while twenty-five (25) people (seventeen point one per cent, 17.1%) marked uncertain. The remaining sixteen participants stated they agreed with this view. In responding to their viewing of death as happy, fulfilling and peaceful, fifty-four (54) people (thirty-seven per cent, 37.0%) stated they were uncertain that this is how they viewed death. Thirty-three (33) participants (twenty-two point six, 22.6%) reported that they agreed with this statement while twenty (20) participants (thirteen point seven per cent, 13.7%) strongly agreed. Still twenty-seven (27) participants (eighteen point five per cent, 18.5%) said they did not view death as happy or peaceful and the remaining ten (10) people (six point eight per cent, 6.8%) said they strongly disagreed. Thus, we can see that the respondents in this study, for the most part, see death in a positive way. However, some uncertainties in their minds still prevail (Tables 9 & 10).

Teachers in this study said they take an active part in visiting cemeteries, hospitals, nursing homes, et cetera. The numbers of people having visited a cemetery where someone they care about is buried showed an absolute frequency of one hundred thirty-one (131) which was eighty-nine point seven per cent (89.7%). The numbers of teachers who visit old people in hospitals, nursing homes, et cetera showed an absolute frequency of one hundred twenty (120) which is eighty-two point two per cent (82.2%).

TABLE 9. -- Frequency of Unpleasant Views of Death

I think of death as dark, ugly and scary. A) Strongly Agree
 B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree
 E) Strongly Disagree

Viewing Death As Unpleasant	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	6	4.1
Agree	10	6.8
Uncertain or No Opinion	25	17.1
Disagree	54	37.0
Strongly Disagree	49	33.6
Blank	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 10. -- Frequency of Pleasant Views of Death

I think of death as happy, fulfilling and peaceful.
 A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion
 D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Viewing Death as Pleasant	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	20	13.7
Agree	33	22.6
Uncertain or No Opinion	54	37.0
Disagree	27	18.5
Strongly Disagree	10	6.8
Blank	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Although most teachers completing the survey reported they did not believe they were responsible for someone's death, a few teachers did. With an absolute frequency of eleven (11) people (seven point six per cent, 7.6%) marking agreement to this statement, another five (5) respondents (three point four per cent, 3.4%) said they were uncertain as to whether they were responsible for someone else's dying.

Teachers, also, say that they do not believe that anyone in their family had ever received grief counseling. With an absolute frequency of one hundred (100) people, (sixty-eight point five per cent, 68.5%) stated this to be the case. Another thirty (30) people (twenty point five per cent, 20.5%) were uncertain.

Again, most teachers marked disagreement to the statement that they often have nightmares about death. An absolute frequency of one hundred twenty (120) responders (eighty-two point two per cent, 82.2%) stated they do not have this problem.

Responders to the survey showed mixed feelings concerning their fear of dying. Even though teachers in this study said they were comfortable with talking about death, the thought of their own death left them either disturbed or uncertain (Table 11).

TABLE 11. -- Frequency of Fear of Death

I am afraid of dying. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree
C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Afraid of Death	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	13	8.9
Agree	23	15.8
Uncertain or No Opinion	39	26.7
Disagree	44	30.1
Strongly Disagree	26	17.8
Blank	1	.7
Total	146	100.0

While some responders stated that they often think about death, these do not appear to be suicidal wishes. Thirty-three (33) people (twenty-two point six per cent, 22.6%) said that they think about death while twenty-four (24) people (sixteen point four per cent, 16.4%) were uncertain. Eighty-eight (88) people (sixty point three per cent, 60.3%) stated they did not think of death often. An absolute frequency of one hundred twenty-four (124) people (eighty-four point nine per cent, 84.9%) stated that they do not often wish they could die.

An absolute frequency of one hundred thirty-five (135) teachers (ninety-two point five per cent, 92.5%) stated that they had not ever attempted suicide. Three (3) people marked uncertain or no opinion. Four (4) responders (two point seven per cent, 2.7%) marked agreed that they had attempted suicide and one (1) strongly agreed.

More people participating in this study reported that they did not know of anyone who had attempted suicide than those people who had. An absolute frequency of seventy-seven (77) people (fifty-two point eight per cent, 52.8%) said that they did not know of another person's suicide attempt while fifty-nine (59) people in this study (thirty-one point four per cent, 31.4%) said they did know someone. An absolute frequency of ninety-nine (99) responders (sixty-seven point eight per cent, 67.8%) said they did not worry that someone they know might kill themselves. Fifteen (15) people (ten point three per cent, 10.3%) stated uncertain or had no opinion. The remaining thirty-two (32) people (twenty-one point nine, 21.9%) stated they were concerned with the fact that someone they know might try to kill themselves.

Part C of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher's view of death in education and the role they play as educators. Teachers in this study reported to have mixed feelings about teaching death education. Most teachers reported they had never had to teach a unit on death due to the death of one of their students. An absolute

frequency of seventy-five (75) responders (fifty-one point one per cent, 51.1%) stated that they felt comfortable with teaching about death in the classroom. Forty-two (42) responders (twenty-eight point eight per cent, 28.8%) were uncertain or had no opinion on the statement. Yet another twenty-four (24) responders (sixteen point five per cent, 16.5%) stated they felt uncomfortable with the subject of death in the classroom. An absolute frequency of seventy-seven (77) responders (eighty point two per cent, 80.2%) stated that they have not ever had to teach about death due to the loss of a student in the classroom. Eleven (11) responders were uncertain and twelve (12) responders (eight point three per cent, 8.3%) stated that they did lose a student through death and taught death education to the surviving students (Tables 12 and 13).

TABLE 12. -- Frequency of Feeling Comfortable with Teaching About Death in the Classroom

I feel comfortable with teaching a unit about death to my students. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Comfort in Teaching Death Unit	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	24	16.4
Agree	51	34.9
Uncertain or No Opinion	42	28.8
Disagree	9	6.2
Strongly Disagree	15	10.3
Blank	5	3.4
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 13. -- Frequency of Teaching a Unit on Death Due To The Death of a Student

I have had to teach a death unit due to the death of one of my students in the classroom or school.

- A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No Opinion
D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Teaching Death Due to a Student's Dying	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	3	2.1
Agree	9	6.2
Uncertain or No Opinion	11	7.5
Disagree	43	29.5
Strongly Disagree	74	50.7
Marked Incorrectly	1	.7
Blank	5	3.4
Total	146	100.0

As stated earlier, teachers in this study reported that they learned of death themselves from religious leaders and parents. Only four (4) people from this sample group reported they had received any death education from schools. In Part C the writer asked teachers to state who they felt was responsible for the death education of children. While most teachers stated it was the responsibility of religious leaders and parents, they did not totally eliminate themselves from the idea of death educators. An absolute frequency of forty (40) teachers (twenty-seven point four per cent, 27.4%) said they agreed it was the school's responsibility to help children learn to cope with death experiences. Another fifty-one (51) responders (thirty-four point nine per cent, 34.9%) said they did not feel the school was responsible. An absolute frequency of one

hundred twenty-six (126) responders (eighty-six point three per cent, 86.3%) said they felt the parents' should be responsible and one hundred eleven (111) responders (eighty-two point nine per cent, 82.9%) said they felt it should be the church's responsibility to teach death education to the children (Table 14, 15, and 16).

TABLE 14. -- Frequency of Teachers' Reporting That Teachers Should Be Responsible for Childrens' Death Education

I feel it is the school's responsibility to help children learn to cope with death experiences. A) Strongly Agree
B) Agree C) Uncertain or No Opinion D) Disagree
E) Strongly Disagree

Schools Are Responsible For Death Education	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	5	3.4
Agree	35	24.0
Uncertain of No Opinion	51	34.9
Disagree	21	14.4
Strongly Disagree	30	20.5
Blank	4	2.7
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 15. -- Frequency of Teachers' Reporting That Parents Should Be Responsible for Childrens' Death Education

I feel it is mostly the parents' responsibility to teach the children about death experiences. A) Strongly Agree
B) Agree C) Uncertain or No Opinion D) Disagree
E) Strongly Disagree

Parents Are Responsible For Death Education	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	61	41.8
Agree	65	44.5
Uncertain or No Opinion	12	8.2
Disagree	6	4.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Blank	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

TABLE 15. -- Frequency of Teacher's Reporting That Churches Should Be Responsible for Childrens' Death Education

I feel it is the church's responsibility to teach the children about death experiences. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No Opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Agree

Churches Are Responsible For Death Education	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	43	29.5
Agree	78	53.4
Uncertain or No Opinion	18	12.3
Disagree	6	4.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Blank	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Although teachers in this study report they may feel comfortable in teaching about death to their students they, also, report they feel less than adequate in their ability and training to do so. In responding to the statement concerning feeling adequate in their

ability and training to teach death education, fifty-nine (59) responders (forty per cent, 40.0%) responded that they did not feel adequate. Forty-six (46) responders (thirty-one point five per cent, 31.5%) said they were not sure. Forty (40) responders (twenty-seven point four per cent, 27.4%) said they felt they would have the ability to teach death education to children. One hundred twenty-three (123) teachers (eighty-four point two per cent, 84.2%) in this study stated that they had not received specific training in college education to prepare them as educators to help a child who may be grieving due to a death experience (Table 16).

TABLE 16. -- Frequency of Teachers Reporting Feeling Adequate
In Their Training To Teach a Unit on Death Education
I feel adequate in my ability and training to teach a unit
about death. A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain
or No opinion D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

Feeling Adequate In Training of Death Education	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	18	12.3
Agree	22	15.1
Uncertain or No Opinion	46	31.5
Disagree	35	24.0
Strongly Disagree	24	16.4
Blank	1	.7
Total	146	100.0

Teachers reported that they not only felt inadequate for the most part in their training and college education in the field of death education, the teachers in this study reported they did not feel they have the resources to help them teach. An absolute frequency of eighty-seven (87) responders (fifty-nine point six per cent, 59.6%)

said they felt they did not have ample access to educational materials in this particular school district to teach a unit on death. An additional forty-four (44) teachers (twenty-two point six per cent, 22.6%) said they were uncertain (Table 17).

TABLE 17. -- Frequency of Teachers Reporting Access To Educational Materials for Teaching a Death Unit

I feel I have ample access to educational materials in this district to teach a unit on death. A) Strongly Agree
B) Agree C) Uncertain or No opinion D) Disagree
E) Strongly Disagree

Feeling Adequate In Educational Materials For Death Education	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Per cent)
Strongly Agree	2	1.4
Agree	10	6.8
Uncertain or No Opinion	44	30.1
Disagree	33	22.6
Strongly Disagree	54	37.0
Marked Incorrectly	1	.7
Blank	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Teachers in this study reported they did not feel children needed to be taught death education until a death experience occurred. One hundred twenty-five (125) responders (eighty-five point six per cent, 85.6%) said they agreed with this statement. However, at the time of the death experience the teachers said they did not feel children should be protected. An absolute frequency of one hundred thirty (130) teachers (eighty-nine point one per cent, 89.1%) said they felt children should be allowed to watch others grieve.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

The second group of statistical analyses were made using the Pearson correlation coefficients. This test was used to study any significant correlations between the ordinal items in Part A with each item in Parts B and C of the survey. A complete table of the results of each equation can be found in the Appendix. As one can see by studying the table, many correlations were found to be significant at the .01 level. Due to this large amount of significance, the writer chose to discuss the correlations showing the most significance as well as a few other observations. Also, the coefficient of determination will be given for each significant correlation showing the amount of information shared by the two factors.

Age was an important factor in these correlations. The age factor showed moderate correlations among the teacher's personal views of death. While some significant correlations were noticed between the age of the responder and his/her statements of their views of death education in the schools, they were not as great a correlation as the teacher's statement of their personal views.

1. There is a significant correlation between the age of the responder and the responder's reporting feeling comfortable in talking with their family about death in general. $P=.420$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.176$.

2. There is a significant correlation between the age of the responder and their feeling comfortable in crying with grief while in the same room as their family. $P=.447$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.199$.

3. There is a significant correlation between the age of the responder and the responder's reporting their feeling of having learned about death from their teachers. $P=.430$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.184$

4. There is a significant correlation between the age of the responder and the responder's reporting their view of death

as happy and peaceful. $P=.460$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$;
 $r^2=.211$

5. There is a significant correlation between the age of the responder and the responder's reporting that someone in their family has received counseling due to a death or dying experience. $P=.457$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2= .208$

An assumption one might make after looking at these correlations is that teachers share certain views about death education in the schools no matter what their age. However, on a more personal level, older age seems to bring more knowledge and experience of death. According to the way the participants responded, there appears to be a definite relationship between the difference in age of the teacher and the individual teacher's view of death in their own life.

The particular grade level that the teacher taught appears to have had some definite correlations by the responses from the teachers on their personal views of death. Perhaps these relationships are because of the different cognitive ability levels in the various grades. As children's ability level grow so might the attitude of the teacher towards discussing death with their students. These following observations are worth noting because one might not think of each of the two factors having any relationship at all.

1. There is a significant correlation between grade level the teacher taught and the teacher's reporting their feeling of having learned about death from their church. $P=.474$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.224$

2. There is a significant correlation between grade level the teacher taught and the teacher's reporting their view of death as happy and peaceful. $P=.468$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$;
 $r^2=.219$

3. There is a significant correlation between grade level the teacher taught and the teacher's reporting of their own wish to die. $P=.493$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.243$.

4. There is a significant correlation between grade level the teacher taught and the teacher's reporting their concern that someone they know might try to kill themselves. $P=.421$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.177$

Attendance of religious services showed moderate correlations with some of the factors concerning the responders personal views of death. Although significant correlations were made between the teacher's church attendance and attitudes toward death education in school, none showed a very dependable relationship.

1. There is a significant correlation between the teacher's reporting of their church attendance and the teacher's stating their belief that children should be allowed to attend the funeral visitation of someone they love. $P=.466$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.217$

2. There is a significant correlation between the teacher's reporting of their church attendance and the teacher's stating they visit people in hospitals, nursing homes, or the home of someone who is old. $P=.395$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.140$

3. There is a significant correlation between the teacher's reporting of their church attendance and the teacher's stating of having nightmares about someone dying. $P=.457$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.208$

4. There is a significant correlation between the teacher's reporting of their church attendance and the teacher's stating they know another person who has tried to commit suicide. $P=.468$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.219$

5. There is a significant correlation between the teacher's reporting of their church attendance and teacher's stating of their fear that someone they know might try to kill themselves. $P=.444$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.197$

There were some moderate correlations to be found concerning the age of the responder when they had their first death experience.

1. There is a significant correlation between the responder's reporting of their age at the first death experience and the responder's reporting of their visiting the cemetery where someone is buried. $P=.478$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.228$

2. There is a significant correlation between the responder's reporting of their age at the first death experience and the responder's reporting of their visiting people in hospitals, nursing homes, or the home of someone who is old. $P=.438$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.191$

The cognitive ability level of a child is very important in understanding social practices of the dying and the dead. We must understand these different age levels in order to help these children gain the full benefits of these experiences.

3. There is a significant correlation between the responder's reporting of their age at the first death experience and the responder's reporting of their feeling they have ample access to educational materials in this district to teach a unit on death. $P=.407$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.165$ We have learned from our frequency data that teachers reported not feeling they have enough information to teach a unit on death. The implication is here, then, that teachers may not have enough information to teach a unit on death at their particular grade level.

4. There is a significant correlation between the responder's reporting of their age at the first death experience and the responder's reporting of their feeling children should be protected from watching others grieve. $P=.467$ Reject H_0 ; significant at $P<.01$; $r^2=.218$ Some people believe that elementary children are too young to comprehend death and should not have to see the pain and distress in others until they are older (Grollman, 1983).

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Using the data from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the results of this study indicate that the teachers participating in this survey say they have not received specific training in their college education to deal with helping a child cope with his grief. The teachers in this study, for the most part, state they do not feel they have adequate resources available to assist them in their teaching the subject of death. While half of the teachers surveyed stated they felt comfortable with discussing death in the classroom, fewer than half stated they felt adequate in their ability and training to do so.

The second part of the study attempted to identify teachers' attitude concerning schools dealing with death education. One-fourth of the teachers completing this questionnaire agreed that they should help children try to cope with death experiences. A minority of teachers stated that they believe that the schools should play a definite part in educating our children in such a way that these children can handle a death or dying situation.

Another thirty-four point nine per cent (34.9%) of the teachers surveyed were either uncertain or not concerned about the issue. They did not necessarily support death education, but they did not oppose it either. If they knew more about the topic and had received information about death education and why it is needed, these same teachers may be more willing to incorporate the topic into their classrooms when the need arises. Thus, these teachers along with the one-fourth of the teachers who agreed that death education should be part of the schools, could make up a large majority of teachers who may be willing to incorporate death education in the classroom.

The amount of completed questionnaires is positive response to the teacher's concern for their students. The writer has stated that this questionnaire was not given at the time of the year when teachers are most anxious to accept new responsibilities. However, more than half the teachers took the time to respond to these issues. This response may be indicative of the relatively open and positive attitude these teachers showed in the results of this survey.

Church attendance could be taken as another positive factor among this particular group of teachers. Over ninety per cent of the teachers stated they had a specific religious affiliation and more than half attend church on a regular basis. We might infer here that the fact that the teachers have a religious support system for themselves may help them think there is a need to provide others with a support system where it is needed.

The teachers in this particular school system seemed more ready to invite the topic of death into their classrooms than did the administrators. When first obtaining permission to do this survey within the schools the writer met some resistance. Not only had the writer planned to do this questionnaire with the teachers, but the writer had a similar questionnaire designed to give the students. The objective being to obtain a needs assessment in the area of death education with the students. However, after a building principals meeting, the administrators decided that to present a questionnaire on the topic of death would cause the children to start thinking about death. The students then might have questions which the teachers would not be equipped to handle. Thus, the elementary children were denied the opportunity to participate in the survey.

Recommendations For Implementation:

Based on the results of the survey school officials may wish to consider offering an opportunity for individuals involved

to participate in order to gain further knowledge in the area of death education. Inservices and workshops could be offered not only for teachers, but for administrators, as well. To help educators see the need to have death education in the schools an informative program could be provided. A curriculum guide could be given to show teachers what to teach and how to teach a unit on death education. This guide should have a list of objectives, goals, lessons, and activities for each grade level. Listed, also, could be the cognitive abilities levels for that grade. Each teacher could receive a complete guide covering grades K-12. This material will help the teacher know what material has already been covered previous to that grade level as well as what knowledge the student needs to acquire before going on to the next grade level.

A list of resources could be made available so the teachers will know where to get the materials they will need. A list of community resource people could be given so teachers will know who to contact when a crisis occurs. A committee could be developed to assist the school's unit librarian in choosing appropriate materials for the next year's budget when ordering new materials.

College courses in education could include some basic fundamentals to better equip teachers for handling death situations. Teachers could be taught before they ever walk into the classroom how to handle crisis situations in any area. Simple lessons in empathetic listening and the stages of grief are a start. Prospective teachers could be trained on what to look for in a child who may be suffering from prolonged grief. It is important to know the various behaviors children may exhibit.

The writer concludes that many of our teachers would be and some already are willing to teach our children how to cope with death experiences. But first we should teach our teachers.

Recommendations For Further Research

The writer stated previously that she would have liked to have done a needs assessment with the students in this school district. Another school district might be anxious to learn what the fears and questions are that the children in their community have. A questionnaire designed for children could be helpful in learning how acceptable death education would be among the students. This needs assessment would help develop the appropriate curriculum for these particular students.

Another questionnaire might be given to parents, also. It would be valuable to know what parents expect from the schools in the area of death education. A needs assessment from parents could be used with such groups as the Parent-Teacher Association. Parents and teachers could work together to develop an appropriate program for their children, as well as informative sessions on helping parents to aid their children in grief situations.

If this same questionnaire is to be used with other sample populations, the investigator might want to validate this questionnaire with that population. The investigator could do the same study with the general population as well as with a group of educators. A comparison of the two groups may show significant relationships.

The Pearson correlation coefficients were valuable in seeing the relationships of teachers' attitudes with their background knowledge and experience concerning death. A further study could be done to learn how each of these correlations interact with each other. For example, in the statement that there was a significant correlation between the age of the participant at their first death experience and feeling children should be protected from watching others grieve, questions are still left unanswered. Do people here think that elementary children are too young to face death? Older teachers may feel that children should not be protected from death while younger teachers feel that we must protect our children.

There is a wealth of information in this survey given the resources to further analyze the data. More inferences can be drawn. The researcher could perform t-tests on the categorical items in the survey to study the relationships more in depth. For instance, is there, in fact, a difference between a male teacher feeling comfortable with teaching death education and that of a female teacher? We may learn that female teachers exhibit more empathy and understanding of the emotions of a child's grief than does a male teacher.

Is there a difference between a teacher's possessing a religious background and their feeling comfortable in discussing death openly with others than those teachers who do not have a religious affiliation? The researcher might learn that the death education a teacher has learned in their religious training might, in fact, have either a negative or positive effect on that person being able to communicate their thoughts and feelings about death to others. Further analysis of the data presented in this paper or other such surveys could answer these questions.

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Appendix

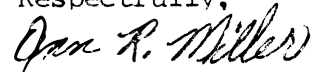
Cover Letter Sent With Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being provided by me, Ann Miller, guidance counselor at Mattoon Jr. High. The information obtained in this survey will be used in the writing of my thesis concerning the correlation between teachers' personal views of death and teachers' views of death education in the classroom. This thesis is being done in partial fulfillment of the Educational Specialist degree in Educational Psychology and Guidance at Eastern Illinois University.

In completing this questionnaire, please do not write any personal information. This material is to be confidential in that I do not wish to know the individual names of people completing this survey. Your input as teachers is valuable in completing my course of study. Your help and support will be greatly appreciated.

Please return the completed questionnaires to Ann Miller, Mattoon Jr. High School. Thank you for your help.

Respectfully,



Ann R. Miller

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Questionnaire

This three-page questionnaire is the one used with teachers participating in this study.

Directions For Part A

1. Fill in only one circle for each answer.
2. Please do not write your name, date or any other information anywhere on this questionnaire.
3. Pay special attention to additional directions located within the questionnaire.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. What is your sex? A) male B) female | A B
0 0 |
| 2. What is your age? A) 20-30 B) 31-40 C) 41-50 D) 51-65 | A B C D
0 0 0 0 |
| 3. What grade do you teach? A) K-3 B) 4-6 C) 7-8 D) 9-12 | A B C D
0 0 0 0 |
| 4. What is your religious background? | |
| A) Jewish B) Protestant C) Roman Catholic | A B C D E |
| D) Other than above (Moslem, Buddist, etc.) E) None | 0 0 0 0 0 |
| 5. How often do you attend a church or religious service? | |
| A) rarely miss B) frequently C) occasionally | A B C D E |
| D) seldom E) never | 0 0 0 0 0 |
| 6. Have you ever had a close significant person in your life die? A) yes B) no | A B
0 0 |
| 7. If the above answer to # 6 is <u>yes</u> , who was this person? A) parent B) sibling C) grandparent | A B C D E |
| D) close friend E) child | 0 0 0 0 0 |
| 8. If the answer to # 6 is <u>yes</u> , how old were you when you had this first death experience? | |
| A) 1-5 B) 6-10 C) 11-14 D) 15-18 E) 18-21 F) older | A B C D E F
0 0 0 0 0 0 |
| 9. Have you ever lost a loved one through: | |
| suicide? A) yes B) no | A B
0 0 |
| murder? A) yes B) no | A B
0 0 |
| accidental death? A) yes B) no | A B
0 0 |
| natural causes? A) yes B) no | A B
0 0 |

(page 2 of questionnaire)

Directions for Part B

Each statement is to be answered according to how You feel about it, not how your friends or family would fee.

Please mark your response from the following choices:

A) Strongly Agree B) Agree C) Uncertain or No Opinion

D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. I feel I have learned enough about death to understand it's finality and the practices in our society concerning it. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 2. I feel encourage by my family to talk about someone who has died. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 3. I feel comfortable in talking with my family about death in general. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 4. I feel I learned about death from my teachers. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 5. I feel I have learned about death from my church. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 6. I feel I have learned about death from my parents. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 7. I feel that all my questions about death have been answered. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 8. I feel children should be allowed to attend the funeral of someone they love. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 9. I feel children should be allowed to attend the funeral visitation of someone they love. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 10. I feel comfortable in crying with grief while in the same room as my family. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 11. I think of death as dark, ugly, and scary. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 12. I think of death as happy, fulfilled and peaceful. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 13. I believe that I am in someway responsible for someone's death. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 14. I have visisted the cemetary where someone I care about is buried. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |

(page 2 of questionnaire, cont.)
 (Part B, cont.)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 15. I go to visit people in hospitals, nursing homes,
or the home of someone who is old. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 16. Someone in my family has received counseling due to
a death or dying experience. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 17. I often have nightmares about someone dying. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 18. I am afraid of dying. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 19. I often think of dying. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 20. I have often wished that I could die. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 21. I have tried to kill myself before. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 22. I know another person who has tried to kill himself. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 23. I worry that someone I know might try to kill himself. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |

(page 3 of questionnaire)

Directions For Part C

Please follow the same directions as in Part B.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. I feel comfortable with teaching a unit about death to my students. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 2. I have had to teach a death unit due to the death of one of my students in the classroom or school. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 3. I feel it is the school's responsibility to help children learn to cope with death experiences. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 4. I feel it is mostly the parents' responsibility to help children learn to cope with death experience. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 5. I feel it is the church's responsibility to teach the children about death experiences. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 6. I do not feel children should be taught about death and our social practices until they have a death experience. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 7. I feel adequate in my ability and training to teach a unit about death. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 8. I have received specific training in college education to prepare me in helping a child who may be grieving due to a death experience. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 9. I feel I have ample access to educational materials in this district to teach a unit on death. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 10. The thought or idea that I will someday die disturbs me. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |
| 11. I feel children should be protected from watching others grieve. | A B C D E
0 0 0 0 0 |

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Table

Correlations of Items with Significance Level Above P<.01

This table consists of all the Pearson correlation coefficients that were done in this survey. Items numbered 102, 103, 105, and 108 refer to statements in Part A of the questionnaire numbered accordingly (see actual questionnaire on page 43). Items numbered 201-223 refer to statements in Part B of the questionnaire numbered accordingly. Items numbered 301-311 refer to statements in Part C of the questionnaire numbered accordingly.

All correlations that were found to be significant at the P<.01 level are starred.

Coefficients of determination (r^2) are given for each correlation that was found to be significant at the P<.01 level.

	102	103	105	108
201	P=.143	* P=.361 $r^2=.130$	P=.005	P=.024
202	* P=.315 $r^2=.0999$	P=.140	P=.171	* P=.235 $r^2=.081$
203	* P=.420 $r^2=.176$	* P=.254 $r^2=.064$	P=.014	* P=.232 $r^2=.053$
204	* P=.430 $r^2=.184$	P=.041	* P=.325 $r^2=.105$	* P=.383 $r^2=.146$
205	* P=.358 $r^2=.128$	* P=.474 $r^2=.226$	P=.001	P=.119

(Pearson correlation coefficients table, cont.)

	102	103	105	108
206	* P=.332 r ² =.110	* P=.383 r ² =.146	P=.233	P=.157
207	P=.091	P=.186	P=.001	P=.010
208	* P=.366 r ² =.133	P=.149	* P=.285 r ² =.081	P=.042
209	* P=.338 r ² =.114	* P=.364 r ² =.132	* P=.466 r ² =.217	P=.042
210	* P=.447 r ² =.199	P=.044	P=.162	P=.231
211	P=.020	P=.216	P=.001	P=.059
212	* P=.460 r ² =.211	* P=.468 r ² =.219	P=.001	P=.100
213	P=.104	* P=.294 r ² =.086	P=.139	* P=.395 r ² =.156
214	P=.005	*** P=.338 r ² =.114	P=.009	* P=.478 r ² =.228
215	P=.029	* P=.390 r ² =.152	* P=.396 r ² =.156	* P=.438 r ² =.191

(Pearson correlation coefficients table, cont.)

	102	103	105	108
216	* P=.457 r=.208	P=.020	P=.008	P=.207
217	* P=.345 r ² =.119	P=.112	* P=.457 r ² =.208	P=.219
218	P=.059	P=.007	P=.060	* P=.372 r ² =.138
219	P=.039	* P=.270 r ² =.072	P=.022	* P=.306 r ² =.082
220	P=.116	* P=.493 r ² =.243	P=.114	* P=.307 r ² =.094
221	P=.216	P=.093	* P=.354 r ² =.125	P=.072
222	P=.024	P=.124	* P=.468 r ² =.219	* P=.354 r ² =.125
223	P=.010	* P=.421 r ² =.177	* P=.444 r ² =.197	P=.016
301	P=.021	P=.212	P=.059	* P=.284 r ² =.080
302	P=.226	* P=.271 r ² =.073	P=.249	P=.035

(Pearson correlation coefficients table, cont.)

	102	103	105	108
303	P=.216	* P=.463 r ² =.214	* P=.374 r ² =.139	P=.195
304	P=.170	P=.196	P=.147	* P=.337 r ² =.113
305	* P=.304 r ² =.092	P=.022	P=.111	* P=.315 r ² =.099
306	P=.089	P=.038	P=.128	P=.113
307	* P=.259 r ² =.067	* P=.316 r ² =.099	* P=.294 r ² =.086	P=.087
308	P=.064	* P=.348 r ² =.121	* P=.368 r ² =.135	* P=.281 r ² =.078
309	* P=.360 r ² =.129	P=.051	* P=.306 r ² =.093	* P=.407 r ² =.165
310	P=.038	P=.096	P=.007	* P=.390 r ² =.152
311	* P=.311 r ² =.096	P=.253	* P=.360 r ² =.129	* P=.467 r ² =.218