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Student Engagement in LDS Seminaries

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF

LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS) SEMINARIES

by

Thomas P. Aardema

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Education

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2013

ABSTRACT

Student Engagement in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints (LDS) Seminaries

by

Thomas Palmer Aardema, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2013

Major Professor: Dr. Francine Johnson
Department: Teacher Education and Leadership

This qualitative study examined student engagement in seminaries of The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This study sought to answer the following

question: "What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as

having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student

engagement in their classrooms?" To examine this question, a phenomenological

approach was used to explore the participants' perceptions of what they do to generate

student engagement. Ten participants were selected after surveying content experts who

identified teachers who exemplified high levels of student engagement. The primary

sources of data came from one-on-one interviews, classroom observations, and document

analysis. Newmann, Wehlage, and Lamborn's theoretical framework of student

engagement guided the analysis and interpretation of data and findings.

The findings from this study were organized around the following concepts:

competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun. The researcher also examined each participant's personal definition of student engagement, evidence that each participant looks for in determining student engagement, and a general overarching question about participants' perception of what they do to generate student engagement. The findings from this study suggest that there are 48 strategies that the 10 participants used to generate student engagement in their classrooms.

(244 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study examined student engagement in seminaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This study sought to answer the following question: "What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms?" Ten LDS Seminary teachers were selected as participants for this study. The findings from this study were organized around the concepts of: competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun. The findings from this study suggest that there are 48 strategies that the 10 participants used to generate student engagement in their classrooms.

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Ultimately, I express gratitude to a loving Father in Heaven and Savior, Jesus Christ, who have given me all the blessings of my life and afforded me riches beyond expression.

Thomas Palmer Aardema

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table   Page

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As an early career teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) Seminaries and Institutes (S&I), I became discouraged about the level of student engagement in my classroom and felt the problem was due mainly to the group of students who had been placed in my class. I became so discouraged that I began looking at other career choices. However, as part of my professional growth plan, I observed seminary classes at a different seminary and witnessed student engagement at a level that changed my perspective. Each class that I observed at this seminary had a wide variety of students and each class seemed to have higher levels of student engagement than what I had been observing in my own class. With my heightened interest in this particular seminary program, I began interviewing the principal and teachers concerning the concept of student engagement. I discovered that this seminary had created particular processes and procedures with the desired outcome of greater student engagement. I learned from them that teacher practices and procedures have an impact on student engagement in the classroom. From that experience I determined to learn more about the concept of student engagement in order to understand the teacher's role in generating and maintaining student engagement in the classroom.

As part of my research into student engagement, I observed and interviewed many teachers who were recommended by administrators and other teachers as having high levels of student engagement in the classroom. From the data I collected from these interviews and observations, I began to notice a few consistencies in teacher practices

among these teachers that seemed to correlate with higher levels of student engagement. Of course all of these observations and analyses were anecdotal, so I determined to study this topic more in depth and research the existing literature in order to better understand the concept of student engagement.

The Problem

Student engagement is linked to academic achievement and can ameliorate low levels of academic achievement, high levels of student boredom, and disaffection, all of which lead to skipping school, suspension, cutting class, and high dropout rates (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Newmann, 1989; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Sharan & Tan, 2008). Studies have shown that student engagement is an important component in education and is essential to learning, understanding, and mastering the knowledge, skills, and crafts that academic work is intended to promote (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gonida, Voulala, & Kiosseoglou, 2009; Kuh, 2001; Mo & Singh, 2008; Newmann, 1989; Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992; Powell et al., 1985; Yazzie-Mintz, 2009; Zyngier, 2008). These studies focused on the essential elements required to generate student engagement in the classroom.

A review of the literature revealed that no study regarding student engagement in LDS seminaries has been conducted. While much of the research focused on the dynamics of engagement at the secondary and collegiate levels, there were few that looked at religious education and student engagement. Much of the research focused primarily on engagement at religious-based universities rather than specifically at

religious education in the classroom and the phenomenon of student engagement (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006; Mahaffey & Smith, 2009).

In the research literature, no study existed that explored the educational phenomenon of student engagement in LDS seminaries. Therefore, this study explored the phenomenon of student engagement by exploring the perceptions of LDS seminary teachers of what they do to create student engagement in their classrooms.

The Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of student engagement in LDS seminaries from the perception of seminary teachers in Utah. Newmann and colleagues' (1992) theory on student engagement was used as the lens through which the study was framed and results were interpreted. Student engagement was defined as "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann et al., 1992, p. 12). This theory also stated that student engagement required competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun.

A qualitative approach helped provide understanding of the phenomenon of student engagement from the perspectives of LDS seminary teachers who were identified by principals and directors as having high levels of student engagement in their classrooms. The findings from this study supply valuable knowledge about student

engagement in religious education that can help teachers, leaders, parents, ecclesiastical leaders, and students understand factors that affect student engagement and provide a foundation in recommending policies, practices, and procedures, that may help foster engagement. In addition, this research study provides valuable themes, descriptions, and interpretations which can lead to additional research questions and studies.

Research Questions

Following Creswell's (2007) suggestion, this study has been reduced to a single overarching question with several subquestions. The main question of this research was: *What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms?* In order to acquire more information and rich understanding of this phenomenon, data were collected from 10 LDS seminary teachers who were identified by principals and directors as having high levels of student engagement in their classrooms (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006). Principals and directors qualified as content experts because they had the assignment to observe all teachers on their faculties or areas at least annually with most observing quarterly or monthly. The questions were designed to collect data in order to understand both textural and structural descriptions of this phenomenon, which allowed the researcher to describe the lived experiences of the participants and convey an overall essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994;). Moustakas explained that two general questions should guide research in phenomenology: (a) What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon?

(b) What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences

with the phenomenon? Therefore the main subquestions for this research were as follows.

    1.   What experiences have LDS seminary teachers had with student engagement?

    2.   How have contexts or situations typically influenced or affected experiences

of LDS seminary teachers with student engagement?

Limitations

The qualitative methodological approach to this study was designed to describe

the essence of the phenomenon of individual teachers' experience with student

engagement. As with all qualitative studies, because of the analytical and subjective

nature of the design, there are limitations. Qualitative inquiry is studied from the

perspective of human beings and the key instrument of the study is the researcher;

therefore the information gathered and analyzed is subjective (Glesne, 2006). In this

study the researcher served as the interpreter of the description and functioned as the

research tool mediating between different meanings of the participants lived experiences

(Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2006).

Another limitation of qualitative phenomenology is its inability to be generalized

or be widely applied to other populations and settings. The information gleaned from this

study and the lived experiences of the individual participants is not necessarily indicative

of the outcomes and conclusions of other educational settings. Because this study focused

on LDS seminary teachers in Utah, this study may be limited in its ability to be

generalized to other LDS seminaries outside of Utah or to other religious educational

programs. The lived experiences of participants in this study were unique to the contexts of each of the participants' lived experiences. Therefore, this data and any of its descriptions and recommendations may not reflect the experiences of those within different environments and lived experiences.

Delimitations

Due to the difficult nature of defining student engagement and myriads of theoretical perspectives of the subject, this study focused on the definition of student engagement presented by Newmann and colleagues (1992). The data gathered were analyzed through their perspective of what is needed to generate high levels of student engagement.

This study focused extensively on the perspectives of LDS seminary teachers in Utah concerning the concept of student engagement. By focusing solely on LDS Seminary teachers in Utah, it allowed the researcher to describe the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon within a particular milieu (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the researcher to develop clusters of meaning within specific context (Moustakas, 1994). This homogeneous sample is appropriate because this study sought to understand the unique experience of student engagement in release time LDS seminaries (Creswell, 2007).

Definitions

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS): The religious organization

founded in 1830 in the United States of America by Joseph Smith and is commonly referred to as the "Mormon" church.

LDS released-time seminary: The religious education program of the LDS church that has students released from the public school with permission from their parents or guardian to attend religious classes in buildings adjacent to school property.

The objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion: "Our purpose is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven (see Appendix G).

Student engagement: A student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote

Academic competence: A student's ability to learn, understand, and master the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote.

School membership: A student's ability to perceive schooling as legitimate and deserving of a committed effort, and the student's sense of being a respected member of the school community.

Clarity of purpose: A student's ability to clearly understand the objectives and educational purposes of academic work.

Fairness: A student's ability to perceive equity through inclusion, due process, and fair treatment.

Personal support: A student's perception of a support network provided by the

teacher and peers to lessen the fear associated with risk required for academic work.

Caring: A student's perception that they are valued as a worthy and important member of school.

Authentic work: Tasks that are considered meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort, in contrast to those considered nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial, and therefore unworthy of effort.

Extrinsic rewards: External rewards given to students base on academic performance such as grades, social approval, status, admission to higher education, attractive vocational prospects, and increased income.

Intrinsic interest: A student's internal interest to engage in academic work.

Sense of ownership: A student's perception that they have influence over the conception, execution, and evaluation of academic work.

Connection to the "real world": A student's ability to connect issues, competencies, and concerns of daily life to academic work and see the relevance.

Fun: Academic work must provide opportunities for lighthearted interaction, play-like imaginative activity, and humor.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Effective learning requires student engagement, a multifaceted and complex educational concept. This study explored the phenomenon of student engagement in LDS seminaries. One of the challenging aspects of understanding student engagement was the diverse definitions and theoretical perspectives of this educational concept. In order to better understand the concept of student engagement, this study explored the historical settings of student engagement, the different theories existing in academic literature, and focused primarily on the theoretical framework and definition of student engagement used by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Historical Settings of Student Engagement

Academic literature discussing student engagement is a relatively recent development that began in the mid-1990s (Zyngier, 2008). However there is a "long tradition of literature from Dewey to Friere that connects engagement with student learning" (Zyngier, 2008, p. 1767). Sharan and Tan (2008) suggested that the term student engagement has been used for the past two decades in relation to reading engagement, classroom engagement, task engagement, and so forth. Axelson and Flick (2010) suggested that the concept of student engagement has been around for over 70 years starting with Ralph Tyler's research on students' time spent on work and its correlation with learning outcomes and later with C. Robert Pace's research on quality of effort in the 1960s. The concept of student engagement has been a recent discussion in

learning theory, but the principles of this concept are closely aligned with theories that have been in existence for a long period of time such as progressive education and social reconstruction. Although not labeled as student engagement, many of the reformers and progressive educators began writing theory based on the ideas that the traditional and liberal educational systems were not built to engage students and that the American school systems needed to be reformed in order to establish a more engaging curriculum. John Dewey was one of the progressive reformers.

Although Dewey used different words to describe much of his theory, the principles he addressed align well with the principles of engagement. For instance, Dewey (1913) heavily addressed the concept of interest, effort, and motivation. The definitions of student engagement correlate with the definitions of interest, coupled with effort and motivation. Much of Dewey's work centered on concepts of the child and the child's engagement with the curriculum. For example, Dewey's book *Interest and Effort in Education* discussed ideas that resembled many of the concepts of student engagement. The major focus of the theoretical concepts proposed by Dewey dealt with allowing a student to engage with the social curriculum, which helps children learn the basic concepts of knowledge and their democratic roles in society.

Dewey believed that things that were uninteresting had to be made interesting through discovering children's own urgent impulses and habits and then supplying them with the proper environment and direction. Under these circumstances, interest and effort would take care of themselves (Kliebard, 2004). Dewey stated, "Effort, like interest, is significant only in connection with a course of action, an action that takes time for its

completion since it develops through a succession of stages" (p. 47). The word action used here could easily be stated as engagement.

Dewey (1913) also stated that student engagement hinged upon the subject matter being offered the student. He said that a teacher needs to determine "what specific subject matter is so connected with the growth of the child's existing concrete capabilities as to give it moving force. What is needed…is a consideration of their powers, their tendencies in action, and the ways in which these can be carried forward by a given subject matter" (p. 62). Dewey's answer to this question could be found in his curriculum concept of social occupations embedded in miniature communities. The goal of these social occupations was to allow the student to engage with the curriculum in a way that lead to greater understanding and helped formulate the basis for more complex and abstract subject matter that would be introduced in later years. This could be accomplished when the student engages socially and learns to fulfill his or her responsibility in the learning community.

Dewey's belief about successful and integrating education parallels many of the principal concepts described in student engagement literature. His educational theory is woven with many of the same threads and beliefs as the proponents of the modern academic writers in the field of student engagement.

Social reconstruction, another early education reform movement, incorporated student engagement into its theory. Social reconstructionists believe that the greatest vehicle to create social reform is the school and its curriculum. Student engagement is a major concern because changes in social reforms can only occur when a student engages

with subject matter that seeks to build a new, less competitive, individualistic, and materialistic, social order, which allows the student to commit to the principles of democracy and the common good (Franklin, 2009). The common good can be established when students are engaged in a social community where they are immersed in a school community that allows them to develop an understanding of the social ills in society and instills in them the desire to create social reform (Beyer & Liston, 1996). Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* envisioned a curriculum where students engaged in a problem posing community that focused on the contradictions of social, political, and economic life (Beyer & Liston, 1996). Social reconstructionist theory requires high levels of student engagement with the curriculum so that it inspires students to then go out in society and make changes based on their greater understanding of their current social setting.

Much of the current literature on student engagement has been written by academics who could be classified as social reconstructionists. Newmann and colleagues (1992) and McNeil (1986) believed that many of America's students disengage because the current school systems and the current curriculum perpetuate an intended influence that seeks to insure that certain groups remain impoverished and powerless. They believed that the greatest societal changes will occur when students are able to engage with curriculum that inspires in them democratic principles that in turn instill a desire for equity.

The concept of engagement as proposed by both progressive educational reformers and social reconstructionists helped create the modern theory of student

engagement. This leads to the need to define student engagement and embed this concept within today's educational literature.

Definition of Student Engagement

The use of the term engagement in much of the literature is synonymous with Astin's (1984) term involvement that is in his original articulation of student involvement theory. Although Astin defined student involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience; his focus is primarily on the behaviors in which the student engages (e.g., participating in campus organizations, interacting with faculty and peers, attending campus events, and spending time studying). He emphasized that he made a deliberate decision to attend to the behavioral components of involvement rather than the motivational components, noting that it is not so much what the individual thinks or feels, but rather what the individual does, how he or she behaves, that defines and identifies involvement. Many researchers and educational historians believe that Austin's concept of involvement originated in what would become modern engagement research (Axelson & Flick, 2010).

Because student engagement is defined as a physiological investment and effort in academic work, these characteristics are not readily observable. Students' level of engagement in academic work can be inferred from indirect indicators such as the amount of participation in academic work (attendance, portion of tasks completed, amount of time spent on academic work), the intensity of students' concentration, the enthusiasm and interest expressed, and the degree of care shown in completing the work

(Newmann et al., 1992).

Newmann and colleagues (1992) defined student engagement as "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (p. 12). Newmann and colleagues also stated that student engagement is more than motivation or a general desire to succeed in school; it involves participation, connection, attachment, and integration in particular settings and tasks. As such, engagement is the opposite of alienation, isolation, separation, detachment and fragmentation. Engagement is not simply a commitment to complete assigned tasks or to acquire symbols of high performance such as grades and social approval; rather, students may complete academic work or perform well without being engaged in the mastery of a topic, skill, or craft. Powell and colleagues (1985) stated that students invest much of their energy in performing rituals, procedures, and routines without developing substantive understanding.

The research literature elaborates upon Newmann and colleagues' (1992) definition by dividing student engagement into three different levels: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Axelson & Flick, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioral engagement focuses mainly on the idea of participation and involvement in academic and social activities that are considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioral engagement also relates to student conduct, on task behavior, initiation, avoidance, passivity, and giving up (Gonida et al., 2009). Emotional engagement refers to students' positive and negative reaction to teachers, classmates,

academics, and school (Fredricks et al., 2004). Emotional engagement can include

interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gonida et al.,

2009; Mo & Singh, 2008). Cognitive engagement is defined as students' "investment in

learning that incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to

comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60).

Cognitive engagement is also related to motivational goals, self-regulated learning,

strategic learning, and psychological investment (Fredricks et al., 2004; Mo & Singh,

2008). As such, engagement implies more than motivation. Academic motivation usually

refers to a general desire or disposition to succeed in academic work and in the more

specific tasks of school (Brophy, 1987; Stipek, 2001).

Closely associated with the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement

defined in the literature is Schreiner and Louis's (2008) definition of engaged learning: a

psychological and behavioral engagement in the learning process that requires a positive

energy invested in one's own learning evidenced by meaningful processing, attention to

what is happening in the moment, and involvement in specific learning activities.

Educational Implications

Student engagement is linked to academic achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004;

Kuh, Carini, & Klein, 2006; Newmann, 1989; Newmann et al., 1992; Porter, 2006;

Powell et al., 1985; Sharan & Tan, 2008). Fredricks and colleagues (2004) suggested that

school engagement can ameliorate low levels of academic achievement, high levels of

student boredom, and disaffection, all of which lead to skipping school, suspension,

cutting class, and high dropout rates.

Education must create contexts in which students are engaged in order for effective learning to occur (Porter, 2006). Fredricks and colleagues (2004) identified three major levels that increase student engagement: school level factors, classroom context, and individual needs. School level factors that must be present to increase student engagement are voluntary choice, clear and consistent goals, small class size, student participation in school policy and management, opportunities for staff and students to be involved in cooperative endeavors, academic work that allows for the developments of products, and flexibility and fairness. Classroom context includes teacher support, peers, and task characteristics. At the individual level, students need to feel relatedness, autonomy, self-competence, and owning with both teacher and peers. Alternatively, Newmann (1989) suggested five factors that contribute to student engagement: competence, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, social support, and sense of ownership.

Adding to the factors that contribute to student engagement, Zyngeir (2008) put forth three essential concepts. Agreeing with much of the literature, he stated that owning is essential to student engagement and that all students should be able to see themselves as represented in the work. Further, student engagement requires responding to students' lived experiences and actively and consciously critiquing that experience. Finally, students need to know that what they do will make a difference to their lives and have the opportunity to voice and discover their own authentic and authoritative life.

Powell and colleagues (1985) stated that student engagement develops on the

basis of class treaties and those treaties between student and teachers create a level of engagement. They explain that there are two major types of treaties: the formal, explicit, and publically agreed upon treaties, and tacit treaties that are created between teacher and student during day-to-day interactions. Classroom treaties can either create student engagement or avoidance of learning.

Focusing on factors contributing to college students' level of student engagement, Kuh (2001) stated that what students do during college counts more in terms of desired outcomes than who they are or even where they go to college. He also stated that research on college student development shows that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development. Kuh and Zhoa (2004) also stated that learning communities in college have an impact on student engagement.

Knowing that student engagement is needed for effective education in schools, many institutions have directed great efforts in helping increase and analyze student engagement. Many colleges and universities have adapted the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to help determine the levels of student engagement so that policies and practices can assist in helping students engage. The NSSE is specifically designed to assess the extent to which students are engaged in empirically derived good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience (Kuh, 2001). The results from the NSSE project have been used to produce a set of national benchmarks of good educational practice that participating schools are using to estimate the efficacy of their improvement efforts (Kuh, 2001).

Kuh (2001) continued by stating that factors contributing to high levels of engagement for college students included student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, high expectations, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. He also stated that important to student learning are institutional environments that are perceived by students as inclusive and affirming and where expectations for performance are clearly communicated and set at reasonably high levels.

Another survey that is designed to help educators engage students is the High School Survey of Student Engagement. The High School Survey of Student Engagement is designed to both help schools ascertain students' beliefs about their school experience and provide assistance to schools in translating data into action (Yazzie-Mintz, 2009). The project's three primary purposes are to help high schools explore, understand, and strengthen student engagement, work with high school teachers and administrators on utilizing survey data to improve practices, and to conduct research on student engagement (Yazzie-Mintz, 2009). This survey explores emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement.

Student Engagement: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Concept

Nearly all of the academic literature claims that student engagement has a positive effect on academic achievement, and therefore educators should strive for the highest levels of student engagement. Fredricks and colleagues (2004) explained, "The concept of school engagement has attracted increasing attention as representing a possible

antidote to declining academic motivation and achievement. Engagement is presumed to be malleable, responsive to contextual features, and amenable to environmental change" (p. 59).

By definition, student engagement incorporates a wide variety of educational constructs. Some of the definitions overlap, such as those on attitudes toward school or those that use teachers' ratings of behavior to predict achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Definitions of engagement also overlap across the three levels of engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. The definitions and components of each level of engagement are less precise than in studies that focus on a single concept. A third problem is the rebuttal of some of the typical identifiers of student engagement. Emdin (2009) refuted the idea that hand-raising, sitting quietly listening, or responding to questions are real indicators of engagement leading to academic learning. He argued that these student-teacher behavior interactions were instead political or pragmatic tradeoffs in a complex classroom barter between teachers and students. This argument aligns with the theory of Powell and colleagues (1985) that posited the existence of formal, explicit, and publically agreed upon treaties and tacit treaties that are created between teacher and student during day-to-day interactions and serve as a tradeoff between teachers, students, and institutional objectives.

Theoretical Lens

This study examined the concept of student engagement through the theoretical frame work of Newmann and colleagues (1992). They defined student engagement as the

"student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (p. 12). They elaborated on this definition by explaining that engagement involves a psychological investment in learning, comprehending or mastering knowledge, skills, and crafts, not simply a commitment to complete assigned tasks or to acquire symbols of high performance such as grades or social approval. By this definition, engagement implies more than motivation, which usually refers to a general desire to succeed in academic work and tasks of schools, whereas engagement calls special attention to social contexts that help activate underlying motivation and conditions that may generate new motivation. They stated that the meaningful cognitive demands of formal education cannot be mastered through passive learning nor through entertainment, which will only yield superficial understanding and short term retention, but rather today's educational demands require an engaged student.

According to Newmann and colleagues (1992), the foundational factors that affect student engagement are students' underlying need for competence, students' need to experience positive membership in school, and students' sense of the personal authenticity of the work they are asked to complete.

Competence

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that students have a powerful need to develop and express competence in academic work, which in turn is personally rewarding to the student. They stated that when efforts to act competently are met with success, this generates continued investment in academic school work, which perpetuates a cycle of

success in school. They stated that mastery of school work offers numerous opportunities for development of competence and a school needs to examine what type of academic work schools must design so that students' underlying need of competence can be channeled into academic mastery. They stated that in order for schools to successfully help students feel rewarded in academic competence, they need to address the need of students to feel a sense of positive school membership and to do authentic work in school.

School Membership

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that if students are to engage in school, they must perceive the general enterprise of schooling as legitimate, deserving of their committed effort, and honoring them as respected members. They stated that "for many students, schooling signifies institutional hypocrisy and aimlessness, rather than consistency and clarity of purpose; arbitrariness and inequity, rather than fairness; ridicule and humiliation, rather than personal support and respect; and worst of all, failure, rather than success" (1992, p. 19). They stated that positive school membership is the key to institutional conditions that get students to buy into the general enterprise of trying to succeed in school. They also stated that bonding or a sense of membership develops when students establish affective, cognitive, and behavioral connections to the institution. They stated that schools are most likely to cultivate a sense of membership in students when schools demonstrate clarity of purpose, equity, personal support, provide frequent occasions for all students to experience educational success and integrate these features into a climate of caring.

Clarity of Purpose

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that students' identification with an educational institution can occur through symbols such as school name, colors, or school song, or school identification can occur through participation in a common agenda of activities such as taking courses, eating lunch, or attending athletic events, but the sense of membership needed for investment in mastery of academic work needs to be grounded in clear educational purposes. Clarity of purpose contributes to building a sense of membership that enhances student engagement in school work. *The Shopping Mall High School* (Powell et al., 1985) showed that attempting to serve all interests and tastes, and refusing to insist that any be pursued with vigor, offers no reason for students to engage in academic mastery. Clarity of purpose can be undermined by hypocrisy and aimlessness, which may result when schools fail to articulate goals or pursue multiple goals that conflict with one another. Positive school membership requires clarity of purpose from the educational institution.

Fairness

According to Newmann and colleagues (1992), another requirement for a student to feel positive school membership is fairness. They stated that a sense of fair treatment is critical to organizational bonding and that in schools fairness is often undermined both by violations of due process and disciplinary matters and by inequity in allocation of opportunities and rewards. They stated that basic elements of due process include due notice of rules, consistent and uniform enforcement, a chance to defend oneself if accused, avenues of appeal, reasonable punishments, equitable allocation of

opportunities, and equal access to resources and activities. They continued by explaining that a student's sense of fairness is ruined when a student feels excluded from membership because curriculum and extracurricular activities fail to take account of a student's unique experiences. They also stated that equity entails nondiscrimination in access to courses, good teachers, counseling, social services, and participation in extra-curricular activities. In contrast, when schools strive for fairness through inclusion, equity, and due process, a heightened sense of school membership can advance student engagement in academic work.

Personal Support

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that another requirement for a student to feel positive school membership is personal support. Because learning requires risk, a support network consisting of peers and teachers is needed for a student to foster the essential cyclical process of making and correcting mistakes. In a competitive environment, the "social disrespect that often accompanies failure can suppress engagement in academic work and divert the need for competence to alternative, psychologically more comfortable activities" (p. 22). Therefore, if students are to build confidence and willingness to invest themselves, their participation in academic tasks must be accompanied by personal support from teachers and peers. Personal support contributes directly to student engagement in academic work; it also contributes indirectly by fortifying student investment in the organization's goals and means (Newmann et al., 1992).

Students also need to feel successful in order for engagement to occur (Newmann

et al., 1992). In order for a school to nurture a sense of membership, it needs to ensure

that students experience success as they develop academic competence. Engagement will

not be achieved by grade inflation or reducing the rigor of academic demands; instead,

educators need to design schoolwork that presents significant challenges, that meets

criteria for authenticity, and that offers personal support and provides institutional

recognition for the successes of all students. The enhanced sense of membership that

comes from successful demonstration of competence will result in further student

engagement in academic work.

Caring

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated emphatically that "there is more to life

than academic achievement. Academic success must not, therefore, be the sole criterion

for school membership" (p. 23). They also stated that students' moral worth and dignity

must be affirmed through other avenues such as nonacademic contact between staff and

students, athletics, music, outings, and personal advising. In order to foster an

environment of school membership, all of the stated components of purpose, fairness,

support, and success must be included within a climate of caring. They stated that in

order for a climate of caring to exist a school must communicate that all students are

worthy, important members of the school, establish that the school is serious about

helping all to build new forms of competence, establish fairness, personal support, and

ample opportunity for success. They stated that students need to be cared for as persons

who represent multiple aspects of humanity and not as units to be processed through the

official agenda of the school.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in order for academic institutions to foster an environment where students feel included as valued member of the institution they need to generate the commitment to clear purposes, fairness, personal support, success experiences, and a climate of caring. They also stated that another fundamental component to student engagement along with school membership is authentic academic work.

Authentic Work

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that once conditions of bonding and sense of membership are established, then the focus for student engagement must shift to creating a process of ensuring authentic work. They defined authentic work as "tasks that are considered meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort, in contrast to those considered nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial, and therefore unworthy of effort" (p. 23). They stated that in order for academic work to be authentic, the work needs to have extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, sense of ownership by the student, a connection to real-world application, and a level of fun.

Extrinsic Rewards

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that student engagement should increase if mastery of school tasks is accompanied by rewards such as high grades, admission to higher education, attractive vocational prospects, increased income, and social approval and status. They also stated that these rewards need to be used with caution because what may be powerful extrinsic rewards for some students may have no effect or may actually

decrease the engagement of others. Only when students value the extrinsic rewards, perceive that academic achievement is possible, and believe that their efforts will result in academic success will student engagement increase. Another challenge associated with extrinsic rewards is the distribution of long-term rewards and short-term rewards. They stated that some powerful extrinsic rewards, such as jobs and income, tend to focus on long-term cumulative effort rather than on engagement for the short-term daily tasks that lead to academic learning. Because of the dual need to focus on short-term and long-term rewards, the task to establish extrinsic rewards becomes very difficult for education institutions. However, they stated that many instructional tasks can be designed to yield social approval, official credentials, public displays of impressive accomplishments, and special privileges.

Intrinsic Interest

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that extrinsic reward is not enough to generate engagement; rather it needs to be coupled with intrinsic interest. They referred to interest as "the reality that some topics and activities are considered more stimulating, fascinating, or enjoyable to engage in than others" (p. 25). A few factors contributing to a student's interest are the topic itself, the approach and teaching style of the teacher, the student's prior experience with similar material, and the perceived value to the student of the extrinsic rewards offered. Engagement will likely increase when academic tasks permit expression of diverse forms of talent. In many instances, academic tasks focus primarily on abstract verbal and mathematical competence at the expense of aesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, and spatial competencies. When schools limit

academic tasks to a narrow range, they diminish the opportunity to respond to students'

intrinsic interests and to build their competence based upon prior knowledge.

Ownership

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that engagement with and internalization

of knowledge depends to a large degree on the opportunities students have to own their

work. They also stated that "rather than toiling under predetermined routines to master

skills and knowledge dictated arbitrarily by school authorities, students need some

influence over conception, execution, and evaluation of the work itself" (p. 25). This type

of ownership entails flexibility in the pace and procedures of learning, opportunities for

students to ask questions and study topics they consider important, and students'

constructing and producing knowledge in their own language rather than reproducing the

language of others.

Real-World Connection

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that often students disengage from

schoolwork because it is unrelated to issues, competencies, and concerns of daily life,

which leaves students questioning why they should devote effort to mastery of

knowledge that seems necessary only to success in school but in no other aspect of life.

They stated that in order for academic work to have a connection with real-world settings

it needs to include value beyond instruction, clear and prompt feedback, collaboration,

and flexible use of time.

Value beyond instruction. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that one of

the most critical criteria for authentic work is that it has value and meaning beyond the instructional context. They gave examples of this type of learning by stating:

> Writing to persuade a friend or publicize one's views in a letter to the editor is more authentic than writing only to show a teacher that one is capable of organizing a coherent paragraph. Studying the habits of animals or fish when one is also responsible for their care is more authentic than learning about behavior from texts. Remolding a house, repairing a car, developing a computer program, and tutoring all involve application of knowledge in ways that can have value or use in the world beyond the instruction of the student who completes the work. (p. 26)

Real world value beyond the necessity of the school task helps a student feel more interested and engaged in academic work.

Clear, prompt feedback. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in real world feedback on an individual's works is often more immediate than in school. In the real world it is not necessary to receive a "teacher's response to learn whether one got a hit in baseball, whether the sweater one knitted fits, or whether one remembered his or her lines in the play. In contrast after completing abstract academic tasks, the feedback students receive is often much delayed and difficult to comprehend" (p. 27). They stated that, to the extent that feedback is mystifying and delayed, student engagement will suffer.

Collaboration. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that achievement outside school often depends on the opportunity to ask questions, receive feedback, and depend on the help of others including peers and authorities. Many times school work is structured to prohibit students from working together or accessing published information because it is seen as cheating and not personally authentic. When schools restrict opportunities for cooperation and consultation with peers and authorities, this violates a

critical process of successful engagement.

Flexible use of time. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that meaningful achievement outside of school cannot be produced within rigidly specified time periods. They stated, "Standard, predetermined time schedules that flow from bureaucratic procedures for managing masses of students in divers course offerings, rather than from the time requirements of disciplined inquiry, can reduce authenticity of students work" (p. 27). Although most school systems require a rigid bell schedule, school systems need to allow for flexible use of time in order to foster higher levels of student engagement.

Fun

The final component that Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated is required for authentic work is fun. While emphasizing the qualities that help generate serious effort and concentration on academic task, an academic institution must not overlook the importance of fun, play, and humor. In other words, in order to sustain engagement, the tasks of academic work must also provide opportunities for lighthearted interaction and play-like imaginative activity. They stated that fun reduces the stress of intense pressure to succeed and the boredom of unchallenging, but perhaps necessary, routines.

The theory of student engagement set forth by Newmann and colleagues (1992) described student engagement as a "student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (p. 12). Factors that affect student engagement are a student's perception of individual competence, school membership, and authenticity of work. They stated that school membership is most affected by a school's clarity of

purpose, fairness, a student's perception of personal support, a sense of success, and a feeling of caring from the school, teachers and peers. Authentic work is most affected by students' perceptions of extrinsic rewards, students' personal intrinsic interests and sense of ownership, the connection of school work to real-world application (including a need for value beyond instruction), clear and prompt feedback, collaboration between students and teacher, and flexible use of time. Finally, in order for students to feel their work is authentic schools need to incorporate fun and lightheartedness into the curriculum.

The data gathered in this study were viewed through the theoretical lens of student engagement as proposed by Newmann and colleagues (1992). This study explored the perceptions of LDS seminaries teachers concerning student engagement and the data gathered from interviews and observations was coded according to the theory of Newmann and colleagues as outlined above.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Qualitative Inquiry

To better understand LDS seminary teachers lived experiences with student engagement, this study used a qualitative approach of inquiry. Unlike the detached nature of quantitative research, in qualitative inquiry the researcher understands that "subjectivity is always part of research" (Glesne, 2006, p. 119) and that the researcher is the "key instrument" for the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 38). Glesne suggested that it is essential for qualitative researchers to monitor subjectivity through reflexivity in discovering their own interests, biases, and motives for conducting a study. Creswell stated that in doing this, the philosophical assumptions underlying the design of the study need to be made explicit in writing because they make up the worldviews, paradigms, and sets of beliefs that are brought by the researcher to the study. Glesne argued that the choice to use qualitative inquiry indicates the researcher's perspective of the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and the theory of how the inquiry should proceed (methodology).

Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Assumptions

The concept of student engagement is multifaceted and complex but has embedded within it the concept's philosophical underpinnings. The ontological issues addressed within this concept deal with the nature of reality that is constructed by

individuals involved within the construction of engagement. Within engagement multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the teacher, the students, and observers of the class, and the researcher, followed by the interpretations of the readers of the research. The concept of student engagement aligns with the perceived theories inherent in an ontological approach to the nature of reality as found in the theory of phenomenology. This theory states that reality is a structure of consciousness in human experience (Creswell, 1998).

The epistemological underpinnings associated with student engagement align with the physical intersubjectivity views of structuralism, which posits that knowledge arises from a vast sea of informal, tacit, embodied experience (Davis, 2004). Structuralism also views learning as a matter of modifying the knowledge that we already have and learning as an ongoing, recursive, elaborative process (Davis, 2004). This theoretical perspective also includes constructivism and constructionism which are subcategories of social construction theory. Student engagement aligns with Vygotsky's belief that children learn through interaction with skilled partners in the zone of proximal development, and that through engaging with others in complex thinking that uses cultural tools of thought, students become able to use such thinking to increase their knowledge and understanding (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1987).

Approach to Inquiry: Phenomenology

Because of the theoretical perspectives associated with the concept of student engagement, an appropriate qualitative paradigm to use in conducting the current

research was phenomenology. A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a phenomenon and explores the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenology began with the extensive writings of Husserl (1859-1938) a German mathematician (Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark, & Morales, 2007). He stressed that researchers need to search for the essence and central meaning of experience through intentionality of conscience as perceived by the individuals who experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998).

The psychological approach to conducting phenomenological research was used to "determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essence of structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). A main concern in conducting phenomenology is the need for the investigator to set aside, as much as possible, his experiences in order to have a fresh perspective of the phenomenon under examination; Husserl called this epoche (Creswell et al., 2007).

In this study, a phenomenological inquiry was appropriate because it is best suited for studies oriented in a constructivist paradigm and the best approach when the research is of such a nature that "it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p. 60).

Moustakas (1994) suggested that when conducting a phenomenological study the

researcher needs to: (a) determine if the research question is best studied using a phenomenological approach, (b) select a phenomenon of interest to study, (c) recognize the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenology, (d) collect data from those who have experience with the phenomenon, (e) analyze the data by grouping responses of participants' experience with the phenomenon and why, and (f) write a composite description, or essence, of the phenomenon. This study followed these procedural guidelines.

Role of the Researcher

Glesne (2006) stated that in conducting qualitative inquiry the research process is not only influenced by the theoretical lens, but it is also influenced by the personal lens of the researcher. Therefore it should be clear that the researcher rapport and subjectivity influences interpretations of participants' descriptions (Glesne, 2006). I have worked within the S&I program of the LDS Church 10 years; I acknowledge that this is a backyard study and I am a proponent of the cause of S&I. The clarification of research bias is addressed later in this chapter. In order to clearly define the role of the researcher in this study it must be stated that my intent in this study was to understand the phenomenon for purposes of improving in my own classroom. Glesne stated that such a role of the researcher is known as "champion of the cause" (p. 136).

Rapport

Rapport in a qualitative study is defined as a distance-reducing, anxiety-quieting, trust building mechanism (Glesne, 2006). Communication for this study was conducted

in culturally appropriate ways including monitoring for researcher appearance, speech, and behavior (Glesne, 2006). As mentioned earlier, I am an employee of S&I, which made it important to disclose this fact to each participant and the same time help them understand my role as a student researcher and not as a researcher for the LDS church. I spoke with each participant by telephone prior to each interview and informed them of my role. I then had a similar conversation with each participant face to face just prior to each interview.

Subjectivity

In qualitative research subjectivity is recognized as a part of the research that influences all aspects of the research from the selection of the phenomenon being studied to the interpretation of the data and writing of the findings (Creswell, 1998). Glesne (2006) stated that subjectivity can contribute to the study if it is recognized and monitored. Glesne also stated that one way researchers can recognize their subjectivity is to be attuned to their emotions. In the current study, I monitored subjectivity by using a field journal to record and analyze my feelings and thoughts during the gathering, interpreting, and writing process, which helped me self-disclose the potential biases of the study (Creswell, 2007).

One other way I monitored for subjectivity is through the process of inter-subjectivity which is defined as subjective input of all individuals involved in the research process (Glesne, 2006). Participants had the opportunity to use their subjectivity by viewing transcripts, descriptions, and interpretations of the collected data which allowed my subjectivity to be monitored by others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne,

2006). Glesne stated that negotiation of subjectivities is ongoing with the option for values, attitudes, and understandings to be changed through the research process by both the researcher and participants. In the current study subjectivity was monitored by recording my emotions, feelings, and personal reflections in a field journal during the gathering, interpreting, and writing process.

<div align="center">**Research Procedures**</div>

Pilot Study

Glesne (2006) suggested conducting a pilot study before engaging in the actual study to learn about the processes, interview questions, observation techniques, and for testing the proposed research. She also suggested researchers use the pilot study as a chance to inform themselves about the topic they are studying. Further suggestions include conducting a pilot study to help refine interview question and revise the research statement and plans (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006). Following these suggestions, I conducted a pilot study in the spring of 2011. The pilot study was my novice approach to qualitative research but helped me to discover challenges inherent in a study of student engagement.

I worked closely with my own supervisors to identify three teachers who exemplified high levels of student engagement. I asked my immediate supervisor for a list of names of teachers he felt exemplified high levels of student engagement. I then interviewed each participant and made several class observations. I asked each participant two questions:

1. How do you know when student engagement is happening in your class?

2. What do you do to generate student engagement in your class?

The interview protocol then became more open-ended and less rigid to allow the participants to express their beliefs and practices regarding student engagement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The results of this pilot study indicated a greater need for me to identify a theoretical lens to analyze the data. The theoretical lens was also needed to establish a firm definition of the educational concept of student engagement. Glesne (2006) explained that after a pilot study changes to research questions, interview protocols, and the theoretical lens are common procedure. After this pilot study, I decided to examine the concept of engagement through the theoretical lens of Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Sampling

In order to identify teachers who exemplified high levels of student engagement, it was essential to create a definition of the phenomenon to analyze the concept of student engagement. After a thorough review of the literature, I decided to use the following definition of engagement: a psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote (Newmann et al., 1992) With that definition of engagement in mind, I worked with principals and directors in S&I to identify individuals who had experienced the phenomenon.

In order to gain access to principals, directors, and teachers, it was necessary for

the researcher to receive permission from S&I to conduct this study. The researcher

petitioned S&I Education Research Committee and received approval (Appendix C).

To identify individual teachers who exemplified high levels of student

engagement, I surveyed all the directors and principals in the S&I Utah Area (the name

has been altered to protect the identity of each participant) asking them to identify 10

teachers who exemplified high levels of student engagement according to the given

definitions derived from the literature. Principals and directors qualified as content

experts because they had the assignment to observe all teachers on their faculties or areas

at least annually with most observing quarterly or monthly. Each principal or director had

a professional assignment to assess and evaluate teaching based upon objectives directed

by S&I administration. As part of their administrative responsibilities they observed all of

the teachers under their supervision and assessed their teaching through both formative

and summative evaluations (Marzano, 2003). Because of the numerous times that

directors and principals observed the classroom teaching of each teacher on their faculty

or in their area, they qualified as content experts who could identify and suggest names of

teachers who exemplified high levels of student engagement as defined by Newmann and

colleagues (1992).

Along with Newmann and colleaegues' (1992) definition of student engagement,

a definition of the corresponding components of engagement including: competence,

school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work,

extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, sense of ownership, connection to the real world, and

fun were included in a hand out given to the directors and principal as well as each of the

10 participants to insure accurate understanding of student engagement and its corresponding components (Appendix D). Creswell (1998) defined this as criterion sampling. Each principal and director was contacted via email with an attached letter (Appendix E) and the attached list of definitions.

The reason for choosing the Utah Area was because of the large circulation of faculty members throughout the area. Many teachers taught at many of the seminaries in that area, so principals and directors have observed many teachers in the area not just the teachers who constituted their current faculty. After each principal and director submitted the names of teachers, the researcher identified the 10 names that were suggested most often. The reason for 10 participants was because Moustaka (1994) stated that phenomenological studies examine anywhere from 5 to 25 individuals with the average being around 10. Boyd (2001) suggested 2-10 participants made a sufficient sample size; whereas, Morse (1994) suggested that six participants constituted an appropriate sample size. Creswell (1998) stated that 10 was sufficient to describe the essence of a phenomenon. This study followed the recommendations of Moustaka and Creswell.

From the data collected from principals and directors, the 10 teachers who received the most recognition as having high levels of student engagement were selected as the participants of this study.

Research Questions

According to Creswell (1998), once the individuals for the study are identified, the researcher composes research questions that explore the meaning of the experiences

of the identified individuals. These individuals are asked to describe their everyday lived experiences concerning the phenomenon.

In this study, the questions focused on the lived experiences of each individual concerning student engagement. Creswell (1998) stated that the questions need to contain the following types of questions.

1. What are the possible structural meanings of the experience?

2. What are the underlying themes and contexts that account for the experience?

3. What are the universal structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts about the experience?

4. What are the invariant structural themes that facilitate a description of the experience?

Examples of the research questions were based on the theoretical lens of Newmann and colleagues (1992). As stated earlier, the main question of this study was: What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms? In order to collect data pertaining to this question, the researcher asked the following questions to each participant (Appendix B).

1. How do you define student engagement?

2. What evidence do you look for to determine if student engagement is occurring in your classroom?

3. What do you do to generate student engagement in the classroom?

4. What do you do to help establish competence with your students?

5. What do you do to help foster positive school membership for students?

6. What do you do to help define clarity of purpose for students?

7. What do you do to insure fairness with your students?

8. How do you give personal support to your students?

9. How do you foster an environment of caring in your classroom?

10. What do you do to help students feel that the work they do in your class is authentic?

11. What extrinsic rewards do you implement in your classroom?

12. What do you do to help foster intrinsic interest with your students?

13. How do you develop a sense of ownership with your students?

14. How do you help make your curriculum have a connection to the real world for your students?

15. What do you do to help create an environment of fun for your students?

A definition of each construct was given to each participant to help insure accurate understanding of the concepts pertaining to student engagement (Appendix D).

Data Collection

Data collection in a phenomenological study is centered on in-depth interviews with participants (Creswell, 2007). Glesne (2006) suggested that multiple data collection contributes to the trustworthiness of a study and should include such things as observations, field journals, document analysis, surveys, theory, and pilot tests. For this study I conducted interviews, field journal observations, and document analysis in order to triangulate and verify the trustworthiness of the data (Glesne, 2006).

Interviews. Following the survey given to principals and directors, I compiled the list of teachers that the principals and directors believed fostered high levels of student engagement. I then selected 10 teachers who received the most number of recommendations to be the participants in this study. I contacted all participants by telephone and provided them a detailed description of the study, explained their potential role in the research, and invited then to participate in this study. All participants were also sent by email the Letter of Information (Appendix A). All 10 of the original teachers agreed to be participants for the entirety of this study. Following Glesne's (2006) suggestion, I kept each interview to within a specified time frame of approximately one hour. I visited the seminary of each participant and observed them teach and interact with students throughout the day. Following the classroom observations I interviewed all participants in their office or classroom. The interviews were structured according to the interview protocol (Appendix B). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to obtain accurate information (Creswell, 2007). I personally transcribed all the audio recorded interviews into 10 electronic documents. I followed up as needed with further interviews to continue the data collection process and insure prolonged engagement in the research. Most participants were contacted on several occasions by telephone and email and asked to clarify statements and make further statements associated with the questions in the interview protocol.

To help protect the participant's identity, all personal and demographic information was coded to ensure confidentiality. I used pseudonyms, chosen by each participant, in place of participants' names, schools, students, and locations. Also, to help

protect this information, I kept all of the interview transcripts on a password protected computer (Creswell, 2007).

Field journal observations. I kept a field journal to record what was observed for meaning and help protected against personal bias (Glesne, 2006). The field journal included descriptions of sites, participants, including their description and reaction throughout the interview process, classroom observations, evidences of student engagement I observed during classroom observations and personal insights and observation made by the researcher. The field journal also documented the research process in order to have a record for future research which helped me more clearly see the events that led to the data collection. The field journal was kept in an electronic document on the computer.

Document collection. Along with interviews and field journal observations, I gathered documents from each participant that they used to help engage students in the classroom. I gathered participants' grade sheets, "get to know you activities" sheets, seating charts, listed classroom rules and expectations, responsibility charts, and instructions for class leaders. Documents corroborate observations and interviews and increase the trustworthiness of the study as well as strengthen the research process (Glesne, 2006). Studying these documents and items helped me put in context the practices of the participants concerning concepts they employed to generate student engagement.

Data Analysis

Creswell (1998) stated that following data collection the researcher begins an

analysis of the data by first creating a full description of the researchers experience with the phenomenon. The researcher then scours through the transcribed data looking for statements about how individuals experienced the phenomenon. This process is referred to as horizonalization which means the researcher lists every significant statement relevant to the phenomenon and gives it equal value (Creswell, 2007). The researcher then develops a list of original non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements. Once an original list of experiences is created, the researcher then groups the data into "meaning units" and coding (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher then reflects on the coding and uses imaginative variations or structural descriptions seeking the meanings and perspectives of the individuals studied (Creswell, 1998). This is conducted in order to construct a description of how the phenomenon was experienced. The researcher then constructs an overall description of the meaning to describe the "essence" of the experience (Creswell, 2007, p. 55).

Following Creswell's suggestion concerning data analysis, I scoured through the pages of transcribed data looking for significant statements relating to student engagement. I put the significant statements into codes. The coding of units for this study was centered on the themes from the theoretical lens of Newmann and colleagues (1992): competence, school membership: clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, and caring as well as authentic work: extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to the real world, and fun. I also included three additional coding units: participants' definition of student engagement, evidence that each participant looked for to measure student engagement, and an over-arching description of what

generates student engagement.

Because the original research question of this study was "What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms," the data analysis focused on the compilation of concepts used by participants to help generate student engagement in their classrooms.

Following the transcription of the data and the selection of coding units, I compiled a description of the data from each participant. I then described each participant's perception of each coding unit. Next I compiled all of the participants descriptions into each coding unit creating lists of concepts used to generate student engagement. I then coded each description into common coding units and compiled the results into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet in order to create a list of stated concepts. I then used the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to calculate the times each concept was described by the participants. The participants' descriptions of the phenomenon and the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were then used to generate the key findings in this study. I then performed a comparative analysis between the key findings and the theoretical framework of Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) stated that in order to gain trustworthiness in a qualitative study the following strategies should be implemented: prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, peer review, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member

checking, using rich thick description in writing, and external audits. Creswell also recommended that at least two of these strategies should be engaged in a qualitative study. In this study I used member checking, peer reviews, external audits, rich and thick description, negative case analysis, clarification of researcher bias, and triangulation.

Member Checking

Creswell (2007) suggested that this is the most critical technique to establish credibility from data gathered through interviews. In this study I gave each participant the transcripts of the interviews and conclusions derived from the gathered data to ensure accurate interpretations of each participant's comments and ideas. Each participant received an electronic copy of the transcripts via email from the researcher. The participants were then contacted by telephone by me to discuss the process of member checking. I then received an electronic copy of the transcript from each of the participants with corrections and additions made by the participants to the original transcript. This process was repeated throughout the study. This helped establish that I attempted to portray the original intent of the thoughts, ideas, and perspectives of the participants (Glesne, 2006).

Peer Review and External Audit

Creswell (2007) stated that one validation strategy in research is to have other researchers review the procedures. The current study was reviewed by two groups of research experts. The first was the doctoral committee for the current study and the second was the Educational Research Committee for S&I.

Following Creswell's (2007) suggestion for an external audit, the current study received a critical review by an external colleague, who examined all field notes, interview transcripts, analyses, and descriptions of the study. The colleague was someone who understands qualitative methodologies and has knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. The colleague was not a participant or part of the current study. He found that the research procedures for the current study met validity requirements for qualitative inquiry (Appendix F).

Clarification of Researcher Bias

Because I am an employee of the LDS seminary system and conducted a backyard study, there was potential for researcher bias. To deal with this threat to trustworthiness, I used the field journal to record researcher bias and personal reflections of those biases.

Rich and Thick Description

By using thick and rich description describing participants and settings, a researcher allows the reader of the study to apply transferability from the current settings of the study to other settings (Creswell, 2007). In the current study, I used the process of a field observation journal to create a rich and thick description. The field journal contained details of participants, settings, and emotions of the study.

Triangulation

Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry (2006) defined triangulation as a deliberate attempt to confirm, elaborate, and disconfirm facts and interpretations through the use of multiple

data sources. I accomplished triangulation of the data through the collection of data from interviews, field journal observations, and document analysis (Glesne, 2006).

Negative Case Analysis

This procedure required that I consciously search for negative cases and disconfirming evidence. Although working with a criterion sample that all experienced the phenomenon, I looked for cases that provided divergent textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon. I did not find any negative cases or disconfirming evidence.

Prolonged Engagement

In order to gather accurate data, I engaged in in-depth interviews as well as conducted follow up interviews to assist the data gathering process. I also continued to contact participants by phone and email to keep in contact and thoroughly explore the participants' perceptions of the studied phenomenon. By doing this I insured that prolonged engagement occurred with each participant.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine student engagement in LDS seminaries. The intent of this chapter was to write a description of 10 LDS seminary teacher's experience with the phenomenon of student engagement. In following Moustakas' (1994) suggestion, the descriptions were taken from verbatim examples and direct quotations of participants which were clustered into themes. The descriptions were also supplemented by researcher observations and document analysis. The themes used in describing seminary teachers' experience with student engagement were generated using the categories proposed in the theoretical framework of Newmann and colleagues (1992) and three additional categories including: participant's definition of student engagement, what evidences the participants look for to determine if student engagement is occurring, and each participants perception of what they do to help generate student engagement. The themes included the following: (a) the participant's personal definition of student engagement; (b) participants' perceptions of evidence of student engagement; (c) participants' efforts to generate student engagement; (d) competence; (e) school membership; (f) clarity of purpose; (g) fairness; (h) personal support; (i) caring; (j) authenticity; (k) extrinsic rewards; (l) intrinsic interest; (m) ownership; (n) real-world connection; and (o) fun. The following is the description of each of the 10 participants and their experiences with the phenomenon of student engagement.

All 10 of the participants have both a bachelor's and master's degree. One participant was working on a doctoral degree in education. The participants' bachelor

degrees included three in marriage, family, and human development; one in economics;

one in science; one in elementary education; one in Spanish; one in integrated studies;

one in American studies; and one in history. The participants' master's degrees included

seven in education; one in marriage, family, and human development; one in social work;

and one in religious education.

The process of becoming a seminary teacher included obtaining a bachelor's

degree and completing two teaching courses offered through an institute program. At the

end of the second teaching course, a student had an opportunity to student teach for 10

days. During their 10-day teaching experience, they were evaluated to determine if they

were eligible to student teach for a year. Throughout a student teaching year, a teacher

was observed by multiple individuals including the manager of preservice to determine

hiring status. Typically there were between 100-300 student teachers. In a typical hiring

year, 20-40 student teachers were hired as full-time S&I employees.

Cal Barlow

Cal Barlow was a 36-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 9 years. He

had taught at three seminaries adjacent three different large rural high schools in Utah.

He had been the principal for the past 4 years. He had a bachelor's degree in economics

and a master's degree in family and human development.

Definition of Student Engagement

Cal Barlow defined student engagement as "simple." He stated that student

engagement was when students view the lesson as "interesting, relevant, applicable, and

enjoyable." He continued by stating that engagement was when students "are just with you, they are in the lesson, they are learning what it is that people around them are talking about."

Evidences of Student Engagement

Cal Barlow was quick to point out that determining student engagement was difficult because he stated that "students engage in many, many different ways." However, he did state that there were a few signs to determine that student engagement was taking place. He stated that engagement was "when students are talking or commenting" or that if you asked them what was being discussed in class "they would know and there would be a level of interest there." He also stated that student engagement was evident when students quietly listen to whoever was speaking. He stated that he watched their eyes and looked to see that they followed whoever was speaking. He said, "It's kind of like wherever the center of attention is, their head and eyes follow to see who is speaking. Their eyes are with you and they are looking at what is going on. You can tell a lot by their eyes if they are involved or disengaged."

Generate Student Engagement

According to Cal Barlow, he stated that he did a lot to help generate student engagement in his classroom. He stated, "This is something that I have been working on for a long time and that I find very significant." He stated that he prepares for this long before the students arrive and the start of class. He stated that he tried to have music playing when students came in and had the classroom organized, cleaned, and settled so

they can feel relaxed and calm. He stated:

> When I am busy and running around when the students come to class, it's not the same level of engagement, but if I am ready and standing there when they arrive, we can have a conversation about their lives and ask them about their activities, and let them see that there is a relationship there. Then it is easier for them to be interested in what is going on and easier for them to invest in class.

He stated that one of the keys for generating engagement was to have a positive relationship in which a student felt cared for and respected. He stated, "A lot of creating a positive relationship happens before class and after class. Like shaking hands, asking how they are doing, calling home when they are not there out of genuine concern."

The next key that Cal stated as necessary for engagement was relevancy. He stated, "If they don't see how it applies to them right now or why it would benefit their life, then they will have a difficult time engaging in the lesson." During his preparations each day, he looked through all the curriculum material seeking for things that seemed to have relevance in his students' lives and what he thought would be interesting for them.

Competence

When asked what he did to generate competence with his students, Cal shared a story of observing another teacher's class. He said that as he sat in the back of the classroom he watched as a girl gave a prayer and another student gave a thought but the teacher went on with the lesson like it did not happen. He said, "It felt as if the teacher was telling those students that they were not important and now they were going to start this wonderful lesson he had prepared. It felt wrong. So since then I have tried to sincerely compliment every student who contributes to class." He also stated that he tried to write notes to students to compliment them about things they had done in class or their

overall behavior. He stated that by complimenting his students they developed confidence, which in turn allowed him to equip students with the knowledge necessary to be successful in class. He felt that validation brings confidence, and when students were confident they could learn the essential knowledge required for success and competence.

Positive School Membership

Cal Barlow tried to foster positive school membership with his students his entire career. He stated that one way to build positive school membership was by allowing each student to have assignments and be a part of class leadership. He stated that anything he did that can be delegated to students such as holding up pictures, writing on the board, reading aloud, or passing out papers, he asked students to do in order to get them involved. He stated that by doing these little things, it helps a student feel valued and a part of class, which helps foster school membership. He also stated that this process of delegation was how he prepared to teach each lesson. He prepared a lesson that had a basic outline of principles he wanted to teach, but then he tried to listen to the questions of the students so that he could have them lead the class discussion. He also stated that in a lesson he wanted to cover many principles but allow the students to discuss the ones that are relevant and interesting to them. He said that this allowed the students to have ownership in class and be contributing members who helped direct the course of the class.

Clarity of Purpose

To help students see the purpose and importance of his class, Cal Barlow had a

lesson at the first of each year on class expectations. He stated that the class was not just about rules and procedures but a discovery about the dynamics of a good class. He did this by having each student write a paragraph in their journal about "the most awesome seminary class they have been a part of." He then had them look through the paragraph and find the major factors that contributed to the dynamics of that class. The class members then come and write those factors on the board. He recalled that the list usually has statements like "the teacher was awesome, everyone participated, everyone was kind to each other, and we had good discussions in class." He stated that he did this so that the students could see that the class factors that contribute to making class a great experience were mostly the responsibility of the students and only about 20% of it was the sole responsibility of the teacher. He then told his students:

> I promise that I will do everything I can to make this class awesome. I will prepare with all my heart, I will be kind, I will do all of these things. But the other stuff listed on the board is my expectation for you. I want this class to be uplifting and edifying so here is the class expectations.

He stated that they "buy into this because they came up with it." He continued by saying that the students recognized that they were a determining factor into the success and experience of class. He said that classes that understood and accepted this expectation would share, participate, and help make the classroom a safe environment in which people felt they could share things of the heart without being ridiculed.

Cal also stated that he had a motto for himself in regards of expectations for his students. His motto was "lovingly firm." He felt that helping students see the purpose of class required them to see the expectations associated with class membership. He stated, "You can't just let things happen. You have to have expectations, but you don't have to

be a jerk about it. By being lovingly firm and enforcing the expectation and doing it in an inspiring way, that shows them they can be better." He also stated that while being "lovingly firm" he tried to never be adversarial by using the phrase "my class" and "my lesson" because students need to feel that it was their class and their lesson.

Cal Barlow stated that one tool he used to help students maintain clarity of purpose throughout the school year was the class grade sheet. He stated that many of the behavioral expectations of class were expressed on the grade sheet for the students such as: coming to class having read the text for the day, participating in the lesson by verbally contributing to class discussion, being on time, and writing at least one journal entry each day. Although he used a grade sheet as a tool to visually help students remember the expectations of class, he stated, "The things that really matter are hard to put on a grade sheet." He continued by saying:

> I think emphasizing, especially in the first few weeks of each semester, when something good happens and really taking time to recognize the students' accomplishments, helps them see the importance of class. I think they need to hear a compliment when they really shared a great comment or a thank you for their contributions.

He also stated that one of the best ways to pay a compliment to a student was using their comments to perpetuate the lesson or by referring back to a student's comment throughout the lesson.

Fairness

Cal Barlow stated that having clear expectations helps students feel that class is administered in a fair manner. He stated, "I think it is about having clear expectations and if everyone is expected to live up to that standard, and if you are kind but firm when that

standard is not met, I think the students' impression of class is fair." He also stated that

students feel class is unfair when they do not have a clear understanding of class

expectations. He spent great efforts at helping each student understand class expectations

and insuring that class standards are met and observed. He felt that in grading, class

discipline, class participation, and student teacher interaction, if the students clearly know

the expectations of class, they would feel that they were dealt with fairly.

Personal Support

Cal Barlow stated that the best way to give personal support to his students is by

getting to know them personally and understanding what experiences are happening in

their lives. He explained that he learned a valuable lesson from another teacher about

helping students feel supported. He said, "Someone asked this teacher 'what do you do to

reach the hard-to-reach kids?' He said if you can't reach them today, love them today,

and maybe you can teach them tomorrow." He continued by saying:

> I have really, really taken that to heart, and I know there has to be firm standards
> and things like that but the only time I have gotten into trouble and damaged a
> relationship with a student is when I forced a standard on them out of frustration
> for myself or for my lesson rather than out of love and concern for that student.

He also stated that a student needs to see that a teacher is acting in the best interest of the

student. He stated:

> I think if we can word things in a way that shows the students that I am concerned
> about them and not myself or my lesson, it helps them feel supported. For
> instance if you go up to a kid and say that this behavior is not going to happen in
> my class is very different than holding a student after class and saying I really
> want you to have a good experience in class and I feel like you are not having
> one. Can you help me understand what is going on because I really want to help
> you? When it is focused on them it's better. It makes them feel like you have an
> interest and desire for them rather than a selfish desire that the students are here

for the teacher. If that balance ever switches and we start to think that the students are here for us rather than we are here for them, then we lose that relationship we should have built with the students.

Cal stated that in order to help students feel personally supported, students need to know that the teacher is motivated by helping the students rather than being self-serving.

Caring

When asked what he did to foster an environment of caring in his class, Cal Barlow said that one of the most important things he did was personally get to know each of his students. He felt that when he got to know what was happening in their lives he could show genuine concern and care for them. He gave an example of this to help illustrate how he cared for his students. He said:

> I had a girl miss five or six days in a row and I called home each time but was unable to reach anyone. Finally one day this girl came back. When I pulled her aside I asked if there was something going on and if there was something I could do to help. She then told me that her mom had just started battling cancer for the second time and when her dad found out that her mom had cancer he left saying that he couldn't go through this for a second time and he left the family. I was so grateful that day that I took the time to ask what was going on in her life rather than come down hard on her and say something stupid like, if you miss this class one more time you will be in trouble.

He further emphasized the need to get to know the students by saying that he tried to greet each student daily and ask them what was going on in their lives. He also stated that in order to help the students feel that he cared, he assumed the best in each of his students. He said:

> I assume the best in people, and even when I hear the worst, I just try and treat them the way I hope they will be someday rather than how they are currently acting. I want them to see a vision of what they can be, and that I see their potential, and that I care for each of them.

He said he wants them to know that he sees their potential and that he has faith that they can be even better than what they are today. By helping them see this in themselves he said he is helping them see that he cares for them.

He said that he showed the students he cared by making calls home when they were absent, shaking hands with each of them when they come to class each day, and recognizing when they were not there. He said:

> As I shake hands, greet the students, and call home when they are absent, they see that I care. If they haven't been here and missed class for a few days and if they come to class and you don't even say hi to them or tell them you missed them, I think it leaves them feeling that you just don't care about them. But if they miss a day and you say we missed you, are you ok, what was going on last time, then they recognize that you know who they are and that you care about them.

Cal also stated that in order to for a student to feel that they were cared for, they had to feel validated by the teacher. He said that a student needs to know that a teacher cares about what they were saying and was interested in each student's response. He said:

> I have watched as a student speaks and a teacher is not listening but is looking at the lesson and really just using the student's comments as a place holder to get them to the next thing they want to teach. Every student in that room can see that and they know you as a teacher are not listening to a word they are saying. They know that you don't really care about them.

He said that in order to help a student feel validated a teacher really needs to listen when a student was making a comment. He said:

> Really listen, don't just listen but listen to understand and if you don't understand then ask questions and let them know that you really think they are on to something and that you want to understand and learn from them.

He stated that by doing these things it lets the student know that you were "really listening and that you really care."

Authenticity

Cal Barlow stated that in order to make class an authentic experience for students,

it needs to be a class of discovery rather than a regurgitation of information. He stated:

> Students need to discover something new each day. I think that every day there
> should be some discovery. Either they are discovering something for themselves
> or they are discovering how something applies to them or they are discovering
> how they can use something to teach someone or discovering something about
> themselves.

Cal told of an experience he had that illustrates the principle of class being a

session of discovery. He said:

> I once knew a lady who was an artist and a convert to the church. When I met
> with her in her home, I was attracted to a picture she had painted hanging on her
> wall. The picture was of a fall season and a leaf covered path that meandered to a
> bright white church house positioned right in the middle of the painting. As I
> looked at the picture, I asked her to tell me what she sees when she looks at that
> painting and what the painting means to her. She told me that she painted the
> picture after her conversion to the church and it represented how she wants the
> church to be the center of her life. As I looked at that painting I saw something
> different and thought about how this painting might mean something different to
> each person that looked at it. For instance the picture could be seen by one person
> who has lost a loved one to death to represent a glowing hope the church brings
> when you are surrounded by death represented in the dying leaves. Another
> person might see the winding road and see that it represents his life that
> meandered and curved like the leaf strewn path but eventually by the hand of God
> found the way to where he needed to be. This is how our teaching should be. We
> should help paint a picture and let each individual student discover what the
> painting means to them and see it through their personal paradigm. I know that if
> we paint a beautiful picture, God will help each student get the individual
> message he has for each person.

Cal also stated that teachers need to be less concerned with the students

understanding the message that the teacher prepared but rather be more concerned that

they receive a message for themselves taught by the spirit. He structured his class each

day to try and facilitate individual discovery. He asked students to write in their journals

what they got out of class each day and focused on students having an experience with discovery rather than focusing on a specific message that he had prepared. He stated that he relied on the Holy Ghost to help each student have an authentic experience in class, which he stated will increase student engagement.

Extrinsic Rewards

Cal Barlow stated that he incorporated a few extrinsic rewards into his classroom. He said that he gave grades. He said that the grades were based upon performance and that the grade sheet was used mainly to help establish class expectations. He also used small food items once in a while that could be considered extrinsic rewards. He stated, "I might give donuts every once in a while or some type of edible award. I give them out for good behavior but not very often at all. Those are some of the only extrinsic rewards that I use."

He said that extrinsic rewards were less effective at helping students engage in seminary. He said:

> I have manipulated my grade sheet over, and over, and over and have yet to find the perfect one. I feel that if a kid doesn't have an interest in seminary, no matter what extrinsic gimmick I use, they are not going to engage and will likely get a below average grade. It doesn't matter what I do with their grade sheet and it doesn't matter how many donuts I give out, those things don't usually do much to motivate. They rarely inspire someone to do something different.

Cal felt that extrinsic rewards were not an effective tool to help motivate students to engage in seminary. He stated that one extrinsic reward that helped students engage in seminary was sincere compliments from the teacher and other students. He strove to compliment his students especially when they fulfill class expectations. He tried to foster

an environment that allows students to complement each other. He stated that these

sincere compliments helped students engage in seminary.

Intrinsic Interest

One of the things that Cal Barlow did to help foster intrinsic interest within his

students was to help them identify how seminary blessed their lives. He shared an

example about a young woman in his class who struggled in seminary her freshman year

and by making many phone calls home and holding parent teacher conferences, she

reluctantly came to class but did very little to participate. By her senior year she began to

participate and actually enjoyed seminary. He said:

> I took her aside and said you are different; there is a different light about you. I
> then asked her what was different. She said "I have changed. I have made some
> changes in my life and I am trying harder to do what is right." I took that
> opportunity and told her that I was proud of her and that I could see that when she
> tried harder she had so much greater light about her. I made sure to point out to
> her how good she was doing.

Cal continued by saying that most teenagers have highs and lows when it comes to

seminary and the gospel in general. He stated that when a student is showing a high

interest and desire to be in seminary and live the gospel, he tries to point out to them the

blessings they are having in their lives because of their willingness to do what is expected

of them. He said that when they see the value of being in seminary, they will naturally

have a greater intrinsic interest in seminary and be motivated to more fully engage. To

highlight this principle of instilling confidence in his students and helping them see the

value of fulfilling the expectations that promote intrinsic interest, Cal shared a story of

playing baseball. He said this experience changed his perception of what helps motivate

people. He said:

> I had two college baseball coaches. One is in the hall of fame and one is not. The Hall of fame coach was Dan Johnson III. I remember one lesson he taught me more than anything else he said. Union State where I went was in the top 25 of the country for sending players to the pros, not just division two, but all of college baseball, and that is because of his coaching. He would get these guys with raw talent and turn them into amazing baseball players. Everyone thought he must do this grand transformation with his players by being an amazing coach or at teaching batting or other fundamentals of baseball. That was not the case. Actually he rarely taught us baseball at all. He would obviously coach but he would do other things that were much more effective at helping his players reach their potential. One day when I was a freshman I was trying to get used to hitting a 90 mph fastball every time I would go out to hit. In high school you face one of those type of pitchers maybe once or twice, but at this level 90 mph was common. So I was struggling to get used to that level of speed. One day I was really struggling so I came up to him after batting practice and I said "Coach what am I doing wrong?" I said "Help me I am struggling at the plate." He looked at me, 75 years old, Phi Beta Kappa, doctorate degree from Stanford University, a baseball coach, you know just a smart guy, and he looked at me shaking his head and just said "Barlow shut up! If you couldn't hit the ball I would never have given you a scholarship. Stop thinking about it, get in the batter's box and start hitting the ball as hard as you can. That is the key to hitting." That was it. That is all he said. No get your weight back, keep your eye on the ball, nothing. What he did was instill confidence in me that I got a scholarship to a great school because I was a great hitter. I thought to myself, it's not like I can't hit. Like stop all this thinking and get back in there and hit the ball. And that made the biggest difference. When we would make a mistake like an error in the field he would tell us what we did wrong. He would tell us this line that he would use all the time. He would say, "You're better than that Barlow. You are better than that. You never make that error." He would instill confidence even while correcting us. One time I was up to bat and a guy was throwing a pitch. You know in baseball when there are two strikes there is not much to do. So I stepped out of the batter's box and looked down at him to give me a sign. Instead of a sign, and all he said was, "What! Hit the ball! This guy can't strike you out!" he said that so the pitcher could hear it. Of course the pitcher heard my coach say this then looked over at him and my coach said to the pitcher, "What! You can't. He is too good." I thought to myself now this guy is going to hit me in the face. So I got in there and I hit the pitch and my coach yelled to the pitcher, "Told you!" The reason that this coach was a hall of fame coach was because he instilled that kind of confidence in his players. He taught us confidence that even when we made a mistake, we were better than that mistake. I have often thought to myself, he is not going to strike you out, you know how to hit. I have thought a lot about him in my teaching career and want to help my students feel the confidence he helped me find in myself.

Cal stated that he reminded himself over and over that the teenagers in his class will make poor choices and his job was to help them realize that there was something greater inside of them and give them the confidence that they can be successful. He felt that his students had the potential to be great and could, in their own unique way, be a blessing in someone else's life. He said that as he helped his students develop confidence in their unique abilities, they will begin to develop the intrinsic interest needed to help them engage in seminary.

Ownership

When asked what he did to help develop a sense of ownership with his students, Cal Barlow said that he strove to help them feel confident and competent so they could have a successful experience. He stated that one contributing factor to students feeling a sense of ownership in class was their ability to see that they could perform and be successful at the tasks they were asked to perform. He said, "One thing we as teachers can do wrong is give the students too much ownership and expect them to do everything." He said that he had witnessed teachers who turned everything over to students, and the students had a poor experience because the class lacked sufficient structure and instruction to help them be successful. He stated that the students left class feeling frustrated at their failures and viewing class as chaotic and lacking purpose. He stated that ownership requires detailed structure and instruction. He also stated that the reason many teachers fail to give students ownership is because it requires more effort than standing in front of the class and delivering information to the students as a "talking head." He said that lessons that give students ownership are far more difficult and time

consuming than a lesson centered on the distribution of information by the teacher. He spent the majority of his preparation time putting together instruction and class structure that allowed the students to actively participate in class and feel a sense of ownership. He assigned students to be the "discussion leaders, teachers, and the directors of class."

Real-World Connection

Cal Barlow stated that he taught principles in order to help students bridge the gap between the information taught and the application to their lives. He said that when he taught the principles contained in the stories and doctrines of the scriptures they had universal application that could be adapted to the understanding and application of each student. When preparing a lesson he found the driving principles associated with the stories and doctrines and created a variety of ways for his students to discover, analyze, and apply the principles to their lives. He stated, "If we fail to make the stories, doctrines, and lessons relevant and applicable to each of the students in our class, then we have failed as teachers." He recalled in his own life that the classes that he struggled with the most were classes that he couldn't see the application to his life. Conversely he remembered very well one particular chemistry teacher in high school who helped him not only love chemistry but apply it to his life. He said:

> I remember my chemistry teacher Mr. Sharp, one of the only teacher names that I remember. He also won California's teacher of the year award. He made class come alive. Instead of just having us learn the elements and their symbols, he made class come alive and applicable by having us learn what the different elements do. For instance he would ask us who used shampoo this morning and then would ask us if we wanted to know how it works. I loved that he taught me things I could apply to my everyday life.

Cal said that just like his chemistry class, every effective class, whether seminary or

math, needed to take the material being taught and make it relevant and applicable to

each student. He shared an example that illustrated how the curriculum can be directly

related and relevant to a student's life. He said:

> Seminary needs to be relevant, like Moses and the Red Sea that needs to be parted. If we just teach the students that Moses parted the Red Sea then it is a text book fact and not relevant. The students need to see that just like Moses, when their back is against the wall, they can ask for God's help and he can part the Red Seas in their lives. The story of Moses is really their story.

Cal said that helping students make a real-world connection to the curriculum was

the true joy and adventure of teaching. He said:

> The boring part of teaching is disseminating information from my lips to the students' pens. But helping students see how the lesson applies to their lives and having kids say 'here is my Red Sea and I am going to part it' is the joy of teaching.

Fun

Cal Barlow stated that he wanted his classroom filled with fun and laughter

throughout his lesson. He stated that he tried to be a fun teacher who allowed his students

to enjoy their experience together. He stated that he helped create an environment of fun

by allowing his students to get to know him and see his personality. He stated that he

maintained an appropriate student-teacher relationship but let the students see that he was

"human." He said one of the keys to doing this "is not taking yourself too seriously." He

related an experience that happened in his class when at a pinnacle of his lesson a student

shared an "off the wall" comment that was intended to be funny and a bit distracting to

the class. When it happened his first thought was to brush by his comment and move on

to the next, but he thought the student's comment was humorous and witty so he laughed

with the rest of his class. He felt that laughing with the students at this time was

appropriate and the students were able to see his personality, and together they took a

brief moment of levity and had fun together. He felt that instead of being a distraction it

actually helped set the class at ease and the lesson went better than he thought it would.

He stated that part of "not taking yourself too seriously" requires a teacher to be flexible

and not be rigidly tied to a preset lesson. He said:

> Don't be so decided in your lesson that something should happen a certain way
> that you try and force it on your students and anything that deviates from your
> plan is a distraction and therefore is wrong. But instead just be light without being
> light-minded about things. Let it be fun, let it be a good atmosphere. You just
> have to roll with things and be flexible on your expected outcomes. Of course
> have lines that shouldn't be crossed, but have fun with your students and enjoy
> them and their personalities. Let them enjoy yours.

Cal also shared an experience when he was a new teacher that helped him see the value

of having fun with his students. He said that when he was first hired his formal student

evaluations always had comments about him being fun. He said that many of his

colleagues teased him that he must just spend his time telling jokes. He said that this

comment "rubbed him the wrong way" and he felt particularly sensitive about the

environment he created in class. He said:

> When I was a young teacher I was worried about the comments of the other
> teachers, but now that I have the responsibility to observe other teachers, I have
> noticed how important it is to have a light, comfortable, relaxed, not casual, but
> relaxed atmosphere in order to have high levels of student engagement.

Cal also stated that the scriptures contain stories that are funny. He said, "I think

many times the scriptures have funny stories. They teach principles and some of them are

really funny so why not laugh and have fun with your students." He felt that humor could

help everyone get engaged in the lesson. He said:

When students are laughing that helps draw them into the lesson so they pay attention and are more engaged. Teachers need to strategically insert humor into their lessons. I have heard the sentiment that entertainment is engagement and I think that is wrong. I think you can use humor simply for humor's sake so that students will be engaged and ready to receive the part of the lesson that you really want them to get. Every now and then I will randomly share a good story from my life that is funny and an observer might falsely say that my story is completely off topic but that is not the point. The point for me is I use the funny story to catch the students' attention so they will be engaged for the part of the lesson I feel is most important. The story is just a tool to help them reengage so they are ready to be taught the important principle of the lesson. We have to have fun with our students. We can't make class a morgue and expect our students to be engaged.

Cal stated that the way he helped students have fun in his class was by creating a structured but relaxed and comfortable atmosphere in which students feel they can be themselves. He also stated that the key to having fun was being relaxed as a teacher and allowing the students to get to know you so they know that you care enough about them and are willing to open up and let them get to know you.

Emma Burke

Emma Burke was a 36-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 13 years. She has spent her career teaching in two Utah seminaries adjacent to suburban high schools. She spent 7 years at the first seminary and 6 years in her current assignment. Both seminaries are in the same city. She had a bachelor's degree in marriage, family, and human development and a master's degree in secondary education.

Definition of Student Engagement

Emma Burke defined student engagement as something more than simply participating. She stated:

> We often associate engagement with involvement or participation, but I don't necessarily think that students are engaged just because they are participating. Engagement is not just physical, but mental, emotional, and spiritual. Engagement is much more of an all body experience.

She also described engagement by stating:

> The students are totally invested in the lesson. They are engaged in all the motions of body and spirit and their hearts are fully in it. It's when students want to engage and it's not like it is a forced thing, but they realize the good that comes when they do, because they realize the spirit works on them and they feel good when they engage.

Emma's definition of engagement aligned with the three levels of engagement of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Axelson & Flick, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004).

Evidences of Student Engagement

The evidences of student engagement that Emma Burke looked for to determine if student engagement was happening included: scriptures are open and are being marked, students are writing in their journal or in their scriptures, students seem to be thinking and pondering, students are raising their hands and sharing insights and comments and their comments are evidence that they have processed the ideas and principles of class, and students "seem to be totally invested in the lesson." Emma also looked for evidences that students were disengaged such as: being off task, text messaging, heads down, scriptures are closed, homework from another class is on their desk, and the students don't seem to be following along.

Generate Student Engagement

Emma Burke stated that the generation of student engagement begins with clearly stated expectations. From the very first day of class she helped her students see that this

was not her class but rather this was their class together and there would be much

expected of each student. She helped students see that although there was a high

expectation, if the students put forth their best effort they would enjoy class and have a

great experience. She stated:

> Expectations start from day one. The students are responsible to help run class. I expect that and they know that they cannot just come to class and be a bump on a log in our class. I let them know that I expect them to engage because I love them and want them to have a good experience. I let them know that one way they will have a good experience is by engaging in class and that way they can be touched by the spirit and can act and not just be acted upon.

She also stated that one thing she did to help generate engagement as have a

student begin each class session. At the beginning of each class, she had a devotional that

contained prayers, hymns, scripture citations, and spiritual thoughts. This process of the

devotional was organized and run by students. She had a class president who welcomed

everyone to class and then turned the time to the students participating in the various

aspects of the devotional. She took an entire day at the first of each semester to allow

students to prepare for their devotional. She said that this time helped students prepare

and be responsible for the devotional on their assigned day.

Emma also stated that another key to generating student engagement was variety.

She wanted variety in her lessons to keep it interesting for the students. She tried to

switch methods every 15 or 20 minus in order to "keep the lesson fresh." In her

preparation she "focuses not on what I will do today, but rather what will my students do

today."

For variety, Emma had students find particular doctrines and principles in the

scriptural text. She also had students mark their scriptures, read out loud as a class or in

groups, teach each other in partners or in front of the class, class presidency assignments, assigned partners, and group activities. She felt that all these activities helped a student engage.

Competence

Emma Burke stated that creating a safe environment was a major key that helped a student feel competent. She created that environment by sincerely complimenting her students especially when they took a risk at answering a question or sharing a comment. She said, "I try to always respond to their comments by complimenting them, praising them, making them feel comfortable, and validating their comments."

She validated students and said to them, "I have felt that way too, or I have thought that same thing." She also established an environment of safety by showing the students she had faith in their abilities and believed that they could accomplish assignments and activities. She told her students that she had faith in them and let them know verbally that she believed they would be successful in class and each activity. She spent the first 3 to 5 minutes of class having students respond to each other about "the question of the day." She posed questions that students discussed with each other ranging from humorous questions to serious questions intended to have students share their beliefs and feelings. She said that this small investment of 3 to 5 minutes built unity and a sense of safety. She also said that the "question of the day" helped build positive school membership.

Positive School Membership

In addition to fielding the "question of the day," Emma Burke helped students feel that they were important members of her class by setting the expectation that all members of class played a valuable and vital role. As stated earlier, Emma helped the students understand that the class was not hers but class ownership belonged to each class member.

To help each students fulfill their role as a member of class, Emma put students into a group she called tribes. Each tribe had between four and five students who sat together in rows. The class had six tribes. Each tribe and student had specific assignments. She stated that as students had specific assignments and were responsible and accountable to a smaller subset of students, they felt a sense of belonging and were more included in class. Each tribe leader had the responsibility to reach out to struggling students and call them if they were missing and make sure that they were included in class activities.

In addition to helping students feel positive school membership by assigning them to work within a smaller sub set of class, she also had the entire class work together on projects such as reading. Each week Emma had students anonymously report the number of days they read their scriptures. This helped students see that their anonymous contribution affected the class average and their contribution did matter to the success of the entire class. She felt that this combined effort by class members fostered unity and helped students feel valued.

Emma also had a student share announcements at the first of class that highlighted

the accomplishments of the students and the activities they were involved in. Emma

stated that as students learned about what was happening in the lives of the other

students, it helped build a spirit of unity and increased the feeling of school membership.

Clarity of Purpose

Emma Burke said, "Each of my students know that every minute of our class time

is sacred and that their time is valuable to me and each other. So they know we get started

on time and get right to the lesson and important matters of the day." She spent the first

few minutes of class helping the students get to know each other and share what was

going on in their lives. They then got right into the scriptures and lesson. She admitted

that she had evolved as a teacher from one who spent a large amount of time with object

lessons, activities, and other teaching methods designed to entertain, to a teacher who

tried to spend her time in the scriptures. She said:

> I am probably not as fun of a teacher as I once was but I now don't spend as
> much time doing those fun things but I focus on our purpose to help students draw
> closer to the Savior and feel the spirit through the word of God. So I think I try to
> establish clarity of purpose by diligently teaching the word and being in the word.
> We are to be in the word and the students know the purpose of being here is to
> study and to learn.

She stated that every student clearly knew that the purpose of class was to learn

the doctrines and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and the words of

modern prophets. She spent a lot of time at the first of the year helping her students

understand the definition of principles and doctrines and showing them many examples

of how to find them within the text of the scriptures. She reinforced that the purpose of

her class was to help the students discover, understand, and apply, the doctrines and

principles to their lives. She did this by having students come up with a "take-home

lesson" each day. These "take-home lessons" were small phrases that helped students

remember the principle or doctrine taught in a particular block of scripture. She created a

visual poster that represented the take-home lesson and hung it on the classroom wall.

This allowed students to have a visual reminder of all the important doctrines and

principles taught throughout the year.

Fairness

Emma Burke admitted that treating all students fairly was difficult because some

students were especially challenging. She said:

> Obviously there are some students that are easier to love than others. So it can be
> challenging to treat them all fairly, but I try to pray for them every day and learn
> more about their lives so I can see them like the Lord sees them and then it
> becomes easier to treat them fairly.

She stated that she tried to help each student feel supported and loved so that they

saw class as being administered in a fair and equitable way. She stated that if every

student saw that he or she as loved by the teacher then they would see that class was run

fairly. She also stated that the clear expectations helped the students see that class was

fair. About these expectations impacting fairness she said:

> I expect everyone to share. I want there to be fairness in sharing; I want there to
> be fairness in speaking. So I think breaking class down into tribes helps with that.
> A seating chart helps with that too. That way I can see who is sharing and
> speaking and help students that are not sharing by reminding them that we all
> share and we all speak. Tribe leaders can help me with that and help remind each
> student in their group about the expectations.

Emma also stated that she felt fairness was not just about sharing but also how a

student felt in class. She stated that she tried to joke with each student and have them feel

that she liked them. She also stated that in order for class to be fair, it needed to be a safe environment where each student felt loved.

Personal Support

Emma Burke stated that she gave personal support to her students by getting to know them and what was happening in their lives. She stated that shaking hands with every student who comes into her class was vital. She said that students felt supported as she shook their hands and asked each one about his or her life. She said that she asked, "How is your day? What is going on in your life? Anything new going on that you want to share? How is school or whatever activity you are involved in?" She felt that that small investment helped each student feel cared for and supported. She also stated that a key to caring was following up with the students' responses so they knew that she really listened and cared. She said:

> You have to follow up the next time they come back to your class and ask them how did it go or how was your test or how is your dad feeling? They need to see that you remember things about their lives. When they share you need to validate them and follow up with things in their lives.

She also said that she helped students feel supported by helping them enjoy class and feel that it was a place of sanctuary where they could come and be themselves. She said:

> Help each student feel the enjoyment of being in seminary. It is such a strength to have them like seminary and let them know that this can be a sanctuary. I think some of it takes place outside of class. Show support to them by going to their games, concerts, or plays. Or if you can't be there then say I read your name in the paper, you came off the bench and scored 11 points, that is so awesome. Just support them that way and then in the lesson just support their answers and validate them by supporting how they feel.

By acknowledging students and the activities in their lives, Emma said that she helped give personal support to her students.

Caring

From the first day of class, Emma Burke tried to help her students feel comfortable and cared for. She said:

> On day one you get this new class and they don't know each other very well. There always seems to be a nervousness or apprehension to open up and share. So day one I teach the principles of caring and let each student know that they need to treat each other with love and respect. I help them see that we need to do this together in order to make class successful. I help them see that if they can allow each other to open up, feel, comfortable, and show respect, then class will be amazing.

Emma had a few activities at the beginning of the school year that she stated helped students foster an environment of caring. She stated that her question of the day helped students get to know each other and care for each other. Speaking of the question of the day and how it related to caring, she said:

> I think the question of the day really helps create a caring environment. Some days we ask silly things like what super power would you choose, and then other days it's more serious like what is something you love about your family, or what is your favorite hymn, or who is your favorite scripture hero. That way they can be a little more serious and share things from their hearts.

Emma stated that a balance between having fun and feeling the spirit was required for an environment of caring. She stated that when that balance was reached, the students felt it, loved it, and looked forward to coming, because they knew they were cared for. She also said that when this balance was reached, students knew it would be fun and that they would be edified by the spirit.

Emma stated that in order for a student to be cared for they needed to feel

respected. She said that having students assigned to tribes helped foster respect because

they got to know and trust four to five people. She said that starting in that small group,

the respect and caring grew throughout the class.

Authenticity

Emma Burke said that having the spirit in class helped with authenticity. She

said:

> The spirit helps make the lesson authentic. I think that is the beauty of the spirit in the classroom. If I can be a worthy instrument through which the spirit can operate, the greater the level of engagement, the greater the questions, and the better will be the choice of scriptures I highlight. If the spirit is here, it will authenticate the message for each student in their lives and personalize it for each student's circumstance. The students will see the value in it and in their lives.

In order to help class be authentic, Emma had her students participate in S.P.I.T.

an acronym for: Seek the spirit, Ponder looking for principles, Insights of inspiration

during this, Time. She gave students time each day to silently read from the scriptures.

She said that by doing S.P.I.T., students saw the value of the scriptures for their personal

life and found something specific to apply. After several minutes, she had students share

with the class what they found in the text that was interesting or blessed their lives. She

said:

> It is amazing how diverse and how varied the comments can be, yet how well they apply and go with the lesson I have prepared. They have that freedom to search the word and be under the influence of the spirit and be able to find application and authentic insights for their own lives.

She said that her students expressed how much they enjoy S.P.I.T. and complained when

they went a few class periods without doing it. She tried to vary the length and the timing

of this activity so students continued to feel the variety associated with this activity.

Extrinsic Rewards

Emma Burke stated that she implemented extrinsic rewards into her class. She stated that grades were part of what she did, but rather than being used as a motivational tool they were used as a reminder of class expectations.

She stated that she had a few class competitions to help students read the scriptures and fulfill class expectations. About these extrinsic rewards she stated:

> I do a little reading competition between the classes where we fill tubes with colored cereal. It is just a visible reminder to help the students remember to read their scriptures every day. I tell them that at the end of the term the winning class will get a reward, but that is a little bit deceiving because I share with them a quote about competition. The quote says that if there is any competition in this work it is with our former self. So at the end of the term, I have them think about their scripture reading before this class and then have them see how they have improved. Most every student will recognize that they have improved in their scripture reading. Then I will reward every class and we eat the cereal and have a party to reward everyone because everyone was only in competition with their former selves. I think that all of these motivators are internal. If someone looked into my class they might say that I am an extrinsic motivator, but really the principle is that you earned the reward because you were only in competition with yourself. I help each student see that they have to start wherever they are and improve from there and be even better in the end.

She also stated that these rewards served more as a technique to help develop class unity. She said that as students saw where they were as a group compared to other classes, they bonded together and helped each other collectively and improved as a group.

She stated that many of the rewards that she gave to her students were more a variety technique than an extrinsic motivator. She gave the example of how she had students do things like a staring contest and the winner got to read the next verse, or she would give a small piece of candy to someone who could answer a difficult question. She stated that these were done to break up the lesson and add variety and that she did not

consider them extrinsic rewards.

Intrinsic Interest

Emma Burke stated emphatically that the only intrinsic motivation for a seminary

student came from the Holy Ghost. She said:

> We know that the greatest teacher, the only teacher is the spirit. So that is where
> students need to get their motivation. I can talk until I am blue in the face but
> unless they are feeling the spirit they won't change. They won't be motivated to
> do anything different

She stated that there were things she did that helped students have a spiritual experience,

which helped foster intrinsic motivation. She stated:

> I think there are ways that we can help them feel the spirit. By first being worthy
> instruments for the spirit, by keeping them in the scriptures throughout the lesson,
> giving them time on their own to discover truths, having them write in their
> journals so they can discover things on their own to help motivate them, and
> having students share what they think and feel. I could say the same things that
> the students share but it means so much more when it comes from a peer sitting in
> their class. So allowing them to share their thoughts and insights when under the
> influence of the spirit probably changes them the most or causes them to
> intrinsically choose to be motivated.

Emma stated that she strove to help students fulfill their role in the learning

process and act for themselves so that they could have the spirit teach them and touch

their hearts. As stated, she felt that intrinsic interest came to a student when they felt the

influence of the Holy Ghost.

Ownership

Emma Burke stated that one thing she did that added to student ownership was

have a very organized and structured class. She stated that this structure allowed students

to see that they had responsibilities, ownership, and a personal investment in class. Her

class was run by her class presidency. She said:

> The class presidency has been asked to lead out. They help unify the class and have each class member pray for each other and pray for me as their teacher. They take ownership and responsibility for class. They let me know of some of the interests of the class and I listen to what they tell. For instance it was my class presidency that came up with the idea to have a talent show so I listened and they did it. They got the sign ups, they made the reminder phone calls, they made it an expectation that everyone needed to participate. They all felt a sense of responsibility and belonging because the talent show was their idea and they made it happen.

Along with class presidencies, Emma Burke helped students feel a sense of ownership by assigning each student to a small group called tribes. She stated that the tribes helped each student feel like a part of a group and feel a need to contribute and participate. She said:

> They all feel a sense of belonging and feel a part of their group. I hear students say things like 'Hey Monday is our day for devotional. Let's make sure and do a good job and have things ready before class. Let's help our classmates feel the spirit and start class right.' Because each student is assigned to a tribe and given specific responsibilities there is an expectation and ownership that comes from that.

Emma stated that one thing she did to help students feel a sense of ownership was help them understand that a successful class was determined by each student's contributions and not just hers as the teacher. She said:

> I think that sometimes we do a great disservice to our students when we want them to like us and it is hard for them to go to another teacher because they have an allegiance to us. I never want to be that way. When I see my students in the hall when they are in a different class than mine, I want to hear them say I miss our class. I never want them to say that they miss me. I want them to say they miss our class because they felt a sense of ownership, they felt protected, they felt safe, and our class was a haven for them. I think there is a danger if we get students to think that our class is the best. They need to know that the teacher in every class is the Holy Ghost and they can learn and belong in any class because they have a responsibility and an ownership in that class. I want them to know that a class is more about the environment and what each student contributes to

that class. To give students ownership, a teacher must see that class is owned by the Holy Ghost and the students, and their job is to be an instrument in helping the students fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

To help students feel a sense of ownership, Emma Burke ran class through a class presidency, assigned each student to small groups that had specific responsibilities and assignments, and helped students see their role in the learning process, fulfill their responsibilities, and take ownership for the success of class.

Real-World Connection

Emma Burke stated that to help student make a real-world connection with the curriculum she taught principles. She defined principles as "truths packaged for application." She stated that all of her teaching was driven by a principle she hoped each student understood when class was completed. She said that all the activities, methods, goals, and techniques she used were an attempt to help students see past the history and the context of the scriptures and see themselves in the stories. She then helped students understand the principles, analyze them, and apply them to their lives.

Hanging on the wall of Emma Burke's classroom were posters of each principle taught in each lesson. She and her students called these posters "principles of power." She described them as follows:

> It is a visual reminder often stated in a catchy way. It is stated in a clever way so that it has a longer mental self-life and helps students remember it. For instance, in 1 Kings 17 Elijah turned a "go and do" into a "went and did." They are a catchy ways to use scriptural language so that students will remember the principles and take them home and apply them to their lives. Another example is Naman whose servant asked him to do some great thing. The principle of power was "the great things are the simple things." With Solomon the principle of power on the wall states "don't be a but." The students remember that continually through the story of Solomon it would say things like he was great but he was

lustful, or he was faithful but he did wickedly. So students know that the principle of don't be a but means that they should be completely righteous and not have anything that would be a "but" for them. These are all catchy phrases that they write in the scriptures and then we make visual posters to hang up in the classroom.

By teaching the principles of power and by focusing her lessons on principles, Emma felt that this helped her students have a real-world connection to the curriculum.

Fun

Emma stated that she was a person who liked to have fun and her students knew that. She said going into the classroom with her students and having a great lesson together was fun. She felt that her ability to have fun helped the students also have fun and if she was relaxed and smiling students tended to be more relaxed and enjoy the experience of seminary.

She stated that she tried to have a lot of variety and be creative in order to keep students interested and having fun. She said:

I try to be creative in the methods I use. For instance today we sang a song during class and even colored a picture. We focused on 9 tools but gave each student a chance to be creative in how to use that tool in the activity. Allowing students to express their creativity helps them have fun. In class we try to do a variety of activities that are fun. We do things sometimes just to break up the monotony. For instance when students share it doesn't always have to be a pair and share activity. Use variety like, have a staring contest and the winner reads first, or whoever has the biggest hands needs to share. These changes are really small and quick ways to help add variety and make it fun for the students. It also helps each student get to know each other which also contributes to student engagement.

Emma also stated that the teacher helped create an environment of fun. She stated that the "excitement, enthusiasm, and expression of the teacher" helped students have fun. She said:

I think the way you present as a teacher is everything. If you think the activity you are doing is dumb so will they. But if you are excited about something or think something is fun then they will think it is fun as well. You can have fun because you make it fun and the information they learn is amazing.

Emma also said that the scriptures were fun and contained things that would be fun for the students to know. She said:

Ultimately the scriptures are fun. They really are exciting. So when a teacher pays the price to discover the power and the fun contained in the scriptures, the students will have a love for the word and will have fun in the scriptures and in your class. So when a teacher pays the price to understand and love the scriptures and see the fun in them, then the students have an excitement to study the scriptures because they really are the most engaging thing about what we do as seminary teachers. I know the spirit will prompt you with your own personality and creativity to come up with fun things for the students because you have paid the price and see the fun.

Eli Huish

Eli Huish was a 49-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 27 years. He spent his first 5 years teaching at a seminary in Southern Utah. He then spent 6 years coordinating seminary in the state of Washington. Eli then returned to Utah and worked in the central office of S&I in the training division. He was currently the principal of a large and rapidly growing seminary adjacent a rural high school. He had been in his current assignment 3 years. Eli had a bachelor's degree in science and a master's degree in social work.

Definition of Student Engagement

Eli Huish stated that student engagement was when students were involved in a learning process with the teacher, the spirit, the scriptures, and other students. He stated

that these four components were essential to have student engagement.

Evidence of Student Engagement

Eli stated that there were a few things he looked for as evidence of student engagement. He looked to see if students had their scriptures open and were making visible signs of following along. He looked to see that students were writing in their journals or in the scriptures. He looked to see students followed along while other students taught. He looked for eye contact as evidence of student engagement. He also stated that verbal participation was important evidence that a student was engaged.

Eli also stated that students could be engaged even when they were not showing these signs of engagement. He said, "There is a sort of unknown element where you can tell they are just getting it and they are following along head to head and heart to heart."

Generate Student Engagement

Eli said that there were two major categories to help generate student engagement. The first was to create activities that invited participation because the activity put the responsibility of learning on the student and the student in turn accepted and performed that responsibility. The second aspect was the responsibility of the teacher to help coach and guide students to be responsible for their own learning and have sufficient understanding and ability to be successful. He said:

> It's kind of a two process approach. An involved detailed activity that is well designed and asks for students to engage in the learning process and then a coaching aspect on the part of the teacher to help students accomplish the purpose of the activity.

Competence

In order to help students feel competent, Eli began the year with an assessment of

his students to determine their current understanding and skills. Some of the things he

assessed included: "can a student read out loud, does a student know what it means to

mark their scriptures, do they know how to use the footnotes, the topical guide, and the

index. What is the student's general understanding of the scriptures and the various

scripture tools? Does the student know how to identify doctrines and principles in the

scriptures?" He stated that he tried to assess where each student was and then spent a lot

of time at the first of the term training students how to use the tools and develop the skills

necessary to successfully study the scriptures. He said:

> There is a lot of guidance for the students early on so they understand footnotes, what a scripture means, how to identify doctrines, exedra. So there is a lot of coaching that happens early on to help the students feel competent and be able to get to a level where they run class and automatically do the things that help them be successful seminary students. They know what is expected and they know how to be successful.

Eli said he had clear and high expectations. He coached the students on the

necessary skills to reach the expectations and be successful in seminary.

Positive School Membership

Eli stated that he used partners to help foster positive school membership with his

students. He said:

> I think positive school membership starts with partners actually. I think it starts with one on one connections. I have a seating chart and in that chart each student is assigned a partner to work with throughout the term. I try to carefully select each partnership so that one student is strong and the other may need a little extra help. I usually try to assign partnerships by boy-girl. These partnerships help students realize that they have a responsibility for someone and they seem to care

about their partner enough that they do their part and contribute to class. That positive peer pressure and sense of school membership causes the students to do things I might not be able to get out of them.

Eli shared the following story about partners:

Today in class there was a girl that sits up front and came in late. Her name is Katy and is a wonderful young woman but she really struggles engaging in class. I assigned her a partner, a young man, football player, kind of a handsome guy. She almost always comes into class and just puts her head on the desk. Today I could see that her head was on her desk so I decided to have them do something with their partners. Because she feels a little pressure and a little bit of an obligation to this young man, she took her head off the desk turned to her partner and actually read the pamphlet. This was probably the one thing she did to engage in class today. She felt that need to participate in class because a peer caused her to feel a part of class. That is why I feel partners help contribute to a student's sense of school membership.

Eli fostered positive student membership by assigning each student a partner and giving them assignments that made them responsible to another student.

Clarity of Purpose

Eli looked at clarity of purpose on two levels. The first dealt with the purpose of seminary in general. He stated that the first few days of the term sat the tone, expectations, and guidelines for the class. He said:

I think the first few days of an experience with a class sets a tone, some guidelines, and an expectation that this is going to be a meaningful experience for students if they are willing to do their part. So the first few days we talk a lot about student training. I think the first two or three days of each term are just crucial to that. And then you have to continually help the students remember what the expectation is and what they need to do to help make class successful. Then I make sure and follow through and give the students an opportunity to fulfill their responsibilities every day.

Eli also helped define clarity of purpose by helping students see that what they study in class will make a difference in their life.

The second level of defining clarity of purpose for Eli dealt with helping students

mentally transition from high school to seminary. He said:

> It starts with helping my students get ready. I do a readiness activity each day that
> is captivating and immediately gets us to why we want to look in the scriptures.
> That readiness has three elements to it. You have to have something that catches
> the student's attention, something that takes them out of their world and gets them
> into yours. And if they can make this transition then it is going to lower the
> hurdles of participation so they will want to talk, to read, to mark, to write in their
> journals or whatever else. Then when they see the purpose of today's lesson they
> will see that this is why they should care about the scriptures and engage in
> today's lesson.

Eli helped his students understand the expectations of seminary and helped them see the

general purpose of seminary. He also helped students understand the purpose of seminary

by focusing on the purpose of seminary and promoting daily scripture study.

Fairness

Eli stated that he established fairness with his students by establishing

accountability. He stated that students had a sense of accountability based on his class

grade sheet. He said:

> I spend a lot of time helping each student understand the structure of the grade
> sheet. Some might say that is a silly way to have a score out there but the grade
> sheet is a structure that lets students know every day where they stand compared
> to the class expectations. Students know the expectations and know if they have
> read, came to class on time, had their own scriptures on their desk, and had all
> outside distractions put away. Then every day I look at the grade sheets and score
> the students based on their participation. I write them a comment and let them
> know how I see they are doing. This communication is uniform and I give that to
> everyone. Each student knows what is expected and the same is expected of
> everyone. So the grade sheet is something that is an across the board treatment of
> students. The grade sheet helps establish an environment of fairness.

Eli also said that he established an environment of fairness by greeting each

student daily. He stated that when each student feels cared for they feel a sense of

fairness. His goal was to allow every student to hear their name spoken by him at least twice a class. He greeted every student and called them by name when they entered the class. He spent a few minutes asking students about their lives and letting them know he cared about them. The second time each student heard their name was as they were leaving class. Eli tried to shake each student's hand and addressed them by name as they left class. He felt that as students saw him make an effort to reach out to each student individually they would feel that class was fair.

Personal Support

At the first of every year, Eli Huish handed out a "get-to-know-you sheet" to his students. He stated that it was not just a superficial information sheet but a tool he looked at often to help him know more about each student and what was happening in their lives. He said that by getting to know each student he could give them greater personal support.

Eli's get-to-know you sheet was open-ended and asked the students three general questions. Eli stated that the first question asked the students to tell about themselves. Eli said:

> The first question is "Tell me about you. Tell me about you, your jobs, your clubs, your sports, your hobbies, your favorite TV shows, your homework, your friends, and do you like school." The second question is "Tell me about your family, tell me about your mom and dad, brothers and sisters. How you get along with them, tell me about all that." The third question asks students to share their beliefs and feelings about the church and about seminary.

Eli stated that these three categories helped him see "a more full picture" of the student so he could be of greater support to them. He also stated that by getting to know them he could talk more individually to each student and show them that he cared not only about

what they did while in his class but that he cared about them as a person and what was

happening in their individual lives. He stated, "With this get too know you sheet there is

some level of personal support and caring and it lets me express to my students that their

life is important and they are important to me individually."

Caring

Eli Huish stated that he showed care by being fair with students and by giving

them personal support. He said that in addition to these two things that have been

discussed, he also created an environment of caring by placing each student in a zone. He

assigned students into a zone of four to six students. His classroom had six rows of desks

with five desks in each row. Within each zone he designated a zone leader who had

responsibility to help each member. The zone leader helped each member get to know

each other and feel a sense of responsibility. Eli stated that each student felt cared for by

peers in the classroom. He said, "The idea of zones is so that students help care for one

another and also feel responsible for each other. That way a student will know they are

cared for and are missed when they are not there and are needed when they are." He

shared a story about why he felt zones helped foster caring:

> For example today we had a boy that was part of the devotional who had quit
> seminary but his mom said he had to come back. So we switched him out of his
> class and into my class. He is depressed, he is going to counseling. He is really
> struggling in his life right now. I put him next to Allison who is the zone leader
> and now his partner. I told her when it's your zone's devotional don't make him
> do anything. Don't make him read out loud if he doesn't want to. Because he is
> surrounded by people who know him, I don't tell them his circumstances, but they
> know that he needs some additional care, and today you saw him read with his
> partner because he feels safe and comfortable with his partner Allison. When I
> know the class I can assign certain students to groups I think can help support and
> care for them.

Eli said that the best way to help foster an environment of caring is to treat students with fairness, give personal support, and allow students to be in groups together so they can care for one another.

Authenticity

Eli Huish started class nearly every day having students come to the front of the class and share any insights they had gained or questions they had from their personal scripture study. He stated that this helped students feel that class was authentic and allowed for greater flexibility and adaptation. He also worked with students to help them develop personal goals about blessings they wanted in their lives by attending seminary and fulfilling all the assignments. By being flexible and allowing students to generate their own goals, he helped students feel that class work was authentic.

Extrinsic Rewards

When asked what extrinsic rewards he implemented in class, Eli stated that he used the grade sheet. He said that he gave students nearly 10,000 points on the grade sheet so that they thought that an assignment worth 500 points was very important. He felt that making the points bigger the students seemed to put greater value on assignments. He said, "I think subconsciously they care about that number." He also used the grade sheet to help reinforce class expectations. He said that he allowed students to score themselves each day based on their perception of how they fulfilled their responsibilities. He said:

For instance in first period I had a young man that gave himself full points for

participation but he had been texting during class. I crossed out his 50 and changed his score to a 20 and then wrote texting with a frowny face in the margin "but I still love you." I think he must have thought to himself that I don't want to do that anymore because he hasn't done that again and he is fine and right back on track.

Eli stated that he had activities in class that used extrinsic rewards like donuts or candy. He stated that they were small and more for variety and helping incentivize the students to participate in specific activities.

Intrinsic Interest

Eli said that the most important thing he did to help foster intrinsic interest with his students was creating an environment of caring. He felt that one thing he did well was listen to student's comments. He said:

> I have been told that one of my better strengths as a teacher is that I am able to listen to students' comments and they really feel valued and safe. I hope that this is a talent I have developed over my teaching career, but it just comes naturally for me to listen and then restate it. That does help motivate them intrinsically because they see that what they say counts and then they want to participate and engage in class. So I think the environment has everything to do with fostering intrinsic interest.

He said that he helped create an environment of caring that fostered intrinsic interest by putting students in zones and giving them responsibilities to help each other.

Ownership

Again Eli stated that he helped students develop a sense of ownership by allowing them to have a bit of autonomy and responsibility in their assigned zones. He said that by doing this students felt that they had a responsibility that was uniquely their own. He also said that students developed a sense of ownership when they clearly understood the

purpose of class and understood their own personal accountability in contributing to the environment of the class. He said, "When a student feels valued and has a sense of accountability then they are willing to take ownership of class."

Real-World Connection

Eli stated that he had been trained for years to use readiness, participation, and application (RPA) to help students apply lessons in their lives. He said that the first thing a teacher needed to do was "start where the students are and have something that catches their interest and then moves them to say why do I want or why do I care about this." He stated that beginning class helping students discover what they currently knew and believed and then take them to the scriptures, the lesson, the principles, or the doctrine that was being taught, students would make the application to the real world and apply it to their real life. He said:

> My objective in starting the class is not to have them get ready to do what I want them to do, but it's to start with where they are in the real world and have them draw themselves into the doctrines and principles of the scriptures, because then they will leave class wanting to apply it in their life and make their life better.

Eli stated that he had students explain, share, and testify about the doctrines and principles in the scriptures and shared how they had applied them and were blessed. He said:

> Often times I will have a student share for us and immediately the other students are caring about that person because they see him or her as their peer, which is different than just having me teach them something I care about. Instead when the students see their peers participating and doing things in front of the class they have a connection to the real world that awaits them back at the high school. When peers teach peers they have a real-world connection to that person up there and there are a lot more questions that are asked about how the principles and doctrines we are teaching that day will relate to their lives.

Eli stated that by spending time at the beginning of class helping students see what they believed and felt, and help them discover principles and doctrines that applied to their lives, helped students have a real-world connection. He also said that having peers explain, share and testify, helps students relate with the curriculum because they valued the opinion of peers.

Fun

Eli Huish considered himself a kid at heart and someone who liked to have fun. He stated that he liked to let students see that he could be playful, have fun, and even joke around a little. He said:

> I am naturally a little goofy. I am just a big kid. Even though I am much older than my students, I can joke around with them enough to let them know I can have fun. I am naturally a playful person. I let my students know that I can be both playful and spiritual too. So many times I think kids think that in order to have fun they have to be rude, crude, crass, or sarcastic the way the world is. There is a deep part of me that wants to show them that they can have fun, be clean, and be spiritual, and a good person too.

To have fun Eli stated that he gave "a lot of high fives" and fun ways to acknowledge students' successes. He had a place on their grading sheet for what he called "cake." He said that students put their birthdays on a paper and four times a year he held a "cake" party for those students who had birthdays within a designated time period. He purchased a boxed cake mix and frosting, assigned a student to make the cake, and then they ate cake and celebrated students' birthdays.

He also stated that he created an environment of fun by having a lot of variety. He said that 9 months is a long time to be monotonous and students needed variety to have fun. He had activities like contests and games between classes and in-class competitions.

He said that the competition was never against another student but was always against a standard. He said, "The activities that we do that have competition, every student can compete because we are competing against the standard. Anyone can play because it's more about time than it is against someone else." He also had activities like shooting a ball into a waste basket if you answered a question correctly.

Another thing he mentioned and was evident in his class, was the proper use of humor. He said students needed to feel that they could say funny things and even laugh in class. He did not feel that side splitting laughter was necessarily appropriate, but he felt that a good sense of humor was an essential ingredient to help students have a fun experience in class.

Scott Olsen

Scott Olsen was a 42-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 17 years. He spent his first 2 years teaching seminary in a small rural town in Utah. He then spent 7 years teaching seminary in Alaska. He then returned to Utah and has taught the last 7 years at three different suburban seminaries. He had been the principal at a seminary adjacent a charter school the last 5 years. Scott had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in educational technology.

Definition of Student Engagement

Scott Olsen defined student engagement as students being involved in various ways. He said:

Students will be involved by the things that they share. To me it's the idea that we

are all enlisted together, there are no passengers, we are not just here for the ride, and we all participate. For example when a student shares a scripture we all turn with them to that scripture. When someone shares an experience we are all listening.

Scott said that engagement was when students participated within the framework and expectations of class. He also stated that engagement was more than just behavioral. He stated:

People think that engagement is that we are all raising our hands and are sharing, answering questions, and volunteering to read. Those things are only external, but true engagement is so much more. I want the students to be to the point where the spirit can teach them.

Evidence of Student Engagement

Scott Olsen stated that the greatest evidence of student engagement was at the end of class when a student prayed. He said that typically students fall into a pattern in the prayer that seems rote and with little thought. He stated that a sign of engagement was when the student broke from this pattern and expressed ideas that were generated during the lesson. He said:

I love to hear the heartfelt prayer that says, "Heavenly Father we are grateful for this marvelous work in The Book of Mormon. Please help us to apply it and learn from it." So as a teacher I gage a lot by that prayer as to whether or not the students were engaged. If their prayer included the doctrines and principles taught during that day and gratitude for it, then I think they got it, and I feel that that student who is praying represents the class in that prayer and reflects the class's feelings of the spirit.

He also stated that there were behavioral signs of engagement such as students having scriptures on their desk along with other items needed for class, their heads are up and looking at who is in front, and they nod their head when a question is asked.

Another evidence of engagement that Scott looked for was when students made

comments about other student's comments. He said, "I love when a student shares something and then other students make reference to that students comment later in the lesson. That lets me know that they are not just responding to my questions but they are engaged."

Generate Student Engagement

When asked what generated student engagement, Scott Olsen stated that he assigned everyone a responsibility, had high levels of structure and organization, helped students understand the purpose of class, and helped class members feel safe and cared for.

Speaking of structure and class management, Scott said:

I create a structured environment so students know there is organization. Where there is organization there is comfort. When there isn't any structure then there is uncertainty and students will be uncertain if it is safe to share. But students in my class know it is safe because there is structure and structure provides security. This security helps them engage.

To give everyone a responsibility, he had students placed in rows he called tribes. He usually has four to five students in each tribe. Each tribe had specific responsibilities and each member of the tribe also had specific responsibilities. He said that having a responsibility and being part of a smaller group helped students feel safe and cared for.

Scott also spent a lot of time at the first of each term training on the purpose of class. He stated that this helped students know that he cared about them, their education, and the purpose of seminary. He stated that when students understood the purpose of seminary they were more willing to follow the class structure and engage in the lessons.

Competence

Scott said that there were two major things that helped students feel competent.

The first was high expectations. He said:

> When there is a high level of expectation then there is a high level of competence. If I don't expect anything out of them then they won't put forth the effort to be competent. My students know that I have got a rule that is we never force but we always invite. They know that they can't come into my classroom and say I don't pray or I don't participate and think you get this free pass. No, every time we will invite you to do something, you are free to say no, but we will always invite. We never force but we always invite. Eventually they are going to understand that the reason I keep inviting them is because I not only want them to, but I know they can. For me competence comes from expectation. I expect them to rise to the occasion and when they know that I believe in them they are more competent. That is what we all need. We need to feel two things. We need to feel that we are loveable and that we are capable. Our self-esteem is dependent upon those two things. We feel competent if we feel loved and if we feel capable. I know this and so I do everything I can to give my students opportunities to feel successful. I also try to tell them how much I believe in them.

The second thing Scott did in class was provide opportunities for his students to be successful. He said he recognized goodness within his students. An example he gave of this was students knowing the content and meaning of scriptures. They spent time every class period memorizing and understanding key verses of scripture. He would tell every student that they were expected to participate and answer questions. He stated that this was not to embarrass them but to articulate the expectation and give them opportunity to succeed. If they did not do well he gave them encouragement and helped them accomplish the expectation. When they met the expectation he praised them. He specifically designed activities that required students to participate and did this to help them earn praise from the teacher and peers.

Positive School Membership

Scott taught at a small seminary adjacent to a small private school. He stated that

most students felt a part of school and were "not just a number lost in the crowd." He

stated that putting students in tribes helped create positive school membership. He said:

> I think we build positive school membership by having students in tribes. By putting them in small groups of five or six students they feel a part of a group. In each group I assign a tribal leader and their basic responsibility is to make sure that everyone in their tribe participates, feels a part of their tribe, and is recognized.

Each member of the tribe had specific responsibilities and many of the activities were

designed to promote tribal unity.

Each tribal leader as asked to look for students who were not participating or who

did not show signs of being a positive member of the tribe. Scott also instructed each

tribal leader to be aware of the concerns in each tribe. He stated that assigning students in

small groups helped them feel a greater sense of positive school membership.

Clarity of Purpose

Scott stated that having high expectations helped establish clarity of purpose for

his students. He said that he did not tell students all the "don'ts" but be focused on the

"does." He said:

> Even though I have high expectations for my students, I don't believe in taking the time in class to outline those expectations. It's kind of an interesting paradox because I don't take the time to define them I just expect it from them. So when they don't meet the expectation I let them know. For instance I never tell my students that they can't do outside homework while in class, but when I see them doing homework I tell them that it would be better if they put it away so they could focus on what we are doing in class. This way I try to help them see the does rather than the don'ts. They are focused on the purpose and not the rules. The purpose to put away homework is so you can have a great experience in class

today, rather than put the homework away because that is the rule.

Rather than spending time going over the expectations or rules of class, Scott spent a day

at the first of the year teaching the purpose of class. He called this lesson his "purpose

day." On that day he had students help him create a theme for class based on class

expectations. This year's class was about searching the scriptures and studying them with

the intent to find salient doctrines and principles that could be applied to each student's

life. So the theme for their year was "dig the mine." Each student was instructed on what

that theme meant. Scott then created a poster that he placed on the back wall by the door

that had "dig the mine" printed in big bold letters. He said:

> Our class purpose is to dig the mine so that they could find gold nuggets in the
> scriptures to apply to their life. I made that sign in the back of my room so that it
> is kind of like the Notre Dame Fighting Irish sign that says play like a champion
> that all the players touch on their way out of the locker room. Each student will
> hit that sign as they leave the class each day to remind them what our purpose is
> and what we are going to do. It's funny because I will see kids that come back in
> the class after everyone has left and I will say did you forget something and they
> will come back just to slap that sign; it becomes a part of their day.

Scott stated that having a day to teach the purpose of class and then having that purpose

in front of the students helped create clarity of purpose. Scott said that when students

understood the purpose they focused on the purpose rather than on the list of rules or

policies.

Fairness

Scott said that he ensured fairness in his class by having students in tribes. He

stated that tribes helped equalize opportunity by giving each student a responsibility. He

said that he equally distributed students into tribes both by grade and by gender. Each

student had responsibilities and he rotated those responsibilities between tribe members.

Each tribe had an opportunity to earn points and Scott helped create activities that

favored one group over another so that he could help balance class points and not have

one tribe dominate the others.

Scott also said that his classroom expectations helped create a sense of fairness

with students. He said:

> I want everyone to feel like they can be successful and feel fairly treated. I think
> this goes back to expectations and that it is fair that I don't let students just coast
> through class and assignments, but I expect them to be a crew member. We will
> always invite each person in class to participate and make it fair for everyone
> because the expectation is that everyone participates. I think it is fair that I am
> going to ask you to continually participate. They may continually say no but at
> least it is fair that they always are given an invitation. One of these days they may
> realize that they are active participants and not just passengers.

The expectation in Scott's classroom was that every student was a participant and was

continually invited to engage in class.

Personal Support

Scott Olsen stated that personal support for students began with good teacher

rapport. He said that he naturally created good rapport by spending time getting to know

his students before class and with a get-to-know-you sheet. He spent a few minutes

before class asking students about their individual lives. He stated that as he interacted

with students and was able to discuss specific things happening in their lives, students felt

supported and cared for.

Scott also stated that he tried to genuinely compliment his students so that they

knew he recognized their accomplishments. He also stated that his class structure and

high expectations allowed each student to be successful, which in turn allowed him to give genuine compliments based on standards and performance.

Caring

Scott stated that a structured classroom helped facilitate an environment of caring because it showed the students that he put forth effort on their behalf. One example of structure that Scott stated was classroom decor. He said:

> One thing I do that lets my students know I care is I spend a substantial amount of time decorating my room. I don't use the word decorate because I believe my walls teach not just decorate. When you spend as much time organizing and doing all the things that I do, I hope that it naturally says that I care. I remember my sixth grade teacher who was pretty remarkable who did a ton of things for me as a student that you just don't realize when you are in the sixth grade. She spent so much time, effort, and money, into unique activities and daily things she did to help motivate us as students. When I was a senior in high school I was able to go the elementary and be her teaching assistant. I was able to watch all these amazing things she did for her students from the decorating, to the activities, to the little things she did for each student. Every student in that class knew that she cared for them and loved them. So I walked away knowing that students need to see my physical classroom, as well as the expectations of my classroom, as well organized, having required great personal effort from me, so that they know I spent that time and effort on their behalf, because I care for them.

Scott stated that a teacher can say they care or love their students, but students would not believe them unless they see the teacher's effort and work on their behalf. He said that he showed students this by having a well-decorated classroom with learning material relevant to the curriculum posted on the walls, having very well-designed and visual power points, having organized activities, classroom structure including student lead devotionals, class presidencies, and students organized into well-functioning tribes.

Scott said a teacher created an environment of caring by having well-organized and edifying lessons. He said:

Hopefully the students can see the effort and that things just don't happen. Anyone can simply walk into class and open there scriptures and say today we are going to teach Isaiah or something, but when you come to class prepared with a power point, a video, an activity, or something like that, you send a message to your students that you care enough to take time to prepare really great lessons for them. Students will see that I care enough to spend substantial time for them. So the students see the time, the effort, and the prayers that go into putting together a great lesson. It really does serve a double purpose. It provides the environment to have the kind of engagement we are seeking for, but is also shows the kids that I care. That I care so much for them that I am not just going to throw something on the board but I am going to spend the time to make it great.

Scott stated that he created an environment of caring by having an organized classroom and curriculum so that students saw that he cared for them by the effort he put into making sure the class and lesson were edifying and informative.

Authenticity

To help students feel that the work they did in class was authentic, Scott created a sign that instructed students to come to class with a question in mind. The sign read, "Come to class with a question." Scott also said that he "created a part of each student's journal where he/she can write down questions about the gospel, or about their lives, or about anything else." He also instructed them that if they came to him and asked him to answer those questions "they may leave feeling disappointed because I try not to answer their questions but rather give them the tools to answer their own questions." He stated that the tools he referred to were the scriptures, words of modern prophets, and the Holy Ghost. He said that these three tools helped students "find answers and feel the guidance of the spirit." He said:

I think that one of the greatest ways we can provide authentic learning is when the spirit is the teacher because then they are getting what they need. Then they can say this is what the spirit taught me. They will leave class saying I learned

something for myself today. Now that is authentic. Authentic learning is when the spirit is teaching you.

Scott said that when students learn by the spirit they were more apt to engage in "authentic sharing." He said that he helped promote authentic sharing by being open minded to students' answers and validated what they had to say even when he did not have the same conclusions or ideas. He said:

> When students say something I was not thinking of, I try not to take it away from them or twist it into what I was thinking, but rather just let them share and compliment, recognize, and validate their authentic thought and contribution.

Extrinsic Rewards

Scott Olsen stated that he felt that extrinsic rewards carried a bad connotation and he did not believe that he gave extrinsic rewards. He stated that instead of giving extrinsic rewards he gave things for positive recognition. He said:

> You know I think it is interesting because we do these tribe things and it's funny at the beginning of the year someone asks what do we get if we win. I always say that you will be rewarded and they say how. Then I say just look at me, obviously all rewards are eatable. But here is the deal, we give points and some will say that is extrinsic because you are giving out points. I don't think that is extrinsic because for me it is simply about recognition because our students need to receive positive recognition. Even though I give out points and a pizza party, it is interesting because even though they spent the entire year working on these points to win a pizza party, not very many of them actual show up. That tells me they weren't motivated by the points or the pizza but rather for the positive recognition. The idea behind my extrinsic rewards is not to be motivating them, but rather I believe that our young people need to be recognized and when we recognize their goodness they want to be even better. It's just innate in them. This is how I use my tribal structure. It's all designed to help recognize; to help recognize the students.

Another extrinsic reward that Scott used was a grade sheet. However, he stated that the purpose of his grade sheet was more than to motivate a student by giving them a

letter grade. He said:

> I believe that the whole purpose of seminary is to help students come closer to Jesus Christ, so who am I to tell a student that you get a C or an A in this area. So I teach them the expectations of what helps us fulfill our purpose in coming closer to him and then allow the students to give themselves a grade based on those expectations. So the expectations are scripture reading, attendance, participation, and application; all of those things. So then I have a grade sheet that says 20% of your grade is attendance, 25% is reading your scriptures every day, part of it is scripture mastery, a final, a participation grade, and an application grade. All of this is a way of figuring out your points. This will tell you if you got an A, B, or C. Then I ask the students if this is their grade and they will say no it is only a starting point. I let them know that we have had promises from prophets that if we do these things that are the expectations of seminary then we will draw closer to The Savior Jesus Christ. So for now they can see where they are on a scale and see the areas in their life that they could improve. They can see if they need to read their scriptures more, or attend seminary more. I then let them reflect and they give themselves the final grade and I don't touch it. They determine how they are doing in coming closer to Christ. I only give out a grade because our employer makes us, but I use it to help teach them what prophets have told us we need to do to come closer to The Savior. This is clarity of purpose. A grade in seminary doesn't really matter. What matters is helping the youth gain a testimony of Jesus Christ.

Scott said that he used extrinsic rewards to help students better understand the purpose of class and give them positive recognition.

Intrinsic Interest

Scott stated that "the only way to help foster intrinsic interest with students is the Spirit. There isn't anything else that can motivate me internally to do what I am supposed to do." He stated that everything he did in class was to help students learn by the spirit and feel a spiritual influence. He stated that one of the most important things he did to help create a spiritual environment was establish and maintain classroom discipline. He said:

> A well-disciplined classroom where there is high expectations and structure a

student feels safe. When students feel safe they are more able to feel the spirit and engage in class especially in sharing their feelings. When kids are talking or disrupting the class or kids are doing their homework or they are on the cell phone and the teacher doesn't address those problems, kids see that and think the teacher doesn't have control so they shut off from feeling and sharing because they don't feel safe. So in order to have intrinsic motivation or to have the Spirit we have to have an environment that is safe. So I have to insure that there is a high level of discipline in class because the spirit has to be there because it is the only intrinsic motivator.

Scott stated that because the spirit created intrinsic interest, he created a structure where students had opportunities to bear their testimony, study from the scriptures, and have good devotionals that "help invite the spirit into the classroom." He said that all of class business and outside conversations about sports and other events took place before the devotional. He said:

But after the devotional we change because we are focused on having the spirit in class. I want to help them feel and recognize the difference when the spirit is in class because that is the only way that intrinsic motivation will come.

Ownership

Scott stated that his classroom structure of tribes helped students feel a sense of ownership because the tribal structure allowed students to take charge of class and have specific responsibilities. He stated that when students had responsibilities, they understood that this was their class and not just the teacher's. He stated that this paradigm also applied to the curriculum and students sensed that what was taught in class was determined by their participation. Scott said that he prepared a detailed lesson, but once class began he put the lesson outline away and tried to teach by the spirit. He said he tried to perceive students' needs and teach the doctrines and principles he felt the students had interest in and needed in their lives.

Scott stated that his devotionals helped establish a sense of ownership because it brought the spirit. He said that students were trained that class was about what they felt, knew, and believed. The devotionals were a venue where students taught each other about the doctrines and principles that were important to them.

Real-World Connection

When asked what he did to help the curriculum have a real-world connection for his students, Scott said:

> That is all I do. I am not a scholar in any way, shape, or form. Part of that is because I don't want to be; I don't want it enough. My emphasis and where I spend my time is in application. It's all about application for me. Part of the way I do this is I try to understand the student's world. I feel that you have to understand where they are coming from; you have to understand their world. So I liken things to their world all the time, whether it is movies, or sports, shows, whatever. I bring those things into my lesson so students can see how the stories of the scriptures and the doctrines and principles they teach apply to their lives. My class is always about constant application.

Scott said that teaching to relate to students was the way the Savior Jesus Christ taught. He said that the Savior used sheep, fruit, trees, and other objects that dealt with the daily routines of his students. Scott stated that his goal was to do the same by helping students "bridge the gap from scripture stories to modern day application." He used modern day examples to help the message "stick in the minds of the students and help make it whole." Scott spent the majority of his lesson preparation trying to discover how the doctrines and principles in the scriptures could be applied to student's lives.

Fun

Scott was a fun teacher and full of energy. He stated that in order to create an

environment of fun, he had fun himself. He stated that he had the most fun job in the world because each day he got to be with the youth, feel their excitement for life, laugh with them, and most importantly feel the joy of the gospel and spirit. He stated that the key to having fun in class was feeling the spirit. He said that when students felt the edifying influence of the spirit, they would feel joy and want to keep coming to class. He said a well-organized class that allowed the influence of the spirit and had a great lesson was key to having fun.

Scott also said that variety was important to help students have fun. He created different lesson formats and activities that provided variety for his students. He stated that when students had variety they had more fun and liked coming to class because they always experienced something new.

Scott also stated that fun was much more complex than what an outside observer referred to as entertainment. He thought fun was joy, and joy was what helped propel us to action. He said, "All I do is help students want to live the gospel and feel the joy and happiness that comes from that." He said that when students came to seminary and had a positive uplifting experience they had fun and had a desire to be better and keep improving. He also stated that he wanted every student to have fun and feel the joy of the gospel.

Logan Daniels

Logan Daniels was a 36-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 12 years. He had spent his career in three different seminaries in the same county of Utah. He had

been the principal of a large seminary adjacent an urban high school for the past 2 years. He had a bachelor's degree in marriage, family, and human development and a master's degree in education.

Definition of Student Engagement

Logan Daniels defined student engagement as "students being invested and learning about whatever the material is. When they have a personal drive to want to understand it, incorporate it, apply it, use it, and are willing to ask questions and put aside other things." He also stated that engagement was "the desire and willingness to be vested in the experience and learning process."

Evidence of Student Engagement

Logan Daniels stated that student engagement could be evident by a student's attendance. He stated that if students were engaged then they would continually come to class. He also stated that other evidences of student engagement included: eye contact, willingness to participate in varied activities, journal writing, working with a partner, raising hands, asking questions, participating in class discussions, and openly questioning the teacher's responses or beliefs.

Generate Student Engagement

Logan said that he generated student engagement by creating a structured environment where students felt safe to engage and participate. He stated that helping students build a relationship with him and the other students created a safe environment. He said:

At the beginning of each year we make huge investments in relationships, with each other, with me, with fostering relationships with their families. I thrive on my students feeling trusted, valued, loved, needed, and especially safe. If they feel this way then I think they will engage in class. By building relationships they can feel safe to engage. I have a seating chart which allows them to get to know more people. We will mix this up so they have lots of opportunity to meet and work with new people.

At the first of each year, Logan spent a few days having the students participate in "getting-to-know you activities" as well as having a student "spot light" that contained unique information about each student.

Logan stated that having a structured environment where students felt safe and an environment where students built trusting relationships, was essential to generate student engagement.

Competence

In order to help his students feel competent, Logan took time each year to teach students the skills needed to be successful in studying the scriptures. He said:

In the beginning of the first semester, I stop and have a scripture skills moment and review with the students the tools needed to better understand the scriptures. That way they are equipped with the knowledge of some of the resources available. We then use them so they have practical application and understanding of how to use them in order to be more successful in their study of the scriptures.

Logan also helped students develop competence by complimenting them and acknowledging their successes. He stated that his goal was to help students be equipped with the skills necessary to feel success and safety. Logan fostered competence by teaching student's skills, allowing them to practice, and complimenting their success.

Logan trained students to ask clarifying questions. He trained students to ask questions if they did not understand. He had activities that helped students ask questions

and taught his students that it was ok to say "I don't understand" or "I don't know."

Logan had students model skills. He said:

I use upperclassman to model skills because they have been trained and practiced the concepts and skills that we use. So I will explain to the class the expectations and skills and then have a peer that is an upperclassman model that skill or explain that expectation so that all the students have a visual model to follow. Modeling helps develop competency.

To help establish competence with his students, Logan taught the necessary skills to help students be successful, established an environment where students felt safe to ask clarifying questions, and used upperclassman to model for the other students.

Positive School Membership

Logan started each school year by having students participate in activities designed to get to know each other. He said students felt more valued members of the class when other students knew their name and valued their contributions.

Logan stated that students developed positive school membership when they felt valued and validated. To enhance this, he built off of students comments and asks the class to respond to other students comments. He said that by doing this, students felt valued and a culture of positive school membership occurred.

Clarity of Purpose

Logan stated that the best way to give clarity of purpose to his students was great teaching. He said:

Great teaching is the best way to help students see the purpose of class. If they feel the joy of a great lesson they will participate and when they participate they will enjoy class even more. So I think that they begin to see the vision of class when they experience a great lesson. So experiencing and feeling the power of

class helps them see how powerful this class can be for them and will increase their experience of feeling joy.

Logan stated that when students experienced applying the lessons to their lives they more clearly saw the purpose of class. He invited students to apply the doctrines and principles taught in class and gave students the opportunity to share experiences they had while applying them to their lives. He said:

> I try to teach truths and principles, have students apply it to their lives, and try it. Then they come back and share what it did for them and how it was meaningful. Then they experience the fruits of class outside of class and they begin to see the larger purpose for coming to seminary.

Logan said he established clarity of purpose by teaching students a lesson at the first of each year discussing the mission and purpose of seminary. He stated that the purpose of seminary was to help students come closer to Jesus Christ. He stated that as students had an experience with the spirit and felt that seminary could help them come closer to Jesus Christ, they would understand the value and importance of seminary in their lives.

Fairness

At the high school where Logan Daniel taught, he said there was a tradition of seniors aggressively confirming their dominant position over the underclassman. He said:

> In a loving but firm way I try to let the seniors know that that type of behavior is unacceptable and instead have them share times in their lives where a mentor stepped up and helped them, and point out how much that meant to them. I then ask them to be a mentor.

He stated that by having mentors, class was fair and everyone was treated with respect.

Logan also acknowledged that he tended to relate more with students involved in

sports and that if he was not careful he tended to interact and favor those students. He said that he "consciously tries to ask students more about things like choir, dance, band, and other groups and tries to highlight those students" in order to be more equitable with his attention. He also said:

> I can show students and highlight that what they do is cool. That helps the other students begin to see greater value in other students. Then as peers begin to ask questions and acknowledge what they do, they begin to feel greater validation and a sense of community. They then begin to treat others with a great amount of fairness and value.

Personal Support

Logan stated that one of his goals was to personally greet each student before class and talk with them individually to learn about what was going on in their lives. He said that when he talked with students about their lives, they felt validated and supported. He stated that students need to know that the teacher cared more about them and their lives than teaching lessons. He had an open-door policy and wanted students to know that they could come and talk with him about anything.

Logan also supported students by emailing each student's parents weekly and informing them about what was going on in the seminary and how their student was doing. He highlighted the successes of each student. By doing this, students felt supported by their teacher and received validation from their parents.

Caring

Logan said that one of his greatest qualities was genuinely caring about each of his students. He became a teacher because he loved the youth and knew they had great

potential. He showed them that he cared by taking the time to interact with them before and after class, getting to know what was going on in their lives, and validating their contributions to class. He said that he showed he cared by teaching great lessons that inspired students to improve their lives. He said that establishing high expectations demonstrated that he cared because students could see that he wanted them to have a great environment where they could learn.

Authenticity

Logan Daniels stated that he helped students feel that the work they did was authentic by incorporating student's comments, questions, and experiences into the lesson. He said:

> I try to incorporate what students bring to the table and build our lesson off of what they say. The experience we have in class is in large part what the student create. I will tell them that our lesson is going to be a story out of the scriptures and I can't wait to see what we are going to do with this lesson. It is amazing how I can teach six lessons in a row and they will be completely different from the others because the students play such a huge role in what we learn and teach in class. I teach them this principle in the beginning so they can see that they really are the key to the lesson and the success of this class. So hopefully they rise to it and work hard.

Logan stated that he helped students feel their work is authentic by listening to and processing student's comments. He said that as he stopped, listened, and took a few moments to ponder on what was said, students felt validated and could see that the "teacher is not just asking them to be a place holder in the lesson plan but actually listens and values what is said." He also said that as he validated student's comments it "shows them that it is their turn and they are the ones actually doing the teaching."

Extrinsic Rewards

"I love them and I hate them" is how Logan responded when asked what he did to implement extrinsic rewards in his class. He said, "They are both distracting and useful."

One extrinsic reward he implemented was grades. He said, "I use grades but when it comes to calculating them I am quick to point out that their grades don't measure worth or capacity but are an assessment of effort in a few key areas." He said, "The only reason I give grades is the computer makes me in order to give the student credit, otherwise I wouldn't give them." He also said that he did not give the student their grade but he had the student evaluate how they felt they had done based on the standards and expectations of class. He said:

> I have students fill out their grade sheet and give themselves a grade, but I also have them write a promise to themselves about what they can do to improve. So a grade is just an indicator for them to see where they can improve. I want them to evaluate themselves.

Logan said he used extrinsic rewards of food and candy at times but said they were more to help give variety rather than be used as a motivating technique.

Intrinsic Interest

He said students developed intrinsic interest when they were cared for, saw and valued the purpose of class, felt competent, had success, had positive school membership, and felt supported. He said that all the things he stated about what he did in each of these categories could be applied to what he did to help foster intrinsic interest. In addition, he also stated that working with students one on one helped them be motivated to do things for themselves rather than for the praise of parents or teachers. He also stated that as

external validations came, a student would begin to have intrinsic interest.

Ownership

Logan stated that his student-led devotionals helped develop a sense of

ownership. He said:

> I have students that are responsible for devotionals each day. The intent of the
> devotional is to create a spiritual environment so we can achieve the purpose of
> class, which is to draw closer to The Savior, which can only be done as we are
> taught by the spirit. So a student is invited to share their spiritual thought that has
> been prepared in advance. They will write their information on the board and the
> class as a whole will study that topic. So that student directs class for the first part
> of the day. That student owns that time and directs class. That helps students see
> the importance of that time because they know they are responsible to be the
> teacher for that time and lead the class. After the students have invested study
> time for five minutes or so, then the student leading the devotional comes to the
> front of the class and shares his or her insights. Then other students chime in and
> share what they thought or what insights came to them. So not only does the
> person who is in charge of the devotional have ownership but each member of the
> class helps create the lesson that day.

Logan also helped his students feel a sense of ownership by instructing them on

their role as a learner and the need to come to class prepared to be successful. He said,

"So if I as the teacher come unprepared we are at a disadvantage but just the same if they

as the students come unprepared we are also at a disadvantage." He said that as students

understood and accepted their role in the learning process, they felt a greater sense of

ownership.

Real-World Connection

Logan stated that if his curriculum did not apply to students lives, then he did not

care about it. He said that everything discussed and taught needed to have relevance and

application to students otherwise it should not be taught. Logan said:

> To have a real-world connection it has to be applicable. It has everything to do with the way it is presented and the way it is taught. If the students understand the context and content of the scriptures, then application will naturally flow. If they really understand what is going on in the story and they really understand the pressures that were going on in the life of the people in the scriptures, then we can talk about how that story can be applied in their high school lives. I constantly ask them how this relates to their life. So as they know the context and content and we discuss the applicable principles and doctrines, and analyze them, it is almost impossible for them not to apply it to their lives when we ask them to.

Logan stated that to help students make a real-world connection he would ask them to look for certain applicable principles in the scriptures. He said:

> I will tell them what we will find in the story and ask them to think about how it applies to them. So as we get into the story they are already looking for things they can apply in their lives. I give them a primer.

Fun

Logan stated that he liked to have fun and used humor as part of his class. However, he stated that he did not "do a lot to formalize fun it just seems to be spontaneous and just happen." Logan said:

> I think we have fun on my terms. I keep a tight control but I am willing to laugh at myself. I don't tell a joke of the day or anything like that but things that are funny come up. Life is funny. The scriptures are funny. So we laugh a lot in class and don't take ourselves too seriously.

Logan said he liked to use students "who are funny" to help the class have fun. He said that he would call on a student to share fun things happening in his or her life. He would do this before the start of class. He felt that when students were in an environment that as relaxed and filled with humor, students would feel safe to share. He also stated that he liked to talk with students about what was going on in their life prior to class and this time helped students feel a sense of fun.

Rex Jones

Rex Jones was a 32-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 7 years at a large suburban high school in Utah. The seminary where Rex taught had one of the largest student enrollments in all of S&I. Rex had a bachelor's degree in marriage, family, and human development and a master's degree in educational technology.

Definition of Student Engagement

Rex Jones stated that the best type of engagement was spiritual. He defined engagement as "anything that connects students with the spirit."

Evidence of Student Engagement

Rex stated that engagement was difficult and did not necessarily have physical signs as evidence. He stated, "I think a student could be completely engaged even if it doesn't look like they are following along." He stated that he defined engagement as spirituality, which adds to the difficulty of determining student engagement. He said:

> Engagement is with the spirit. That is why I say they could be engaged even if they are not with me sometimes, because they could be thinking about their life and the spirit could be teaching them. Because they are in a spiritual place, in a dedicated building, around people that care about them; they can be there just pondering. This makes it very hard to tell if they are engaged.

However, Rex stated there were a few things he looked for as evidence of student engagement. He said that evidence of engagement included: raising hands, asking questions, eye contact, and body language.

Competence

Rex stated that the four things that helped establish competence with his students were the spirit, love, a safe environment, and class membership. He said:

> To help establish competence there must be the spirit and love. There must be an environment that is safe. Students need to know one another and feel that they are a part of a class that cares about each other. So students have to see that the spirit is the most important part of class. They must also feel loved which will help them feel genuinely cared about and in turn they will care about others in class. Then that bleeds into being safe because when they feel loved they feel safe. That safe environment will then allow students to feel competent in engaging in class.

Rex stated that he established competence by teaching students class expectations and the skills and knowledge needed to be successful. Logan said that helping students develop confidence in their answers helped foster competence. He said that he complimented his students when they contributed to class and helped them feel supported.

He said, "To help establish competence I would also throw laughter in there. I think laughter and making it a fun place helps them feel relaxed and more themselves."

Positive School Membership

To help foster positive school membership, Rex talked with students before class. He asked them about their lives and shared what was going on in his. He did an activity he called C.T.R. which stands for Care To Relate. He described C.T.R. as follows:

> I open up to students to share anything they want to relate to the class. I want this to be a time they can share what is going on in their lives. So at the first of the year I set this up so they know they can share what is going on in their lives. Like when they went on a date and turned a couch into skis. But my favorite is upcoming events in their lives where they share what activities are happening in their lives. So I think that really helps build school membership because it lets students see what each other is involved in and what is important to them. C.T. R.

is so healthy. I have seen it increase school spirit. If they feel they are apart, school spirit increases. C.T.R. gives them a chance to share and be a part which helps build unity and love. It is interesting how they build off of each other. This builds a family feeling that helps them feel accepted and a part. It also helps me know what they are doing so I can come out and support them.

Rex said that his attendance at student activities helped foster positive school membership because students saw that he was interested in their personal lives and they were important to him.

Clarity of Purpose

Rex said that students had clarity of purpose when they were given high expectations. He said that he helped students understand classroom expectations by having them build the "testimony wall." The purpose of the testimony wall was to teach students "that the most important lessons are caught and not taught and they need to listen to The Holy Ghost." He said that if students were taught by the spirit they would strengthen their testimony. He stated that the purpose of his class was to help students "develop a testimony of Jesus Christ and his Gospel." At the beginning of each year he had a lesson that built the testimony wall. The lesson was about building a testimony and then he put the word "testimony" on the wall, which remained the rest of the school year. He stated that keeping the word testimony on the wall helped remind students of the purpose of class. During his testimony wall lesson, he gave his students a rock that spelt testimony that they kept with their supplies that they brought to their desk each class session. Rex also stated that each week he had students write on a piece of paper experiences they have had that strengthened their testimony. He taped each paper on the testimony wall. At the end of the year he invited students to write how the year helped

strengthen their testimony and then had them generate a goal that would help strengthen their testimony during the summer.

Rex said that students needed to be constantly reminded of the purpose of class in order to have clarity of purpose. He said that having an in-depth lesson about the purpose of class at the first of the year, daily visual reminders, and weekly activities about the purpose of class, helped establish clarity of purpose.

Fairness

To insure fairness in class, Rex said that he gave students autonomy and allowed them to be themselves. He said, "I let the louder kids be loud and I let the quite kids be quite and it helps me treat each student fairly." He said that although he allowed each student to be themselves, he invited each student to participate. Rex said, "When I see a student raise his hands too often, I will say something like hold on does anyone else have an answer." He said that a little intervention by the teacher, to help give opportunity for students who were naturally quiet and reserved, helped each student feel they had a fair opportunity to engage in class. He said, "I need to help balance out the students who always share and give opportunity for the other students who want to participate but feel overshadowed. By doing this it helps create a fair learning environment."

Personal Support

Rex stated that one of the best ways he gave students personal support was by talking with them one on one before and after class. He said that he made sure his lesson was prepared and the class was set up so he could focus on students when they came to

class and took that time to talk with them about what was going on in their lives. He said

that when students saw that he cared about them and their individual lives, they elt that he

was supporting them and caring about them.

Rex stated that he gave personal support to students by giving them time to share

spiritual experiences they were having in their lives. Rex had an activity he called "Share

Something Spiritual." He said:

> After the devotional I give my classes time to share something spiritual that has
> happened to them. It is completely volunteer so no one feels obligated. I just turn
> the time to the class and if they feel like coming up and sharing then they do.
> They can share something they have read from the scripture, or maybe a great
> lesson they had in church that Sunday. They can share anything they want that has
> been spiritual in their lives. By sharing something spiritual I think they feel
> supported because the whole class listens to them and supports them. If a student
> hasn't shared the whole year, I don't put pressure on them, but I may just go up to
> them and ask them to share something when they feel comfortable. That way they
> feel like they are contributing and the class is supporting them.

Rex said he gave personal support to his students by talking with them one on one

before and after class and by allowing students to "Share Something Spiritual."

Caring

On the first day of each year Rex took pictures of every student in his classes and

took the pictures home to memorize their names. He did this to show his students that he

cared. He stated that on the second day when students came to class and he called them

by name, they felt that he cared. He also had students fill out "get-to-know-you" sheets.

Rex said that students needed to feel cared for by the other students in class. He

taught a lesson at the first of the year where students rotated stations and each student

visited with all the students in class. Each student answered questions like: "What is your

favorite activity"? "What is your favorite scripture?" "How many people are in your family?" and so forth. He also had a seating chart and had activities and responsibilities assigned to each row. He stated, "It is healthy and helps people get to know each other when they have to sit in an assigned seat."

Rex said that he cared for students by talking with each of them individually before and after class, teaching a lesson designed to help students get to know each other, and having a seating chart.

Authenticity

In speaking of authenticity, Rex said:

I was once given feedback by a colleague who said I played the guessing game with my students. He said I would ask the students to guess the answer I had on my mind and if they didn't guess what I was thinking I would shut them down by saying no that is not right. I slammed them down and it could have been completely true even more true than what I was looking for. But because they didn't guess what was on my mind I would tell them they were wrong. So since then I have tried to be more open minded and structure my questions to bring about true responses not just say what the teacher wants to hear. When I do this I get more authentic responses from my students. So you saw in my lesson today that I shared with my students things I had found but then I asked them to share what they found. So I think asking questions that allow students to share authentic responses is crucial.

Rex said he created authenticity by inviting students to share spiritual experiences. He stated that "Share Something Spiritual" helped add to student's authentic engagement in class.

He also stated that he tried to create lessons that were principle-based and did not require specific outcomes or applications. He said that principle-based lessons allowed for authentic responses because students could derive many applications and principles

from a particular lesson.

Extrinsic Rewards

Rex said he used candy and competitive games only once or twice in a term. He said he did it for variety more than motivation. He also stated that he had a grade sheet. He said:

> I do have a grade sheet. I think students act based on expectations. One major factor in class is my expectations for my students. The grade sheet is used to remind students of their expectations. They know I will follow through with those expectations. I think you have to be persistent in those expectations. However I do believe that our purpose of being in seminary is not to get a grade but we are here for a spiritual experience. The only reason I use a grade sheet is to help them get in the habit of what is expected. I really don't use grades as a motivating tool. It's more about expectations. I think the reward is the spirit and I think that the students are mature enough to see that. They can see that when they leave the class feeling the spirit that is the greatest reward. So the candy and other things I use to help them pay attention, but their real reward is helping them open up to the spirit. When they come back to class they are excited because they felt the spirit and it wasn't about candy or a grade.

Rex used a grade sheet, a few games, and candy as extrinsic rewards.

Intrinsic Interest

Rex stated that helping students feel and recognize the spirit was key to foster intrinsic interest. He said:

> The spirit is the key. Seeing how the spirit affects their lives, seeing how it affects the class, seeing how it touches their hearts; the spirit is the key. They feel it as they share in class or hear from someone else, or it comes as an answer to prayers. It may come from writing in their journals. It can come from anything they do to help connect them to the spirit. The spirit really is the motivating factor.

Rex stated that there were two things that helped students become intrinsically interested in seminary. He said that each student needed to have a personal experience

with the Spirit. He also said that students needed to be in a place where they could feel

the influence of the Spirit. He said:

> There is something to being where we are supposed to be so that we hear a
> spiritual message. So speaking of intrinsic motivation, I will do everything I can
> to get students to come to seminary because there is so much power just being in
> the right place at the right time. I teach them to be where they are suppose to be,
> so they can hear, and then hopefully when the time is right the spirit can enter
> their heart, and this is when they are changed because the spirit touches their
> heart. It is not me or my stories or the things I say, it is the spirit that motivates
> them. So the only thing I do to help them intrinsically is to have a place where
> they can be taught by the spirit.

Rex stated that in order to help students have a spiritual experience he needed to

provide an environment where students were taught doctrines and principles in safety and

structure.

Ownership

Along with his efforts to help students feel that the work they did in his class was

authentic, Rex stated there were two things he did to give students greater ownership. He

had students sign up for 1 day each term to lead the devotional with the assignment to

share a spiritual thought. He said that this gave students ownership and an opportunity to

share authentic ideas and thoughts.

Rex frequently had an activity that helped students feel ownership. He assigned

students to give 2-minute talks on a scriptural topic. He said this gave students ownership

because they were responsible for their 2-minute talk.

Real-World Connection

Rex said he helped make his curriculum have a real-world connection by teaching

students to identify doctrines and principles from the scriptures, examine them, and find

ways to apply them to their lives. He said:

> Helping them apply is what I do. It is simple, it's like the analogy of a man drowning in the ocean. Some people come by and see the man drowning and they say "I know that man is drowning and I know that with all of my heart." I ask my students is it good enough just to know something and they will say no that we have to do something about it. So I then ask them what are they going to do with the knowledge they get out of this class. I help them see that they are going to have to take the principles and doctrines that we teach and do something with them. They are going to have to apply them to their lives. So at the end of each lesson I turn the class over to them to come up with the real life application. All of a sudden instead of me telling them how it applies, they apply it on their own and they listen to the real life applications of their peers. That is when they say this is real, this is real life application, and they are sold on it.

Rex encouraged students to share their personal application with the class. He said, "I

think sometimes as teacher we try to sell it to them but the more I turn it over to students

to sell it to each other, the impact is greater. It allows them to see each other applying it

to their real lives."

He also stated that he gave students opportunities to reflect about the doctrines

and principles in their journals. He said that when students wrote their feelings and

reflections in a journal they more easily applied the lesson of the class to their real world.

Fun

Rex said that he created an environment of fun for his students by smiling He

stated that smiling and showing the students that you were happy and excited to be in

class helped students feel a sense of fun and created a desire for them to attend.

He said that in order to have fun you have to be yourself. He said:

> When I was a student teacher I struggled doing this, but when I was hired I was able to relax and be more of myself. I was more able to be my happy, positive,

smiling self. It is just infectious and the students are happy and want to be there because the teacher is happy and wants to be there.

Rex stated that being yourself allowed students to get to know you and see that they could relate and connect with you. At the beginning of each year, Rex allowed his students to ask him questions about himself. He stated that this helped students get to know him and showed students that he was willing to invest himself in the class, which he said builds trust. He said, "I think this helps create an environment of fun because my students see that I am real and not just a strict teacher up front. That goes two ways; they also need to feel that they can be themselves." He also said, "When I can be myself and they can be themselves that is what makes class fun and then together we can be our best selves."

Chris James

Chris James was a 44-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 18 years. For his first 3 years he taught seminary in Arizona. He then spent 9 years teaching at three different seminaries in Utah. In his current assignment he had been the principal of a small seminary adjacent a suburban junior high school for 9 years. Chris had a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a master's degree in education: curriculum and design.

Definition of Student Engagement

Chris James defined student engagement as "students having a responsibility and feeling like they have ownership of the class. They feel like they have a responsibility to do things." He also said, "Engagement is when students are up and doing and they are

encouraged in the doing process and doing what is expected."

Evidence of Student Engagement

Chris said that students' attitudes and initiative were evidences of student

engagement. He said, "Attitude is so important and seeing students do what is expected

without being told. I know they are engaged when I don't have to prompt them."

Generate Student Engagement

Chris stated that assigning students to a partner is one of the most important

factors in helping students be engaged. Chris said:

> My whole class is based on the buddy system. Students are responsible to take
> care of that person, to serve that person, to work with that person, to pray for that
> person, to be deep and strong with that person. By the end of the year each student
> will have made a deep connection with at least four people. They are expected to
> go deep and take care of their partners. I will have a buddy day where they will
> bring a treat or leave a kind note for their buddy. They will just make it a special
> day for that person. They have a responsibility that day to take care of that buddy.

Chris said:

> I think we spend a lot of time at the first of the year discussing the principles and
> importance of the buddy system and then we spend a lot of time training on the
> expectations and vision of it and the importance of it. It seems to have worked
> well for the last 10 or 12 years. This helps give students class ownership and they
> feel like what they do matters and that the teacher is someone who has created an
> experience for them, but they are the ones actually running class.

Chris stated that partnerships increased student engagement because he no longer

"stands in front" of the class and did all the teaching. He said that students had a greater

responsibility to teach and learn in partnerships. He said:

> So whereas in the past I would traditionally ask a question and wait for a response
> by raising hands, I now will automatically bypass that by saying to the partners,
> one of you go here and one of you go here then teach each other. It's a constant

connection and link to the curriculum. I don't want to stand and deliver and tell them what something means. I want them to teach one another and then I will come back and ask them what they have learned and will probe a little more. But whenever I am preparing I constantly ask myself the question of what can the students do to teach this and then I plan accordingly and try to get myself out of the equation as much as possible.

Chris also stated that assigning students a partner helped increase student engagement because students feel a greater sense of autonomy and ownership.

Competence

Chris said he did a lot of training to help students feel competent. He said that he trained students on how to fulfill particular responsibilities. Chris said:

I will print off detailed instructions that I give to my students at the first of the year and will have them refer to that all the time. I will have buddies teach their buddy about how we do things and help them to know where to go and to know what to do. So that is a constant training tool to help them know what their responsibilities are and help their buddies succeed and fulfill their assignments and responsibilities.

Chris said that if he noticed students not fulfilling assignments or tasks, he would stop class and train them on skills needed to be successful. He said that as he had done this he noticed that students felt more confident in their abilities, which increased competence and success.

Positive School Membership

Chris said that he helped students feel positive school membership and feel valued by creating successful partnerships. To do to this, he had students ask their partner three types of question during a get-to-know-you activity. He said:

I have three levels of questions: getting acquainted questions, getting deeper questions, and getting spiritual questions. So at the beginning I ask the getting

acquainted questions and they have time to chat with their buddy about this question. Then I will go deeper with them, and then we will work at asking the spiritual questions. A get acquainted question is something like what is your favorite this or that. The getting deeper question is something like who is easier to talk to, mom or dad, and why. It is opening things up a little bit. Getting spiritual questions are something like how do you feel when you pray, or when was the last time you trusted the Lord. Then you are getting serious like when has he answered your prayers, and they share experiences they have had. Those are pretty close to the vest, but in a successful buddyship those kinds of questions are easily answered. When students feel safe and comfortable to share those type of questions they also feel valued as a member of class and feel like their contributions are important.

Chris said that partnerships helped foster positive school membership because each student had specific assignments relating to their partner and each person was validated by both the teacher and partner. Each partner had the responsibility to call when their partner missed class, which helped students feel that they were valued.

Clarity of Purpose

Chris taught his students "The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes" and created class themes based on the objective. He said:

Each term we as a class create a theme that goes along with The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes. We tweak it a little bit to make it rhyme. So we have four different themes throughout the year and we start each class by standing up and reciting that theme together as a class. It reminds us of our vision and purpose of being here. This also helps create unity and a shared vision of purpose.

Chris had "The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes" and the different class themes posted on the classroom walls.

Fairness

Chris stated that partnerships created fairness because each student had clearly defined assignments and responsibilities. He said that having class structure eliminated

the perception of him having favorites and giving too much attention to any particular student. He stated that each student had the same responsibilities and opportunities.

Chris also stated that he tried to be consistent with each student. He said he had the same expectation for all students and that all students needed to fulfill class expectations. He shared an example of how he tried to be fair:

> Today I had a student come up to me and ask for a piece of candy but she didn't want to earn it the way I have told them. She wanted to do something different and just wanted me to be nice, but I told her that she needed to do what was expected. So she said she was ok and left with no problem because I treated her fairly and held her to the same expectations as everyone else. I also think that you treat everyone fairly when you treat each person fairly.

Chris said he insured fairness by having students assigned in partnerships and by holding students to clearly defined expectations.

Personal Support

Chris stated that he gave personal support to students by praying for them and validating them in class. He prayed for each of his students every day and said that doing this helped increase his love and compassion for them. He also said that by focusing on each student he knew them more. He also stated that he genuinely complimented students whenever they contributed in a positive way. He said that this public recognition helped students feel valued. He also wrote thank you notes to his students and left them in their assigned cupboards.

Caring

Chris stated that he fostered an environment of caring by assigning students to partnerships. He said:

I really reinforce the idea of paying attention to their buddy. On occasion I will have a buddy that sits with a friend rather than their buddy and I will always go over to him and say what message are you sending to your buddy right now. When I do that it pretty much wraps that up and they know they have a responsibility to that person and their non-verbal communication is that I don't care about you and they don't want to say that so they go back and sit by their partner.

Chris also helped students understand that each person had unique circumstances and challenges that they faced and should show patients, kindness, and understanding to their partner. He taught his classes that many students came to class seeking friendship, peace, and a spiritual experience, and they could help facilitate those experiences for others.

Authentic Work

Chris stated that his philosophical approach to teaching required students to learn, feel, and act. He said:

One of my philosophies and methods of teaching is learn, feel, and do. I want student to reflect on what have they learned, how do they feel about what they have learned, and what will they go and do because of what they feel. I think that philosophy helps students create something that is authentic and real. I am not trying to do something that is contrived, I am trying to do something where they learn something, feel something, and do something. That can't be mine it has got to be theirs. So I will ask them what did they learn and follow up with feeling questions which then produces its own customized council and authentic work.

Chris stated that giving students time each day to write in their journals helped create authenticity. He stated that he never read student's journals or required them to show their work, but allowed them the autonomy to write in their journal whatever they wanted. He gave direction and encouraged them to write down what they learned, felt, and now desired to do because of the lesson, but said "They can write whatever they want

because it is their journal."

Extrinsic Rewards

Chris implemented many extrinsic rewards in his classroom. He stated that he

used extrinsic rewards to help students reach certain standards. He said:

> For class reading we bring goodies if the class reaches a certain percentage. We
> have a program called Stand as a Light which is about reaching certain standards.
> We will do stickers and wrists bands and other things to help them mark their path
> on the way to reaching certain goals. Key chains, DVDs, t-shirts, are all rewards
> we use in our honors program. At the end of the term they can cash in their
> reward points for candy or extra credit or things like that. We use a candy tube
> that represents class reading. Each class puts candy in a transparent tube to show
> how much reading they have done. That way each class can see how they are
> doing compared to all the other classes.

Chris also used grades as extrinsic rewards and stated that he would change their

grade for one term if they showed remarkable progress the following term.

Intrinsic Interest

Chris stated that all he could do to help students have intrinsic interest was

provide an environment where they could feel the spirit. He stated that the only intrinsic

motivation a students could have in seminary is the spirit. He said, "Feeling the spirit is

what helps them have an experience deep down, so it is nothing I have given them but the

opportunity is there and they are the ones that create it." Chris said that his role as the

teacher was to give students opportunity to do things that invited the spirit such as

studying the scriptures, sharing testimony, and singing hymns. He said that if students

would do these things they could feel the spirit and be intrinsically motivated.

Ownership

Chris stated that having students in partners and in "buddyships" created ownership. He also said that having students write in their journal each day contributed to a student's sense of ownership.

Real-World Connection

Chris stated that students perceived that the curriculum had a real life connection when it was urgent and relevant. He said:

> To make a real-world connection students have to first sense that what matters to the teacher is what should matter to them. They need to feel a sense of urgency. I really try and help my students understand that I am not the teacher in class but the spirit is the teacher and whatever we get from the spirit is the most important thing we can learn. If students understand that then they understand that whatever they learned in class has been customized for them personally by the spirit and they can apply it to their lives.

Chris said that a teacher needed to try and make the curriculum relevant to student's lives. He said:

> The lesson has to be relevant. Relevancy is the most important thing for a student to have a connection with the spirit and with the Savior. So I try to make things relevant. It has to be relevant or you are dead in the water. It's like you are plowing through mud. I always try to picture the students and ask if what I am teaching is on their level and does it matter to them. Does it create a feeling for them, but not make it sensational. So I always try to picture, as I prepare, what experiences the students will have in class today and what relevance does it have to their personal lives.

Fun

Chris stated that he had his students define fun. He said he wanted his student to have faithful fun. He said:

> We define fun in class as faithful fun. I have them come up with what faithful fun

is. I will write fun and faith on the board. I will then ask students to define what faith is and how you can tell if someone is having fun. I then have them describe what faith is and how you can tell if someone has faith. I then have them combine those two words and ask them what faithful fun is. We then try to incorporate those things into our class.

Chris stated that he fostered an environment of fun by having edifying lessons. He said that when a student felt the spirit and drew closer to the Savior, that was fun. He said, "When we are edified we rejoice and feel uplifted. We leave class feeling smarter, stronger, and happier. It is fun to feel smarter, stronger, and happier."

Chris said that he incorporated a lot of variety in his lesson. He said that he spent a lot of time thinking of different methods to increase variety.

Mark Calley

Mark Calley was a 30-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 4 years. He had taught 4 years at a seminary adjacent a large suburban high school in Utah. He had a bachelor's degree in integrated studies and a master's degree in education.

Definition of Student Engagement

Mark Cowley defined student engagement as "the class being managed by the teacher but run by the students." He said:

> I am the driver but the students are the wheels. They are the ones moving the vehicle or class to the destination and the wheels don't turn unless there is student engagement. But unless there is a driver the car goes out of control, so the teacher needs to take the wheel and allow the wheels to turn.

Evidence of Student Engagement

Mark stated that there were a few physical signs of student engagement. He

looked for students having their heads up, scriptures open, raising hands, sharing with neighbors, participating in group work, and writing in their journals.

Mark said that when students were engaged on a spiritual level it was much more difficult to see the evidences of that type of engagement. He said, "Spiritual engagement is much more difficult to tell because that is happening within their mind and heart." He said that there were a few evidences of spiritual engagement such as students sharing how they felt or what they had been thinking.

Generate Student Engagement

Mark stated that he generated student engagement by having variety, a seating chart, groups, high levels of structure, and expectations. He said that he organized students into groups designated by the row in which they sat. He said that this gave students opportunities to have responsibilities and assignments that helped them engage. He created the seating chart and assigned students into groups he felt would be beneficial and engaging.

He stated that he incorporated a lot of variety in his lessons. He said, "Wherever in my lesson I feel like there is a need for variety that is where I will do an activity like come up to the board, get in groups, turn and discuss with your neighbor. I try to just keep things rolling."

Mark also stated that the structure of class helped students engage. He said that he structured class to allow students the opportunity to run class devotionals. He said:

> The class structure allows students to know what to do right when they get to class so they can contribute and get things going. They know that they need to work and participate because that is the structure of class."

Mark said that good questions generated student engagement. He said:

> I am just a huge believer in questions. If you can ask the right question it just stimulates participation. It gets students thinking and then answering, and if I can help them feel like they own that answer then they will repeat that action.

Mark stated that he spends the majority of his preparation creating engaging

questions.

Competence

Mark said that the most important aspect of helping students feel competent was

giving them confidence to comment in class. He said:

> I think they develop competence when I have them own their own comments. So they have a sense of ownership. So even if their comments are a bit off I still try really hard to tell them that was a great comment or good job. That way they feel like they own that comment and are more confident to share the next time. They say to themselves that my teacher liked my comment and that it helped class, because the teacher values what I say, I feel greater confidence in my abilities to share comments and contribute to class.

Mark stated that as students felt confident in their ability to comment they would

see that they had the necessary skills to be successful. He said that students would

increase their confidence as they were genuinely complimented. He said:

> I try to let students know how much I appreciate the comments they make and tell them their contributions really helped me learn and see things more clearly. I know personally when someone does that for me it gives me a sense of pride and it makes me feel glad that I helped make things better. It helps me want to engage more.

Mark stated that if teachers point out the flaws in a student's comments, it

discouraged participation and limited engagement.

Positive School Membership

Mark stated that he built positive school membership with his students by having them work in groups. He said that this helped students have ownership and feel they were a valued member of class and vital in helping class go well. Students also felt that their contribution was crucial. He stated that he wanted students to feel that they were part owners of the class. He did this by preparing lessons that required students to do something and not just receive a lecture. He used a variety of methods each day that encouraged students to participate, which then gave students ownership and positive school membership.

Clarity of Purpose

Mark has a 3'x5' poster in his classroom of "The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes." He stated that he posted this to help remind students of the purpose of seminary and what outcomes they should seek. He spent time at the first of every year teaching the students about the purpose of seminary and The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes. He reviewed the purpose continually throughout the year.

Mark stated that when he was a teenager he would not have 'thought twice" about the objective of seminary even if it was trained, on the wall, and constantly reviewed, unless the purpose of seminary was both relevant and applicable to his life. He said:

> To help them understand the purpose of seminary I always ask them about their own lives. This way they can see that they are here for more than just getting their heads filled. I feel that there is a stigma of classroom settings and students thinking that they are here to learn regurgitated information and that they are here just to stick information in their heads and leave. My goal is to help them see that what we do in this class is both relevant and applicable to their lives. Hopefully because we constantly talk about how this is relevant and applies to their lives,

they see why they should come and understand that these lessons can bless their lives if they actually go and apply them. So when they have felt moved and actually go and do something about it then they will see the value of what we are doing because they have experienced it for themselves.

Mark asked questions that helped students see the relevance of the doctrines and principles to their lives and gave students time to reflect on how they could apply the doctrines and principles to their lives.

Fairness

Mark talked with his students before class each day. He stated that this helped him get to know his students and know what was going on in their lives. He said that by talking with students before class they felt supported and treated fairly.

Mark stated that he included all students in class discussions. He said:

I make sure that before I move on to the next subject that I pause and ask if anyone has a comment, and at least students know I am trying to include everyone and not just moving on. I also tell people who dominate the discussion that they have great comments but let other students have an opportunity to share so that way students see that I am trying to make class fair.

By getting to know his students personally and by giving every student an opportunity to share, Mark created a sense of fairness.

Personal Support

Mark stated that he gave students personal support by taking time to get to know them. He spent time before and after class talking with them about events happening in their lives. He went around the room during quiet moments in class and interacted with students on a personal level.

Mark also stated that he gave support to his students by complimenting their

classroom contributions. He said, "I really do think that giving them genuine comments while looking them in the eye helps them feel personally supported by me."

Caring

Mark stated that rapport was the best way to help students feel that he cared. He said:

> You have to have good rapport with your students. That way they can feel relaxed and comfortable and not feel like I am going to criticize them. They also feel like I can relate with them and what is happening in their lives. So to build rapport we laugh together and spend a few minutes joking with each other. That time before class has really paid off because we talk about life and we talk about what is going on at school, what is going on the weekend, or spring break. The students see that I am involved and interested in what they are doing and what is going on in their lives and I think that shows them that I care.

Mark built rapport by spending a day at the first of the year having students ask and answers questions to get to know each other. He stated that during this time they relaxed, had fun, and opened up to each other. He also stated that at the end of class he answered all of the same questions. He said this helped build rapport and in return helped students feel that he cared.

Authentic Work

Mark stated that in order to help students feel that the work they did in his class was authentic, he limited the amount of time he spent lecturing. He said:

> I try not to be a talking head where students feel that they are only going to be lectured to. Students need to feel ownership. They need to be constantly asked to do something, whether that is answering questions, or giving responses, writing in a journal, teaching a partner, or anything that allows them to contribute to class.

Mark said that he created authenticity by using student's comments as the catalyst

for class discussion. He said:

> I acknowledge that the comments they make in class are theirs and I don't try and take credit for their ideas. I really try hard to not one up them or out do them. I will sometimes bring greater light to what they said and highlight their comments but I want them to feel that what they say is valuable to our class. I want them to feel like their comments are what carries the class. I think that my compliments are the major thing that helps students feel the work they do is authentic.

Extrinsic Rewards

Mark stated that he used compliments, candy, competitive games, wrist bands, and grades as extrinsic rewards. He stated that he did them mainly as variety. He also stated that he only used extrinsic rewards "once in a while."

Intrinsic Interest

Mark stated that intrinsic interest came from feeling the spirit. He said:

> The challenge is helping students recognize that the way they feel is the actual reward. That what they are feeling is the spirit. We are dealing with spiritual learning so we have to help them see that their feelings are rewards from The Holy Ghost. It is so different than some of the secular responses. I think we need to help them recognize that they are feeling the spirit and be motivated to seek after spiritual things. The Holy Ghost is their intrinsic motivator.

Real-World Connection

Mark stated that he helped his curriculum have a real-world connection with his students by helping them discover, understand, analyze, and apply the doctrine and principles found in the scriptures. He stated that the students needed to see past the stories and look for the truths and applicable principles. He stated the he spent great effort in helping them learn how to identify doctrines and principles in the scriptures. He trained his students how to find the doctrines and principles in the scripture text. He did this by

asking questions that helped them transition to the story. He also developed good search

questions that helped students identify doctrines. He created effective analyze questions

that helped students understand the doctrines. He also prepared application questions that

asked the students how the doctrine or principle applied to their lives.

Mark stated that by breaking students up into smaller groups they were more

willing to share personal experiences. This helped students hear examples of how the

doctrines and principles of the scripture could be applied to their lives.

Fun

Mark stated many times that he had a tendency to be "stiff" and "not an

affectionate person." He said that he had to constantly remind himself to relax because he

felt that students needed to feel that a teacher was relaxed and comfortable in order for

them to have fun. He said:

> Whenever I come to class I have to remind myself to loosen up and relax and not
> be such a stickler so students can enjoy class. I feel that as a teacher if I am
> uptight and can't loosen up then students don't think they can relax and be
> themselves and then they won't want to be here and everything else dealing with
> student engagement will be hurt. Students won't share or open up if they don't
> feel that they can be themselves and have fun. If they don't have fun they won't
> engage. I have to be willing to go off the path a little and be a little flexible about
> where the students want to go. So if before class they are talking about a good
> movie or a book, I should relax and take just a couple of minutes and talk with
> them about it. I think a few minutes before class or whenever can be such a huge
> investment. The students feel it and enjoy class more.

Mark stated that he created an environment of fun by having students work within

their rows and with partners. He said that they had fun when they got to interact with

each other and develop friendships. He said he liked to rotate partnerships and rows so

that students had variety and got to interact with different people in class. Mark also said

that variety helped students have fun. He said:

> Variety and a sense of change is fun. Once a day I try to do an activity so they can see that we are doing something fresh and new. We try different learning methods so that we cater to many styles and help lots of people feel included and have fun. Fun has to do with variety and making sure that every day is not monotonous or redundant but that they come and there is something new and there is something fun.

Mark also stated that he took time at the end of a semester and celebrated the experience of being together as a class. He allowed students to bring food and candy. He stated that this celebration was just about being together and enjoying each other's company.

John Allen

John Allen was a 33-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 8 years at a seminary adjacent a large suburban high school in Utah. John has a bachelor's degree in American studies, a master's degree in religious education, and was currently pursuing a doctorate in education.

Definition of Student Engagement

John Allen defined student engagement as a spiritual experience. He said:

For me student engagement is the degree to which I am inviting or facilitating the student having an experience with the spirit. So it to me is a spiritual process that starts before the lesson. It starts with my prayers in my daily life and my desires for the students as I pray for them. I think it continues on in the classroom as I try to implement the other things that I understand that facilitate them putting forth energy and effort. Thinking, pondering, asking, seeking, and knocking all those things that bring about learning that as I invite them to do those things they are able to process and internalize what we are trying to do in the class that day.

Evidence of Student Engagement

John said that there were two types of evidence for student engagement. He said, "I think there is spiritual evidence and then there is temporal evidence."

John stated that the "temporal" or physical evidences of engagement included: opening scripture and following along, raising hands, asking questions, participating in activities, singing the songs, volunteering, body language, the tone of their voice, and level of enthusiasm. He also stated that there are "many, many more" indicators of physical participation.

Concerning spiritual evidence of student engagement, John said:

The spiritual side would be the level of the spirit you feel as they are asking questions, as they are making comments, or making discoveries. The edification that I feel and the degree that I am learning something new, I know that the spirit is becoming the teacher and we are being edified together. I feel a connection with the students and I feel a love for them. I think that is an indicator for me that there is a Christ like love between me and them which for me is a great indicator of student engagement.

Generate Student Engagement

When asked what he did to generate student engagement, John said:

It starts with creating an environment of purpose where students feel that what we are doing here is important and we are not going to waste time. That every activity and everything we do is geared toward something greater than just coming to a classroom and opening a book or just raising hands. Students need to know the purpose and objective of seminary.

John stated that he spent a lot time teaching students the purpose of seminary and helping them understand their role in the learning process.

John stated that students needed to get to know each other in order to have student engagement. He said that students needed to get to know each other's story, back ground,

where they are coming from, challenges, and trials. He said, "The more they get to know

each other the easier it is for them to let down their guard and extend love to each other

and appreciate each other which creates and environment where the spirit can dwell and

teach us."

John also stated that students needed to feel the spirit in order to engage. He stated

that in order for students to feel the spirit the teacher needed to be spiritual. He said:

> Obviously the teacher has to pay a price and that price is personally living the
> standards of the gospel and sacrificing to keep the covenants that have been made
> in order to have the spirit. When that happens in my life, I notice I have the kind
> of energy and the strength, the grace, from Heavenly Father to go into class and
> teach in a way that can bring about engagement. The spirit brings about
> engagement when people feel the spirit. They are motivated to do the things they
> need to do. So the spirit itself is the greatest indicator and tool we have for
> engagement. If people feel the spirit they have a desire to learn. That taste, that
> power of the spirit helps students hunger and thirst after righteousness. Because it
> changes people and motivates people, it is the most powerful thing for
> engagement. But the price has to be paid by the teacher. The teacher has to start
> with his life, and his study, and his preparation, and his training, and he has to do
> it as a professional to become a good teacher. Then a teacher just needs to strive
> to listen to the spirit and be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to invite the
> spirit into class so students can become engaged with Christ.

John stated that students had a responsibility to be prepared spiritually in order to

engage. He said, "The spirit in class is also effected by what student have been doing in

their personal lives; their levels of repentance, their level of meekness, their level of

openness, their personal relationship at the time with the Savior." John stated that the

teacher and students needed to feel the spirit in order to be engaged in class.

Competence

John stated that students needed to have a certain skill set in order to be

competent. He said that those skills included having a certain level of vocabulary, reading

capacity, and understanding of complex usage of language such as metaphor, symbolism, and figurative parts of speech. John stated that students needed to be able to look for principles and doctrines in large tracks of scriptures. He said that he paused while teaching the scriptures to define vocabulary and discuss parts of speech in order to help students become familiar with the writing style and language of scripture. He also stated that he helped students understand the context and background of each scriptural story to help students understand what was taking place in order to better understand the scriptures.

In addition to helping students develop reading skills and increase scriptural vocabulary, John helped students understand the operations of the spirit. He said:

> It is also important that we help students become familiar with the language of the spirit. We help them recognize the spirit so they can understand how it operates. We spend a certain amount of time throughout the year helping them to understand the principles by which the spirit teaches. Not only do we show them how to be good learners in an academic sort of way like we have a certain criteria like our grade sheet and other administrative types of things, but more importantly we help them to learn spiritually by study and by faith. A teacher needs to spend time doing this. We spend time not only at the first of the year but throughout the year, taking time to look at those principles and try to educate students in that way.

John said that one way he built competence was helping students move from learning to acquiring information in a proficient enough way to teach. He said:

> We have to spend a certain amount of time teaching students how to teach. There are certain teaching skills we want them to gain. Not only do we want them to study effectively, we also want them to teach effectively. I think that takes a lot of modeling and a lot of feedback. It also takes a lot of practice and knowing theory a little bit. I spend a lot of time letting my students teach and helping them understand why they need to teach.

John included a teaching opportunity for his students in each lesson.

John said that in order to develop competence with students he created an environment where students were comfortable and became good listeners so that mutual respect and care increased. He said that he taught students how to be good listeners and show respect by their body language and attentiveness. He said he helped students be cognizant of the nonverbal messages they sent out to class members.

Positive School Membership

John stated that a teacher had a tremendous impact on students feeling positive school membership. He stated that as students came to class and the teacher was enthusiastic and positive, it spread to the students and they felt excited, wanted, and needed. He stated that he taught students the principles of unity and spent time letting them get to know each other. He stated that he had students participate in unity activities throughout the year.

John said that when students lived the gospel they felt school membership. He said:

> The biggest thing that brings people together is that as they come closer to Christ they come closer to each other. So the most important thing we do is teach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. Teach students with purity and power and people will like to come to that environment and when they do this their heart will be knit together in love and unity as the scriptures teach. This has a tremendous impact on students feeling like they are valued and a positive member of class.

Clarity of Purpose

John stated that helping students see the purpose of class was vital to engagement. He said:

> Defining clarity of purpose with my students is an ongoing process. It has to be

taught at the beginning of the year, it has to be taught and expressed and needs to be felt by the students. There needs to be some level of authenticity from the teacher and if students don't feel that then they won't respond. There has to be a level of enthusiasm from the teacher. I think the purpose of seminary has to be reviewed throughout the year. It needs to be refreshed and students need to be reminded. It can't just be words it has to be played out in deeds and in actions, in activities, and in teaching every day, so they can see it. So most of it is unspoken and the purpose is centered in the heart of the teacher and by the end of the year most students have come on board and really understand and see the purpose of seminary.

John said that in order for teachers to continue to have the purpose of seminary centered in their hearts, it was essential for teachers to attend regular faculty inservice meetings.

John taught a lesson at the first of each year instructing students about "The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes." In this lesson he committed students to set goals based on the objective. He then took time with each student individually to discuss their progress on their goals.

Fairness

John stated that he helped insure fairness with his students by allowing them to create class rules. Each year he asked students what things helped them have positive experiences in seminary. He wrote their responses on the board. He said that based on the answers of the students, the class created classroom rules and guidelines that each students was expected to keep. Then as students had conflicts with keeping class rules he could reinforce that these were rules agreed upon by the class that they generated together.

John stated that he was principle-based in his administration of classroom rules

and said that the characteristics he tried to obtain were: persuasion, long suffering,

meekness, love, patience, and operating from standards of truth. He taught students these

principles and tried to be consistent in enforcing policies. He said:

> I always try to be consistent with the rules. I try to make sure that when need be, there is a timely consequence. And then I ask myself when I give a consequence am I doing it with mercy, am I doing it with good judgment, am I doing it with charity.

John stated that when students understood the principles behind classroom

discipline they felt a sense of fairness.

Personal Support

John said the following about personal support:

> I like to spend time one on one with each of my students as much as I can. That requires a lot of my time before and after class time, and some time even during class. I think it is so important to get to know our students. It is vital that we get to know them to help them feel supported. So we have to exert some effort in getting to know them. A lot of that comes by just spending time talking with each student individually, and as you spend time with them and try to find out what they love and are involved in. It is also important to talk with them and find out about their challenges and trials. As we do this it becomes easier to support them and help them see that you really do care about them and what is happening in their lives. They also need to see you at their extracurricular activities and in the community so they feel that your intent is in their best interest and that you really care about what they are trying to accomplish in their lives.

John also stated that as teachers came to know students personally and on an

individual level, students would feel even more supported because the lessons could be

tailored to fit their personal needs and concerns. He stated that when students feel that

their teacher care about them and taught lessons that applied to their specific needs, they

felt that they could share their "deepest and innermost dreams, desires, hopes, and really

engage in a deep and spiritual way in class."

Caring

John stated that when he talked with students one on one before and after class, he got to know his students personally and they knew that he cared. He also said that his ability to care for students deepened as he prayed for them and thought about their individual concerns. John also stated that as students interacted with each other in spiritual ways, they began to develop affection for each other and the love and caring in his classroom increased. John stated that in order to create an environment of caring between students he was "quick to quell contention and quick to build students with edifying language." He explained:

> We are careful with our humor to never demean or belittle or make fun even if it is sarcastically. We help each other avoid this type of tone. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to gently help students recognize how they are treating each other with their language and tone of voice. As the teacher I set the example by the way I talk with and about students. The students learn a lot by the example that I set.

John stated that one of the expectations he sat for students was treating each other with care and respect. He reminded them of this expectation and corrected students in a gentle way if they did not fulfill that expectation.

Authenticity

John stated that in order for students to feel that the work they did in class was authentic, they needed to feel validated by the teacher and students. He said that the best way to do this was by showing the students that the teacher sincerely learned from their contributions and expressed how important their contributions were to the classroom experience. He said, "I try hard to be open enough as a teacher to learn so that when I do learn something from a student I can say with all sincerity thank you, or I appreciate that,

or that was really valuable, or I love your different perspective or viewpoint." He also

cautioned to be careful in telling a student that their view point was incorrect or wrong.

He said, "when there needs to be correction to a comment it needs to be done carefully so

as not to squash the desire to contribute. So if you have to clarify a doctrine, do that with

care and in a way that the contributing student still feels validated."

John stated that authenticity was generated when a student was given an

assignment that required individual thought. He said that he had activities that had

students discover doctrines and principles. He then asked open-ended questions like

"What did you discover?", or "What was important to you in this story?", or "Have you

ever had an experience similar to the one in the story"? He stated that these types of

questions required students to have authentic responses that contributed to class. He also

said that these types of questions allowed students to steer the direction of the class and a

teacher needed to be flexible and allow the class to flow in a direction that students

directed. He said:

> One effort we need to make as teachers is that when a student makes a comment
> or brings up an idea that is not aligned with what the teacher has prepared, the
> teacher needs to be open and humble enough to recognize the contribution. The
> teacher then needs to connect that statement with the other doctrines and
> principles being taught, don't disregard it or set it aside but acknowledge it,
> embrace it, and help students recognize that they have made a valuable
> contribution that connects with the lesson. We as teachers need to be patient and
> not be so driven that we miss those great truths shared by the students.

John stated that by creating activities that allowed students to give authentic

responses and publically acknowledging students contributions, students would feel that

the work they did in class was authentic.

Extrinsic Rewards

John Allen said that there was value and limitations with extrinsic rewards. He

said:

> I have strong feelings about extrinsic rewards. There is of course value in
> extrinsic rewards; we live in a world that operates by them. People are motivated
> by rewards; it is how society works in many ways. It works on many levels but I
> think there are significant limitations to extrinsic rewards. If we use extrinsic
> rewards we need to ask ourselves some very tough questions. We use extrinsic
> rewards to motivate small children to help them form habits and sometimes our
> teenagers are a bit immature and extrinsic rewards can be a very valuable tool. So
> we use things like candy, or raffles, or grades. However, I struggle with the idea
> because at what point do we draw the line and what things are appropriate to use
> extrinsic rewards for and what things are not. We use extrinsic rewards to
> motivate students to read. Well what if we up the ante and said we will have a
> waffle party if you pray. Then think if we used rewards for a mission like if you
> go on a mission we will buy you a car. Obviously we reach a point where we stop
> using extrinsic rewards and we do things differently. I am currently leaning more
> and more to letting the students receive internal rewards.

John acknowledged that each student was different and some needed extrinsic rewards to

"kick start them to get to a point where they will be motivated by internal desires."

John gave grades, reading rewards, and candy, but expressed that he really felt

that "lasting and lifelong desire and change" only came through intrinsic interest.

Intrinsic Interest

John stated that one of his core beliefs as a teacher in religious education was that

intrinsic interest as an outcome of a student's faith. He said:

> For a student to want to read scriptures, for a students to want to be involved in
> class, or to overcome the fear that naturally comes from speaking in public, or
> sharing something that is valuable to them, all these things that we think are
> valuable for a them to do in class, a student has to exercise faith.

> He stated that students could increase faith by hearing and reading scriptures,

feeling pure love, being around someone who has great faith, hearing about experiences of those who have exercised faith, and feeling the spirit. John said that he tried to incorporate these factors into his lessons and teaching methods.

John also stated that in order for students to reach a level where they were intrinsically motivated, there needed to be a good learning environment that invited students to engage. He said that was why he had a disciplined and structured classroom, used a variety of teaching methods, created good readiness activities that helped students shift to spiritual learning, and had "processes in place that help break down the barriers that interfere with a student's ability to be intrinsically interested."

Ownership

John stated that he taught students their role in the learning process. He said:

> The students need to be taught very early in the year that they have a responsibility to all who come into their realm of influence including each student in our class. They need to know that the class is theirs and it is their responsibility to help each other learn and grow. They need to know the doctrine of why we learn and why learning is important, so they can then take responsibility for their own learning. I think that when students understand the importance of their individual contribution and behavior they will take that responsibility on themselves and have that ownership.

John also gave students specific assignments and responsibilities such as being responsible to run daily devotionals.

Real-World Connection

John stated that in order to help his curriculum have a real-world connection for his students he looked for real-world applications to the principles and doctrines in the scriptures. He said:

As teachers go out in the world and experience life they need to be quick to observe and see the challenges and difficulties the youth are facing. They need to see how the things we teach can be both relevant and meaningful to students. In order for a teacher to help students make application, they need to study what is going on in the world and lives of the students.

John stated that he taught his students how to identify principles in the lives of people in the scriptures and then take that same principle and apply it to their lives. He said that as students aw beyond the actual story and saw the story as "packaged principles ready for application," they would more easily see the real-world connection. In his teaching, he constantly asked students to identify principles. He then asked them to give modern-day examples of how that principle could be applied to their lives. He then had students come up with how it could specifically be applied to their individual lives.

Fun

John stated that he loved teaching and he loved his students. He said that every day he came to teach he had fun because he recognized what a blessing it was for him to be employed where he could teach youth the scriptures. He said that his enthusiasm and his love and excitement helped students see that class was fun.

To help establish an environment of fun, John stated that he tried to not take himself too seriously and to "laugh at all of our human foibles." He said that he tried to help students get to know each other and care for one another. He had his students participate in an activity where they named a characteristic that another student in class possessed that they thought was admirable. He said that by doing this students deepened their respect and love for one another and had fun.

He said that variety helped students have fun. He said, "What makes a sun set so

inspiring is that you never see a rerun. What makes class fun is making things less mundane and adding a lot of variety." He said that one thing he did to break up the monotony was to take time to "just talk with students and laugh with them. That is fun."

John stated that class was fun when students felt the spirit and lived the gospel standards. He said:

> Feeling the spirit is fun. When we do the core things of the gospel it brings out happiness and joy that naturally comes in life. Everything becomes brighter and better. As students relate the gospel to their lives and see that everything God has made has a lesson in it for our lives, that is joy. All joy relates back to the truths that save us. So as we enjoy the tastes, the touches, the smells, the sights, all the different ways we learn, as we connect those back to gospel truths; that is fun.

John stated that he created an environment of fun for his students by not taking himself so seriously, having students develop affinity for each other by recognizing each other's admirable characteristics, having variety, and teaching and learning by the spirit.

Joseph Young

Joseph Young was a 34-year-old teacher who had taught seminary for 9 years. He has taught at three different seminaries adjacent suburban high schools in Utah. He has been the principal of a seminary adjacent to a large suburban high school for the past 4 years. Joseph had a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in education.

Definition of Student Engagement

Joseph Young defined student engagement as "being involved intellectually, vocally, spiritually, and internally." He also said that "whether that process is happening externally or internally, either way both is engagement."

Evidences of Student Engagement

Joseph stated that he looked for a few behavioral signs of student engagement that included: scriptures open and on their desks, eye contact, body language, raising hands, following along, and no distractive material such as homework or cell phones. However, he said that many times he was surprised to find out that a student was engaged even when there were no physical signs of engagement.

He stated that he determined if students were engaged by the way he felt. He said:

> Mostly it is a feeling. I pay attention to how I feel. You can usually feel if it is going well or not and you feel how the students are doing. You just feel the spirit and you feel what particular students need. So mostly I look for a feeling. I just feel like they are engaged or I feel like they need to change gears because they are not as engaged as they need to be. You just need to feel it and adapt to the different students and the different classes.

Generate Student Engagement

Joseph stated that he did two things to help generate engagement. The first he said was teach directly from the scriptures and stay in the scriptures. The second was using a variety of teaching techniques. He said:

> I believe in changing gears and changing the pace of class. I really believe that when we do that students will get ready to learn and remain that way throughout class. If we are mindful of our different teaching techniques, that will help them get involved and keep them engaged and interested.

Joseph stated that more students would be engaged when a teacher used a greater array of teaching methods. He said that his experience had shown him that he had greater success with helping students engage when he used more variety.

To add variety and help students be engaged, Joseph had a "FEAST" at the first of every class. It was an activity where students were given 5 to 10 minutes to read in the

scriptures individually. When they finished reading, they shared with a partner doctrines and principles that stood out to them. Then a few students were invited to share with the whole class.

Joseph had students responsible for running the devotional each day. The student running the devotional assigned students to offer the prayers, play the piano, and recite the scripture mastery. The student in charge was responsible to give the spiritual thought. As part of the devotional, the student who was in charge was also given "The Final Word," which was the responsibility to share thoughts about the lesson just prior to the closing prayer. Joseph stated that by having students share the devotional and last word of the day, he helped train students to be more active and engaged in the lesson.

Competence

Joseph stated that he helped build a student's competence by building confidence in their abilities, sets high expectations, and provide sufficient training to give them the skills needed to be successful. He said:

> The most important thing is to let the students know that you have confidence in them and you have no doubt that they will meet the high expectations that you have set for them. Even if they have off days, if they can see and feel that you don't doubt them, then they are going to want to meet those expectations and do what you ask 99% of the time.

Joseph stated that he instructed students on classroom expectations and then reminded students of those expectations throughout the year. He said, "I can't overstate the importance of being consistent because training on technical things and classroom management and protocol has to happen the whole year, every day." He also dedicated class time to help train students on skills they need to be successful in seminary such as

devotionals, scripture tools, and identifying doctrines and principles.

Clarity of Purpose

Joseph stated that he constantly taught the students "The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes" and reinforced that purpose by helping students see the relevance of doctrines and principles in their daily lives. He said:

> I teach the purpose of being in seminary from the scriptures. I teach the students why they need this in their lives and show them what ancient and modern prophets have said. So it is a simple answer and it is to teach the doctrine consistently and effectively of why this is important. This will help students catch that vision and feel the importance of what we are talking about. Hopefully sooner or later those words will sink into their hearts and minds and their actions will reflect what they know and believe. So we help them see the purpose of seminary by consistently and effectively teaching the doctrine.

Fairness

Joseph said that he established fairness with his students by loving them equally. He said, "Love all you kids and love them all equally. Treat them all like you expect every bit as much out of this one as you do anyone else. They will feel that love and feel that same expectation." He stated that he helped students feel this equality and fairness by interacting with each student individually and giving all students responsibilities such as reading, answering questions, and making comments. He said:

> Spread things around and don't always rely on your all-star students. Instead try to spread it around. Each student is expected to do things and do them well. So be consistent on helping each student have an opportunity to fulfill those expectations. Some will obviously do better, but be encouraging and help everyone have an opportunity.

Personal Support

Joseph stated that he gave personal support to his students by visiting with each of them individually before and after class and being there to help answer questions and coach them during class. He also stated that students needed to feel that their teacher cared about them individually and was interested in the cares and concerns of their daily lives.

Joseph shared the following story highlighting how he helped a student feel supported:

> One example from today's class is a kid that has been tough to reach. He is a little bit of a challenge but he works at a paleontology department and so he really likes dinosaur bones. Lately he has brought in a video of things he has been doing and wanted so badly to show. So I watched for a few minutes the video of him working on a bone. I was so glad that he wanted me to take some time to share with him because he has been harder to connect with but I feel that talking with him about what is important in his life has helped him feel like I care and support him. He now has been coming around and attending more than he ever has. I felt I needed to do something more for him so I wrote him a letter and delivered it to him over at the high school. It wasn't a chastising letter saying you should have been in class more or you need to be more engaged, but rather I just said I have been thinking about you, you are in my prayers, I know God loves you, and I am glad you are in our seminary class. Ever since he has gotten that letter he hasn't missed a day. He is coming and he is not always totally engaged but he is more engaged than he has been> Just because I think he felt like my teacher cares about me. I was probably a little late in telling him that but better late than never you know.

Joseph supported his students by getting to know them individually and showing students that he cared about what is going on in their lives.

Caring

In addition to getting to know students and showing care in what was happening in their daily lives, Joseph stated students needed to feel care from their peers. He stated

that the best way students learned to care for each other was by sharing spiritual

experiences together. To facilitate this, he assigned students to work with partners. He

said, "I assign students to work with different people throughout the semester because

this helps them interact together in the scriptures and gets them looking, discovering,

finding, discussing, and answering questions together." He said as students did this they

would feel the spirit together. He said:

> When students interact together in the scriptures they will feel the spirit together. I feel that the more they are in the scriptures together they get to know each other more on a spiritual level. I think caring is a natural result of feeling the spirit. When you feel the spirit together you just naturally bond and care for that person. So I try to give students the opportunity to act with each other in class in a spiritual way.

Joseph stated that by getting to know his students personally, showing care for

their individual experiences, and helping students interact with each other on a spiritual

level, students would feel that the teacher and peers care.

Authenticity

Joseph said that he helped students feel the work they did in class was authentic

by giving them opportunities to express themselves and ask and answer questions that

were important to them. One way he did this as by establishing the activity "The Final

Word." He said:

> I think The Final Word helps students feel that class is authentic because it gets kids seeing right at the beginning of the year that they can share and can contribute what they personally got out of class. Those final words shared by a student are very authentic because it is them sharing with the class what they authentically got out of class that day. I tell them from the start that I don't want The Final Word to be a summary of what was taught, but I want them to share what they have really learned and what was meaningful for them personally.

Joseph said that students felt that class was authentic by taking doctrines and principles and applying them specifically to their individual lives and making them relevant for their specific needs. He said:

> We need to teach true, sound, and fixed doctrine, but authenticity comes from how each student applies them to their lives and makes them relevant. So authenticity is about application and bridging the gap between the past and present and those ancient stories and life for me today. So I consistently discuss with my students how the doctrines and principles apply to them, and help them see how they can apply them to their personal lives and experiences.

Extrinsic Rewards

Joseph stated that he tried not to use extrinsic rewards in his class. He said:

> I want to say that I don't use any, I kind of feel strongly about this one. I don't like to use extrinsic rewards. I don't ever use food or candy as gimmicks. I just feel that by consistently and effectively teaching doctrine is the best way to motivate students. When student feel the Holy Ghost they will be motivated. The spirit is the best motivator. The only extrinsic thing I do is openly validate students in class by saying things like good answer, or great insight, or thank you that was great, or something to just validate that student. So I do not use extrinsic rewards, at least knowingly. I am very contrary to them and just try everything not to use them.

Joseph stated that he did give grades as an extrinsic reward but when asked how he felt about giving grades, he said:

> I only give grades because I am required to do it by the administration. I don't feel it is the best way but I do it because I am asked to. I feel that grades are an extrinsic reward that compromises the true intent of religious education, but that is a whole discussion in and of itself. It can really cause a student to feel less than what they really are spiritually because they got a B rather than an A in seminary. I really think it can be damaging. We should administer differently than we do. My Master's thesis was on this topic and I feel that grading compromises the value of religious education.

Intrinsic Interest

Joseph said that the best way to help foster intrinsic interest in his students was by "consistently, effectively, and powerfully teaching doctrine from the scriptures because students feel the spirit and the spirit is the very best motivator." He said as students feel the spirit they would more clearly see the relevance of the scriptures in their lives. When they feel the spirit they would be more intrinsically interested and desire to apply the doctrines and principles to their lives. Joseph said that he constantly tought about ways he could help students discover doctrines and principles, deepen their understanding of them, feel their importance through the witness of the spirit, and apply the doctrines and principles to their lives.

Ownership

In addition to assigning students in their responsibility to run devotionals, participate in FEAST, share The Last Word, have an assigned seating chart with an assigned partner, and giving students authentic opportunities to share ideas and questions, Joseph helped students feel ownership of class by teaching them their role in the learning process. He did this so they would understand their responsibility in helping achieve the objectives of class and thereby take more ownership in their education. He had a lesson at the first of the year addressing this topic and continued to point out and remind students of their responsibility in learning throughout the school year.

Real-World Connection

Joseph stated that teaching principles helped students see the real-world

connection with the curriculum. He said, "The thing that bridges the gap between the past and the present is principles; which are statements of truth that apply to varied circumstances in life." He stated that students would most likely never experience many of the specific experience addressed in the scripture stories, but as students saw past the story and discovered the principle, they could take that principle and apply it to their own life and their own circumstances.

Joseph prepared lessons focused on helping students identify, understand, and apply the doctrines and principles in the scriptures.

Fun

Joseph stated that creating a fun environment for students began with the teacher. He stated that students needed to see that a teacher as a happy person and enjoyed the lesson, the classroom experience, and most importantly the students. He also said that a teacher needed to use appropriate humor and be flexible and relaxed enough to let things happen. He said that in order to have fun, students needed to have variety.

He said that the greatest fun that a student could have was when they had a spiritual experience and felt joy. He said that when students understood the doctrines and principles and applied them to their lives, they felt the spirit and have joy. He said when this happens class was fun.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The current study posed a single overarching research question with two subquestions. The overarching question was: What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms? The two subquestions were: (a) What experiences have LDS seminary teachers had with student engagement? (b) How have contexts or situations typically influenced or affected experiences of LDS seminary teachers with student engagement? To answer these questions, data were collected from 10 LDS seminary teachers in Utah. Data were then organized into themes proposed in the theoretical framework of Newmann and colleagues (1992) and three additional categories including: participant's definition of student engagement, what evidences the participants looked for to determine if student engagement was occurring, and each participants perception of what they did to help generate student engagement.

This chapter discusses key findings and places them within the existing themes used to analyze the data. After key findings are discussed, this chapter provides implications of the findings, implications for future study, and a conclusion to the study.

Key Findings

Definition of Student Engagement

In the current study, student engagement was defined as "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the

knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann et al., 1992, p. 12). It was stated that student engagement required competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun.

Many of the participants' definitions aligned with aspects of Newmann and colleagues' (1992) definition of student engagement. The participants also expanded the definition of engagement and gave additional concepts. Each participant's definition included aspects of at least one of the three levels of engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Axelson & Flick, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004).

Some of the components of behavioral engagement stated in the participants' definition of student engagement included: engaged in the motions, sharing, turning in the scriptures, raising hands, answering and asking questions, volunteering, visibly following along, putting away distractions, being up and doing, and vocally contributing.

Some of the components of emotional engagement stated in participants' definition of student engagement included: feeling ownership, desire and willing to engage, enjoying class, interested, involved internally, and feeling good.

Some of the components of cognitive engagement stated in the participants' definition of student engagement included: mentally invested, understanding, thinking, pondering, involved intellectually, incorporating, and applying.

Expanding the definition of engagement beyond the three components listed in the literature, seven of the 10 participants' stated that student engagement was a spiritual

phenomenon. They said that student engagement was "a spiritual process," "anything that connects students with the spirit," "where the spirit can teach them," "are involved with the spirit," "engaged in all the motions of body and spirit," and "spiritual engagement…is happening in their mind and heart."

Comparative Analysis to Newman and Colleagues

Newmann and colleagues (1992) defined student engagement as "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (p. 12). Their definition aligned with two aspects of engagement stated by others in the literature. Their definition that student engagement included "psychological investment," aligned with cognitive engagement, and directed effort aligned with behavioral engagement. However, they did not include emotional or spiritual engagement in their definition. In the current study, the participants not only included aspects of cognitive and behavioral engagement but they also included emotional engagement. The study suggested that for religious educators there was an additional dynamic of spiritual engagement. This study suggested that a definition for student engagement for religious education should include behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual engagement.

General Conceptual Analysis

Evidence of student engagement. Each participant was asked what evidences they looked for to determine if student engagement occurred. Their responses indicated that many of the signs they looked for were behavioral. They include: raising hands,

heads up, scriptures open, sharing, participating in group work and activities, writing, eye contact, asking questions, making comments, verbally participating, listening, following along, students making comments on other students comments, body language, singing songs, and putting away all distractive materials.

Many of the participants discussed the difficulty of determining if student engagement occurred because student engagement included mental, emotional, and spiritual engagement. Many stated that even if a student showed no behavioral signs of engagement they could still be engaged.

In determining if engagement occurred beyond the behavioral signs, the participants stated: "mostly I look for a feeling," "you just feel the spirit and feel what a student needs," "the spiritual side would be the level of the spirit you feel," "there is a Christ like love between me and them which for me is a great indicator of student engagement," "Engagement is with the spirit. That is why I say they could be engaged even if they are not with me," "they could be thinking about their life and the spirit could be teaching them," "there is a sort of unknown element where you can tell they are just getting it and they are following along head to head and heart to heart," "attitude is so important," and "spiritual engagement is much more difficult to tell because it is happening within their mind and heart."

The participants stated that there were many behavioral signs of student engagement but acknowledged that determining student engagement was far more difficult because it also involved the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual components which are not easily observed behaviorally. Although difficult to identify, the cognitive,

emotional, and spiritual components were important to student engagement in the religious education context, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Generate student engagement. Each participant was asked a general question about what they did to generate student engagement. The purpose of this question was to better understand each participant's broad perspective of the phenomenon of student engagement. Because of the broad nature of the question, the responses varied greatly and many diverse aspects were discussed.

Table 1 shows the statements of each participant and the frequency of each response. It is interesting to note that the 14 general statements given by participants describing a general overview of what they did to create student engagement, closely align with many of the concepts stated by Nemann and colleagues (1992) as essential for student engagement. Newmann and colleagues stated that student engagement requires competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to
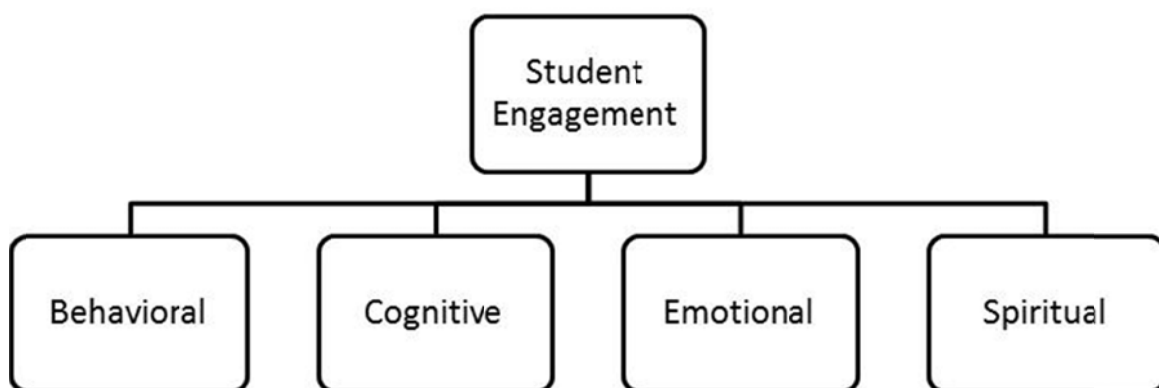
Figure 1. Religious education student engagement components.

Table 1

Most Frequently Shared General Statements

Response	Frequency
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary	8
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	7
Create a safe environment	4
Build positive relationships	4
Have variety	3
Have a seating chart	3
Assign students to groups or partners	3
Have high levels of structure	3
Give students ownership	3
Group work	3
Establish caring	3
Have high expectations	2
Teach relevant and applicable lessons	2
Feel the spirit	2

real-world application, and fun. Although the titles of the concepts proposed by the

participants vary slightly from the concept titles proposed by Newmann and colleagues,

most of the concepts are principally the same. However, the participants' responses

concerning feeling the spirit are unique to this study.

Table 2 shows a comparative analysis of the participants' general statements

regarding student engagement and the categories of student engagement proposed by

Newmann and colleagues (1992). The participant's responses aligned with 10 of

Newmann and colleagues' concepts of student engagement. Six of the 14 responses

aligned with intrisinc interst and five aligned with building positive school membership.

Three of the participant's statements aligned with establishing a clear purpose, three

Table 2

Most Frequently Shared General Statements Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues' 12 Concepts

Responses	Com	SM	Pur	Fair	PS	Car	Auth	ER	II	Own	RWC	Fun
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary	x		x						x			
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments							x			x		
Create a safe environment		x			x	x						
Build positive relationships		x			x	x						
Have variety												x
Have a seating chart		x										
Assign students to groups or partners		x			x				x	x	x	
Have high levels of structure			x						x			
Give students ownership							x					
Group work		x										
Establish caring						x			x			
Have high expectations			x						x			
Teach relevant and applicable lessons									x		x	
Feel the spirit												

Note. Com = Competence, SM = School Membership, Pur = Purpose, Fair = Fairness, PS = Personal Support, Car = Caring, Auth = Authenticity, ER = Extrinsic Reward, II = Intrinsic Interest, Own = Ownership, RWC = Real-world connection, Fun = Fun.

aligned with personal support, three aligned with caring, two with authenticty, two with ownership, two with real-world connection, one with fun, and one other with compentence. It is noteworthy that there were no statements given by particpants concering fairness or extrinsic rewards.

Comparitive Analyisis to Newmann and Colleagues' 12 Components

Competence. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that students have a powerful need to develop and express competence in academic work. They also stated that in order for schools to successfully help students feel rewarded in academic competence, they need to address the need for students to feel a sense of positive school

membership and to do authentic work in school. In this study, each participant was asked what they did to help establish competence with their students. Each participant acknowledged the need for students to develop competence in order to be successful in seminary. Table 3 shows participants' statements about competence and the frequency of each response. In this study participants stated 12 concepts used to establish competence with students. Eight of 10 participants mentioned the need for a teacher to train students on essential class skills, and 7 of 10 teachers mentioned the need for teachers to compliment and validate students' contributions.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that the two main components of competence are positive school membership and authenticity. Four of the responses given by the participants align with the concept of positive school membership, and one response aligns with authenticity. However, training students on essential class skills, having high expectations, and feeling the spirit do not align with positive school membership or authenticity and are unique to this study.

Table 3

Most Frequently Shared Responses About Competence

Responses	Frequency
Train students on essential class skills	8
Compliment and validate students' contributions	7
Have high expectations	4
Create a safe environment	3
Build positive relationships	2
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	2
Establish caring	2
Feel the spirit	2

Table 4 shows participant responses categorized according to the concept of positive school membership and authenticity stated as essential to competence by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Positive school membership. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in order for students to engage in school, they must perceive that they are honored as a respected member. They said that positive school membership was the key to institutional conditions that get students to buy into the general enterprise of trying to succeed in school. They also proposed that schools are most likely to cultivate a sense of membership in students when schools demonstrate clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, and caring.

In this study, each participant was asked what they did to help foster positive school membership for their students. Table 5 shows participants' statements about positive school membership and the frequency of each response

Table 4

Most Frequently Shared Responses About Competence Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Responses	PSM	Auth
Train students on essential class skills		
Compliment and validate students' contributions	x	
Have high expectations		
Create a safe environment	x	
Build positive relationships	x	
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments		x
Establish caring	x	
Feel the spirit		

Notes. PSM = Positive School Membership, Auth = Authenticity.

Table 5

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Positive School Membership

Responses	Frequency
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	6
Group work	4
Have unity activities and lessons	4
Talk with students about their lives	4
Give students ownership	3
Assign students to groups or partners	3
Have student leadership	3

The participants stated seven concepts used to foster positive school membership for their students. Six of the 10 participants stated that they fostered positive school membership by having assigned responsibilities for their students such as leading class devotionals, specific roles within groups, class presidencies, and daily routine opportunities to participate and fulfill perpetual assignments and expectations. Four of the 10 participants had students assigned to a group with specific assignments and responsibilities. It is interesting to note that these four participants had similar classrooms structures in that the class has 30 desks with six rows of five desks. Every row was paired with another and students sat desk to desk with an assigned partner. Four participants also had activities dedicated to helping students build unity. Many called these activities "getting-to-know-you activities." Four participants took time each day before or after class, or even during the first few minutes of class, to talk with their students about their lives. They stated that by doing this they more fully know what was happening in the lives of the students. They also suggested that by doing this students perceived that the teacher valued them as class members.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that positive school membership was most likely to occur when schools provide clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, and caring. Two of the responses given by participants aligned with Newmann and colleagues. They stated that they had students participate in unity activities and lessons to help establish a sense of purpose, which aligned with clarity of purpose. Participants also stated that they built positive school membership and showed caring by talking with students about their lives, which aligned with personal support and caring. However, the responses of giving students specific responsibilities and assignments, group work, giving students ownership, assigning students to groups or partners, and having student leadership are more closely aligned with the concepts of authenticity and ownership.

Table 6 shows participant responses categorized according to the concepts of clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, and caring, stated as essential to positive school membership by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Clarity of purpose. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that clarity of

Table 6

Most Frequently Shared Statement About Positive School Membership Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Responses	Pur	Fair	PS	Car
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments				
Group work				
Have unity activities and lessons	x			
Talk with students about their lives			x	x
Give students ownership				
Assign students to groups or partners				
Have student leadership				

Note. Pur = Purpose, Fair = Fairness, PS = Personal Support, Car = Caring.

purpose contributes to building a sense of membership that enhances student engagement. In this study each participant was asked what they did to help define clarity of purpose for their students. Table 7 shows participants' statements about clarity of purpose and the frequency of each response.

The participants stated five concepts used to define clarity of purpose for their students. Seven of the 10 participants stated that they trained students on class expectations and the purpose of seminary. Many of the seven stated that they had a lesson at the first of the year dedicated to training students on the purpose of seminary and the student's role in the learning process. Many of these six stated that they reviewed these principles continually throughout the school year. Four out of 10 participants stated that they had visuals posted on their classroom walls that were used to help remind students of the purpose of seminary. Two of the four had a large print of *The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes* posted on the wall, and the other two had student created class themes posted on the wall. Three of the 10 teachers stated that students understand the purpose of the class when they feel the influence of the spirit in their lives. Throughout this study, participants stated that the spirit was the teacher. A few participants stated that

Table 7

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Clarity of Purpose

Responses	Frequency
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary	7
Have visuals stating the purpose of class	4
Teach relevant and applicable lessons	4
Feel the spirit	3
Teach students The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes	3

when students were taught by the spirit they would "feel" the purpose of seminary. Four stated that in order for a student to have clarity of purpose and see that class was more than simply attaining information, the teacher needed to have relevant and applicable lessons. Three also stated that students needed to be taught *The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes*. All other responses were suggested by only one participant.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in addition to clarity of purpose contributing to building a sense of purpose, schools needed to insist that some interests or tastes of the students be pursued with vigor. They also stated that schools needed to clearly articulate goals.

The findings in the current study showed that participants believe that having clear objectives and goals contributed to establishing purpose for the students. Participants' responses of training on expectations and purpose of seminary, having visuals stating the purpose of class, and teaching students The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes, all aligned with the theoretical frame work of Newmann and colleagues (1992). However, the concepts of teaching relevant and applicable lessons and feeling the spirit were unique to this study. In this study, no participant mentioned the need for schools to promote pursuing interests with vigor.

Table 8 shows participant responses concerning purpose categorized according to the two concepts of clarity of purpose stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992)

Fairness. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that fairness helps increase student engagement. They said that when schools strive for fairness through inclusion, equity, and due process, student engagement is enhanced. In this study, each participant

Table 8

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Clarity of Purpose Categorized
According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Vigor	Art. Goals
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary		x
Have visuals stating the purpose of class		x
Teach relevant and applicable lessons		
Feel the spirit		
Teach students The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes		x

Note. Vigor = Pursuing interests with vigor, Art. Goals = Clearly articulating goals.

was asked what they did to insure fairness with their students. Table 9 shows

participants' statements about fairness and the frequency of each response.

The participants stated nine concepts used to ensure fairness with their students.

Five of the 10 participants mentioned that students felt class was fair when students

clearly understood the high expectations of the class. Four of those five participants

stated that in order for students to understand class expectations they needed to be trained

on them. Five of the 10 participants stated that students felt that class was fair when they

were given specific responsibilities and assignments. Each of the 10 administered this

uniquely, but each stated that they assign students to fill particular roles. Three of those

five participants assigned students to work in groups. Four of the 10 participants stated

that they ensured fairness with their students by establishing a caring environment. Some

of their comments included: "I help my students feel supported and loved," "our

classroom rules are based on persuasion, long suffering, meekness, love, patience, and

truth," "I try to let my students know that I love them," and "Love all your kids and love

them all equally."

Table 9

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Fairness

Response	Frequency
Have high expectations	5
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	5
Train on expectations and the purpose of seminary	4
Establish caring	4
Assign students to groups or partners	4
Talk with students about their lives	4
Consistently enforce expectations	3
Have student leadership	2
Equitably spread opportunities to participate	2

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that the three major components to ensure fairness in school were: inclusion, equity, and due process. They stated that basic elements of due process included due notice of rules, consistent and uniform enforcement, a chance to defend oneself if accused, avenues of appeal, reasonable punishments, equitable allocation of opportunities, and equal access to resources and activities. They continued by explaining that a student's sense of fairness is ruined when a student feels excluded from membership because curriculum and extracurricular activities fail to take account of a student's unique experiences. They also stated that equity entails nondiscrimination in access to courses, good teachers, counseling, social services, and participation in extracurricular activities.

In the current study, some of the participants' responses aligned with inclusion, equity, or due process. Assigning students to groups or partners aligned with the definition of inclusion proposed by Newmann and colleagues (1992). Giving students specific responsibilities and assignments and equitably spreading opportunities to

participate aligned with the definition of equity. Having high expectations, training on

expectations and the purpose of seminary, and consistently enforcing expectations,

aligned with the definition of due process. However, establishing care aligned with the

Newmann and colleagues' concept of caring, talking with students about their lives aligns

with positive school membership or personal support, and having class leadership aligns

with ownership. Table 10 shows participant responses categorized according to the

concepts of fairness, inclusion, equity, and due process stated by Newmann and

colleagues (1992).

Personal support. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that if students are to

build confidence and willingness to invest themselves, their participation in academic

tasks must be accompanied by personal support from teachers and peers. They also stated

that personal support contributes directly to student engagement. Table 11 shows

participants' statements about personal support and the frequency of each response.

Table 10

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Fairness Categorized
According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Inc	Eq	DP
Have high expectations			x
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments		x	
Train on expectations and the purpose of seminary			x
Establish caring			
Assign students to groups or partners	x		
Talk with students about their lives			
Consistently enforce expectations			x
Have student leadership			
Equitably spread opportunities to participate		x	

Note. Inc = Inclusion, Eq =Equity, DP = Due Process.

Table 11

Most Frequently Shared Statement About Personal Support

Response	Frequency
Talk with students about their lives	9
Be motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving	4
Establish caring	4
Compliment and validate students' contributions	3
Attend students' extracurricular activities	2
Have unity lessons and activities	2
Pray for each student	2

The participants stated seven concepts used to give personal support to their

students. Nine of 10 participants stated that they helped students feel supported by talking

with them and personally getting to know what is happening in their individual lives.

Many said they take time before and after class to talk with students. Four of the

participants stated that they give personal support to their students by helping them know

that they are motivated by the best interest of their students rather than being self-serving.

Four of the 10 participants stated that they give personal support to their students by

establishing a caring environment. Three participants stated that students feel supported

when a teacher compliments and validates their contributions.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) said that because learning requires risk, a

support network is needed for students. They said:

> Learning involves risk-taking; that is, trying to learn new material when chances
> for success are uncertain, making mistakes, and trying again. Unless one can trust
> teachers and peers to offer support for the hard work of making and correcting
> mistakes, the learning process can be too punishing to try. (p. 22)

They continued by stating that personal support must come from teachers and

cooperative learning among peers.

In the current study, four of the seven participants' responses directly align with Newmann and colleagues (1992). Participants stated that having unity lessons and activities helped build unity which aligns with establishing cooperative learning among peers. Participants also suggested that they give personal support to their students by talking with them about their lives, complimenting and validating students' contributions, and attending students' extracurricular activities. However, the participants' responses of establishing caring classrooms overlap with Newmann and colleagues' concept of caring. Also unique to this study is the participants' statements about the need for a teacher to be motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving, and the need for teachers to pray for their students.

Table 12 shows participant responses categorized according to the concept of personal support by peers and teachers, stated as essential to positive school membership by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Table 12

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Personal Support Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Peers	Teacher
Talk with students about their lives		x
Be motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving		
Establish caring		
Compliment and validate students' contributions		x
Attend students' extracurricular activities		x
Have unity lessons and activities	x	
Pray for each student		

Note. Peers = Peer Support, Teacher = Teacher Support.

Caring. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in order to foster an environment conducive to student engagement, all of the components of competence, school membership, purpose, fairness, and personal support must be included within a climate of caring. In this study each participant was asked what they did to foster an environment of caring. Table 13 shows participants' statements about caring and the frequency of each response.

The participants stated 7 concepts used to foster an environment of caring in their classrooms. Six of the 10 participants stated that in order to foster an environment of caring they talk with students and try to get to know them individually and know what is happening in their lives. Six of the 10 participants stated that they assign students in small groups or with a partner because it helped students get to know each other and develop caring relationships. Three participants stated that students feel cared for when they feel the influence of the spirit. Three participants stated that they had activities designed to help students get to know one another and interact in order to foster an environment of caring amongst the students. Three participants stated that they have a class rule and

Table 13

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Caring

Response	Frequency
Talk with students about their lives	6
Assign students to groups or partners	6
Have unity activities and lessons	3
Insure that all class members are treated with love, respect, and purpose	3
Feel the spirit	3
Have student leadership	2
Have high expectations	2

expectation that all students should be treated with love and respect. They stated that they train students on this expectation.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) said that in order to foster an environment conducive to student engagement, all of the components of competence, school membership, purpose, fairness, and personal support must be included within a climate of caring. They further defined caring by stating that caring includes communicating to students that they are worthy and important members of school and that the school is serious about helping all to build new forms of competence, and that all activities in pursuit of the purpose of schooling will be discharged with fairness, personal support, and ample opportunity for success. They also stated that students are cared for as persons who represent multiple aspects of humanity and not as units to be processed through the official agenda of school.

Although they give a thorough definition of caring, Newmann and colleagues (1992) failed to give details about the specific processes or concepts that are required for establishing caring in the classroom. The current study proposed that talking with students about their lives, assigning students to groups or partners, having unity activities and lessons, insuring that all class members are treated with love, respect, and purpose, feeling the spirit, having student leadership, and having high expectations help to establish an environment of caring.

Authenticity. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that authentic work was essential for student engagement. They defined authentic work as, "tasks that are considered meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort, in contrast to

those considered nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial, and therefore unworthy of effort"
(p. 23). In this study participants were asked what they did to help students feel that the
work they did in class was authentic. Table 14 shows participants' statements about
authenticity and the frequency of each response.

The participants stated 12 concepts used to help students feel that the work they
do in class is authentic. Six of the 10 participants stated that they give students time each
day to individually read their scriptures, share experiences both in their individual lives
and religious studies, ask questions from their personal reading or events in their lives,
and personally reflect on the lesson to seek for application to their lives. A few of the
teachers have time at the first of each lesson designated for students to do this. One
teacher gives students time at the end of class. Five participants stated that a teacher
needs to be flexible and allow student to direct the course of the lesson and not be rigidly

Table 14

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Authenticity

Response	Frequency
Give students time to individually read, share, ask, reflect, and testify	6
Be flexible	5
Compliment and validate students' contributions	4
Ask questions that require open ended responses and thought	4
Have students write in their journals	4
Teach principles and doctrines rather than specifics	3
Feel the spirit	3
Let students' comments and questions guide the class	3
Make class a session of discovery	2
Have variety	2
Teach relevant and applicable lessons	2
Be patient and don't rush	2

tied to a lesson plan. Four participants stated that allowing students to write their thoughts, ideas, feelings, or questions in a journal helped students create authentic work. Four participants stated that asking students questions throughout the lesson that require open ended responses and personal thought helped students feel the work they did in class was authentic. Four participants stated that students felt that their work was authentic when teachers complimented and validated their contributions.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) suggested that in order for academic work to be authentic, the work needs to have extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, sense of ownership by the students, connection to real-world application, and a level of fun.

In the current study, many of participants' statements concerning authenticity align with ownership and real-world connections. Participants' responses concerning ownership included: giving students time to individually read, share, ask, reflect, and testify, being flexible, letting students' comments and questions guide the class, and being patient and don't rush.

The participants stated that they helped students have real-world connections with the curriculum by having students write in their journals. They stated that this gave students an opportunity for personal application and reflection. The participants also stated that they help students have a real-world connection by asking questions that require open ended responses and thought, teaching principles and doctrines rather than specifics, making class a session of discovery, and teaching relevant and applicable lessons.

In analyzing authenticity and its subcategories suggested by Newmann and

colleagues (1992), the concept of complimenting and validating students' contributions

does not align with the theoretical frame work, but instead aligns more closely with

giving personal support. The participants' statement about having variety and feeling the

spirit are unique to this study.

Table 15 shows participant responses categorized according to the concept of

authenticity, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, ownership, real-world connections, and

fun as stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Extrinsic rewards. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that student

engagement should increase if mastery of school tasks is accompanied by rewards such

as high grades, admission to higher education, attractive vocational prospects, increased

Table 15

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Authenticity Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	ER	II	Own	RWC	Fun
Give students time to individually read, share, ask, reflect, and testify			x		
Be flexible			x		
Compliment and validate students' contributions					
Ask questions that require open ended responses and thought				x	
Have students write in their journals				x	
Teach principles and doctrines rather than specifics				x	
Feel the spirit					
Let students' comments and questions guide the class			x		
Make class a session of discovery				x	
Have variety					
Teach relevant and applicable lessons				x	
Be patient and don't rush			x		

Note. ER = Extrinsic Reward, II = Intrinsic Interest, Own = Ownership, RWC = Real-world connection, Fun = Fun.

income, and social approval and status. They also state that these rewards need to be used with caution because what may be powerful extrinsic rewards for some students may have no effect or may actually decrease the engagement of others. They stated that only when students value extrinsic rewards, perceive that academic achievement is possible, and believe that their efforts will result in academic success will student engagement increase.

In this study participants were asked what extrinsic rewards they implemented in their classrooms. Table 16 shows participants' statements about extrinsic rewards and the frequency of each response. Participants listed five extrinsic rewards used in class. All 10 participants stated that they used grades as an extrinsic reward. Nine of the 10 participants said that they used food as extrinsic rewards, and four stated that they had competitive activities amongst the students in class or between classes. Nine of the 10 participants said that they had reservations and concerns with using extrinsic rewards and stated that teachers should use caution. Five of the nine participants mentioned that they used extrinsic rewards mainly to help reinforce class expectations. Four of the nine participants stated that they used extrinsic rewards more for variety than to motivate

Table 16

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Extrinsic Rewards

Response	Frequency
Grades	10
Food	9
Competitive activities	4
Compliment and validate students' contributions	2
Honors recognition program	2

students. One teacher stated emphatically that he believed extrinsic rewards were detrimental to religious education.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) suggested that the extrinsic rewards that increased student engagement were: high grades, admission to higher education, attractive vocational prospects, increased income, and social approval and status. A few of the responses by participants concerning extrinsic rewards aligned with this theoretical framework. For instance, all 10 of the participants in this study stated that they used grades as an extrinsic reward, which aligned directly with high grades. The responses of competitive activities, complimenting and validating students' contributions, and honors recognition programs, aligned with social approval and status. The one unique finding in the current study that expanded the list of extrinsic reward was the use of food. However, the extrinsic reward of higher education, vocational prospects, and income, was not mentioned by the participants.

Table 17 shows participants' responses concerning extrinsic rewards categorized according to the five extrinsic rewards stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Table 17

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Extrinsic Rewards Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Grades	Educ	Voc	Income	Soc
Grades	x				
Food					
Competitive activities					x
Compliment and validate students' contributions					x
Honors recognition program					x

Note. Grades = High Grades, Educ = Higher Education, Voc = Vocational Prospects, Income = Increased Income, Soc = Social Status.

Intrinsic interest. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that intrinsic interest coupled with extrinsic reward help promote student engagement. They stated that a few factors contributing to a student's interest are the topic, the approach and teaching style, prior experience with the material, and perceived value.

In this study participants were asked what they did to help foster intrinsic interest with their students. Table 18 shows participants' statements about intrinsic interest and the frequency of each response. Participants stated 11 concepts they use to help foster intrinsic interest with their students. Seven of the 10 participants stated that the spirit is the best intrinsic motivator. They stated that they try and help students feel the influence of the spirit because feeling the spirit will bring students happiness and joy, which in turn is intrinsically motivating. Four of the 10 participants stated that teaching doctrines and principles from the scriptures fostered intrinsic interest because students feel the spirit

Table 18

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Intrinsic Interest

Response	Frequency
Feel the spirit	7
Teach doctrines and principles from the scriptures	4
Allow students to share spiritual/personal experiences	4
Establish an environment of caring	3
Train on expectations and the purpose of seminary	2
Help students see the benefits of attending seminary	2
Have students write in their journals	2
Assign groups or partners	2
Have high expectations	2
Have high levels of structure	2
Have a high level of discipline	2

and are motivated to apply the doctrines and principles in their lives. Four of the 10 participants stated that when students were allowed to share spiritual experiences and bare testimony, and hear other students share spiritual experiences and bare testimony, students felt the spirit and were intrinsically interested. Three participants stated that in order for students to have intrinsic interest in seminary, they needed to feel loved and cared for by the teacher and classmates. They stated that a caring environment was welcoming and students were drawn to where they were valued.

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that a few factors contributing to a student's interest are the topic, the approach and teaching style, prior experience with the material, and perceived value. They also stated that intrinsic interest increased when academic tasks permitted expression of diverse forms of talent.

All but one of the participants' responses aligned with factors contributing to intrinsic interest suggested by Newmann and colleagues (1992). The participants' responses about the need to teach doctrines and principles from the scriptures aligned with Newmann and colleagues' statement that the topic contributed or detracted from a student's interest.

The responses of establishing an environment of caring, assigning groups or partners, having high expectations, having high levels of structure, and having high levels of discipline align with Newmann and colleagues' (1992) statement that teaching style and approach effected interest.

Participants' responses of training students on the expectations and purpose of seminary and helping students see the benefits of attending seminary aligned with the

Newmann and colleagues' (1992) statement that a student's perceived value impacted intrinsic interest.

Participants' responses about allowing students to share their spiritual or personal experiences and having students write in their journals, aligned with Newmann and colleagues' (1992) statement that intrinsic interest increased when students were allowed to express their diverse forms of talent. It is interesting to note that none of the responses aligned with Newmann and colleagues' (1992) statement that the students' prior experience with the material effects intrinsic interest.

Participants' responses about feeling the spirit are unique to this study. Table 19 shows participants' responses concerning intrinsic interest categorized according to the five factors stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Table 19

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Intrinsic Interest Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Topic	Style	Exp	Value	Talent
Feel the spirit					
Teach doctrines and principles from the scriptures	x				
Allow students to share spiritual/personal experiences					x
Establish an environment of caring		x			
Train on expectations and the purpose of seminary				x	
Help students see the benefits of attending seminary				x	
Have students write in their journals					x
Assign groups or partners		x			
Have high expectations		x			
Have high levels of structure		x			
Have a high level of discipline		x			

Note. Topic = Topic, Style = Teaching style, Exp = Prior experience with material, Value = Perceived value, Talent = expression of diverse talents.

Ownership. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that engagement with and internalization of knowledge depended to a large degree on the opportunities students have to own their work. They stated that ownership entailed flexibility in the pace and procedures of learning, opportunities for students to ask questions, and study topics they consider important, and students' construction and producing knowledge in their own language. In this study participants were asked what they did to develop a sense of ownership with their students. Table 20 shows participants' statements about ownership and the frequency of each response. Participants stated six concepts they used to help develop a sense of ownership with their students. Seven of the 10 participants stated that they give students specific responsibilities and assignments so students have opportunities to participate and engage in class. Six of the 10 participants train their students on their role as learners. Five of the 10 participants stated that they assigned students into groups or partners because it gave students responsibilities and a sense of belonging and importance. They stated that having students in small groups allows more students to participate and share authentic work, which helped students feel greater ownership.

Table 20

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Ownership

Response	Frequency
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	7
Train students on their role as a learner	6
Assign groups or partners	5
Allow students to share spiritual/personal experiences	3
Have high levels of structure	2
Train students on expectations and the purpose of seminary	2

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that ownership entailed flexibility in the pace and procedures of learning, opportunities for students to ask questions and study topics they consider important, and students' construction and producing knowledge in their own language.

Many of the key findings in this study aligned with the theoretical framework of ownership as stated by Newmann and colleagues For instance, the statements concerning giving students specific responsibilities and assignments, training students on their role as a learner, assigning students to groups or partners, having high levels of structure, giving clear instructions, and having student leadership, all addressed class procedures. The participants' statements reflected the need to allow students ownership within the structures, procedures, methods, and dynamics of the class.

The participants' responses about assigning students to groups or partners aligned with giving opportunities for students to ask questions. Most participants stated that the purpose of assigning students to groups was to allow them to individually ask, answer, share, and more fully participate in class.

Having well-prepared lessons aligned with allowing students to study topics they considered important. Participants stated that when teachers had well-prepared lessons, students enjoyed the lesson and felt that the doctrines and principles were important and applicable.

Participants' responses about allowing students to share spiritual and personal experiences and having students write in their journals, aligned with Newmann and colleagues' (1992) statement that ownership required students to construct and produce

knowledge in their own language. When students shared experiences and wrote in their

journals, they were constructing and producing knowledge in their own language.

Participants' responses about helping students feel confident and competent did

not align with the four factors of ownership, but aligned with the concept of competence.

Participants' responses about feeling the spirit were unique to this study. Table 21 shows

participants' responses concerning ownership categorized according to the four factors

stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992).

Real-world connection. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that often

students disengaged from schoolwork because it was unrelated to issues, competencies,

and concerns of daily life, which left students questioning why they should devote effort

Table 21

*Most Frequently Shared Statements About Ownership Categorized According to
Newmann and Colleagues*

Response	Flex	Ask	Topic	Lang
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	x			
Train students on their role as a learner	x			
Assign groups or partners	x	x		
Allow students to share spiritual/personal experiences				x
Have high levels of structure	x			
Train students on expectations and the purpose of seminary	x			
Help students feel confident and competent				
Give clear instructions	x			
Have well prepared lessons			x	
Have student leadership	x			
Feel the spirit				
Have students write in their journals				x

Note. Flex = flexibility in the pace and procedures of learning, Ask = opportunities for students to ask
questions, Topic = study topics they consider important, Lang = students' construction and producing
knowledge in their own language.

to mastery of knowledge that seemed necessary to success only in school but in no other aspect of life. They stated that in order for academic work to have a connection with real-world settings it needs to include value beyond instruction, clear and prompt feedback, collaboration, and flexible use of time.

In this study, participants were asked what they did to help make their curriculum have a real-world connection for their students. Table 22 shows participants' statements about real-world connection and the frequency of each response. Participants stated four concepts they used to help make their curriculum have a real-world connection for their students. Nine of the 10 participants stated that they trained their students to identify doctrines and principles in the scriptures so they could apply them to their lives. They stated that helping students bridge the gap between the scriptural stories and the applicable doctrines and principles as key to helping students see the modern lessons that related specifically to the students' lives. They stated that the principles allowed the students to see the real-world connection. Three of the 10 participants stated that students feel that the curriculum has a real-world connection when other peers share how it is applicable to their lives; therefore, they have students explain, share, and testify of doctrines and principles.

Table 22

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Real-World Connection

Response	Frequency
Help students discover, analyze, and apply doctrines and principles from the scriptures	9
Have students explain, share, and testify of doctrines and principles	3
Get to know your students and their life experiences	2
Use objects and events common to the students	2

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that in order for academic work to have a connection with real-world settings, it needed to include value beyond instruction, clear and prompt feedback, collaboration, and flexible use of time.

The participants' responses that aligned with the concept of helping students see the value beyond instruction included helping students discover, analyze, and apply doctrines and principles from the scriptures and have students explain, share, and testify of doctrines and principles. The participants suggested that students would see the value of the doctrines and principles when they applied them to their lives and taught them to others. Other responses that aligned with helping students see the value beyond instruction included using objects and events common to students, helping students understand the context and content of the scriptures, helping students feel the urgency of the lesson, and teachers needing to visualize students' understanding when preparing lessons.

Responses that aligned with the need for students to collaborate with peers and authority include, teachers getting to know their students and their life experiences, and assigning students to groups or partners. Two responses that were unique to this study and did not align with the theoretical lens of Newmann and colleagues (1992) were helping students transition and prepare to learn and feeling the spirit. Table 23 shows participants' responses concerning real-world connection categorized according to the four factors stated by Newmann and colleagues.

Fun. Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that while emphasizing the qualities that help generate serious effort and concentration on academic tasks, an academic

Table 23

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Real-World Connection Categorized
According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	Value	Feed	Coll	Flex
Help students discover, analyze, and apply doctrines and principles from the scriptures	x			
Have students explain, share, and testify of doctrines and principles	x			
Get to know your students and their life experiences			x	
Use objects and events common to the students	x			
Help students transition and prepare to learn				
Help students understand the context and the content of the scriptures	x			
Have students write in their journals				x
Help students feel the urgency of the lesson	x			
Feel the spirit				
Visualize your students' understanding when preparing lessons	x			
Assign groups or partners			x	

Note. Value = Value beyond instruction, Feed = clear and prompt feedback, Coll = Collaboration, Flex = Flexible use of time.

institution must not overlook the importance of fun, play, and humor. They stated that in order to sustain student engagement, academic work must also provide opportunities for lighthearted interactions and play-like imaginative activity. In this study, participants were asked what they did to create an environment of fun for their students. Table 24 shows participants' statements about fun and the frequency of each response.

The participants stated sixteen concepts they used to help establish an environment of fun for their students. Seven of the 10 participants said that students need to have variety in class and in the lessons to have fun. Five of the 10 participants stated that in order to create an environment of fun, the teacher needed to be relaxed. Four participants stated that a teacher needed to be flexible and not be rigidly tied to a rote lesson. They stated that a teacher must adjust to the needs of the students. Four

Table 24

Most Frequently Shared Statements About Fun

Response	Frequency
Have variety	7
Be relaxed	5
Laugh with the students	4
Be flexible	4
Enjoy the students	4
Be enthusiastic	4
Talk with students about their lives	4
Allow students to get to know you and your personality	3
Don't take yourself too seriously	3
Feel the spirit	3
Have positive, edifying, and uplifting lessons	3
Highlight the humor in the scriptures	2
Smile	2
Have activities and games	2
Have high levels of structure	2
Provide food	2

participants stated that a teacher needed to laugh with students. Four participants stated that in order for students to have fun they need to see that the teacher is enthusiastic and happy to be in class. Four participants stated that in order to have fun the teacher needed to talk with students about their lives. Four participants stated that a teacher needed to show the students that he or she enjoyed them and was glad they were in class.

Although Newmann and colleagues (1992) gave a thorough description for the need to have fun in academic settings, they fail to give details about the specific processes or concepts that are required for establishing a fun environment in the classroom. The participants in this study suggested that a fun environment was created by having variety, being relaxed, laughing with the students, being flexible, enjoying the

students, being enthusiastic, talking with the students about their lives, allowing students
to get to know the teacher and his/her personality, the teacher not taking himself/herself
too seriously, feeling the spirit, having positive, edifying, and uplifting lessons,
highlighting the humor in the scriptures, smiling, having activities and games, having
high levels of structure, and providing food.

Synthesis of the Findings

The overarching question posed in this study was: What are seminary teachers,
who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement,
doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms?

The findings showed that participants made 480 statements about student
engagement. Of the 480 statements, many were repeated multiple times. For instance, in
this study the participants stated that they "give students assigned responsibilities and
assignments" 28 times. Another example is that participants stated the need for a teacher
to "be flexible" 9 times. Reducing the statements down to original theoretical concepts
took the number from 480 to 88. Because many of the original concepts had obvious
overlap in meaning with other concepts, the list of 88 concepts was reduced to 48. For
example in this study participants stated 9 times that teachers needed to "give students
ownership" and 1 time a participant stated that a teacher needed to "give students
autonomy." Because these two concepts are so closely linked, they were combined under
"give students ownership" and the number was changed to reflect that participants stated
this concept 10 times. Another example is three times participants stated "teach students

The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes" and 22 times participants stated "train on the expectations and purpose of seminary." Because these two concepts were so similar, they were combined under "train on expectations and purpose of seminary" and the number was changed to reflect that participants stated this concept 25 times. There were many other concepts that were combined under similar concepts thus taking the stated concepts from 88 down to 48.

Table 25 shows participants' total statements about student engagement and the frequency of each response. The data from this study indicates that the 10 LDS seminary teachers who participated in this study perceived that they create high levels of student engagement by incorporating these 48 concepts into their teaching and administration. Because many of the concepts were stated multiple times by many of the participants, the application of the concepts varied greatly.

The participants stated 28 times that in order to generate student engagement teachers need to give students specific assignments and responsibilities. Many of the participants accomplished this by assigning students into groups or partners and outlined specific responsibilities associated with class dynamics. Participants stated eight times the need for a teacher to "have student leadership."

Participants stated 28 times that teachers need to take time to talk with the students individually and collectively about events happening in their lives. Most of the participants took time before and after class to talk with the students and interact with them individually. Many also took a few minutes at the beginning of the class period to talk with the class collectively.

Table 25

Total of Most Frequently Shared Statements About Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments	28
Talk with students about their lives	28
Assign students to groups or partners	26
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary	26
Feel the spirit	22
Have variety	21
Compliment and validate student's contributions	20
Have high expectations	20
Teach doctrines and principles from the scriptures	20
Establish caring	19
Have fun	17
Teach relevant and applicable lessons	14
Have high levels of structure	14
Give students time to individually read, share, ask, explain, reflect, or testify	13
Provide food[a]	12
Have a grade sheet that clearly defines expectations	12
Give students ownership	11
Build positive relationships	11
Have unity activities and lessons	10
Create a safe environment	9
Have students share spiritual/personal experiences	9
Be flexible	9
Train students on essential class skills	9
Group work	8
Have student leadership	8
Have students write in their journals	8
Train students on their role as a learner	6
Ask good questions	6
Be enthusiastic	6
Have a seating chart	5
Pray for each student	5
Be relaxed	5

(*table continues*)

Response	Frequency
Be motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving	4
Let students' comments and questions guide the class	4
Attend students' extracurricular activities	3
Help students transition and prepare to learn	3
Be a good listener	3
Don't take yourself too seriously	3
See the potential of each student	3
Have well prepared lessons	3
Have an organized classroom	2
Make class a session of discovery	2
Have students set goals based on the purpose of seminary	2
Equitably spread opportunities to participate	2
Regularly contact parents	2
Be patient and don't rush	2
Help students see the benefits of attending seminary	2
Use objects and events common to the students	2

[a] The reason "provide food" was stated so frequently was because each participant was specifically asked what extrinsic rewards they implemented in their classroom. The frequency of this comment was a result of the question asked by the researcher and does not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the participants about its importance in student engagement.

Participants stated 26 times that student engagement increases when students are placed within assigned groups or partnerships. Within the group, students should be given specific responsibilities and be taught their role within the group structure. Many participants stated that assigning student to groups increases the opportunity for students to be given specific responsibilities and assignments. The participants also stated that assigned groups and partners helped increase class unity. The participants stated 10 times the need to "have unity activities and lessons" and many of the participants accomplished this within assigned groups or partnerships. Participants also stated eight times that "group work" was an important concept with student engagement. Participants also stated five times the need to "have a seating chart."

Participants stated 22 times that student engagement was associated with spirituality. Many of the participants made statements referring to the spirit being the true teacher in class and that engagement occurred when a student felt the influence of the spirit. They suggested that part of the class objective was to help students feel the influence of the spirit.

Participants stated 21 times that variety was a key concept in increasing student engagement. Many commented on the need for students to view class as new, exciting, and fresh. They stated that a teacher needed to plan for a variety of methods and techniques throughout a lesson.

Participants stated 20 times that in order for a student to risk the investment to engage in class, they needed to feel validated. The participants suggested that students would feel validated and willing to engage when they received compliments and validation for their contributions from the teacher. They stated many different methods to do this from thanking the students in class, to using a student's comments to propel further discussion, or writing a note of appreciation to a student.

Participants stated 26 times that students need to be trained on class expectations and the purpose of seminary. Many of the participants stated that they take class time at the first of the year to help train their students. The participants also stated that student engagement was linked with high expectations. The concept "have high expectations" could have been combined with "train on expectations and purpose of seminary" and the total number of statements on having high expectations would have been 46. But because of the concept of training, the two concepts were left separated. However, the participants

highly emphasized the need for teachers to implement high expectations for their students. Many of the participants stated that students felt validated by high expectations and sensed that the teacher believed in their potential. They also stated that high expectations allowed students to feel safe in investing themselves and engaging in class. Another concept that is similar with expectations that participants stated 14 times is "have high levels of structure." Each participant implemented different types of structure in their classes but many stated the need to have organized and structured procedures, processes, and practices.

Closely associated with high expectations is the concept of "train students on essential class skills" that was stated nine times by participants. The participants suggested that to help students be competent, they needed to be trained on the required skills necessary for success. Many took time in class at the first of each year and instructed students on how to use and implement these essential skills. Participants also stated 6 times the need to "train students on their role as a learner" and help students understand that much of their success in learning is their responsibility. Participant also stated that students need to be accountable for much of the success or failure of class and their experience with seminary. Participants also stated two times to "have students set goals based on the purpose of seminary." They also stated two times to "have an organized classroom." So in addition to structure, the students can see the physical environment of the classroom reflects organization. They also stated that an organized classroom shows the students that the teacher spent sufficient effort and preparation on their behalf.

Participants stated 20 times that in order to help students engage in class, the teacher needed to teach lessons based on doctrines and principles. The participants stated that teaching students doctrines and principles helped bridge the gap for students from ancient text to modern day application to the students' lives. They stated that lessons that are based on doctrines and principles have greater application and students can see the real-world connection (Newmann et al., 1992). They also stated that when students discover, analyze, and apply doctrines and principles to their lives, they will feel a greater abundance of the spirit. They stated that this helps intrinsically motivate students to engage in seminary. Participants stated 14 times to "teach relevant and applicable lessons" a concept very similar to "teach doctrines and principles form the scriptures." If these two categories were combined they would have been stated in this study 44 times. The participants' statements show that helping students have real-world connections with the curriculum and bridge the gap from the stories and information to personal application is needed for student engagement. Participants also stated two times that a teacher should "make class a session of discovery."

Participants stated 19 times that establishing an environment of care helps students engage. Many of the participants made statements about students needing to feel loved, valued, respected, invited, welcomed, and needed. Another concept that the participants stated 11 times that is closely associated with caring is the need for a teacher to "build positive relationships." These concepts closely align with caring, positive school membership, and personal support (Newmann et al., 1992). Participants also stated three times that when teachers "attend students' extracurricular activities" the

students feel cared for and supported. In this study participants also stated nine times the need for teachers to "establish a safe environment" where students feel safe to engage. The concepts of caring and relationships will help create a safe environment. Participants also stated three times the need for a teacher to "be a good listener" which validates a student's contributions and helps them feel that the teacher and class care. They also stated three times that teachers need to "see the potential of each student."

Participants stated 17 times that fun was an essential part of student engagement. The participants stated many different definitions and processes used to create a fun environment, but all of them stated that allowing students to have fun and create and inviting atmosphere increased the potential for student engagement.

The participants stated 13 times the need to "give students time to individually read, share, ask, explain, reflect, or testify." They stated that students needed to be given these opportunities so that students would feel a sense of ownership. They also stated 11 times the need to "give students ownership," and nine times to "have students share spiritual or personal experiences." The participants suggest that students need to be given an opportunity to personally contribute to the class in order to be engaged. They stated six times that students tend to engage more in class when teachers "ask good questions." One medium that many of the participants used to allow students to explain, reflect, or testify is student journals. Participants stated eight times to "have students write in their journals." Participants also stated three times the need to "have well prepared lessons." This concept suggests that students need to see that the teacher has given sufficient time in preparing lessons for them. They also stated two times to "equitably spread

opportunities to participate."

The concepts of "provide food" and "have a grade sheet that clearly defines expectations" were mentioned 12 times. Grade sheets were mentioned 10 times and food was mention nine times when the participants were asked what extrinsic rewards they used. So the questions led to this higher number in the list of total statements. However, the study suggests that students need to receive extrinsic rewards. Nine times in this study participants stated the need for a teacher to "be flexible" and not be so rigidly tied to the lesson, but instead be flexible and allow students to help direct the course of the lesson. Four times they mentioned that teachers needed to "let students' comments and question guide the class." They also stated five times the need for a teacher to "be relaxed," six times that teachers need to "be enthusiastic," and three times "don't take yourself too seriously." They also stated two times for a teacher to "be patient and don't rush." These six concepts suggest that a relaxed, flexible, and enthusiastic teacher that allows students to help direct the course of the lesson, doesn't take himself/herself too seriously, and is patient helps contribute to student engagement. The participants also stated that praying for each student, being motivated out of concern for the students, helping students transition and be prepared to attend seminary, regularly contact parents, help students understand the benefits of attending seminary, and using objects and events common to students help students engage in seminary.

Comparative Analysis to Newman and Colleagues

Newmann and colleagues (1992) stated that student engagement required

competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun. The currents study lists 48 concepts used by participants to generate student engagement. Table 26 shows the participants' 48 concepts categorized according to the 12 concepts of Newmann and colleagues. In the current study, 44 of the 48 concepts stated by participants align with at least one of the 12 categories proposed by Newmann and colleagues. Many of the 44 concepts aligned with multiple categories that Newmann and colleagues stated as essential for student engagement.

The four unique concepts in this study are feeling the spirit, praying for each student, being motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving, and seeing the potential of each student. Feeling the spirit was stated 22 times, praying for each student was stated five times, being motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving was stated four times, and seeing the potential of each student was stated three times. It is interesting to note that all four of these concepts deal with the cognitive, emotional, or spiritual construct of the teacher and/or students. These findings suggest that an essential element in student engagement in LDS seminaries is a teacher's level of spirituality. The findings suggest that spirituality is a construct of four sub categories: teaching by the spirit, faith in students' potential, faith in God, and teacher motivation.

This study proposed that the concept of spirituality, in addition to the theoretical lens of Newmann and colleagues (1992), be considered when conducting a study of student engagement in LDS seminaries. Figure 2 represents student engagement as viewed by the LDS seminary teacher participants in this study.

Table 26

Total of Most Frequently Shared Statements About Student Engagement Categorized According to Newmann and Colleagues

Response	COM	SM	PUR	FAIR	PS	CAR	AUTH	ER	II	OWN	RWC	FUN
Give students specific responsibilities and assignments							x			x		
Talk with students about their lives		x			x							
Assign students to groups or partners		x			x				x	x	x	
Train on expectations and purpose of seminary	x		x									
Feel the spirit												
Have variety												x
Compliment and validate student's contributions					x							
Have high expectations			x						x			
Teach doctrines and principles from the scriptures									x		x	
Establish caring						x			x			
Have fun												x
Teach relevant and applicable lessons											x	
Have high levels of structure			x						x			
Give students time to individually read, share, ask, explain, reflect, or testify				x			x		x	x	x	
Provide food								x				
Have a grade sheet that clearly defines expectations			x					x				
Give students ownership										x		
Build positive relationships		x			x	x						
Have unity activities and lessons		x			x						x	
Create a safe environment		x			x	x						
Have students share spiritual/personal experiences							x			x	x	
Be flexible										x	x	
Train students on essential class skills	x		x									
Group work		x										
Have student leadership		x					x			x		
Have students write in their journals							x		x	x	x	
Train students on their role as a learner	x											
Ask good questions							x			x	x	

(*table continues*)

Response	COM	SM	PUR	FAIR	PS	CAR	AUTH	ER	II	OWN	RWC	FUN
Be enthusiastic												x
Have a seating chart		x										
Pray for each student												
Be relaxed												x
Be motivated by helping students rather than being self-serving												
Let students' comments and questions guide the class							x			x	x	
Attend students' extracurricular activities		x			x							
Help students transition and prepare to learn	x											
Be a good listener					x							
Don't take yourself too seriously												x
See the potential of each student												
Have well prepared lessons							x			x		
Have an organized classroom							x			x		
Make class a session of discovery							x				x	
Have students set goals based on the purpose of seminary			x									
Equitably spread opportunities to participate				x								
Regularly contact parents					x							
Be patient and don't rush						x	x			x		
Help students see the benefits of attending seminary			x									
Use objects and events common to the students											x	

Note. Com = Competence, SM = School Membership, Pur = Purpose, Fair = Fairness, PS = Personal Support, Car = Caring, Auth = Authenticity, ER= Extrinsic Reward, II = Intrinsic Interest, Own = Ownership, RWC = Real-world connection, Fun = Fun.

Implications for Future Research

As a result of the current study and its key findings, several implication for future research emerged. The current study implemented a qualitative phenomenological approach to answer the question: What are seminary teachers, who have been identified by content experts as having high levels of student engagement, doing to generate high levels of student engagement in their classrooms? Due to the variety and uniqueness of
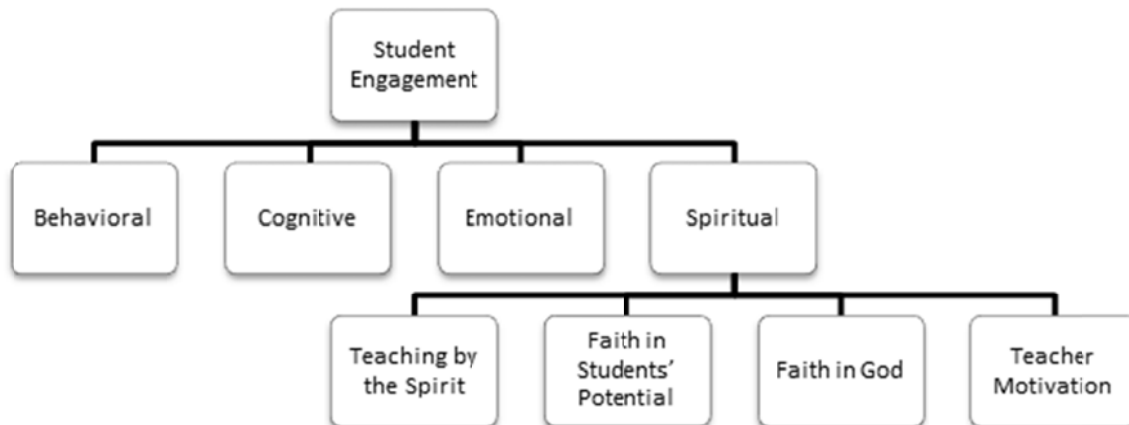
Figure 2. Student engagement model as viewed by LDS seminaries.

the data generated by participants, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted to

validate the findings of the current study.

Similarly, because these findings were obtained through qualitative methods, it is

suggested that a similar study be conducted using qualitative methods. This replication

would reduce researcher bias and subjectivity. It is also suggested that qualitative

methods be used in a study seeking correlation between any of the findings in this study

and the impact on student engagement. For instance, it is suggested that a qualitative

study be done examining the correlation between training students on expectations and

the purpose of seminary with student engagement. The current study focused on teacher

perceptions, and a qualitative inquiry into the actual effects these concepts have on

student engagement would prove valuable. It is suggested that a study be conducted using

any of the current study's findings and research what impact that concept has on student

engagement. Because key finding in this current study stated that there are 48 original

concepts that influence student engagement, it is suggested that any of those concepts be

studied independently to research the impact on student engagement.

Also, because the current study focused on student engagement with full-time LDS seminary teachers in one geographical area in Utah, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted with LDS seminary teachers in other locations throughout the world. It is also suggested that similar studies be done with other religious educational organization in other faiths and denominations.

In addition, in this study the participants were chosen by surveying principals and directors about their perception of what teachers exemplified high levels of student engagement. Each principal and director was supplied with the current studies definition of student engagement and the concepts of engagement posed by Newmann and colleagues (1992). Based on the principals and directors perceptions they supplied the researcher with a list of teacher they felt exemplified high levels of student engagement. It is suggested that a study be conducted examining the process principal and directors went through in determining what teachers exemplify student engagement and what criterion they implemented.

The current study focused only on the perceptions and practices of LDS seminary teachers, it is suggested that further research be conducted examining the perceptions of seminary students on what generates student engagement. Examining the perceptions of students concerning student engagement could help validate the findings of the current study.

Finally the researcher in the current study used the theoretical lens of engagement stated by Newmann and colleagues (1992). They stated that student engagement requires

competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun. It is suggested that a more in-depth research be conducted examining each of these 12 concepts.

Conclusion to the Study

As stated at the beginning of the current study, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of student engagement in LDS seminaries from the perception of seminary teachers in Utah. Newmann and colleagues' (1992) theory on student engagement was used as the lens through which the study was framed and results were interpreted. Student engagement was defined as "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann et al., 1992, p. 12). It was stated that student engagement requires competence, school membership, clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, caring, authentic work, extrinsic reward, intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to real-world application, and fun.

The findings in this study align with much of the previous literature from Dewey to Frieire. Dewey used different words to describe much of his theory, but the principles he addressed align well with the principles of engagement. For instance, Dewey (1913) heavily addressed the concept of interest, effort, and motivation. The definitions of student engagement correlate with the definitions of interest, coupled with effort and

motivation. Much of Dewey's work centered on concepts of the child and the child's engagement with the curriculum. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* envisioned a curriculum where students engaged in a problem posing community that focused on the contradictions of social, political, and economic life (Beyer & Liston, 1996). Social reconstructionist theory requires high levels of student engagement with the curriculum so that it inspires students to then go out in society and make changes based on their greater understanding of their current social setting. This study adds to much of the theoretical literature.

A qualitative approach helped provide understanding of the phenomenon of student engagement from the perspectives of LDS seminary teachers who were identified by principals and directors as having high levels of student engagement in their classrooms. The current findings in this study identify 480 concepts stated by participants, 88 original concepts, and a combined list of 48 concepts that participants suggest effect student engagement. The findings from this study supply valuable knowledge about student engagement in religious education that can help teachers, leaders, parents, ecclesiastical leaders, and students understand factors that affect student engagement and provide a foundation in recommending policies, practices, and procedures, that may help foster engagement. In addition, this research study provides valuable themes, descriptions, and interpretations which can lead to additional research questions and studies mentioned.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter of Information

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Telephone: (435) 797-0385
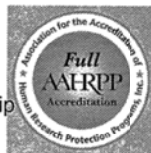
LETTER OF INFORMATION
Student Engagement in LDS Seminaries

Introduction/ Purpose Dr. Francine Johnson and graduate student Thomas Aardema in the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University is conducting a research study to find out more about student engagement in LDS seminaries. You have been asked to take part because of your experience with student engagement. There will be approximately 10 total participants in this research. .

Procedures If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a one-hour, face-to-face interview with the student researcher. The interview will be audio-recorded and you will be asked to review the written transcript of the interview to insure accuracy. You will also be asked to share with the researcher any documents that you use to help student engagement in your classroom.

Risks Participation in this research study may involve some added risks or discomforts. You may feel uncomfortable answering questions about your involvement with student engagement. There is a small risk of loss of confidentiality but steps will be taken to prevent that as described below under "Confidentiality."

Benefits There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from these procedures. The investigator, however, may learn more about the concept of student engagement which may help educators better understand components of the concept of student engagement.

Explanation & offer to answer questions Thomas Aardema has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Professor Francine Johnson at (435) 797-2714 or via email at francine.johnson@usu.edu

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits. You may be withdrawn from this study without your consent by the investigator.

Confidentiality Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigator and student researcher will have access to the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet or on a password protected computer in a locked room. To protect your privacy, personal, identifiable information will be removed from study documents and replaced with a study identifier. Identifying information will be stored separately from data and will be kept only until the project is completed in 2012.

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury and would like to contact someone other than the research team,

UtahState University

Department of Teacher Education and Leadership
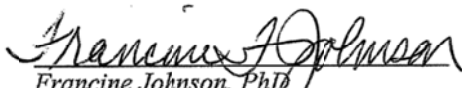2805 Old Main Hill
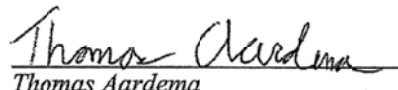Logan UT 84322-
Telephone: (435) 797-0385
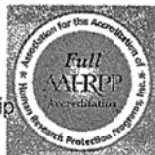
LETTER OF INFORMATION
Student Engagement in LDS Seminaries

you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email irb@usu.edu to obtain information or to offer input.

Investigator Statement "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Signature of Researcher(s)

Francine Johnson, PhD
Principal Investigator
(435) 797-2714 work
Francine.johnson@usu.edu

Thomas Aardema
Student Researcher
(801) 602-6601 cell
tomaardema@yahoo.com

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How do you define student engagement?

2. What evidences do you look for to determine if student engagement is occurring in your classroom?

3. What do you do to generate student engagement in the classroom?

4. What do you do to help establish competence with your students?

5. What do you do to help foster positive school membership for students?

6. What do you do to help define clarity of purpose for students?

7. What do you do to insure fairness with your students?

8. How do you give personal support to your students?

9. How do you foster an environment of caring in your classroom?

10. What do you do to help students feel that the work they do in your class is authentic?

11. What extrinsic rewards do you implement in your classroom?

12. What do you do to help foster intrinsic interest with your students?

13. How do you develop a sense of ownership with your students?

14. How do you help make your curriculum have a connection to the real world for your students?

15. What do you do to help create an environment of fun for your students?

*Adapted from Newmann F. M., Wehlage, G. G., & Lamborn, S. D. (1992). The significance and sources of student engagement. In F. M. Newmann & F. M. Newmann (Ed.), *Student engagement and achievment in american secondary schools* (pp. 11-39). New York and London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Appendix C

S&I Education Research Committee Research Approval

Church
Educational
System
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

04 January 2012

Thomas P. Aardema
US Utah Valley North Area
180 E 600 S
Heber City, UT 84032

Dear Brother Aardema:

The S&I Education Research Committee has approved your research project under the following conditions:

1. The collection of data will be limited to those efforts outlined in your proposal.
2. Any changes to your instrumentation or procedures will be submitted to the committee for approval.
3. You will contact your research subjects and their supervisors well in advance to permit maximum flexibility in managing their schedules.
4. You will obtain S&I approval to publish or present any of your research findings.
5. You will provide S&I with an electronic copy of your research report upon completion of your degree. The copy should be in pdf format and include the signatures on the signature page. Please submit document to: SI_Research@ldschurch.org.

We look forward to learning from your research and using it to improve S&I programs.

Sincerely,

Randall Hall
Associate Administrator

Appendix D

List of Student Engagement Definitions

LIST OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

1. **Student Engagement**: a student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote

2. **Academic Competence:** a student's ability to learn, understand, and master the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote.

3. **School Membership:** a student's ability to perceive schooling as legitimate and deserving of a committed effort, and a sense of being a respected member of the school community.

4. **Clarity of Purpose:** a student's ability to clearly understand the objectives and educational purposes of academic work.

5. **Fairness:** a student's ability to perceive equity through inclusion, due process, and fair treatment.

6. **Personal Support:** A student's perception of a support network provided by the teacher and peers to lessen the fear associated with risk required for academic work.

7. **Caring:** a student's perception that they are valued as a worthy and important member of school.

8. **Authentic Work:** tasks that are considered meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort, in contrast to those considered nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial, and therefore unworthy of effort.

9. **Extrinsic Rewards:** external rewards given to students base on academic performance such as grades, social approval, status, admission to higher education, attractive vocational prospects, and increased income.

10. **Intrinsic Interest:** a student's internal interest to engage in academic work.

11. **Sense of Ownership:** a student's perception that they have influence over the conception, execution, and evaluation of academic work.

12. **Connection to the "Real World":** a student's ability to connect issues, competencies, and concerns of daily life to academic work and see the relevance.

13. **Fun:** academic work must provide opportunities for lighthearted interaction, play-like imaginative activity, and humor.

Appendix E

Letter to Principals and Directors

Dear Principal or Director,

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Utah State University, I am conducting a research study to find out more about student engagement in LDS seminaries. You have been selected for this survey because you observe teachers as part of your administrative responsibilities. The purpose of this survey is to help me as the researcher identify 10 teachers in Seminaries and Institutes who exemplify high levels of student engagement in their classrooms.

Attached is a list of student engagement definitions so that you can understand the meaning of student engagement and its corresponding concepts according to the theoretical framework used in this research study.

By familiarizing yourself with these terms, it will help insure that all principals and directors submitting names have a clear and accurate understanding of the terms, and their recommendations of teachers exemplifying student engagement will correspond with the definitions.

At your earliest convenience, please list the names of 10 teachers you observe as exemplifying high levels of student engagement in the classroom. All submissions will be kept confidential. Please do not limit your answers to the teachers currently under your supervision but please list any teacher you have observed that exemplifies high levels of student engagement (including any administrator that currently has a teaching assignment such as a principal that has a teaching assignment in addition to administrative responsibilities).

Please return your responses to me via email at aardematp@ldschurch.org. If you have any questions please call me at 801-602-6601. Thank you for your time, effort, and participation in this research study.
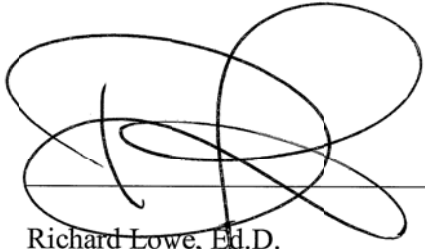
Thank You,

Tommy Aardema

Appendix F

External Audit

EXTERNAL AUDIT

I hereby attest that this study meets the validity requirements for qualitative inquiry. I have performed an external audit examining the audit trail which consists of raw data, analyzed data, records of study processes, and theoretical framework. In my opinion the researcher has followed proscribed and recognized qualitative methodology for establishing trustworthiness.

Richard Lowe, Ed.D.
LDS Seminary Instructor

Appendix G

The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes

THE OBJECTIVE OF SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES OF RELIGION

Our purpose is to help the youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven.

To achieve our purpose:

LIVE
We live the gospel of Jesus Christ and strive for the companionship of the Spirit. Our conduct and relationships are exemplary at home, in the classroom, and in the community. We continually seek to improve our performance, knowledge, attitude, and character.

TEACH
We teach students the doctrines and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. These doctrines and principles are taught in a way that leads to understanding and edification. We help students fulfill their role in the learning process and prepare them to teach the gospel to others.

ADMINISTER
We administer our programs and resources appropriately. Our efforts assist parents in their responsibility to strengthen their families. We work closely with priesthood leaders as we invite students to participate and as we provide a spiritual environment where students can associate and learn together

CURRICULUM VITAE

THOMAS P. AARDEMA

Academic Degrees

Ph.D.,   Utah State University, 2013, Education-Curriculum and Instruction
M.B.A,   University of Utah, 2007, Business Administration
B.A.,   Weber State University, 2003, History

Professional Experience

2011-present Coordinator, Heber Valley Stake LDS Institute
2008-present Principal, Heber LDS Seminary
2003-2008   Instructor, Heber LDS Seminary

Related Experience

2011-present Committee Member, S&I Utah Valley Central Area Administrative and Training Council

2010-2011   Committee Member, S&I Utah Valley North Area Administrative and Training Council

2011   Field-Writer, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Curriculum Services
              New Testament Institute Student Manual

2010   Presenter, S&I Salt Lake Valley Tri-Area In-Service, Salt Lake City, UT.
              Student Engagement in LDS Seminaries

2008-2010   Committee Member, S&I Salt Lake Valley East Area Administrative Council

2007   Presenter, S&I Salt Lake Valley East Area In-Service, Salt Lake City, UT
              Alignment with the Purpose of Seminaries and Institutes

2007-2008   Committee Member, S&I Salt Lake Valley East Area Training Council