

**GETTING IT TOGETHER:
INSTRUCTIONAL COLLABORATION
BETWEEN STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines qualitative and quantitative data from students, their parents, and their teachers at the Grades 4 to 7 levels in order to understand: (a) the expectations of each party for the other with respect to collaboration based on instructional concerns, and (b) whether and how these expectations are met within the web of instructional relationships among the three parties. The study ultimately addresses a third research question: How can triad relationships be improved?

Data for this mixed-method study were drawn from “The CoProduction of Learning Project” a recently completed multi-year, multi-site research effort examining curricular/instructional relationships between families and schools in which I took part as a team researcher. Five-point Likert-style surveys were designed to determine teacher, student and parent attitudes and practices regarding home-school collaboration. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were prepared for each of the three respondent groups.

The quantitative data set for this study consists of 20 teachers and 159 student/parent sets from the second year of the larger project, and twenty-one teacher participants with 174 accompanying student/parent dyads from the fourth year. The qualitative data set consists of 44 teacher interviews, and 100 parent interviews and 100 student interviews over three years of the larger project.

As far as expectations are concerned, there is little sense among teachers of the interaction of parents and students in the home and little sense among students of instructional relationships between parents and teachers. Parents look to teachers to communicate openly and extensively with them, and to respect parent knowledge of their children. Students expect a challenging academic environment, but also help and support.

In triadic relationships in which expectations are met teachers create responsive, collaborative centres of academic learning for students in which respect and responsibility are features. Students are appreciative of these efforts. Teachers also make strong and consistent efforts to reach out to and include parents whom they also consider to be partners in practice. Parents, for their part, respond to the teachers’ initiatives for support and participation by helping at home and communicating freely with the teacher.

In triadic relationships in which expectations are not met there is little conviction demonstrated by teachers regarding the importance of participation by students and parents. These teachers do not make efforts to reach out to parents and often feel that parents are choosing not to help. Parents refer to work that they do with their children but do not mention receipt of information from the teacher about how they might help. Students speak

neither of teacher efforts to work closely with them, nor of teacher efforts to use practices to bring students, teacher and parents closer together.

Findings here suggest that collaborative instructional relationships between students, parents and teachers can be sustained and developed by the continued efforts of parents to initiate connections with teachers and to speak up for their children, and by the efforts of teachers to create participatory classrooms for students and to both seek and respect parent contributions.

DEDICATION

How many of us who are writers have mothers, grandmothers, of limited education; awkward, not at home, with the written word, however eloquent they may be with the spoken one? Born a generation or two before, we might have been they (Olsen, 1965, p. 184).

To my daughters, Hayley Slipiec and Clare Slipiec, with love.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

GENESIS

In the beginning . . . (Gen. 1:1)

THE STORY OF ORIGIN

As I began the new school year in September 1984 I had been an elementary school teacher for almost two full years. Although much remains vivid in my mind from those early years, two incidents from the 1984/1985 school year that are of interest here stand out. They concern two little boys from that composite Grade 3/Grade 4 class, one named Werner and the other named Jason.

Jason was an exuberant and energetic young man in Grade 4. He was lively and engaging in the classroom, never hesitating to make his thoughts and wishes known. Although Jason didn't often demand attention in negative ways, he usually commanded attention from me and other students as a result of his active participation in class and his assertive personality. The other students in the class were amused by Jason's funny or pithy remarks; they liked him. Jason usually bubbled effervescently with high spirits and enthusiasm, but was also quick to argue or challenge. For me, as a teacher, his argumentiveness and impulsiveness were challenging and could sometimes be frustrating.

Jason was very athletic and in Physical Education classes displayed prowess. However, at the same time he showed a marked lack of sportsmanship. Because I took this into account when assessing students in Physical Education, Jason's letter grade did not strictly reflect his athletic ability, and was not as high as it would have been had he displayed better sportsmanship. The letter grade he received was not as high as either he or his parents expected or would have liked. For this reason, Jason's father telephoned me to arrange a meeting to discuss Jason's mark about which I, as a fairly new teacher, was somewhat nervous. In the meeting Jason's father explained to me that he didn't know why his son had received the letter grade that he had, that he knew his son to be athletically talented, and that he felt that the letter grade was not reflective of this ability. Jason's father felt that P.E. grades should reflect only ability and not sportsmanship. I agreed that Jason's mark did not reflect only his ability, and proceeded to explain how I

had assigned letter grades for Physical Education. I pointed out that Jason's sportsmanship was typically quite poor (about which Jason's father did not disagree) and that that was the reason for the less than expected mark. We then proceeded to have a polite but sometimes intense discussion about assessment in Physical Education, and about schooling and evaluation in general. Jason's father articulated for me a detailed philosophy of education, and a corresponding vision for elementary curriculum in the public schools. By the end of the discussion we discovered that his philosophy and mine, such as mine was at the time, did not match. After an hour and a half we agreed to leave the discussion where it stood, as well as Jason's mark. Although Jason's father had not been aggressive, he had been assertive and intense. I felt exhausted, as the meeting had been long, and worn out by my attempt to explain where I stood.

As Jason's father left the room I was struck, powerfully, by two thoughts: (a) How little I know about Jason's parents, their beliefs about education in general, and their beliefs about what they feel is important for their son in this, his Grade 4 year; and (b) How little parents really know about what I believe about education in general and what I believe to be important for students in this Grade 3/4 classroom.

Although I had sent home a letter at the beginning of the year outlining general expectations for classroom procedures and behaviour, and had also provided a general overview of curriculum, my efforts to communicate with parents had not gone beyond those two practices, apart from the standard autumn parent/teacher conference and the occasional needs-based phone call. I had not solicited information and views from parents in any formal way, either at the parent/teacher conference or by letter, or set up procedures to facilitate this. I saw Jason's mother occasionally as she sometimes came to the classroom to pick up Jason after school. At these times we had occasional brief discussions about Jason's work and progress, but obviously never so much as to uncover their expectations and beliefs about curriculum and schooling or indeed whether they were satisfied with me in this respect.



Werner, the little boy in Grade Three, was a complete contrast to Jason. These were "chalk and cheese" students, as different from one another as any two students in that class were. Werner was a heavy boy, unathletic, and deliberate and conserving of movement. In the classroom he was quiet and unassuming, rarely offering a comment or point of view without solicitation. Even then his contributions were brief. Werner neither demanded nor commanded attention in class. He wasn't mean-spirited or aggravating but

didn't entertain students with wit or humour either. He was not disliked by others in the class but would not have been widely considered a favourite. He was withdrawn, appearing shy and sometimes tense, although I very occasionally did see him "simmering" with high spirits, laughing and relaxed on his way into or out of the classroom. When I spoke to Werner about his work, he occasionally nodded his head, but often didn't respond at all. I sometimes perceived this as resistance, and it occasionally frustrated me, as I didn't feel that I was "getting through to him."

Although I believe that I always took care to treat all students fairly, and without favouritism, I remember thinking at the time that it was "less easy" to like Werner than Jason. I thought that liking Jason required little effort. He displayed, at least on the surface, personal characteristics—friendliness, wit, enthusiasm—that are socially favoured. Werner didn't act in obvious ways that made him more instantly likable and engaging. I believe I responded to Werner less warmly than to Jason, even though I had to speak to Jason about inappropriate behaviour much more often than Werner.

One day as I returned some work to Werner that required correction I spoke to him rather harshly, with very little understanding, I regret, about mistakes that he had made. He gazed up at me with large, expressive eyes, rather puzzled. At that moment I realized that the weaknesses in his work did not merit the harshness in my voice, and instantly felt contrite. As I continued to look at him, with what I hope was apology in my eyes, I was struck epiphanously by a simple revelation: I have behaved uncaringly (perhaps because I do not feel truly connected to Werner), but somebody at home loves him.

As I continued to think about the incident over the day and over time two thoughts occurred to me: (a) How little I really know about Werner, about what makes him the person that he is, about his home life and relations with his parents, about their desires for him, about their frustrations and satisfactions in dealing with him; and (b) How little do Werner's parents really know about my interactions with their son in the classroom, about my response to him as a student, about my perspective on his work and abilities?

Although I had met Werner's parents at the fall parent/teacher conference I do not remember either spending any time seeking information from them about him, asking them to tell me what they knew about him that might help me help him, discussing my perceptions of him in the classroom, or soliciting their perspective on his response to me. They did not or were not able to pick him up at the classroom after school and so I rarely saw them.



As I mulled over these incidents in the months and years following I wondered how much more effective I might have been for both Jason and Werner had I learned more from their parents about the boys and about academic interactions in the home, had I at the same time reached out further by communicating and informing them more proactively, and by attempting to create truly collaborative relationships. I wondered about how I might have had a finer understanding of both Jason and Werner, and had been a better teacher for them, had I taken the time to get to know them in the classroom and create stronger student/teacher connections. In short, I wondered about what improved learning conditions in the classroom and in the home we might have all been able to create together had I really made an effort to develop family-school partnerships.

As a result of these and other experiences with students and parents as a teacher, I realized that connections between myself and students and parents were not as they might be, that there was potential for strong(er) home/school partnerships that could benefit all, and that my role as a teacher was instrumental in developing these connections. From this emerged my academic interest in the issue of parent/student/teacher relations and collaboration, my involvement in the Co-Production of Learning Project, and, finally, the focus of this study.



BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This work is part of a recently completed multi-year, multi-site mixed method study entitled “The Co-Production of Learning Project,” which has examined curricular/instructional relationships between families and schools. The first purpose of the larger project was to identify the critical variables affecting collaboration between parents, teachers and students. The second was to develop a series of interventions intended to create a more collaborative relationship between parents, teachers, and students such that all would come to see themselves as involved in the production of student learning. The third purpose of the project was to determine if student sense of identity with the school and parent rating of school as a place to learn could be heightened through improved interactions between home and school.

The work reported here focusses on data collected from parents, teachers and students during three years of the larger Co-Production research project. Both qualitative and quantitative data from students, their parents, and their teachers at the Grades 4 to 7

levels were examined in order to understand: (a) the expectations of each party for the other with respect to partnership based on instructional concerns, and (b) whether and how these expectations are met within the web of instructional relationships among the three parties.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer the following specific research questions with respect to each of the three parties:

THE TEACHER

1. What expectations regarding instructional issues do teachers have for the behaviour and attitudes of the parents of the children they teach, and are these being met?
2. What expectations regarding learning do these teachers have for the students they teach, and are these being met?
3. What is the teacher's orientation and initiating behaviour regarding collaboration with parents and students on instructional issues, as perceived by teacher, parent and student?

THE PARENT(S)

1. What expectations regarding instructional issues do parent(s) have of their child's teacher, and are these being met?
2. What expectations regarding learning do these parents have of their children and are these being met?
3. What is the parent's orientation and behaviour regarding collaboration with teachers and students on instructional issues as perceived by parent, teacher and student?

THE STUDENT

1. What expectations and preferences regarding instruction do students have of their teachers and are these being met?
2. What expectations and preferences regarding learning do students have of their parents and are these being met?
3. What is the student's orientation and behaviour regarding learning and commitment to school as perceived by student, parent and teacher?

The study examines both the behaviours and attitudes of each individual which are seen as strands or links between the individuals, one of which originates with each individual. These "strands" or "behavioural links" are as follows:

TEACHER ATTITUDES/PRACTICES

Teacher practice involves not only what teachers do (behaviours and interaction) to help their students learn and to help parents help their children, but also the set of opinions and attitudes (orientation) which shapes or is shaped by this work.

THE CURRICULUM OF THE HOME

The curriculum of the home represents what parents do at home to help their children learn (behaviours, interaction, expectations for children), and the set of opinions and attitudes (orientation) which shape or is shaped by this work.

STUDENT ATTITUDES/PRACTICES IN LEARNING

Student attitudes toward learning and practices in learning represent the student's orientation which shape both the learning efforts themselves and what the student does to help him or herself.

This study investigates the possibility that student learning is facilitated in collaborative triads (consisting of student, parent and teacher members) in which there is mutual satisfaction among the three parties about their respective roles in creating and sustaining student efforts in learning and student commitment to learning. Satisfaction is assumed to exist when individuals' expectations for the behaviour and attitudes of the others are met.

Comer (1991) explains that “meaningful parent participation is essential for effective schooling. We premise our view on the notion that families and schools constitute important sources of influence on the psychoeducational development of children and that the best results are achieved only when these two institutions work together” (p. 276). In this study Comer’s notion of working together is extended down to individuals at the classroom level. That the best results are achieved when parents, teachers and students work together is supported in the literature. “The consistent finding in many studies,” notes Chrispeels (1996), “is that student achievement is enhanced when there is mutual collaboration and support among home, school, and community” (p. 299).

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

That parent involvement in education benefits children is indisputable. “One element that we know contributes to more successful children and more successful schools across all populations is parent involvement in children’s education” says Swap (1993, p. 1). Henderson (1987) prefaces her extensive review of the connections between parent involvement and children’s school achievement with the following even more emphatic conclusion: “The evidence is now beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement. When parents are involved, children do better in school, and they go to better schools” (p. 1).

As conclusive as they are, these statements do not define parent involvement. Fullan (1982), however, specifies the kind of parent involvement necessary. Of all the possible types of parent involvement in schooling, he says, “direct parent involvement in instructional activities designed to contribute to child development . . . consistently influence(s) educational achievement of students” (p. 196). That parental involvement in instruction at home or at school has positive consequences for student academic achievement towards school is indeed well-documented (Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987; Walberg, 1984; Witte & Walsh, 1990). Fortunately, almost all parents are involved in instructional activities with their children at home (Epstein, 1987) and socio-economic status and student ability are not predictors of parents’ support for school instructional activities and involvement in home-based instruction (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). Walberg (1984) notes that “what might be called ‘the curriculum of the home’ predicts academic learning twice as well as the socioeconomic status of families” (p. 400). What parents do is clearly more important than who they are (Kellaghan, Sloan, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

Studies of effective schools also show that parental involvement and support correlate with student academic success (Binkowski, Cordeiro, & Iwanicki, 1995; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis & Ecob, 1988; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1989; Rutter, Maugh, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Witte & Walsh, 1990). Although school effectiveness can be defined in various ways, the above studies show parental involvement and support to be a key characteristic of schools which facilitate strong student achievement. In a recent report examining the influence of hundreds of educational, psychological, and social factors on learning from many studies Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) identified parent involvement in instruction as one of a very few proximal variables having an immediate effect on students. The instructional relationship between student, teacher and parent is immediate in its influence on student learning, and critical to school effectiveness. Epstein notes (1990b) that "the evidence suggests that school policies and teacher practices are more important than race, parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether parents continue to be part of their children's education" (p. 109). Clearly, what schools do is also important.

The attitudinal benefits to students, parents and teachers from parent involvement and integration have also been made clear (Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Lyons, Robbin, & Smith, 1983; Walberg, 1984). Epstein (1982, 1986, 1987, 1990c; see also Becker & Epstein, 1982) has found that both teachers and parents rated each other more positively when the teacher used frequent parent involvement practices. In addition, not only do parents evaluate teachers more highly overall when they receive frequent and effective communications, but their sense of comfort with the school and their reported level of involvement are also higher (Ames, de Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995, p. 26). When parents and teachers use frequent involvement practices students also have more positive attitudes towards school (Epstein, 1987; Becker & Epstein, 1982). When their parents receive frequent communications from the teacher, student motivation is more positive too (Ames et al., 1995). Since students who have a sense of belonging and value the institution are more likely to stay in school than those who do not (Finn, 1989; Raddysh, 1992) parental involvement can have potentially far-reaching implications and is one means of increasing students' participation and identification with the school (Coleman, 1993).

Importantly, relationships between school and home can be mediated by educators, and changed to benefit parents, students and teachers (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Comer, 1986; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Unfortunately, however, levels of parent activity are low

even though supportive activities by parents in the home may be more generally productive of positive attitudes than parent activities in the school itself (Epstein, 1984). Parents and teachers are both supportive of working together (Moles, 1982; Davies, 1987), yet most parents are never asked to help or are contacted in any way by teachers even though they are willing to help their child at home (Epstein, 1985a, 1987; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Parent involvement is occurring with little support or encouragement from schools (Roeser, Patrick, Yoon, Anderman & Eccles, 1994) and as such represents a potential instructional resource for improving schools and learning which remains virtually untapped and could be capitalized upon with basic efforts from schools (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Eccles & Harold, 1993).

CONTINUING RESEARCH EFFORTS

A 1992 article in the Research and Development Report from the Center of Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning notes that parent involvement research of the previous decade in the U.S. sought to uncover beliefs and opinions about parent involvement, identify barriers to home-school relations and provide a few examples of practice (Center on Families, Communities, School and Children's Learning, 1992, May). Reflecting on that research, Joyce Epstein commented that "real progress has been made" (p. 12). She added, further, that the decade had seen a change in focus, that instead of asking "Are families important?" or "How are families important?" studies began to address the issue of how to help more families become better partners in their children's education. To that end, the article suggests that an important research task is to "identify and evaluate those practices that are effective in reaching all families while establishing differentiated practices" (p. 14) in order to meet varying parental need. In the late 1990s this process is still ongoing. As Chrispeels stated in 1996, "More work is needed to identify the most effective types of home-school-community partnership practices" (p. 317).

The research reported here continues the effort of the 1990s to identify effective involvement practice among teachers, parents, and students, although it does not examine the community partnership practices to which Chrispeels (1996) and others refer (Chavkin, 1993; Epstein, 1995; Finn-Stevenson & Stern, 1997; Kagan, 1997; McLaughlin & Shields, 1987). It does, however, focus on the assessment and development of effective partnership practices based specifically on the expectations and preferences of the three parties involved.

This work might be seen as replicative, to some extent, of parent involvement research in the U.S, a portrait of which is presented in the previous section. However, topics appearing recently in the parent involvement literature in Canada (Gareau & Sawatzky, 1995; Pratt, Filipovich & Bountrogianni, 1995; and Skau, 1996) suggest that research efforts here are perhaps at an earlier stage, descriptively and prescriptively, than those in the U.S. Certainly, the need to establish a research baseline in Canada for school/family partnerships is clear and this study forms a part of that greater effort in Canada generally and in British Columbia schools specifically.

CONCEPTS DEFINED

A variety of terms is widely used in the parent involvement literature. These include, for example, "participation," "involvement," "cooperation," "collaboration," "integration," and "partnership." According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1979) participate means "to take part in" (p. 829), involve means "to engage as a participant" (p. 604), and cooperate means "to act or work with another or others" (p. 247). Participation, involvement and cooperation are certainly all desirable, at the very least, in the relationship between parents, teachers, and students, but are important insofar as they can be initiated by each party or are open to response by each party. However, these terms might as easily characterize interactions or relationships which are unidirectional as those which are mutual. They do not inherently connote mutuality. In contrast, collaboration and partnership are defined, respectively, in the following ways: (a) collaboration is work conducted "jointly with others especially in an intellectual endeavor" (p. 217); (b) a partnership is "a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities (as in a common enterprise)" (p. 829). Both partnership and collaboration do suggest mutuality, relationships that are two-way, in which both individuals can contribute and cooperate. For this reason collaboration and partnership are the terms of choice in this study for reference to the interactions of parent(s), student and teacher.

Definitions from both Davies (1987) and Chrispeels (1996) are useful in elaborating these terms in the context of relations between parents, teachers and students. Davies (1987) contends that "the education of children should be viewed as a partnership between the school and the home—that students and parents are coproducers of education, not simply passive recipients of educational services. Co-production refers to those activities, individual and collective, in school or at home, that contribute to school efforts

to instruct pupils more effectively and raise pupil achievement” (p. 148). Chrispeels (1996) defines partnership as “the mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families, community members and agencies, and school staff, at home, in the community, or at school, in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the success of children’s learning and development” (p. 299). In this study student-teacher-parent relationships are conceived as collaborative instructional partnerships, which encompass not only the participation of parent(s) (or other family members) and teachers, but also of students. Apart from the fact that the efforts of the larger community do not feature in this study, Davies’ (1987, 1993) and Chrispeels’ (1996) definitions both apply, conveying as they do the importance of parent(s), teachers and students working together and all contributing to student learning. Davies and Chrispeels also point out, importantly, that the activities and efforts of the individuals within collaborative partnerships can originate from and take place at either the home or school and can be initiated by either parents, students or teachers.

The use of the term “parent involvement” is problematic according to Watkins and Ames (1994) because it is frequently used to describe teachers’ attempts to involve parents in classroom activities or other participation (e.g., Haynes, Comer & Hamilton-Lee, 1989) and also parents’ involvement in learning activities at home (see Epstein, 1986). In practical settings among educators the term is also widely and generically used to refer to any and all issues of parent participation. In the context of this study in which parents, students and teachers are conceived as collaborators the term is too restrictive. Neither of its constituent words adequately reflect the potential breadth and depth of family-school partnership. Here the term will be used not to refer to collaborative school-family partnerships as defined above, but when necessary to accurately reflect its use in the literature, and in a non-generic sense to refer to the specific involvement activities of parents only.

The term “parent” is used here as a inclusive generic term referring to children’s caregivers, be they parents or others (friends or relatives) appointed as guardians or acting in loco parentis. Most often in this study references are made to parents, teachers, and students as groups and so the term “parents” is usually employed. In general references to parents as individuals the term “parent(s)” is used to encompass both dual and single-parent families.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY AS THE FOCUS OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

In examining the issue of effective partnership practices the present study focusses on involvement related to instruction. As far as school efforts to reach out to parents are concerned, Davies, Burch and Johnson have found that “partnership strategies, although plentiful, are not usually closely linked to changes in curriculum or teaching—the areas in which change is most likely to directly influence student learning and achievement” (Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children’s Learning, 1992, February, p. 3). Yet Walberg (1984) points out that “school/parent partnership programs aimed at improving academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement” (pp. 399–400). Parents are typically involved in governance activities and while these activities might benefit schools in general their effect on student learning is far less direct (Fullan, 1991). This study consequently examines partnership strategies linked to instruction at school or in the home, rather than the broader, schoolwide kinds of “decision-making” activities defined by Epstein (1995).

ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS AS MEASURES OF SUCCESS

In its focus on the importance of the development of school-family partnerships to student learning this study is situated within the broader research context of school effectiveness. However, the study does not use student test score data as a measure of school effectiveness, and improved school effectiveness is not seen simply as student gains on standardized tests. Although early school effects and school effectiveness studies employed only student achievement variables as outcome measures, later school effectiveness studies broadened outcome measures to include other variables such as pupil behaviour, attendance and attitudes toward education (Louis & Miles, 1991; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). This study follows the lead of later school effectiveness researchers in assuming the importance of parent, teacher and student attitudes to school effectiveness. Classrooms and schools are effective, in part, to the extent that parents and students are satisfied with them. In addition, the study adopts Coleman and Collinge’s (1991) approach by assuming the centrality of student-teacher-parent relationships to school effectiveness. Thus, classrooms and schools are successful to the extent that instructional relationships between parent, teacher and student are

productive and supportive of student learning, and to the extent that parents, students, and teachers are satisfied with relations between and amongst one another.

STUDENT VOICE

This study gives voice to student perceptions and attitudes regarding family/school partnerships. Although some research has profiled student perceptions about schooling and teachers in general (Hayes, Ryan, & Zsella, 1994; McCabe, 1995; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992) research in parent involvement has not often included the student voice. (See Epstein, 1982, for one exception). The call and the need to include that voice, in educational research in general and particularly in dialogue about educational change, are clear (Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1996). Nieto (1994) points out the importance of this kind of participation for students and characterizes the current state of affairs:

One way to begin the process of changing school policies and practices is to listen to students' views about them; however, research that focuses on student voices is relatively recent and scarce. For example, student perspectives are for the most part missing in discussions concerning strategies for confronting educational problems. In addition, the voices of students are rarely heard in the debates about school failure and success, and the perspectives of students from disempowered and dominated communities are even more invisible. (p. 396)

According to Epstein, "a new direction for research is the recognition of the 'central role of the child' as a participant" (Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1992, May, p. 14). This recognition should apply not only to the role of the child as a participant in *partnership* because students are members of the educational enterprise, but also as an participant in *research* since students' views too should form part of any new conception of education.

GRADES 4 TO 7

This study involves students at the Grades 4 to 7 levels for several reasons. Parent participation and teacher efforts to involve parents are typically strong in the primary years (K-3), but both teacher efforts to involve parents and parent involvement drop off as children proceed through elementary school (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Chrispeels, 1996; Lareau, 1989). Epstein and Connors (Center of Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1994, June, p. 1) point out, however, that even though parent involvement in their children's schooling declines dramatically as students move from the

elementary grades into high school “students continue to want and need the support of the parents and other adults” (see also Eccles & Harold, 1993). Since the benefits of involvement remain high, and support from parents is not unneeded or unwanted by students, the perceptions and expectations of students in the middle years, and of their parents and teachers, merit exploration.

Students at the Grades 4 to 7 levels are also of special interest because of the posited link between high school drop-out decisions and elementary school experiences. Finn (1989) suggests that dropping out is a developmental process that begins in the primary grades. While experiences in elementary school may lead eventually to drop-out decisions, parent involvement increases the chances that children will bond with school (Coleman, 1993; Epstein, 1987; Raddysh, 1992). Understanding how this bond can be sustained or developed during the middle school years, potentially through parent involvement or family-school partnerships, is thus of critical importance.

ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE/SYSTEMS THEORY

Conceptually the work reported here assumes an ecological perspective in which all three parties—parent, student and teacher—are seen as interdependent and interactive. In discussing school-community interface in the context of an ecological perspective Andrews (1987) notes that “the ecological view assumes an interdependency between . . . sectors” (p. 161) and that “the ecosystem view stresses complexity and variability of the individual component parts” (p. 155). Although the focus of the triadic relationship here is student learning, the behaviours and attitudes of one member of the triad are considered to be no less important and no less intrinsically valuable than those of the others. Participation is three-way. Students are as likely to respond (or not) to the behaviours and attitudes of teachers and parents, as are teachers and parents to students. The same can be said of initiating interaction. The triad represents a complex web of interactions in which students are key participants not in the least because student learning is the ultimate goal. The partnerships and connections between schools and families are not simply “‘overlapping spheres of influence’ on *student development* [emphasis added]” (Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children’s Learning, 1992, May, p. 12). Connections between parents, students and teachers are “overlapping spheres of influence” on one another, on student development, and on student development through one another, at the same time.

Andrews (1987) also comments that, “rather than viewing the environment as hostile, which requires school people to create shells around the schools to protect them, the ecological viewpoint embraces an open, interdependent view in which school boundaries are positive bonds between schools and the communities they serve” (p. 155). Translating this “open, interdependent” view to the classroom context here, and to partnerships between students, teachers and parents, suggests that classroom “boundaries” are positive rather than negative bonds between themselves and the communities of students and parents which they serve, and that individual boundaries between members of the triad can also be seen as positive rather than negative bonds.

Within this study the triad is viewed as the conceptual unit. Thus, attention is focussed on individual relationships between parents, students, and teachers, and the potential to draw inferences about broader conceptual units is limited. Discussion here focusses, accordingly, on individual relationships in triads (and to some extent the classroom), but does not go beyond that to the school level.

FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE IN PRACTICE

One of the purposes of the larger Co-Production of Learning Project was to develop a series of interventions intended to create a more collaborative relationship between parents, teachers, and students. In seeking to better understand parent/teacher/student interactions related to instructional involvement and the extent to which practices and attitudes are viewed as positive, productive and preferred by the various parties, this study also focusses on change and improvement. Identifying practices and attitudes that will promote and facilitate better family/classroom partnerships is important. To this end the ecological perspective is key. Sarason (1990) links school improvement to a systems approach noting that “trying to change any part of the system requires knowledge and understanding of how parts are interrelated. At the very least, taking the concept of system seriously is a control against overly simple cause-and-effect explanations and interventions that are based on tunnel vision” (p. 15). The intent here is also to avoid casting blame simplistically, in this case at either parents, students or teachers, and to avoid simplistic cause-and-effect scenarios. The emphasis, rather, is on exploring interactions in order to come to a deeper understanding of how these might be improved to benefit all.

This study examines data collected over three separate years and a number of the teachers involved in the study participated during more than one year. As such, the study is longitudinal for these teachers and also focussed on change in this sense.

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Multi-site case study is the general research strategy adopted here with interviewing and survey questionnaire as data collection techniques. The study is thus a mixed methods design in that it employs both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Case studies focus on a bounded system which may be “a single actor, a single classroom, a single institution, or a single enterprise—usually under natural conditions—so as to understand it in its own habitat” (Stake, 1988, p. 256). Here the bounded system is the triad—three member groups consisting of student, the student’s teacher, and the student’s parent(s). Typically, parent involvement research has involved dyads consisting of parent and teacher, or very occasionally, teacher and student. In this study the triad is both the conceptual and methodological unit of analysis. Of interest here are the patterns of meaning that occur across many cases or sites (the triads), the ultimate aim being to “build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (Yin, 1994, p. 112).

According to Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994) multiple cases provide the opportunity for both deeper and greater understanding, and generalizability. Here quantitative methods are also applied to meet these needs. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods helps to ensure that both the “personal and social complexity” (Stake, 1988, p. 254) of the problem is portrayed—the specificity of individual triads—and the “unity and wholeness of that system” (Stake, 1988, p. 258)—triad relationships writ large.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In a recent article Chrispeels (1996) refers to the increasing interest in parent involvement as a strategy for school reform. Swap (1993) also wonders about schoolwide work towards parent involvement and is puzzled by the absence of these efforts:

Given the widespread recognition that parent involvement in schools is important, that it is unequivocally related to improvements in children’s achievement, and that improvement in

children's achievement is urgently needed, it is paradoxical that most schools do not have comprehensive parent involvement programs. (p. 12)

Calls to improve student achievement are certainly heard frequently among parents, from the public, and within the media. Working to support and improve student achievement by involving parents and students is both logical (given research findings), sensible, and morally and politically defensible. Creating partnerships has potential for great benefit for students, and also for parents and teachers. However, in many schools (and, too, in many homes) much more could be done to facilitate or create partnerships between teachers, parents and students. This study was undertaken with an awareness of the lack of partnerships between families and schools, and a belief in that need.

For Lezotte (1986) the issue is not that parent involvement efforts be part of school reform or restructuring, or that they are more easily facilitated in particular kinds of schools. He maintains that "effective practices for enhancing parent involvement in schools . . . can be replicated in virtually any school setting" (p. vi). This study is based on the belief that family/school partnerships are both worthwhile and possible whether they are part of school reform or school restructuring efforts, or part of schoolwide or single-classroom efforts, and that they can take place within different school contexts. The study was undertaken in the hope that results might contribute to a knowledge base of family/school partnerships (about what is, and about what is better) that will be applicable and useful, albeit perhaps differentially, in a variety of school or classroom improvement settings and in a variety of school and classroom contexts.

According to Baskwill (1989) true home-school partnerships require "a shift in thinking . . . a new model of reciprocal responsibility" (p. 9). In thinking about and working with parents in new and different ways as a teacher Baskwill (1989) notes that she learned "not to make assumptions about what parents will or won't want, what they will or won't like" (p. 4). Ultimately, the creation of partnerships begins with individuals. However, only with an understanding of the expectations and perspectives of others can parents, students, and teachers go beyond assumptions about what each of them "will or won't want, what they will or won't like." This study was undertaken as an attempt to facilitate movement beyond assumptions, upon which new models of "reciprocal responsibility" might be built.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The literature review here is not organized strictly according to the two major research questions posed by this study: (a) What are the expectations of each of the individuals of the triad for the other in instructional relationships? and (b) Are these expectations met? Expectations and satisfaction are addressed but this takes place within a wider, more general approach which developed organically in response to both the broad issues and specific questions of the study, and was shaped at the same time by the focus and nature of the current literature and the origin of the study as part of a larger research effort.

The literature review begins by placing family-school partnerships in the context of school effects and school effectiveness research and then links the issue of partnership, as an aspect of effectiveness, to school improvement. My interest in parent involvement arose initially as a result of my elementary school teaching experience, but developed academically from a specific knowledge of the school effects and school effectiveness literature which was situated within the wider context of my graduate study in school leadership. The research here thus emerges from an educational administration perspective on school-family partnerships in which parent involvement is seen as an aspect of school effectiveness, rather than, for example, from a school counselling perspective on family-school relations.

To situate the study and the concept of parent involvement several typologies of parent involvement are presented. The “parent involvement” literature typically conceptualizes that involvement as teacher-parent dyads. These typologies provide a base for understanding that conception of parent involvement, as well as the potential for a broader, more inclusive kind of involvement between parents, students, and teachers which is proposed here and redefined as collaborative partnership. Whether parent involvement is narrowly or more broadly conceived, the benefits to all of this involvement in instruction are clear. These benefits are explored.

Following the focus on definitions of parent involvement, current efforts and perceptions—the “reality” of parent involvement in schools—are outlined. Constraints upon home/school collaboration are then identified. The parent involvement literature does not typically speak directly to parents’, teachers’, and students’ *expectations* of one

another in collaborative instructional relationships. That is, expectations are not often used as a framework for investigation and analysis. In addition, since the literature does not conceive of the relations between these individuals as one entity—the triad involving parent, student and teacher—the perceptions of all three parties are not often addressed simultaneously. There is, however, within the literature a comprehensive knowledge base about parents’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the difficulties of parent involvement and collaborative relationships. These difficulties reveal expectations, at least by inference, by illustrating the relational dynamics of partnerships and the degree to which parents and teachers are satisfied within them. The “barriers” literature thus provides a source for exploring both expectations and the reality of interactions. Typically, these focus on parent and teacher, and so the role of students requires particular focus and special discussion.

Because this study has “historical context” as part of the larger Co-Production of Learning Project its findings are also situated within that broader research effort. For this reason and also because findings from the Co-Production project form at the same time part of the larger literature on parent involvement these are cited or discussed in the following review when and where appropriate. Previous analyses of various subsets of data from the Co-Production of Learning Project have given a basic understanding of the dynamics of instructional relationships between teachers, students, and parents in B.C. and provide an important context for understanding the findings of this study.

PART A: FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

SCHOOL EFFECTS, SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

James Coleman's study of school effects (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966) concluded that "differences between schools account for only a small fraction of differences in pupil achievement" (p. 22). Although Coleman specified that schools differed in their relations to various racial and ethnic groups, that "the achievement of minority pupils depends more on the schools they attend than does the achievement of majority pupils" (p. 22), his study was interpreted to mean that schools make very little difference to student achievement and that student success is determined primarily by family socio-economic background. Other school effects studies which followed the Coleman report (Averch, Carroll, Donaldson, Kielsing, & Pincus, 1974; Jencks, 1972) also found that differences among schools accounted for only a small proportion of the variation in student's achievements, especially when family background was controlled.

The effective schools research of the 1970s was to some extent a response to the findings of these input-output school effects studies, especially the Coleman report. Observers noted that, despite the findings of the school effects studies, some schools seemed to be more effective than others and undertook studies (Weber, 1971, for example) to investigate these differences. Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker (1979) and Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston (1979) both explored school processes (in elementary and secondary schools respectively) and found schools to have an important influence on the behaviour and attainment of their students, that variations in learning outcomes were associated with the characteristics of the schools as social systems which mediated "input" resources. Brookover and colleagues (1979) concluded that, indeed, "schools can make a difference in what students learn" (p. 146) and, importantly, that the school attributes that make a difference are alterable.

What these and other studies revealed specifically was that schools that "make a difference in what students learn" are characterized by a number of factors, among them not only attention to academic matters and high expectations for student academic achievement, but also parent involvement and support (Edmonds, 1979; Mackenzie, 1983; Purkey & Smith, 1983). More recent school effectiveness work (Chrispeels, 1992;

Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Witte & Walsh, 1990) has continued to demonstrate the importance to student achievement of both an explicit school and classroom focus on academic matters, and high parent involvement. Mortimore and colleagues (1988) concluded succinctly that parent involvement in the schools in their study was “a positive influence upon pupils’ progress and development” (p. 255). It is clear that parental involvement and support are a key characteristic of schools which facilitate strong student achievement.

That both strong parent involvement and support and a focus on academics are characteristic of effective schools is important in the context of this study which examines instructional relationships between students, teachers, and parents. What is most important, however, is not the role of each of these components independently, but that through collaborative relationships in and regarding instruction these two can be linked together. Drawing parents and students explicitly into the instructional mission of schools—through partnership activity either at home or in the school setting—provides expanded opportunity for student success.

PARENTS, STUDENTS AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

While the promotion of student achievement in schools is unarguably a good thing, school effectiveness studies have been roundly criticized for both conceptual and methodological weaknesses (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983; Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983), especially for using achievement test scores (usually in reading and mathematics) as the sole or primary criterion variable. Neither parents nor teachers would likely deny that achieving basic literacy and numeracy are essential goals of schools, but reading and mathematics represent only a narrow focus of the typical curriculum coverage of schools and a limited range of the entire scope of knowledge and skills taught in schools. Schools have other knowledge and skill (and non-instructional) outcomes which may be equally important to teachers, parents, and administrators (Bossert, 1988; Cuban, 1983; Rowan, Bossert & Dwyer, 1983; Townsend, 1994; Wu & Quinn, 1991) such as, for example, higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, cooperative learning, aesthetic sense, etc. Indeed, parents and students might well consider attributes other than test scores to be also constituent of “effective” schools.

Whatever the “objective” criteria of effective schools might be and whether they be outcome or process variables (on school, classroom or instructional environments, for example), these data do not inherently reflect the perspectives of those involved in

schools. They are attribute and not attitudinal data and do not suggest which, if any, of the outcome or process variables are important to those concerned or whether individuals are satisfied with the status of these variables. As Rowan, Bossert and Dwyer (1983) point out, and as Goodlad (1984) has shown, achievement tests as indicators of school effectiveness do not necessarily correspond to practitioners' own subjective assessments of what makes a school effective (see also Wu & Quinn, 1991, and Townsend, 1994).

School effectiveness and school improvement researchers are often interested in the attitudes of teachers and principals (Blase, 1987; Chrispeels & Preston, 1993; Shephard & Bliem, 1995). Huberman and Miles (1984) and Louis and Miles (1991) discuss at length the participation of school stakeholders (principals and teachers) in change efforts. However, students and their parents are also a part of and subjects of the daily efforts and work of schools and must also be considered stakeholders. Their perceptions and attitudes, their expectations and their satisfaction, often vary quite significantly from those of principals and teachers within schools and can be illuminating and instructive (Coleman & Tabin, 1992; Epstein, 1985a; Hayes, Ryan & Zsellar, 1994; McCabe, 1995; Peterson, 1987; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992; Taylor, Kirby, Teddlie, Pounders, & Freeman, 1995).

Sarason (1995) suggests that in a democratic society the participation of all those affected by and involved in its organizations is a political principle that must not be ignored. This premise applies to the broad participation of students and parents in schools and also to the role of parents and students in defining effective schools. Certainly the perspectives of parents and students are critical to definitions of school effectiveness. Sarason's premise applies specifically here to the participation of students and parents in collaborative instructional relationships and to their role in defining effectiveness within that context.

Sergiovanni (1987) uses the term "successful" to describe schools whose "effectiveness standards are more expansive and comprehensive than basic skills" (p. 126) That term is also appropriate in this study where the effectiveness of schools is also more broadly conceived to encompass the expectations and satisfaction of parents, students and teachers for one another within instructional relationships. Here, successful schools are not simply those which are characterized by a focus on student achievement and parent involvement, and, optimally, a linking of these two through parent involvement explicitly focussed on instruction. Success is also reflected in the satisfaction of parents, students, and teachers within collaborative instructional partnerships.

SCHOOLS, CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School systems, Barr and Dreeben (cited in Bossert, 1988) point out, are divided into distinct levels of organization—district, school, class, group, and individual. Each one of these has a particular and unique productive agenda. This “multilevel perspective,” highlights the decisions and allocations that are made within schools by administrators and teachers as well as the interdependencies among various levels within the system (Bossert, 1983, p. 349).

Districts, schools and classrooms are distinct organizations, but they are also linked and affect one another. Mackenzie (1983) explains that “the classroom as a learning environment is nested in the larger environment of the school, which is embedded in turn in a political-administrative structure through which it relates to the surrounding community” (p. 9). This serves as a reminder that it is difficult to organize good schools within a chaotic political and managerial framework (of the district, for example) or to provide effective classroom teaching in a disorganized school environment. As far as partnerships between home and school are concerned, this is equally true. Chrispeels (1996) notes that “schools have been called loosely coupled systems, but they are also embedded systems. The individual classroom teacher can undertake a number of partnership building activities; however, the teacher’s actions are strengthened if they are supported by schoolwide policies and practices” (p. 316).

That schools are unique organizations is particularly important within the context of school improvement efforts. When these initiatives focus on a single school or group of schools within a district, school context variables such as urbanicity and school level are of prime importance and need to be highlighted (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Context difference is particularly notable in the contrast between elementary and secondary schools which are structurally and instructionally quite different (McLaughlin, 1993; Metz, 1993). Successful high schools may not look like successful elementary schools, and prescriptions for change for elementary schools may not be appropriate for high schools (Firestone & Herriott, 1982; see also Lightfoot, 1983, and Sammons, Thomas & Mortimore, 1997, for comprehensive descriptions of high schools).

For Witte and Walsh (1991) a focus on individual classrooms as unique organizations is also key where school improvement efforts are concerned. They note that effective schools research typically focusses on the school and processes within the school rather than looking more specifically within the classroom at teaching, for example, or classroom instruction techniques. This, they explain, has “a theoretical appeal because individual and classroom education occurs within the context of, and is

affected by, the larger school organization” (p. 189). It is a problem, however, where change is concerned. “Aggregation at the school level masks considerable variation within schools,” they explain, “and makes it impossible to determine if recommended approaches would have a uniform effect on different student subgroups” (Witte & Walsh, 1991, p. 190; see also Purkey & Smith, 1983). For Sergiovanni (1987), variation within schools and the structural looseness of schools are key organizational level issues, apart from any specific concerns about change or improvement. For him, nestedness is quite simple. “For all intents and purposes,” he states, “a school of thirty classes is more like thirty schools than one school” (p. 119).

According to Bossert (1988; see also Teddlie, Kirby & Stringfield, 1989) the classroom is where the work of schools is done. “The productive technology of schools, where materials are put to use,” he observes, “occurs in the classroom” (p. 349). As such, “schools are not really the units of instruction” (p. 349). Where collaborative instructional partnerships are concerned the classroom is also the place where the “productive technology” occurs. But the classroom is not the final “nest.” Embedded within it are the individual student-teacher, teacher-parent, and parent-student relationships which form the core of classroom interactions and the collaborative triad. Interactions between individual teachers, students, and parents, which are situated at the classroom level, are the point of origin for collaborative instructional relationships and, indeed, for school effectiveness properly understood.

Recently school effectiveness researchers (Chrispeels, 1993; Sammons, Thomas & Mortimore, 1997; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) have begun to look more closely at school contexts, and at classrooms and departments, investigating the effect of context on school effects, and the relationship between school and teacher effects. Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) have found consistent (mean and variance) differences between differentially effective schools across grade levels. Teachers in more effective schools scored consistently higher on all identified indices of effective teaching than those in typical or less effective schools. (See also Virgilio, Teddlie & Oescher, 1991, and Teddlie, Kirby, & Stringfield, 1989). Rosenholtz (1989) has found that the most effective and active teachers in her study believed that “teachers can make positive things happen, by eliciting parent involvement” (p. 127). These studies are important not only because they point out that classrooms and the teachers in them vary, but also because they suggest that effectiveness and parent involvement intersect at the classroom level.

Consistent with its focus on the classroom and collaborative triadic relationships within it, this study adopts Coleman and Collinge’s (1991) “inside-out” approach to

school effectiveness and school improvement. That is, relationships between teacher, students and parents form the basis for improvement and success. Schools can be improved by changing the relationships between families and schools which can be altered. As such, school effectiveness begins, and can be strengthened, in the classroom. Much has recently been made in the literature of the methodological and conceptual distinctions between school effectiveness and school improvement (Reynolds, Hopkins, & Stoll, 1993; see also Creemers & Reezigt, 1997). Although Clark, Lotto and Astuto (1984) contend that the two research approaches differ in their focus, these different foci are in fact often linked. The school effectiveness literature is frequently used as a source of prescription for change or action and has been quite openly the basis for much school improvement effort (Louis & Miles, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1992, 1996). (See also Reynolds, 1989, and Maughan et al., 1990, for efforts in the United Kingdom, and Cross, 1990, and Reynolds et al., 1993, for efforts in North America.) At the same time, school improvement is also about improving performance. It is, as Hopkins (1995) points out, a strategy for educational change that strengthens the school's capacity for managing change, and also "enhances student outcomes" (p. 3).

While methodological and conceptual differences between school effectiveness and school improvement research are acknowledged, an uncompromising distinction is not upheld here. That school effectiveness research, specifically, and other research findings generally, can be linked to school improvement by the change process "bridge" is assumed. And, while school improvement work and efforts are not necessarily limited to school effectiveness findings, school improvement is about change for students. Here school effectiveness and school improvement are linked through an emphasis on the importance and development of collaborative instructional relationships between parents, students and teachers (in which all individuals are satisfied). "Parent involvement" or, rather, collaboration between parents, students, and teachers, is critical for schools because of its positive effect on student learning and attitudes and can be the basis for school improvement efforts. As such, schools improve to the extent that more collaborative instructional partnerships are established. This study, with its focus on collaborative instructional partnerships between students, teachers and parents, is about both what constitutes successful schools and what can make them better.

PART B: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INSTRUCTION

Coleman and Collinge (1991) point out that parents can influence the school system in one of two typical ways, through involvement in governance issues, or through involvement in instruction and learning. While parent involvement in governance issues may be beneficial to schools and provide advantages to students that contribute overall to a more positive school environment, parental support in instructional matters is generally more critical to student academic success (Fullan, 1982, 1991). Typically, parents prefer involvement that is related directly to the academic achievement and growth of their children, as opposed to involvement in greater schoolwide concerns such as governance and decision-making (Pugh, 1989).

This focus for parental involvement is encompassed in Epstein's (1995) framework of six types of involvement for comprehensive programs of partnership. This widely cited parent involvement typology includes six types of involvement which are described by Epstein, and here below, from the perspective of the school and its responsibility in developing each of these types of involvement.

- **Type One—Parenting:** refers to help provided by the school to enable families to establish home environments that support children as students. Activities undertaken by the school may include suggestions for home conditions that support learning at the various grade levels, workshops on parenting and child-rearing, and support programs to assist families with health, nutrition and other services.
- **Type Two—Communicating:** represents the design of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications with all families each year about school programs and their children's progress. Practices include conferences, report cards, student work folders, translation services for parents, and memos and newsletters.
- **Type Three—Volunteering:** refers to the recruitment and organization of parent help and support. Strategies include school and classroom volunteer programs, parent centres, class parents, and parent safety patrols.
- **Type Four—Learning at Home:** refers to the provision of information and ideas by schools to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curricular activities. Practices include information on homework policies and how

to assist students with school work at home, homework schedules, home activity calendars, summer learning packets, and goal-setting.

- **Type Five—Decision-Making:** means the inclusion of parents in school decisions as leaders and representatives. Options include parent advisory council participation, advocacy groups, district level councils, involvement on school reform and improvement committees.
- **Type Six—Collaborating with Community:** refers to the integration of resources and services from the community that can strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development. Strategies include the provision of information on community programs, support services, and activities to families, partnerships between schools and businesses and other agencies or organizations, as well as service provided to the community provided by students, school and families.

Within Epstein's framework the Type Two, Three and Four involvement activities either naturally focus on instructional concerns or could have this focus. While the support and care provided by parents at home is not directly related to instruction, it is crucial to instruction as it provides the necessary foundation upon which that activity can most successfully take place at school or at home, by teachers or parents, or parents and teachers working together.

Epstein's typology, in detailing the range of parent involvement activities, is a thorough model of parent involvement particularly for schools. It is a comprehensive cataloguing of the potential spheres for involvement of parents and associated school practices and, as Epstein (1995, p. 705) points out, can be used as a guide by educators to help develop more comprehensive programs of partnership. While the model includes suggestions regarding roles for teachers and parents, these are presented from the involvement perspective of schools and teachers as initiators. That schools and teachers have an active, initiating role to play is clear, but the dual or reciprocal nature of collaborative partnerships is not made explicit.

In this study the ideal involvement of teachers and families is characterized as collaborative. Coleman and Collinge (1991) describe the collaborative approach as one which "envisions teachers actively recruiting parental support with the intention of developing a partnership based on mutual respect, reciprocity of responsibility, and an exchange of knowledge and skills for the purpose of promoting academic growth" (p. 275). Baskwill (1989), as noted earlier, envisions a model of "reciprocal

responsibility” in which teachers communicate to parents regularly “sharing everything they noticed about their children’s growth in learning” (p. 9) but also and even more importantly, that parents do the same thing with teachers, “feeling it was their place—and their right—to do so” (p. 9).

Recently Chrispeels (1996) has proposed a conceptual model which outlines the mutual and overlapping roles and responsibilities of home, school, and community in building collaborative partnerships. Chrispeels’ typology is pyramidal in shape. Each role builds on the other, providing a scaffold of partnership programs. The typology, outlined below beginning with the base level of the pyramid, reflects the participation of home, school and community in each of the five roles.

- **Co-Communicators**—the involvement of all families and school personnel in two-way and multi-dimensional communication.
- **Co-Supporters**—the involvement of home and school in three critical support activities: (1) fulfillment of basic obligations (food, clothing, shelter, nurture, and love) of child-rearing by parent or other family members; (2) support of school by family members through fund-raising, volunteering, participation in school activities and school events; and (3) provision of support for families by schools and communities such as before and after school care.
- **Co-Learners and Co-Teachers**—opportunities for formal and informal learning by both parents and staff through home-school communications and school-sponsored workshops and opportunities also for parents to act as teachers in workshops and at home through involvement in homework and home learning activities.
- **Co-Advisors, Advocates, Decision-Makers**—opportunities for parents to become meaningfully involved in decision-making activities that are focussed on important school goals and are not simply endorsements of administrative decisions made prior to actual consultation with parents.

In Chrispeel’s typology, all but the top activities of the pyramid (Co-Advisors, Advocates, Decision-Makers) either naturally focus on instructional concerns or could have this focus. Like Epstein’s typology, Chrispeel’s model is also useful in presenting a picture of the full potential for family/school partnerships. However, insofar as collaboration requires the involvement and participation of both parents and teachers (at least) Chrispeels’ “co-” model effectively represents the two-way nature of this interaction. To create a classroom/home situation in which collaboration occurs teachers

must be responsive to homes and families and proactive in their outreach, seeking and permitting involvement; at the same time, parents must be responsive to schools and teachers and also active and proactive too in their participation and “reaching in.” Wolfendale (1983, cited in Wolfendale, 1992, p. 14) defines partnership as characterized by parents who are:

- active and central in decision-making and its implementation;
- perceived as having equal strengths and equivalent expertise;
- able to contribute to as well as receive services (reciprocity);
- able to share responsibility so that they and professionals are mutually accountable.

In partnerships both teachers and parents have full roles to play.

When the term “school/family partnership” is used to define collaborative instructional relationships, as it is here, students, as members of the family, logically and necessarily form part of that partnership. Typically, however, parent involvement typologies refer to the participation of parents and teachers and do not always make explicit the role of students. Without specification of an active role for students, the reader is left to infer what that role might be apart from that of a passive recipient of the knowledge and efforts of teachers and parents. Eccles and Harold (1993), however, have outlined a model of parent involvement in which that involvement is treated both as an outcome of parent, teacher and child influences and as a predictor of child outcomes. In this model teacher and parent beliefs (which influence one another) and parent and teacher practices (which influence one another) are posited to directly influence student outcomes. Teacher and parent beliefs also affect child outcomes indirectly as mediated through the practices of each group respectively. Eccles’ and Harold’s model also includes what they term “exogenous variables” which include characteristics of families and parents, neighborhoods and communities, teachers and schools, and *children*. These, they note, are assumed to influence all of the first variables mentioned: teacher beliefs and practices, parent beliefs and practices, and student outcomes. They describe their model as being intentionally overlapping in order to capture the cyclical nature of the relationships between parents, teachers and students. Their model not only enumerates various practices (of parents, teachers, and students), but also captures the relationships between these individuals. In highlighting relationships and the practices of and between all three parties, it does, importantly, acknowledge and make explicit the participation of students in teacher/parent/student collaboration. As Metz (1993) points out, teachers are dependent on their students for the success of their work, requiring their cooperation in the classroom. In the instructional relationships of school/family partnerships both

parents and teachers are dependent on students. And, the development of relationships that are fully collaborative requires the participation and cooperation of not just parents and teachers, but also students.

THE BENEFITS OF “PARENT INVOLVEMENT”

Whether one defines parent involvement narrowly as teachers making communicative overtures to parents and parents simply assisting with student homework, or more widely as a collaborative relationship marked by reciprocal responsibility between teachers, parents, and students, there are benefits for all involved. Typically, literature highlighting the benefits of involvement refers to the benefits of “parent involvement.” For that reason, this term will also be employed below to be consistent with its use in the literature. Although the terms “family-school partnerships” and “collaborative partnerships” are used in this study to denote a wider participation of parents and students, the benefits of “parent involvement” as outlined below are assumed to apply nonetheless.

Benefits for Students

That “parent involvement in instructionally related activities at home and/or at school benefits children,” notes Fullan (1991, p. 231) is clear. The positive consequences of parental involvement in instruction for student academic achievement are well-documented (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1989, 1990a, 1991a; Griffith, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Walberg, 1984; Witte & Walsh, 1990) even in the secondary grades (Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987). As noted earlier, studies of effective schools also show that parental involvement and support correlate with student academic success (Binkowski, Cordeiro, & Iwanicki, 1995; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis & Ecob, 1988; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1989; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Witte & Walsh, 1990). Importantly, these benefits accrue to students across ability range and socioeconomic level. “Parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participating in schools and classrooms,” states Epstein (1987) “affect children’s achievement, attitudes and aspirations, even after student ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account” (p. 120).

As Epstein suggests, students benefit not only academically but also attitudinally from collaborative relationships between their parents and their teachers (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Lyons, Robbin, & Smith, 1983; Walberg, 1984). "Students whose teachers and parents used frequent parent involvement practices," notes Epstein (1987) "reported more positive attitudes toward school, more regular homework habits, more similarity between the school and their family, more familiarity between the teacher and their parents" (p. 128; see also Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1992). The degree of responsibility students demonstrate toward school-related tasks has also been shown to be related to parent involvement (Baskwill, 1989; Coleman, Tabin & Collinge, 1994). These positive attitudinal benefits for students occur as a result of even very simple involvement strategies, such as school to home communication. Ames, de Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon (1995), for example, found that children's motivation, attitudes toward parental involvement and perceptions of their parents' level of involvement were all more positive when their parents received frequent communications from the teacher (p. 26).

Students also benefit indirectly from the changed attitudes and practices of their teachers. Epstein (1982) has found that teachers who reported high emphasis on parent involvement had more positive estimates of more of their children and more families on home learning and school behaviors than other teachers who placed average or low emphasis on parent involvement (even after student ability was statistically controlled). More students in the classrooms of teachers who report high emphasis on parent involvement are recognized by their teachers for positive homework behavior and for parents' helpfulness (Epstein, 1982, p. 12).

Benefits for Teachers

Teachers also benefit from parent involvement. When teachers make efforts to involve parents and when parents become involved both parent and teacher develop a better understanding of one another and each other's respective roles in the life of the child (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987; Lightfoot, 1978). Teachers who involve parents are seen by them to be more competent and to have better interpersonal skills (Epstein, 1983). Parents also believe these teachers to be working hard to interest parents in the instructional programs of their classrooms (Epstein, 1987). In addition, teachers who involve parents in instructional activities experience an increased sense of professional efficacy (Dye, 1989; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; see also McLaughlin, 1987). They develop new skills and knowledge in the domain of parent

involvement (Dye, 1989) which they do not often gain in pre-service or in-service training. Their “teaching” repertoire expands as they teach parents. In allowing parents to become teachers they also learn more. There is evidence to suggest that in working with parents, teachers become more proficient generally, that they devote more time to teaching, experiment more and develop a more student-oriented approach (Becher, 1984, cited in Henderson, 1987). Ultimately, both teachers and parents rate each other more positively when the teacher uses frequent parent involvement practices (Epstein 1985b, 1986, 1987)

Benefits for Parents

Parents who are involved by teachers develop a better understanding of what is taught in the classroom, and learn how to help their children at home (Epstein, 1987). They also develop more positive attitudes toward the school and teachers (Becher, 1984, cited in Henderson, 1987; Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1986; Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1993). In a recent study Ames and colleagues (1995) found that “parents’ overall evaluations of the teacher, their sense of comfort with the school, and their reported level of involvement was higher when they received frequent and effective communications” from the teacher (p. 26). Parents are certainly more involved with learning activities when their child’s teacher communicates more with them (Watkins & Ames, 1994) and encourages them to participate (Ames, Tanaka, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995).

Parents’ sense of efficacy in helping their children has also been related to their home involvement. They are likely to feel more capable of helping their children when they are invited to do so, and are given guidelines and instruction about how to help (Ames, Tanaka, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1992; Epstein, 1990b; Lareau, 1987). In addition, teachers who involve parents see all parents, including single parents (Epstein, 1990c) more positively than those who do not, which is a benefit to both parents and teachers. Teachers who involve parents tend to involve all parents despite their levels of education (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1986). These teachers perceive parents to be more cooperative and believe that they will respond more readily at home to teacher requests for participation.

THE REALITY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Although there are schools and school districts in both Canada and the U.S. in which strong family-school partnership programs exist, such as those described by Comer (1980) and Davies (1993; see also Cochran & Dean, 1991; Comer & Haynes, 1991; and Rich, 1993), typically in North American schools and classrooms family-school connections are weak and parent activity levels low. As Fullan (1991; see also Epstein & Dauber, 1991) explains, not much parent involvement activity occurs in schools apart from the production and receipt of report cards and bad news messages sent from teachers to parents.

In a longitudinal study of patterns of parent involvement across the elementary years Roeser, Patrick, Yoon, Anderman, and Eccles (1994, p. 2) found that teachers themselves reported infrequent use of (classroom-wide) parent involvement strategies, with the exception of basic information on classroom procedures and the negative feedback on student behaviours to which Fullan refers. In addition, teachers reported that they infrequently requested at-home involvement of parents in academic tasks or other educational activities (Roeser et al., 1994, p. 23).

In the same study Roeser and colleagues (1994) found that parents confirmed this lack of school and teacher activity. Mothers, they note, "reported that they were asked infrequently by their child's teachers to get directly involved with schoolwork, and said they were almost never asked to engage with their child in extra educational activities" (p. 23). However, despite the lack of school-initiated efforts to involve parents, mothers reported quite frequent engagement with their children in academic activities across the elementary years (p. 2). These findings are also consistent with other research which indicates that almost all parents are involved in instructional activities with their children at home (Chavkins & Williams, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1992; Epstein, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995; Moles, 1993), that socio-economic status is not a predictor of parents' support for school instructional activities and involvement in home-based instruction (Chavkins & Williams, 1993; Clark, 1983; Davies, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lareau, 1989; Lightfoot, 1978, 1991; Moles, 1993; Rich, 1988; Weisner & Garnier, 1992), but that most parents are never asked to help or are contacted in any way by teachers even though they are willing to help their child at home (Epstein 1985a, 1987).

Teacher efforts to communicate and involve parents occur in some elementary school classrooms. These efforts, however, are typically greater in the lower than upper

grades (Ames, de Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995; Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Roeser et al., 1994) and usually decline as children progress through school (Ames et al., 1995; Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Becker & Epstein, 1982; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1986; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Roeser et al., 1994). Ames and colleagues (1995) suggest that the shift in teachers' practices may in fact contribute to the decrease in parent involvement as grade increases.

It is clear that parent involvement benefits teachers, parents, and students and that both parents and teachers are supportive of "co-productive" family-school partnerships (Moles, 1982). However, even though teachers endorse parent involvement at home and understand the importance of parent involvement to children's educational success (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Moles, 1993; Roeser et al., 1994), the use of parent involvement strategies by teachers is not widespread (Becker, 1981 cited in Fullan, 1991; Coleman, Tabin & Collinge, 1993; Coleman & Tabin, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Roeser et al., 1994). This apparent paradox is puzzling. It is summed up effectively by Fullan (1991):

On the one hand, most teachers say that they want more contact with parents, but seem to feel that many parents are unavailable or uninterested. On the other hand, most parents say that they want to find out more about what their children are supposed to learn and what they can do at home to help, although they need specific direction and support to carry out this role. (pp. 236-237)

That parents are unavailable or uninterested, that involving parents is difficult if not impossible, are refrains commonly heard in elementary school staff rooms. Teachers and administrators often believe that low-income, minority parents in particular are not able to help in their child's education and thus discourage parent involvement (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Comer, 1980; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Roeser et al., 1994). However, notions about parent unwillingness and inability to participate are belied by the fact that parents are involved in academic activities with their children even when schools and teachers provide little or no encouragement or support (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995; Moles, 1993; Roeser et al., 1994). Certainly, some parents consciously abrogate child-rearing duties or are delinquent for reasons outside their control. However, most parents sincerely care about their children, and are committed to their social, emotional and intellectual growth. According to Epstein (Brandt, 1989) research suggests that in fact only about two to five percent of parents may have severe problems that interfere with developing partnerships. Claims about parent unwillingness are also discredited by the fact that some teachers and schools actively involve parents in the education of their

children in a variety of ways while others, “facing identical parents and communities” (Fullan, 1991, p. 237) do not.

Administrative and organizational influences may also have some effect on the establishment of family-school partnerships. “To the extent that principals do not view parent involvement as a centrally important activity, and encourage and support this outreach activity in tangible ways,” explain Maehr, Midgley and Urda (1992), “teachers may be less inclined to encourage it.” There is greater likelihood that more teachers within a single school will initiate school-family partnerships if this is an explicit school goal, or part of a schoolwide emphasis generally. Certainly, individual teachers can establish effective parent involvement practices without strong school support (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Chrispeels, 1996; Fullan, 1991), although, as Fullan (1991) points out, “the impact is greater if teachers and principals are working together” (p. 237).

Apart from the larger organizational and administrative influences referred to above, there are other constraints related to teachers, parents and students that inhibit the development of more constructive and productive instructional relationships between parents, students, and teachers. In fact, discussion about family-school partnerships is almost always situated within the context of barriers to that involvement. As such, these barriers, which form a substantial focus of the parent involvement literature, merit further exploration.

CONSTRAINTS UPON FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Because the constraints to be discussed below do not represent discrete or mutually exclusive categories it is difficult to discuss them in isolation. They, like the roles of parents, students, and teachers in collaborative relationships, are often linked and interdependent. For organizational purposes, however, the various constraints are organized into three major categories which represent teacher, student and parent groups and then divided into sub-groups within each of the referent group categories. Often constraints are not external barriers per se, but rather individual perceptions of one referent group about the work or participation of the other(s) which have implications for the role of that party or the relationship between the individuals.

Teachers

Teacher Norms of Privacy, Autonomy and Professionalism

Teacher work is characterized by norms of autonomy and privacy (Little, 1990). Most often teachers work alone in one classroom. While they may interact with colleagues in their schools, they work independently and at least in elementary schools are usually solely responsible for a single group of students. Since teachers are accustomed to working on their own the participation and interest of parents may be felt as a threat to professional autonomy.

Teachers are typically anxious about their personal efficacy (Lortie, 1975) and often feel that parents will question their professional competence (Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975; Moles, 1982) or blame them for the child's problems (Lightfoot, 1978; Moles, 1982). Many teachers feel that working closely with parents will give parents an even greater opportunity to question their ability (Power, 1985). The actual presence of parents in the classroom may be particularly threatening as teachers are not used to being observed while they teach and this observation may be taken as a sign of lack of parental confidence.

Swap (1993) describes teaching as an isolated and isolating experience. Teachers, she explains, are unused to working collaboratively in schools. Schools are usually hierarchically organized and managed and generally teachers are not prepared to work in collaborative ways. Thus, hierarchical and authoritarian principles also govern schools' interactions with parents. Teachers do not always make overtures to parents and do not always welcome them into the classroom. They often view parents as "distant assistants" (Lortie, 1975, p. 191).

Union regulations often strengthen the norms of professionalism that exclude parents and reduce interaction between parents and teachers. Collective bargaining agreements, for example, often specify the amount and nature of reporting about student achievement to be provided to parents by teachers. Although these kinds of regulations may be stated as minimums they are often interpreted as absolutes or at least limits beyond which teachers need not go, and for which they may be chastised openly or pressured subtly about not exceeding. Personal experience (as both parent and teacher) suggests that teachers often do not go beyond union expectations. In so doing they support their colleagues as fellow union members and avoid setting precedents for teacher work which may be expected of all. They refrain from working openly in ways which may make apparent a superior quality of work or application compared to that of others (or work covertly), thereby establishing norms of mediocrity.

Sykes (1990) speaks of the special knowledge and practice held by professionals and of the circular relation that builds professional status. In professional fields, such as medicine or law, social distance and special knowledge “enhance the claim to expertise” (p. 81). At the same time, possession of the knowledge contributes to social distance. Sykes asserts, however, that teachers “do not possess the moral authority to erect a high-walled kingdom of special knowledge. They must share responsibility with parents, and this means reducing social distance and demystifying school knowledge” (p. 81). According to Sykes, the circular relation that builds professional status in other fields is impermissible in teaching. Lightfoot (1978), too, insists that teachers must share the domain of children’s learning and development with parents. For Baskwill (1989) this is as simple as “giving parents the language of the classroom” (p. 20). In this way, she explains, “you empower them to talk about what goes on within the classroom” (p. 20). However, assumptions about professional knowledge and authority are not often challenged (Welker, 1991) and the language of special knowledge is not often shared.

Lightfoot (1979) describes the relationship between mothers and teachers as subtly and silently competitive. “Clarity of boundaries and issues of territoriality are at the center of relationships between mothers and teachers,” she states. “Mothers and teachers experience a profound and subtle rivalry that arises out of the ambiguous and gray areas of responsibility and authority that stretch between family and school” (Lightfoot, 1979, p.47). Power (1985) comes to similar conclusions about the competitiveness of the mother-teacher relationship based on his study which found that parents and teachers viewed their own competence higher than it was viewed by the other group. Because mothers perceived parents as significantly more competent than teachers (while fathers did not) Power also proposes that perhaps mothers and teachers view their relationship as hierarchical, each of them seeing themselves in a superior position to the other. Even though parents and teachers are engaged in a complementary task, home-school relationships have traditionally been characterized by conflict, because parents are focussed on the needs and interests of their own child and teachers must focus on the needs of a group of children (Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975).

Low Teacher Expectations for Parental Involvement and Assistance

As noted earlier, teachers often have low expectations regarding the willingness of parents to help or their ability to do so (Moles, 1987). They often assume that parents are not interested in helping their children, especially among working-class low-SES (minority) parents, or that they are not able to do so (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Comer,

1980; Davies, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Moles, 1987).. Teachers may also believe generally that parents (of potentially any socio-economic background) are simply not interested in following up on teacher suggestions (Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Epstein 1990c; Moles, 1982) or have negative attitudes about teachers and schools (Davies, 1993). Believing that parents are unwilling or unable to participate, they are thus less likely to ask parents to help their children at home, or invite them to take part in classroom activities (Davies, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Moles, 1993).

Teachers may be biased against certain kinds of families, such as low-SES families or single parent families (Epstein, 1983, 1990c). Some teachers see low-income and minority children as “other” (Delpit, 1995). They may perceive that parents do not value education and that they do not attempt to instill this value in their children (Moles, 1982). They may have had previous negative experiences with parents. In each of these cases they may again be less likely to invite parents to participate.

Teachers Lack of Skill and Knowledge in Involving Parents

Whether teacher attitudes towards parent involvement are positive are not, teachers are often constrained by both a lack of training for dealing with parents and a lack of knowledge about how to involve parents. (Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Moles, 1993). Typically, teachers receive little pre-service or in-service training on parent involvement (Fullan, 1982; McAfee, 1987). In particular, teachers lack training in skills necessary to form constructive collaborative relationships with parents (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Moles, 1993; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 1992; Swick & McKnight, 1989; Veenman, 1984). They may not be aware of what parents need to know in order to help their children at home or do not know how they might effectively employ parental assistance in the classroom. They might simply lack ideas for parents. These problems can pose even greater difficulty for teachers when parents have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Moles, 1982), for which, once again, teachers may lack appropriate training and experience. McLaughlin and Shields (1987) contend that teachers of low-SES children, who are more likely to hold low expectations for both parents and students, especially need to be educated about the benefits of involving parents, about parental willingness to become involved and about successful models of parent involvement. Ultimately, as a result of these problems, schools and teachers may not actively involve parents or provide many opportunities for parents to become involved (Davies, 1987).

Education in general and confidence in one's ability as a teacher are important. Teachers with more education involve parents more; teachers with less education involve parents less (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). And, teachers with a greater sense of professional competence are more willing to involve parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987).

Teacher Time

Teachers often suggest that lack of time and money prevent them from responding to parents more effectively (Moles, 1993). Swap (1993) points out that time is not often allocated within schools for developing outreach to parents, and money is not often set aside for these kinds of programmatic efforts within schools. In general, the time commitment needed to establish parent involvement programs (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Moles, 1993) prevents many teachers from establishing these programs. In addition, teachers are not rewarded for doing any extra work with parents (Epstein & Becker, 1982). They may feel overwhelmed, too, by the problems facing children and parents, and by the demands on their personal as well as professional time.

While efforts to reach out may become an individual teacher priority and working towards this goal may become part of teachers' non-direct teaching time if they so choose, these are areas for improvement that can be addressed systematically at the school level. As far as time demands on teachers and administrators are concerned, Roeser, Patrick, Yoon, Anderman and Eccles (1994) note that "the use (or lack thereof) of parent involvement strategies needs to be viewed in the context of the total repertoire of strategies that teachers and principals can potentially use to increase the educational success of their students" (p. 25). Parent involvement strategies may remain untapped, they explain, in the face of other demands such as large class sizes, mandates for content coverage and difficult students. The daily pressures of teaching life impinge on teacher commitment to parent involvement (Fullan, 1982). However, despite competitive demands on time from various sources, the use of parent involvement strategies is one of individual teacher choice. Collinge's (1994) study, for example, showed that collaborative teachers who consistently use parent involvement strategies recognize the benefit to students and parents and "make time" for these activities.

Parents

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Between Home and School

Linguistic and cultural differences between homes and schools create communication and interactional barriers for parents and teachers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Moles, 1993). Parents who do not speak English well sometimes feel inadequate when they enter schools and cultural misunderstandings often occur (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Swap, 1993; see also Clark, 1983, for the problems experienced by minority students). These parents are not less likely to want to help, but linguistic barriers may prevent them from helping their child at home and from understanding both written or spoken school and teacher communications which may in fact have been designed to facilitate or seek parental assistance. Teachers who do not speak the language of the home are unlikely to call often to communicate about a child's progress or ask for assistance when they are aware that communicative efforts will be difficult, uncomfortable perhaps for both parties, or completely impossible.

Because of cultural differences minority parents may have expectations of schools and teachers that are different from non-minority parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1992; Moles, 1993), and they may not know what schools and teachers expect of them or how to help in ways desired by their children's teachers. Teachers may interpret differing parental expectations in unintended ways, as either too high or too low, for example, and these (mis)understandings may inhibit the development of family-school partnerships.

Economic and Time Constraints in the Home

Time constraints are a problem for parents whose employment prevents them from attending functions at the school during the day or assisting their child or attending meetings in the evenings (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Dauber & Epstein, 1989, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995; Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975; Moles 1987, 1993). Although some parents have flexible schedules which enable them to participate in daytime conferences or performances many others do not have this freedom. In addition, fatigue from the physical demands of employment and lack of time due to the demands of other responsibilities in the home (other children in school, or preschool children) (Moles, 1982) often prevent parents from responding to their children in ways that teachers expect or taking up duties that schools might ask of them. Time constraints are particularly pressing for single parents (Moles, 1987).

Social and Cultural Capital Disparity

In a qualitative study of family-school relationships in working-class and middle-class communities Lareau (1987, 1989) found that the level of parental involvement in schools was linked to the social class position of the parents and the corresponding social and cultural resources that were available to them. Lareau found, consistent with other subsequent research (Collinge & Coleman, 1992; Davies, 1993), that the educational values of the two groups of parents did not differ, that both groups valued educational success, wanted their children to do well in school and saw themselves as supporting and helping their children achieve success at school. However, parents in the middle-class community generally saw education as a shared responsibility between home and school while working-class parents saw responsibility for education as the school's. The social, cultural, and economic resources available to middle-class parents enabled them to participate with the school and to "build a family-school relationships congruent with the schools' definition of appropriate behaviour" (Lareau, 1987, p. 82), such as, for example, making books available to their children, and providing active support of reading achievement through reinforcement and practice at home. A lack of this cultural capital inhibits the development of home-teacher collaboration which is especially important for children in families without these resources (Clark, 1983).

Parent Discomfort in a School Setting

Parents are often very uncomfortable in schools (Swap, 1993), sometimes as a result of their own poor experiences there when they were children (Lareau, 1989; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Parents who have dropped out of school, in particular, often do not feel confident in school settings (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Schools can be daunting places even for those who may not have had negative experiences there as youngsters. Minority parents who have neither the culture nor the language of the school, may feel especially uncomfortable. Even professional parents who were successful students are sometimes cowed by the atmosphere of schools and the professionalism that they encounter when visiting as parents (Coleman, Collinge, & Tabin, 1995b; Collinge & Coleman, 1992).

Teachers, and the technical jargon used by them, can be intimidating (Davies, 1993; Fullan, 1982). Often parents do not feel confident about approaching or interacting with the school (Lareau, 1989). They feel inferior to the teacher (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Lightfoot, 1981) and powerless (Baskwill, 1989). They may feel that teachers are indifferent to their concerns (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975) and do not trust the school (Lightfoot, 1978). Often parents believe teachers are not interested

in their perspective (Lindle, 1989) or that the teacher does not care about their child (Lightfoot, 1978) and fear that offering opinions and complaints will cause difficulty for their child in school (Coleman & Tabin, 1992).

Parent Ability and Efficacy

Many parents do not feel able to help their children with schoolwork (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). Often those who lack formal schooling, who dropped out of school, or who never felt confident or successful as students themselves, feel that they do not know enough to help their children (Eccles & Harold, 1993, Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Helping is even more difficult for parents who do not speak the language of the classroom. Often parents feel unable to help or cannot help because of the difficulty of subject matter or methods. They either do not understand what is being taught or are not familiar with changing methods of instruction, and simply may not understand the child's homework (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995; Moles, 1982). This problem is especially widespread for mathematics (Collinge & Coleman, 1992), and becomes more challenging as children advance in school (Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Moles, 1982; Scott-Jones, 1991).

Lack of Communication, Information and Guidance from Teachers

Even if parents understand what their children are learning, are able to help academically, and are comfortable with how material is being taught and can reinforce this at home, many still feel constrained due to lack of information and guidance from the classroom (Davies, 1993; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein, 1986). They do not know, first, whether their child's teacher wants them to help and, if so, what exactly the teacher would like them to do (Coleman & Tabin, 1992; Collinge & Coleman, 1992; Davies, 1988; Epstein, 1990b; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995; McAfee, 1987). In the case of methodology, for example, parents are puzzled as to whether or not they should explain something to their child using a different method than the teacher. With subject matter assignments they are often not sure about whether to help with content or process, and to what extent they should help.

Epstein (1993) comments that when parents express how they want to be involved in their children's education they use words like "information," "communication," and "participation." They want to participate by helping but need to know what their child is

doing in class (the curriculum), what to help with, and how to help (Coleman, Collinge, & Tabin, 1995b; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995). Both curricular and methodological information from the teacher are essential in this regard, but parents typically receive few communications from the classroom (Collinge & Coleman, 1992; Epstein, 1986) and may only receive basic information about classroom procedures (Roeser et al., 1994). They may think that teachers do not want them to help their children.

Parents would also like to know more about how their child is performing. They are concerned that not enough information is forthcoming from the classroom about their child's progress especially since this too would help them assist their child more effectively (Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Coleman & Tabin, 1992; Collinge & Coleman, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Lindle, 1989; McAfee, 1987). They feel constrained and excluded when they do not receive the information that they need in order to better help their child (Coleman & Tabin, 1992). Often what they do receive is negative; they do not receive enough feedback about positive growth and achievements (Davies, 1993; Moles, 1987; Roeser et al., 1994). They may feel discouraged about helping when they get only "bad news" from their child's teacher (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Moles, 1982) or when teachers do not follow up on their concerns and the school does not do what it says it is going to do (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987).

Philosophical Differences About School and Involvement

While most parents are keen to help their child with instructional matters, occasionally they are not involved or choose not to be as involved. Parent's philosophies about education and homework (the values of the home) may be different than those of the school (Chavkins & Williams, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Some parents, for example, see responsibility for educating the child to be the school's job (Lareau, 1989).

In cases where values differ, the processes of the home (with respect to schoolwork, for example) may also not resemble those of the school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Lightfoot, 1978). Thompson (1992), for example, has examined homework as a social construction, analyzing how family members' models of homework interrelate with cultural and economic resources and shape how homework is or is not done. In some homes the family conception of homework and how it is to be completed positively influences successful homework completion and in others it does not. If family and school or classroom conceptions match, teacher/home collaboration is facilitated; if they

do not, successful collaboration can be inhibited. Value and process differences such as these can be troublesome for both parent and teacher when they are unaware of them, but have encountered difficulties or frustrations because of them.

Thompson's study resembles Lareau's (1987) work in that it examines the role of social class in parent support of the mission of the school. Whether parents lack social and cultural capital or not, however, they may still have preferences about becoming involved. Vandegrift and Greene (1992) have developed a four-quadrant model of parent involvement which distinguishes between the notions of support and activity. A parent, for example, may be supportive but not necessarily active (those parents who are not "joiners"). This parent may prefer not to be involved at the school site, although the educational progress of their child is still a keen concern. At the same time, parents may believe that their role is limited to certain kinds of activities at the school, such as volunteering or fund-raising activities. Some parents may have negative attitudes about schools and/or teachers and for this reason not become involved. For Vandegrift and Greene (1992) garnering support is a prerequisite for improving parent involvement, but approaching parents with an understanding of their perspective is crucial.

Students

Parents and teachers often insist that students constrain home-school collaboration. Parents report that students at the intermediate grades, in particular, sometimes discourage their parents from participating at the school building as they find this embarrassing (Coleman & Tabin, 1992). Often parents limit their own participation in the school even though their child has not specifically asked them to do so, because they perceive that the adolescent child would find this uncomfortable (Eccles & Harold, 1993). Teachers also cite student embarrassment and discomfort as a reason for their failure to invite parents into the classroom during the day (Coleman, Collinge, & Tabin, 1995b).

At the Grades Four to Seven levels parents may perceive that their children need to be and are becoming increasingly independent and so choose non-involvement as a way to support that need (Carnegie, 1989; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1986). Grolnick and Ryan (1989, cited in Watkins & Ames, 1994) have suggested that extensive parental involvement is regarded as intrusive by children and may limit educational attainment. Data presented later bear on this unusual assertion.

On the home front, parents of capable, responsible and academically-independent students often find their roles as "helpers" circumscribed because the child insists that he or she does not need assistance and does not seek out a parent's help (Hoover-Dempsey

et al., 1995). These parents may well participate and demonstrate support for their child's work in other ways, but because this assistance is less active parents often consider it inauthentic.

Sometimes personal relations and conflicts between parent and child make home-based assistance difficult, uncomfortable and frustrating and as a consequence it occurs less often (Collinge & Coleman, 1992). Interestingly, students often seek out the assistance of others—older sisters or brothers, neighbours, grandparents—(or this help is provided; Davies, 1993) if parents cannot help them or when relations with these individuals are more harmonious and assistance will be more productive (Coleman, Collinge & Tabin, 1995b; see also Collinge & Coleman, 1992).

Literature referring to barriers to family-school partnerships originating from students, or reflecting the student perspective, is scant. Typically, home-school partnerships are conceived in terms of the roles and participation of parents and teachers with students as passive recipients of the instruction and ministrations of parents and teachers. The issue of student roles in family-school partnerships and students as autonomous and self-regulating members of the triad is thus less well-explored. Epstein (1982) has reported on student reactions to teacher's practices of parent involvement. However, her findings relate to the effects of teacher practices of parent involvement on student behaviours and attitudes. Her research did not focus on student personal responses to the efforts of teachers to involve parents, the efforts of teachers and parents to work collaboratively, or student collaboration with teachers. A number of the citations above represent references to works produced from the Co-Production of Learning Project from which some knowledge about student participation in family-school partnerships has emerged.

Students as Members of Collaborative Triads

There is also little in the literature referring to the participation of students in the classroom as collaborative members of the educational enterprise or to the joint collaboration of students and teachers with parents. This is, in part, because these are relatively rare phenomena. There is, however, some research evidence concerning students' preferences with respect to teachers and classroom environments. Once again, these relate only to student perceptions of teacher practice and interaction within the classroom and not in relation to collaboration with parents.

In a review of promising directions in the research on student perceptions of schooling Weinstein (1983) noted that students' views of a good teacher are quite similar

across student age groups. Unfortunately, she added, “very few studies have examined students’ concepts of what teachers are like” (p. 290). In summarizing research on student perceptions of the qualities of a good teacher Wittrock (1986) notes that “some studies find students choosing teachers who are warm, friendly, supportive and communicative, while, at the same time, orderly, highly motivating, and in charge of classroom discipline” (p. 299). These findings are consistent with other more recent research efforts in this area.

Phelan, Davidson, and Cao (1992), for example, studied high school students’ views of school contexts. They found that students prefer classrooms which are well-organized and orderly, in which they felt they know the teacher and the other students and in which the teacher treats students as individuals, acknowledging their value and worth, and recognizing their efforts. Students expressed a desire to be challenged, but feel emotionally safe, without being put down or made to feel stupid by either teacher or peers. The authors noted that a recurring theme in students comments was the value they placed on having teachers who care. Care is demonstrated by providing explanation and assistance with academic matters. Students prefer teachers who are willing to help them in understanding material, and who take the time to explain concepts and ideas carefully and thoroughly. They demonstrate a commitment to help students learn. Care is also the expression of interest and concern in students as individuals, that assures students that the teacher likes them personally. Students also mention humor, openness, and consideration as important qualities in a teacher. They appreciate teachers who are considerate, who treat them with respect and are attuned to their needs.

Students in the Phelan, Davidson and Cao study also prefer active, rather than passive roles in instruction. They like classrooms in which pedagogical methods encourage active participation. The authors note that the desire for a personal element in the classroom “may be part of the reason why the majority of students prefer classes with their friends” (p. 696). Having friends that they can trust and can depend on for help is important to students. Students expressed a preference for working in groups; thus the authors suggest that “classroom organization that supports peer interaction may well promote a greater degree of participation in learning” (p. 698). Interestingly, Phelan and colleagues (1992) conclude that, “despite negative outside influences, students from all achievement levels and sociocultural backgrounds want to succeed and want to be in an environment in which it is possible to do so” (p. 696). This parallels findings about parents in the parent involvement literature that all want to help and be able to help their children learn.

Phelan, Davidson, and Cao's findings are consistent with other reports on high school students (McCabe, 1995). Findings among elementary school students have been similar. Hayes, Ryan and Zsella (1994), for example, found that a number of "concept groups" emerged in an analysis of caring teacher behaviors as described by sixth grade students. According to these students caring teachers were those who responded to individual students, helped with academic work, encouraged success and positive feelings, provided good subject content, provided fun and humour, and counselled students. According to the students in McCabe's (1995; see also Nieto, 1994) study, good teachers were not only subject-centered (focussing on academics and knowledgeable about content), but also student-centered. "In a holistic way," McCabe (1995) comments, "the best teachers could also be a friend and create a sense of community and bonding within the class" (p. 126). Importantly, student academic achievement is related to positive student/teacher interaction. Evidence suggests that student results are better in schools where students are well-known to their teachers (Braddock & McPartland, 1993; Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993).

A FINAL NOTE ABOUT EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTIONS

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, there is little in the literature regarding students, teachers and parents engaged all together as collaborators in three-way relationships. There is also little documenting the *expectations* of these individuals for one another with respect to collaboration in instructional relationships, apart from the fact that parents generally want to help their children and be involved and assisted in this regard by their child's teacher, and that teachers acknowledge that this kind of assistance is valuable and welcome. The relationship between parents' educational and achievement goals for their children has been well-explored (e.g., Kang & Schweingruber, 1995; Watkins & Ames, 1994) as have parents' educational expectations for their children (Seginer, 1983). However, parents' partnership expectations for teachers with respect to their child's learning or students' expectations for the learning situation in the classroom have been less extensively investigated. The surfeit of literature about barriers and problems in instructionally-based relationships, at least between parents and teachers, suggests that there is little satisfaction within these relationships. As suggested earlier, one can assume that baseline teacher and parent expectations or preferences are implicit within these barriers. The literature about student preferences in the classroom also makes clear some expectations for teacher behaviour, and some satisfaction variables, with respect to students and their participation. It is possible, however, that parents, teachers,

and students hold partnership expectations of and for one another that are either not reflected in the data about barriers and obstacles or do not emerge from pedagogical issues that arise in the classroom. Some may be unique to the issue of collaborative pedagogy or arise from more general partnership concerns. At the same time, the satisfaction of parents, students, and teachers within instructional partnerships may be based on the fulfillment of preconceived expectations or related to factors that are not consciously predetermined. This study represents an attempt to build on that literature and in so doing to expand the knowledge base on instructional relationships between parents, teachers and students. In attempting to clarify expectations of students, parents, and teachers in instructional relationships and in seeking data about the level and nature of satisfaction in those relationships the study aims for a deepened understanding of collaborative partnerships and the potential for developing them widely.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

PART A: PARADIGMS AND METHODS

Three assumptions undergird the treatment of fieldwork in educational administration as an organized human activity. First, since the fieldworker is the 'main instrument' in doing fieldwork, a focus on how the fieldworker makes explicit the epistemological issues in the fieldwork process is critical. Second, as others also assume (Kaplan, 1964; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; and Mulkay, 1979), all research is a 'valuing' process, and the dialectical relationship of the fieldworker's and the informant's value systems enter into the phenomenology of the research act. Finally, issues of methodology are many and complex, so the researcher must make choices on the nature of the issue to be addressed. (Everhard, 1988, p. 706)

THE GOALS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Educational research can both establish "contemporary fact" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 126), (that is, describe current states) and focus on practice, developing "concepts" based on descriptive, interpretive work that will better enable practitioners to "use their heads" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 126). Soltis (1984) speaks specifically of this duality with respect to educational research:

All aspects of education in its broadest sense need study, not only to give us better causal descriptions or increased understanding of human meaning systems, but also to allow for our collective critical reflection on the desirability of what we do and the conscious development of the most desirable outcomes we can achieve through the human institutions and activities we have constructed to be educative and not oppressive. (p. 9)

That the "desirable outcomes" should be those for children is stated openly and unequivocally by Eisner. For him educational criticism should ideally "contribute to the enhancement of the educational process and through it to the educational enhancement of students" (Eisner, 1991, p. 114).

These two overarching goals for educational research are assumed in the study here, and reflected in the purposes of the study to both: (a) pin down what is—the nature of relationships and practices between parents, students, and teachers with respect to collaboration regarding instruction; and (b) help people use their heads—by deriving concepts that will be useful to parents, students and teachers in achieving productive instructional relationships that will help to create "the most desirable outcomes," that is, enhanced learning for students.

SITUATING ONE'S RESEARCH SELF

A paradigm, state Bogdan and Biklen (1982), is “a loose collection of logically held-together assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research” (p. 30). Guba (1990) outlines three major contemporary paradigms: postpositivism, constructivism and critical theory. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe adherents to each of these paradigms as “realists, interpretivists, [and] critical theorists” (p. 5). Lather’s (1991) paradigmatic categories are more extensive. Her framework is comprehensive of, and goes beyond those defined by Guba, and Miles and Huberman. She divides inquiry as a whole into four paradigmatic categories which include positivism and three post-positivistic stances. Each is defined by the researcher’s interest in generating and legitimating knowledge, whether that interest be to predict, to understand, to emancipate, or to deconstruct: positivists seek to predict; interpretivists/constructivists wish to understand; critical theorists seek to emancipate; and poststructuralists/postmodernists wish to deconstruct.

In speaking of paradigmatic orientation Miles and Huberman (1984) maintain that “it is good for researchers to make their preferences clear” (p. 19). In this way readers do not have to intuit the author’s standpoint. Using the paradigm categories outlined above, this study and my approach as a researcher here began within an interpretivist/constructivist inquiry framework with the broad knowledge generation or legitimization goal of understanding.

In the constructivist paradigm, according to Guba (1990), “realities are multiple, and they exist in people’s minds” (p. 26). As such, subjective interaction between the inquired and the inquirer is the only way to access these realities. Methodologically, then, the constructivist seeks to depict the variety of constructions as accurately as possible, including his or her own, and compare and contrast them.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) interpretive research “entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for study, values and seeks to discover participants’ perspectives on their worlds, views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, is both descriptive and analytic, and relies on people’s words and observable behavior as the primary data” (p. 4).

Interpretivist inquiry acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, that the subject matter, not the method, is prime, that variables are complex and interwoven. It assumes an insider’s (emic) viewpoint. The purpose of this kind of inquiry is to contextualize, understand and interpret the respondent’s perspective. The inquiry is

naturalistic (based in real life settings) and inductive. The inquirer seeks patterns, and assumes complexity and pluralism (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Discussion about paradigms—and methods—is complicated by the fact that terms are often used interchangeably or synonymously. For example, the labels “constructivist” and “interpretivist” are often used to mean the same thing, and the terms “qualitative” and “quantitative” are found describing both paradigm (as inquiry framework) and method (as technique). In the latter case, the terms “qualitative” and “quantitative” often represent the constructivist/interpretivist and (post)positivist paradigms respectively. Here “the more generic term interpretivism” (Greene, 1990, p. 245) will be used to include the constructivist inquiry framework as defined by Guba (1990) and Lincoln (1990). “Quantitative” and “qualitative” will be used to define methods as techniques (and not paradigms).

PARADIGMS AND METHODS IN MIXED-METHOD INQUIRY

There is little dispute within the field of educational research in general about the value of a variety of paradigmatic approaches. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods is not contested either. Viewpoint on the combination of paradigms and methods, however, is mixed. Opinions generally fall into one of three categories: (a) that paradigms are distinct unities and methods are inherently linked to paradigms; (b) that paradigms and methods are all compatible; or (c) that paradigms are distinct unities, but that methods are not inherently linked to paradigms.

The paradigm/method question is particularly challenging for those involved in mixed-method inquiry and some, such as Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) avoid it altogether. “To the probable dismay of purists,” state Greene and colleagues (1989), “we sidestepped the knotty paradigmatic issues involved in mixed-method inquiry” (p. 270). They acknowledge, however, that a comprehensive mixed-method framework must eventually address the paradigm/method question.

As a researcher my approach (and consequently that of this study) falls into the third of the categories above. For researchers of this view, paradigm assumptions are distinct—they are “basic set(s) of beliefs” (Guba, 1990, p. 17)—but methodological choices are a separate and secondary matter. One may hold to a particular inquiry framework, but carefully choose or use a variety of methodological techniques without violating one’s paradigmatic stance. Fetterman (1988), for example, acknowledges that paradigms are distinct, but adds that “each paradigm employs both quantitative and

qualitative methods” (p. 18). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) are also representative of the paradigmatic view, but qualify the use of the methods in relation to paradigms:

Because the positivist and the interpretivist paradigms rest on different assumptions about the nature of the world, they require different instruments and procedures to find the type of data desired. This does not mean, however, that the positivist never uses interviews or that the interpretivist never uses a survey. They may, but such methods are supplementary, not dominant. (p. 9)

In this mixed-methods study qualitative methods are employed as the primary method technique within an interpretivist (meaning-oriented) inquiry framework. Quantitative methods are supplementary.

REASONS FOR MIXED-METHOD INQUIRY

From a qualitative inquiry point of view this study falls loosely within the “systems theory” and “symbolic interactionism” theoretical orientations (Patton, 1990). The central question for systems theory is: “How and why does the system function as a whole?” (Patton, 1990, p. 88). Symbolic interactionism, on the other hand, is concerned with “understanding how individuals take and make meaning in interaction with others. The emphasis is on the pressures of meaning making in social organization” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 10). Of interest here are the ways in which individual parents, teachers and students take and make meaning in interaction with each other, and how this system functions as a whole. This is consistent with the general ecological/systems theory conceptual approach to the study.

As far as the quantitative component of the study is concerned, the above questions and issues apply equally. However, as noted, the quantitative methods are secondary to the qualitative and used purposively for two reasons which are seen as benefits of mixed-method inquiry: triangulation and complementarity.

In a study which is mixed-method for reasons of triangulation, the researcher chooses two different methods to assess the same phenomenon, or, brings to bear more than one source of data on a single point (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This is done to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) or “assess the robustness or stability of findings” (Jicks, 1979, cited in Firestone, 1987, p. 20). Having established convergence, the validity of the findings is strengthened. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) triangulation can enhance a study’s generalizability: “Designing a study in which multiple cases are used, multiple informants or more than one data gathering technique can greatly strengthen the study’s usefulness for other settings” (p. 144). This study benefits not only from multiple

informants, and multiple sites, but also from more than one data gathering technique. For Firestone (1987), quantitative findings are especially important in that they can show “a pattern that extends across a large number of situations” (p. 20). He maintains that the use of a number of sites increases confidence in the generalizability of results “although technically generalizability depends upon the randomness and representativeness of the sample selected” (Firestone, 1987, p. 20).

In a mixed methods study designed for complementarity, overlapping but different facets of the same phenomenon are examined in order to give a richer, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon (Greene et al., 1989). When complementarity is an intent different methods are used to assess different phenomena, or to better interpret the assessment of a single phenomenon (Mark & Shotland, 1987). When used for the same purpose the two methods can “build upon each other to offer insights that neither one alone could provide” (Reichardt and Cook, 1979, p. 21).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “numbers and words are *both* needed if we are to understand the world” (p. 207). Understanding the world better is not simply a question of using both numbers and words for their own sake, but a matter of benefiting from the perspectives or focal view each provides. Salomon (1991) maintains that studies which are based only on the assumptions of the analytic approach (i.e., quantitative) “fail to capture the richness, complexity, and interdependence of events and actions in the real classroom and hence a systemic approach is needed as well” (p. 16). The benefit to using both quantitative and qualitative methods is a “fuller, and more satisfying understanding” (Salomon, 1991, 16). Reichardt and Cook (1979), referring to Eisner (1977, cited in Reichardt and Cook, 1979), suggest that qualitative and quantitative knowing together “provide a depth of perception, or a *binocular vision* [emphasis added], that neither one could provide alone” (p. 23).

For Fielding and Fielding (1986) complementarity is a matter of gaining greater breadth and depth, as opposed to “pursuing ‘objective truth’” (p. 33). As they note:

Life has contextual dimension that gives it form and an interpretative dimension that provides it with content. We would argue for the necessity of synthesizing these dimensions, hoping to gain from their combination. We need to be able to read the small print of social interaction but also to make out the entity into which the pages are combined. (p. 34)

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are necessary “in order to meet the need to describe the detail of the foreground against the design of the background” (Fielding and Fielding, 1986, p. 35). Here, qualitative and quantitative methods are used in order to capture both the print and the page, the foreground and background, of teacher, student

and parent expectations and experiences regarding home-school partnership and instructional collaboration.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are also complementary in that they can inform and guide each other (Salomon, 1991, p. 16). For Salomon (1991) this is especially important where generalization is concerned. He believes that neither the analytic approach, which “capitalizes on precision” (p. 16), or the systemic approach, which “capitalizes on authenticity” (p. 16) are a good basis alone for generalization. The use of quantitative methods for the purposes of generalization is ill-advised without the use of qualitative work which provides the source for one’s quantitative work. “One needs to know,” notes Salomon (1991), “what aspects of the complex setting deserve to be studied in greater detail under controlled conditions. The sources of such knowledge are one’s theory and one’s detailed and systematic observations of the complex phenomenon. Without observations of the whole system of interrelated events, hypotheses to be tested could easily pertain to the educationally least significant and pertinent aspects” (p. 17). The approach within this study is also consistent with Salomon’s advice. Here the qualitative data provide a conceptual framework from which a specific set of quantitative analyses originated.

The use of two methods is appropriate to a study which is focussed on practice, and has as its purpose improvement and change. The detail of individual interviews (the “print” or “foreground”) is balanced by the larger view provided by the quantitative data (the “page” or the “background”). Together here these two provide as comprehensive a picture as possible, upon which recommendations for change can more safely be made.

STATING MY CASE

Ultimately, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods as sources and kinds of data is somewhat murky. Both, notes Merriam (1988), are interpretations of experience: “In one case the experience is mediated through words; in the other situation, through numbers” (p. 68). And each has, or can have, the characteristics of the other. On this issue Miles and Huberman quote Kaplan (1964, cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994): “‘Quantities are *of* qualities, and a measured quality *has* just the magnitude expressed in its measure’” (p. 207). As Fielding and Fielding (1986) note, “the most advanced survey procedures themselves only manipulate data that had to be gained at some point by asking people” (p. 12). Merriam (1988) adds to this by pointing out that “before something can be quantified it has to be identified, named, described, understood” (p. 68).

This point, that all data, whether collected qualitatively or quantitatively, need be interpreted is an important one. Interpretation is an act that is equally a part of the work of both qualitative and quantitative methodologists. Fielding and Fielding (1986) argue that “ultimately all methods of data collection are analyzed ‘qualitatively,’ in so far as the act of analysis is an interpretation, and therefore of necessity a selective rendering, of the ‘sense’ of the available data” (p. 12). For Marshall and Rossman (1995) interpretation is a mysterious act in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. “It is a process,” they explain, “of bringing meaning to raw, inexpressive data that is necessary whether the researcher’s language is ANOVAs and means or rich description of ordinary events. Raw data have no inherent meaning; the interpretive act brings meaning to those data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 113)

As far as the scientific/constructivist paradigm “wars” or dialog are concerned, Guba (1990) hopes that discussion will ultimately lead one day to the development of a new paradigm which, he maintains, “will not be a closer approximation to truth (but) simply . . . more informed and sophisticated than those we are now entertaining” (p. 27). Oberle (1991) suggests that those in human science would contend that the best position for researchers is “somewhere between positivism and relativism . . . a new model which would combine the two opposing paradigms” (p. 91).

Whether “the wars will still be going on in the year 2009,” as Rizo (1991, p. 12) suggests, is an empirical question, as yet without answer. In practice, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are being employed by researchers of a variety of paradigmatic persuasions (Salomon, 1991; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As far as actual practice in the empirical world of educational research is concerned, perhaps, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, “all of us—realists, interpretivists, critical theorists—are closer to the center, with multiple overlaps” (pp. 4-5). In the absence of agreement about paradigm unity, however, and in the absence of an entirely new paradigm—either more informed and sophisticated than current versions, or a new one between positivism and relativism—inquiry and daily research decisions do continue to be made. And in this regard, as Mosenthal (1985) assures us, educational researchers may have “freedom of choice but not freedom from choice” (p. 7). At the same time, as Everhard (1988) notes, the methodology of scientific activity involves human choices “that do not always lend themselves to objective classification” (p. 705).

Within this study choices have been made. However, even though I have described the nature of the work undertaken here as qualitative and quantitative methods used

within an interpretive inquiry framework I have found objective classification to be difficult. This is particularly frustrating given the subtle but undeniable urge I feel to identify myself as part of a distinct methodological group with a clear, descriptive label, and to enjoy the comfort and convenience of nomenclature which seems to require little qualification, such as, for example, “ethnography” and “ethnographer” or “phenomenology” and “phenomenologist.” Perhaps, as Miles and Huberman would likely argue, even these designations are not so easily applied, that they too defy simple classification. For the moment, the best I can do is borrow and loosely apply Fetterman’s (1988) rubric, “generic pragmatic (sociological) qualitative inquiry,” perhaps removing the terms “pragmatic” and “sociological” in order to avoid the Pattonesque association of pragmatism with the idea of combination of paradigms and most authentically represent myself as an educational researcher with interest in but without disciplinary roots in sociology. This leaves “generic qualitative inquiry,” a somewhat lacklustre appellation.

Shulman (1988) suggests that “the most effective programs of educational research are likely to be characterized by . . . applications of ‘disciplined eclectic’” (p. 16). Given the difficulty of objective classification, and the absence of any new, more appropriate paradigms, perhaps this term, added to the above nomenclature, best describes my program of research: generic qualitative inquiry, characterized by “disciplined eclectic.”

PART B: STUDY METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study reports on both qualitative and quantitative data collected over three years of the larger (six year) Co-Production of Learning Project. For the larger project interview and survey data were collected at both the beginning and end of each school year. For this study only the year-end qualitative and quantitative data are employed. Initial interviews have yielded useful and informative data, particularly with regard to parents' and students' expectations of teachers. However, only year-end data provide information about both expectations of each triad member for the others *and* attitudes and practices over the course of the year.

In the larger project rounds of data collection were numbered consecutively beginning with the first round of data collection during Year One which was named Time 1. The May/June round of data collection during that same year was named Time 2 and so on. Of interest here are the data collected during Time 2 (end Year One), Time 4 (end Year Two), and Time 8 (end Year Four). These "Time" and "Year" labels will also be used here to refer to the three data sets analysed in this study.

Data from Year Three of the larger project were not included here because of labour strife in the participating public school districts during that time. Data collection was made difficult by teacher work-to-rule conditions and rotating teacher strikes, and year-end data were not obtained from all participating sites. Because of the limited availability of these data and also because that which was collected would not likely have been typical of parent, student and teacher attitudes and practices during other years not affected by collective bargaining action, the decision was made to exclude the data from this study.

THE SAMPLE

Quantitative Sample

The quantitative data set for this study consists of all year-end matched-set parent and student participants for all of the Time 4 and Time 8 classrooms involved in the larger Co-Production project. For Time 4 (Year Two) this includes twenty participating teachers (from six different schools) and 159 student/parent sets. In Time 8 (Year Three) twenty-one teachers participated (from seven different schools) with 174 accompanying

student/parent dyads. The entire set consists of forty-one classrooms from ten different schools in six different school districts. These data sets are summarized in Tables 1 and 2, on pages 60 and 61 respectively.

Qualitative Sample

Since the conceptual unit of analysis in this study is the triad, the triad was also maintained as the methodological unit of analysis for the qualitative data. Thus, only those triads were considered for qualitative analysis in which year-end parent, student and teacher interview data were all available. For Time 2 this yielded eleven classroom teachers and forty-three dyads for a total of ninety-seven interviews. For Time 4, qualitative data were available from fourteen teachers and twenty-three dyads, totalling sixty interviews. For Time 8 nineteen teacher interviews were available with thirty-four corresponding dyads which totalled eighty-seven interviews.

The combined sample for the qualitative component of this study consists of a total of thirty-five individual teachers (forty-four classrooms over the three data collection rounds) and one hundred parent/student dyads participating over Time 2 (Year One), Time 4 (Year Two), and Time 8 (Year Four). These classrooms represent thirteen different schools in five different school districts.

The classroom total for Time 2, Time 4 and Time 8 together is larger than that for the total of teachers because some teachers participated over more than one year of the study. Thirty-five individual teachers are represented in the qualitative data. Three of these teachers participated over two years of the study and three participated over three years of the study. As such, the study is longitudinal for those teachers who participated over more than one year. These data sets are summarized in Tables 3, 4 and 5, on pages 62 through 64.

There are, as Tables 3 through 5 indicate, varying numbers of complete triads between classrooms for which qualitative analysis was completed. This results, in part, from the availability of data from the individual members of the triad (incomplete triad sets were excluded) and also because different numbers of parent/student dyads were available over each of the three years.

At the outset of the larger project, several interviewing options were open to the Year One research team. These were the following: (a) to interview all parents and students who agreed to participate; (b) to interview all parents and students in some classrooms; or (c) to interview some parent/student dyads in each classroom. Option A was eliminated as unfeasible for the larger project for reasons of both time and expense.

Option B was eliminated because it offered less opportunity for comparison between classrooms than Option C and was also less feasible logically, as all participants were volunteer and full interview participation by all parents in individual classrooms would have been unlikely. Option C was adopted as a general approach as it offered the opportunity not only for some within-classroom comparison between triads, but also for cross-classroom comparison.

Parents and students to interview were chosen using a Table of Random Numbers to create a list of potential interviewees. Since participation in all aspects of the study was voluntary those selected were telephoned to invite their participation in the interview process. Because parents selected were often not available or chose not to be interviewed, telephoning continued using the list until the desired number of interviewees had agreed to be interviewed. For Time 2 of the study five parent/student dyads was set as the target number of interviews. This number was reduced to two for Time 4 and set at three for Time 8. These target numbers were sometimes adjusted on a classroom by classroom basis depending on the number of parents participating. In cases where there were only a very few parent participants, only one or two dyads were interviewed.

Even though the target interview numbers (of parents and students) may have been met through telephone contact these numbers were not always achieved during the interview process. Occasionally, parents agreed to interview, but then the interview could not be scheduled or was repeatedly cancelled. Sometimes students were not available at the initially scheduled, or even follow-up, interview times. If possible new parent/student dyads were selected using the list, to make up the interview dyad numbers. Often, however, this was not possible if the list of potential participants had been exhausted or because interview time in June ran out.

Schools

The participating schools were located in four British Columbia public school districts: two suburban districts in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (Site B and Site D); one large interior school district (Site A); and one Vancouver Island school district (Site C). One large urban non-denominational private school also participated (Site ND). Since the study involves a number of school district and individual school sites it is cross-sectional with respect to both of these units. Brief descriptions of school district sites and a composite portrait of the schools are attached in Appendix A.

Table 1: Time 4 Quantitative Data Sample

District Site	School	Teacher	Class	Class Enrollment	No. of Pt/St Dyads Completing Surveys	
B	Nightingale	21100	5	29	12	
B	Nightingale	22100	7	29	3	
B	Nightingale	23100	6/7	28	8	
B	Mountain View	24100	6/7	25	10	
B	Mountain View	25100	6/7	24	6	
B	Valleyview	26100	6/7	23	9	
B	Valleyview	27100	5/6	23	5	
B	Valleyview	28100	6/7	22	5	
ND	Exeter	31100	5	18	7	
ND	Exeter	32100	5	18	11	
ND	Exeter	33100	6	17	10	
ND	Exeter	34100	6	18	6	
ND	Exeter	35100	7	22	14	
ND	Exeter	36100	7	20	9	
R	Sebastian	37100	*	*	5	
R	Sebastian	38100	*	*	21	
Q	Hillside	41100	6/7	29	8	
Q	Hillside	42100	5	26	4	
Q	Hillside	43100	6/7	28	3	
Q	Hillside	44100	5/6	24	3	
Totals	4	6	20	N/A	N/A	159

* No data available. Approximate class sizes of 25 to 30 students.

Table 2: Time 8 Quantitative Data Sample

District Site	School	Teacher	Class	Class Enrollment	No. of Pt/St Dyads Completing Surveys	
B	Mountain View	24100	6/7	27	4	
B	Mountain View	25100	6/7	27	5	
B	Nightingale	21100	6/7	23	9	
B	Nightingale	22100	5/6	22	4	
B	Nightingale	23100	6/7	26	5	
B	Nightingale	29100	6/7	24	5	
B	Valleyview	28100	5/6/7	25	14	
C	Beachside	71100	5/6	*	8	
C	Beachside	72100	6/7	*	10	
C	Beachside	73100	5/6	*	5	
C	Beachside	74100	6/7	*	15	
C	Deux Langues	61100	5	23	6	
C	Deux Langues	62100	6	22	10	
C	Deux Langues	63100	4	23	8	
C	Rockwood	77100	5/6	25	8	
C	Rockwood	78100	5/6	26	6	
C	Rockwood	79100	5/6	21	9	
D	Meadow Brook	51100	5	27	14	
D	Meadow Brook	54100	6	26	7	
D	Meadow Brook	55100	4	24	8	
D	Meadow Brook	56100	4/5	26	14	
Totals	3	7	21	N/A	N/A	159

* No data available. Approximate class sizes of 25 to 30 students.

Table 3: Time 2 Qualitative Data Sample

District Site	School	Teacher	Class	Class Enrollment	Parent Interviews	Student Interviews
A	Gold Creek	16100 Mr. McPhail	6	29	16201 16206 16222 16228	16301 16306 16322 16328
A	Pine Meadows	14100 Mrs. Wilder	7	25	14205 14211 14216 14219	14305 14311 14316 14319
A	Pine Meadows	15100 Mrs. MacLeod	6	29	15210 15212 15214 15215	15310 15312 15314 15315
A	Spruce Lake	17100 Mr. Kelley	7	30	17203 17211 17219 17224 17226	17303 17311 17319 17324 17226
A	Uplands	11100 Mr. Burton	6/7	29	11201 11211 11213 11227	11301 11311 11313 11327
A	Uplands	12100 Mr. Gage	6	28	12201 12202	12301 12302
A	Vista	13100 Mr. Kinsella	5/6	24	13201 13214	13301 13314
B	Mountain View	24100 Mr. Griffin	7	29	24202 24209 24216 24222	24302 24309 24316 24322
B	Mountain View	25100 Miss Halstrom	6/7	28	25201 25205 25216 25218 25219	25301 25305 25316 25318 25319
B	Nightingale	21100 Mr. Sutcliffe	6/7	25	21201 21202 21204 21211 21213	21301 21302 21304 21311 21313
B	Nightingale	22100 Ms. O'Hearn	6/7	21	22201 22204 22211 22216	22301 22304 22311 22316
Totals	2	7	11	N/A	N/A	43

Table 4: Time 4 Qualitative Data Sample

District Site	School	Teacher	Class	Class Enrollment	Parent Interviews	Student Interviews	
B	Mountain View	24100 Mr. Griffin	6/7	25	24201 24209	24301 24309	
B	Mountain View	25100 Miss Halstrom	6/7	24	25202 25205	25302 25305	
B	Nightingale	21100 Mr. Sutcliffe	5	29	21207 21209	21307 21309	
B	Nightingale	22100 Ms. O'Hearn	7	29	22202	22302	
B	Nightingale	23100 Mr. Desjarlais	6/7	28	23203	23303	
B	Valleyview	26100 Mr. Rudwick	6/7	23	26204 26206	26304 26306	
B	Valleyview	27100 Mr. Tierney	5/6	23	27203 27206	27303 27306	
B	Valleyview	28100 Ms. Thompson	6/7	22	28202	28302	
ND	Exeter	31100 Ms. Draper	5	18	31203	31303	
ND	Exeter	32100 Mr. Pulaski	5	18	32205 32213	32305 32313	
ND	Exeter	33100 Mr. Starke	6	17	33211	33311	
ND	Exeter	34100 Miss James	6	18	34202 34203	34302 34303	
ND	Exeter	35100 Mr. Hostrop	7	22	35204 35207	35304 35307	
ND	Exeter	36100 Miss Antonio	7	20	36202 36206	36302 36306	
<i>Totals</i>	2	4	14	N/A	N/A	23	23

Table 5: Time 8 Qualitative Data Sample

District Site	School	Teacher	Grade	Class Enrollment	Parent Interviews	Student Interviews
B	Mountain View	24100 Mr. Griffin	6/7	27	24202 24204 24206	24302 24304 24306
B	Mountain View	25100 Miss Halstrom	6/7	27	25201 25205	25301 25305
B	Nightingale	22100 Ms. O'Hearn	5/6	22	22201 22205	22301 22305
B	Nightingale	23100 Mr. Desjarlais	6/7	26	23204 23206	23304 23306
B	Nightingale	29100 Mrs. Wenzel	6/7	24	29204	29305
B	Valleyview	28100 Ms. Thompson	5/6/7	25	28201 28216	28301 28316
C	Beachside	72100 Mrs. Graham	6/7		72204 72207	72304 72307
C	Beachside	73100 Mrs. Munke	5/6		73204 73206	73304 73306
C	Beachside	74100 Mr. Winton	6/7		74204 74211	74304 74311
C	Cedar Avenue	75100 Ms. Fraser	6		75204	75304
C	Deux Langues	61100 Ms. Collerson	5	23	61203	61303
C	Deux Langues	62100 Mme Tremblay	6	22	62203 62207	62303 62307
C	Deux Langues	63100 M. Laurent	4	23	63204 63208	63304 63308
C	Rockwood	77100 Mrs. Brewer	5/6	25	77205 77208	77305 77308
C	Rockwood	78100 Miss Davis	5/6	26	78202 78210	78302 78310
C	Rockwood	79100 Mme Boucher	5/6	21	79205 79207	79305 79307
D	Meadow Brook	51100 Mrs. Kosko	5	27	51204 51214	51304 51314
D	Meadow Brook	54100 Ms. Lurie	6	26	54201	54301
D	Meadow Brook	56100 Mrs. Weir	4/5	26	56204	56304
Totals	3	8	19		34	34

Teachers

Four female and seven male teachers participated during Time Two. Two of these teachers were in their first year of teaching. In Time 4 six female and eight male teachers participated. There were no teachers in their first year of teaching. In Time 8 fifteen female and four male teachers participated. Two of these teachers were in their first year of teaching.

Parents and Students

The participating schools varied in pupil intake and, as such, represent a wide range of family socio-economic backgrounds. The SES measure shows a broad distribution of parents in the sample; it does not differ significantly from the population of the province. The SES measure also shows that family education level is not strongly associated with any of the scales (Coleman, Collinge, & Seifert, 1993) which suggests that in British Columbia status variables such as family education level are not strong predictors of parental attitude or involvement. Here, as in other jurisdictions, it is not who parents are but what they do (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

The sample generally represents the ethnic variety of British Columbia (in particular, two of the province's larger ethnic minority groups), especially in the private, non-denominational school and one of the Lower Mainland public schools. However, while the sample may represent the range of B.C.'s ethnic mix, it does not likely represent the exact ratio of that mix, particularly in the suburban schools centered around Vancouver. Surveys were completed in English and interviews were conducted in English which would have limited or excluded the participation of those parents without fluent or near fluent English language skills.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Survey Instrument

Five-point Likert-style surveys (1 = agree; 5 = strongly disagree) were developed for each of the respondent groups: students, parents and teachers. Surveys were composed of items designed to determine teacher, student and parent attitudes and practices regarding home-school collaboration. Items were included to assess not only the attitudes and practices of the individual in question, but also his or her perception of the other two members of the triad. Survey items and scales were developed by the Year One research team which included the present researcher and two other principal researchers of the

larger Co-Production of Learning Project as well as a group of Master's students who were involved as co-researchers during the first year of the larger project. Item and scale development were guided by the existing parent involvement literature and the collective experience of the research team members as parents, teachers, school administrators, and university researchers. The survey instrument was developed prior to the initial round of data collection of the first year of the larger Co-Production project.

The student questionnaire consisted of fifty items at Time 2, seventy items at Time 4, and seventy-three items at Time 8. The individual survey items measured student attitudes and practices within the following scale categories:

- communications with parents regarding school
- student valuing of school
- student perception of school/home communication
- student perception of personal efficacy
- student perception of student/teacher collaboration
- student perception of parent valuing school
- student perception of peer group values
- student perception of school climate (Time 4 and Time 8 only)

In addition, students were asked to rate their school as a place to learn on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 9 (excellent).

The parent questionnaire consisted of sixty-one items at Time 2, sixty-six items at Time 4, and sixty-nine items at Time 8. The individual survey items measured parent attitudes and practices within the following scale categories:

- perception of student/teacher collaboration
- perception of student/parent communication
- perception of teacher/parent communication (instruction)
- perception of teacher/parent communication (general)
- perception of teacher concern about parent involvement
- perception of parent/teacher communication
- parent valuing of schooling
- perception of school climate
- parent efficacy

In addition, parents were asked to rate their child's school as a place to learn on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 9 (excellent). They were also asked to provide some demographic data which included: their education level, gender, caregiver status (parent or guardian), employment status (inside or outside the home; fulltime or part-time), number of adults in the home, number and ages of children in the home, and whether they were or had ever been a teacher.

The teacher questionnaire consisted of forty-six items at Time 2, forty-five items at Time 4, and sixty-two items at Time 8. The individual survey items measured teacher attitudes and practices within the following scale categories:

- teacher attitudes/practices regarding parent involvement
- teacher collegiality
- teacher perception of collaboration with students
- teacher perception of parent efficacy
- teacher efficacy
- teacher perception of student responsibility

All items in the surveys were randomly placed. Items from the same scale category were not grouped together. Some items were reversed in order to avoid patterned response. Spaces were left underneath each item to allow respondents to include comments or questions. Those items on the parent survey requesting personal information were grouped at the end of that survey.

After the administration of surveys at Time 2 (and Time 6) the questionnaires were reviewed by the research team. Using Cronbach's Alpha the weakest items of the scales were identified and then changes were made to improve the scale reliability. Some items were modified and others were deleted and replaced by substitutions in order to better represent the meaning of the scales. Sample parent, teacher, and student surveys are found in Appendix B. Survey scales and Cronbach Alpha reliabilities for Time 8 are listed in Appendix C.

Interview

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were prepared for each of the three respondent groups by the research team prior to the initial round of data collection of the first year of the larger Co-Production project. Items on the interview schedules were developed in order to elicit further in-depth data from respondents about the topics covered by the survey scales. After data collection rounds during each year of the study these schedules were reviewed by the three principal members of the research team. Particularly fruitful

areas of inquiry were noted as well as questions that caused confusion. Changes were made to those items that were confusing to respondents; a few questions were deleted and replaced by others that were deemed to be more useful. In a number of cases, particularly for students, “probe” items were added for interviewers to use at their discretion in cases where respondents provided only a minimal response to the initial question. Sample interview schedules for all respondents are attached in Appendix D.

PROCEDURES

Accessing Sites and Participants

Teacher Participation

For Time 2 access to sites was gained through the research team members who were employed as teachers in the two participating school districts. In the case of School District A contact was made initially with the schools. Permission to participate was sought from the principals who then volunteered classrooms from their schools. Each of these teachers was then approached individually and their permission sought. In School District B individual team members approached teachers in several schools to invite their participation. Permission was sought at the same time from the principals in each of these schools, and also the relevant school district official.

For Time 4 the new teacher participants in School District Site B were approached individually by one of the research team members and invitation to participate was extended. Participation by the large non-denominational private school (School District Site ND) was obtained by a member of the Year Two research team (who joined the larger project in the second year and was an on-leave faculty member of the private school). This individual approached both principal and teachers and sought permission from all of these individuals.

For Time 8 the principal university researcher made initial contact with a school district official in Site C. Permission was granted by the school district official to conduct the study there. This individual then sought participation from the school principals and teachers involved. In School District Site D contact was made with the school principal again by the principal university researcher. The school principal then sought individual teacher participants within the school.

Parent and Student Participation

Individual parents were approached at the classroom level. Students in participating classrooms were asked to deliver a letter to their parents which outlined the study. The letter assured parents that all information they provided would be kept confidential and that their participation would be anonymous. Parents who chose to participate agreed to complete the survey, and possibly take part in an interview. They also consented to their child's participation which paralleled their own, involving the completion of a questionnaire and an interview should the parent be randomly chosen for interview. Parents were also invited to take part in a parent workshop and then to implement one or more of the home involvement practices recommended at the workshop. Because many parents chose not to be involved in the workshops, but participated through the questionnaire and in some cases also an interview, no distinction is made here between varying levels of parent participation. Sample letters requesting participation, and consent forms are found in Appendix E.

Collection of Data

Surveys

Throughout the three years of the study surveys were administered at the end of the academic year, in either May or June. Parent surveys were relayed to the home by students. These were completed by parents and returned to the school by students or parents in sealed envelopes. Student surveys were completed at school, either under the supervision of the classroom teacher or one of the research team members. These also were submitted to the teacher or research team member in sealed envelopes. Several visits to the school were usually necessary in order to encourage the completion of parent surveys at home, complete the administration of student surveys, and retrieve sealed envelopes. Teachers completed the survey at their discretion, usually during the week of data collection in their classrooms, or sometimes just prior to their interview.

Interviews

Interview data were also collected at the end of each year, during May or June. Parent interviews for Time 2, Time 4 and Time 8 data collection rounds were usually conducted in the home or at the school, but not in the classroom or in the presence of the teacher. During the Time 2 round of data collection student interviews were either conducted in the home, or at the school. Occasionally parents remained present during the Time 2

student interviews which took place in the home. As this often appeared to be inhibiting to students the decision was made to interview students at school during further rounds of data collection. Student interviews for Time 4 and Time 8 took place at the schools exclusively, but not in the classroom or in the presence of the teacher. Teacher interviews were also conducted at the school. Parent and teacher interviews usually lasted from forty-five to sixty minutes; parent interviews were occasionally longer. Student interviews usually lasted from twenty-five to forty-five minutes.

During Time 2 all interviews were conducted by members of the Year One research team. Time 4 interviews were conducted by the three principal research team members, and a fourth member who joined the Co-Production project in the second year. Interviewing for Time 8 was conducted by 2 of the principal research team members as well as two research assistants in the larger research project.

Interview Procedures

Before the Time 2 round of interview data collection the interview schedule was reviewed in a general meeting of all Year One research team members to ensure a common understanding of the items on the instrument and a common approach to the interviewing. The team members were instructed to use probe questions included on the interview if necessary. If these particular probes were not successful in eliciting information from the respondents the interviewers were instructed to use other general probing questions such as "Can you tell me more about that?" or "Can you give me an example of that?" Interviewers were requested to address all of the questions on the list. However, if in answering a particular question a respondent also answered a subsequent question on the interview schedule the interviewer was not required to pose that question when it appeared on the schedule. Meetings were also held with the additional Time 4 research team member and the Time 8 research assistants prior to interviewing at these times in order to discuss and clarify the above issues.

Teacher Workshops

Time Two (Year One)

During the first year of the study teacher workshops were held in January in School District Site A and in February in School District Site B.

School District Site A: In School District Site A the teacher workshop was held during the day at the local School District Office. Research project funds covered the cost of

substitute teachers. The workshop was conducted by an outside consultant recommended to the larger project. The consultant was well-experienced as both a public school teacher and public school administrator in San Diego, California, and also as a parent and workshop facilitator. All members of the research team from School District Site A (Master's students) attended the parent workshop as well as two of the principal research team members who were subsequently to facilitate the teacher workshop in School District Site B.

The meeting began with a general introduction to the topic of parent involvement and its importance and benefit. The facilitator introduced a number of teacher practices for parent involvement, strategies intended either to facilitate parent involvement in learning at home or increased communication between parent and teacher. During small group discussion teachers were encouraged to discuss teacher attitudes and practices in general, their own parent involvement practices, and the ideas and strategies suggested by the facilitator. A variety of handouts were provided to teachers. Some listed suggestions; others were examples of materials that could be used immediately in classrooms. All of the handouts provided and all of the suggested ideas focussed on what teachers could do to increase communication between home and school, to provide more information to parents about what and how well their children were learning in school, and to acknowledge and facilitate parent help in the home.

Examples of the handouts include:

- understanding and relating to parents
- principles for developing a family-school partnership
- getting parents involved
- possible topics for a teacher's newsletter
- conducting an effective parent-teacher conference
- parent-teacher conference problem areas
- Understanding and relating to parents (for Time 4)
- Homework: Quality (for Time 4)
- Teacher Expectations (for Time 4).

Examples of the sample materials include:

- homework letter to parents
- outline of study skills
- student-teacher-parent contract
- classroom memo outline
- classroom newsletter outline

- T.V. viewing log
- weekly homework schedule
- reading chart
- interim report outline
- weekly work folder insert
- teacher's phone call record sheet
- daily note to parents.

Before the end of the workshop teachers were asked to choose at least one appropriate strategy for their classroom which they would be prepared to implement immediately. Teachers were offered material support and were encouraged to contact the research team members to request anything they might need (for example, student planners, file folders, double-pocket folders, etc.) in order to facilitate the implementation of the parent involvement strategy they had chosen.

School District Site B: In School District Site B the teacher workshop was held in the meeting room of a local restaurant from late afternoon until early evening. Although the workshop had been initially planned to take place during the day, as it had in School District Site A, a local substitute teacher shortage necessitated rescheduling the workshop to after school.

The workshop in School District Site B was conducted by two of the principal research team members who had attended the teacher workshop in School District Site A. The format of the meeting was similar to that held in Site A: parent involvement strategies were presented to teachers; sample materials (pre-organized in double-pocket folders) were distributed to teachers; discussion about the various strategies took place. Prior to the close of the meeting teachers were also asked to choose one or more strategies to implement in their classrooms, and were also encouraged to contact research team members to request any materials they might need to implement their chosen strategies.

Informal Follow-Up Meetings: Informal follow-up dinner meetings were held after Easter in both Site A and Site B for all participating teachers. The purpose of these meetings was for the research team to follow up on teacher efforts to implement parent involvement strategies in their classrooms and provide support for this work, and to thank teachers for their participation in the study. These meetings also gave the teacher participants the opportunity to both discuss their efforts with other teachers and provide mutual support for one another.

Time Four (Year Two)

In School District Site B a late afternoon dinner meeting was held in December to welcome back and thank the continuing participants from that district, and introduce and welcome the two new Site B participants. This workshop was conducted by the three principal research team members. A brief overview of the project was presented. Teachers were asked to share with the group the collaborative strategies that they had already implemented with parents and students. Additional strategies were also presented. Sample materials were provided to the new teacher participants; additional materials were provided to the returning teachers.

In February the main project workshop was held for participating teachers from both School District Site B and the non-denominational private school site (Site ND). Two sessions of the workshop were held; half of the teachers from each site attended each of the sessions. These workshop sessions were held from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Simon Fraser University. Costs for substitute teachers were covered by the project.

This workshop was conducted by the three principal research team members and also included the fourth Year Two team member, as well as a local consultant, a specialist in the area of elementary school mathematics. At this workshop an overview of the project was presented, parent involvement strategies were discussed, and folders of sample materials were provided to all teachers. These included most of the materials distributed to teacher during the first year of the study as well as some new materials. All of these were computer formatted and made available to teachers on computer disk.

In addition to the general overview on the project and parent involvement in general, the workshop had three particular foci: (a) communicating with parents; (b) home learning projects; and (c) helping children with math, and helping parents help their children with math. The three principal research team members were responsible for the introduction to the session, and the presentation and discussion on teacher communication with parents. The fourth research team member was responsible for the presentation on home learning projects. The math consultant conducted the mini-session on parent involvement with math. Additional sample materials on home learning projects and helping with math were provided to the teachers by the respective presenters.

At the close of the sessions teachers were asked to select one or more parent involvement strategies to implement in their classrooms. They were also invited to contact research team members to request any materials they might require in order to implement their chosen parent involvement strategies. Complete class sets of student planners were provided to all teachers whose students or schools were not already using them.

Time Eight (Year Four)

School District Site B: During Year Four no formal teacher workshop session was held for the teachers from School District Site B. All of these teachers had already participated over one or two years of the Co-Production project. Neither they nor the research team felt the need for a formal introduction to participation in the project. Instead, one of the research team members arranged four informal meetings over the course of the year for the participating Site B teachers. At each of these meetings general discussion took place and teachers were invited to share their experiences and discuss the strategies that they had implemented. General support and encouragement was provided by the research team member who acted as general liaison for the larger project and coordinated data collection rounds.

School District Site D: During Year Four no formal teacher workshop was held for School District Site D teachers. These teachers had initially participated during the third year of the project, at which time a January teacher workshop was held at Simon Fraser University which was run by two of the principal research team members and was similar in format to that held the previous year. At that time the project was outlined to teachers, a presentation of parent involvement strategies took place, and then discussion ensued about teacher experiences in implementing and working with the various strategies. This discussion was guided by the Site B teachers who had all participated in previous years. At this time folders of sample materials were distributed to the Site D teachers and they were asked to choose a parent involvement strategy to implement in their classrooms.

At the beginning of Year Four, contact with the Site D teachers was renewed by the principal university researcher who was the project liaison for that school. Teacher commitment to the project was renewed and teachers were once again asked to implement one or more parent involvement strategies in their classroom that year.

School District Site C: In School District Site C one teacher workshop was conducted by the principal university researcher. At this time the research project was introduced to teachers, parent involvement strategies were presented, and folders of sample materials were provided to teachers. During this workshop session discussion among teachers and with the workshop facilitator was encouraged. Prior to the close of the workshop teachers were also asked to implement one or more of the parent involvement strategies discussed. Teachers at Site C (as well as those in Sites B and D) were invited and encouraged to contact research team members to request any materials they might require in order to implement their chosen parent involvement strategies. Complete class sets of student

planners were provided to all teachers whose students or schools were not already using them.

Parent Workshops

Time Two (Year One)

During Year One parent workshops were held in January in School District Site A and in February in School District B.

School District Site A: The parent workshop in School District Site A was held in the evening at a local high school and was conducted by the consultant who had facilitated the teacher workshop there. All of the research team members attended the workshop as well as the two principal research team members who were to facilitate the parallel workshop in School District Site B.

The facilitator opened the workshop with a discussion about the benefits of parent involvement. She presented a variety of strategies and practices for parents, some focussed on developing or improving parent involvement with learning in the home, and others focussed on increasing and improving communication between home and school. Time was scheduled for small-group discussion among parents about the issue of parent involvement in general, parent involvement practices in the home, and teacher practices of parent involvement. Parents were given the opportunity to address questions to the facilitator (and to other parents) and large group discussion took place. Handouts were distributed to parents. Examples of these materials included:

- parent questions for teachers
- parent worksheet to prepare for parent-teacher conference
- parent checklist for conferencing with the teacher
- parents and reading: How Can I help my child?
- helping your child be successful in school
- ways to help your child do better
- weekly homework/television schedule
- how to improve study skills and habits
- how to prepare for math tests
- doing mathematics at home
- helping with word problems
- how parents can help
- survival tips for parents

Prior to the end of the meeting parents were asked to select one or more strategies to implement at home with their child (or in collaboration with their child's teacher).

School District Site B: The parent workshop in School District Site B was conducted by two of the principal research team members who had attended the teacher workshop in School District Site A. The workshop was held in the evening at the site of one of the participating elementary schools. Parents from the other school were invited to attend at this locale. The format of the meeting was similar to that held in Site A. Parent involvement strategies were presented to parents and discussion ensued. Sample materials originally distributed at the parent workshop in Site A (preorganized in a double-pocket folder) were also made available to parents in Site B. Before the close of the sessions parents were asked to choose an involvement strategy (or more) to implement at home. Packets of sample materials were sent to participating parents who were not able or chose not to attend the parent workshop.

Time Four (Year Two)

Parent workshops were held for parents participating during Year Two from School District Site B, and from the non-denominational private school (Site ND).

School District Site B: The parent workshop in School District Site B took place in January in the multi-purpose room of one of the participating elementary schools. Parents from the other two participating schools were invited to attend at the chosen locale. The workshop was facilitated by the two principal research team members who had conducted the parent workshops during the previous year. These research team members were responsible for the first part of the workshop which focussed on communication with children at home and with the teacher at school. Workshop presenters also included the fourth Year Two research team member, on the importance of reading to and with children, and the math consultant, on helping children with math at home. Discussion took place about parents' efforts at home, and parents fielded questions both to one another, and to the workshop presenters. At this time sample materials (pre-organized in double-pocket folders) were made available to parents, and parents were encouraged to select strategies or ideas to implement in working with their children at home.

In response to parent demand a second parent workshop was held in Site B in March. At this workshop there was once again a general introduction about parent involvement. The Year Two research team member presented a mini-session on helping

with language arts. The math consultant presented a follow-up session on math curriculum and helping with math in the home.

School District Site ND: The meeting for parents from the non-denominational private school took place in the library at that site. This workshop was also facilitated by two of the primary research team members. The workshop was similar in format to that presented in Site B, but did not involve a mathematics component. The two research team members were responsible for the first part of the workshop which focussed on parent involvement in learning at home and home-school communication. The fourth Year Two research team member (an on-leave teacher from this school) spoke to parents about reading. Discussion took place, and sample materials (pre-organized in a double pocket folder) were distributed to parents. Parents were encouraged to select one or more strategies to implement in working with their child at home. Packets of sample materials were sent to participating parents who were not able or chose not to attend the parent workshop.

In response to parent demand a second parent workshop was held at this site in March. At this workshop there was once again a general introduction about parent involvement. The Year Two research member presented a mini-session on helping with language arts in the home. The math consultant presented a follow-up session on math curriculum and helping with math in the home.

Time Eight (Year Four)

School District Site B: One parent workshop was held in School District Site B in February. The workshop was held at one of the local high schools as part of a Parent Fair at which other workshops and sessions were held for parents. Parents who had agreed to participate in the study were invited to attend the workshop at this time. This workshop was facilitated by the two principal (Year Four) researchers who introduced the Co-Production project, presented a variety of parent involvement strategies and encouraged parents to adopt or implement one or more of these strategies. Some sample materials were distributed to parents at this time.

School District Site D: No parent workshops were held in School District Site D.

School District Site C: One parent workshop was held in School District Site C at the beginning of the school year. The workshop was held at one of the participating schools, and parents who had agreed to participate in the study were invited to attend at this

locale. This workshop was facilitated by the principal university researcher who introduced the Co-Production project, presented a variety of parent involvement strategies and encouraged parents to adopt or implement one or more of these strategies at home. Some sample materials were distributed to parents at this time.

DATA ANALYSIS

Instrument development, administration of interviews and surveys, and delivery of teacher and parent workshops were all part of the larger Co-Production of Learning Project, as explained above. These activities were executed by the main research team which, as noted earlier, consisted of myself, another Ph.D. student researcher and the principal university researcher. From the point of development of research questions, however, this study is a single researcher effort. All data selection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation were carried out exclusively by myself. The use of first person narrative in the data analysis notes which follow highlights this distinction.

Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Data

“However constrained the discipline,” note Fielding and Fielding (1986), “it is not merely analysis into minimal constituents which counts in social science, but what can be made of their synthesis” (p. 91). Speaking of inquiry within the field of education Cizek (1995) suggests that the problem of synthesis is one which applies to the observations of qualitative and quantitative methodologists who are often investigating the same things. The synthesis of qualitative and quantitative observations is equally challenging within the context of a single mixed-methods study. Caracelli and Greene (1993) have provided some guidance in outlining four major strategies for integrating data analysis and interpretation in a mixed-method study which includes “at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to a particular inquiry paradigm or philosophy” (p. 195). The benefit to integrative analytic strategies, according to Caracelli and Greene (1993), is that they can help “to realize the full potential of mixed-methodological approaches” (p. 195). These four strategies are the following:

- a) data transformation, in which one type of data is converted into the other so that both can be analysed together, statistically or thematically;
- b) typology development, where a set of categories are developed for one set of data that are then used as a framework to analyze the other set of data;

- c) extreme case analysis, which involves the identification of an extreme case from one data type that is pursued through analysis of the other data type to refine the explanation; and
- d) data consolidation/merging, where both data are reviewed at the same time in order to create new data sets which are then used in further analyses.

In this study typology development and extreme case analysis were adopted as integrative analytic strategies. In the case of the first strategy, typology development, coding of the qualitative data resulted in the development of themes which provided a framework for the analysis of the quantitative data. Using these themes (or categories) I developed a hypothesis about the roles of both parent and teacher with regard to student commitment to school and learning. The validity of this hypothesis was then tested using the larger quantitative data set.

In the case of the second strategy, extreme case analysis, the qualitative data were used to sort classrooms along a satisfaction continuum, ranging from high to moderate to low parent/student satisfaction with teacher. I used both code counts and a general assessment of the content of the interview data itself to identify either high, moderate or low satisfaction levels within triads, and “summed” for these classrooms. Classrooms which were either clearly high or clearly low were then selected and grouped for further analysis using the quantitative data. The high and low groups from both Time 4 and Time 8 data were analysed separately to determine whether this “satisfaction” distinction between teachers upheld in each of these sets of quantitative data. The purpose of the analyses based on both of these strategies was to confirm the qualitative findings.

Qualitative Data

Grounded Theory

The coding and analysis of interview data was guided by the work of Miles and Huberman (1994), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Patton (1990), and followed a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) emerges, or is “grounded in” descriptive data of real-life situations. Theory consists of categories, properties (which describe categories) and hypotheses, which are suggested links between categories and properties. The researcher is guided by initial concepts and guiding hypotheses, but amends or discards these as data are gathered and analyzed, always remaining open to the emergence of new hypotheses. Negative instances of patterns are sought and incorporated into a larger theory if necessary. Analysis is complete, note Marshall and Rossman

(1989), “when the critical variables are defined, the relationships among them are established, and they are integrated into a grounded theory” (p. 114).

Inductive Coding

Strauss and Corbin (1990) outline the use of inductive coding techniques (in a grounded theory approach) in which categories and labels attached to initial data are assembled into more abstract categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) advocate a slightly more deductive approach. They suggest that the researcher approach coding, or even fieldwork, with a “provisional ‘start list’ of codes” (p. 58). They affirm, however, that “induction and deduction are dialectical, rather than mutually exclusive research procedures” (1984, p. 134).

Analysis within this study represents this “dialectical” process. Coding was primarily inductive in that it was always responsive to and emerged from the data. The study was exploratory in addressing specific research questions and there were unanticipated responses—new and emerging data—to which I was sensitive. As such, an inductive coding scheme emerged which reflected a deepening understanding of the specific issues concerning parent/teacher/student expectations for one another and satisfaction in this regard. Although I had previously coded some of the interview data in this study, I decided not to make use of any of this coding here. Coding all the material anew ensured that the codes emerged from within the context of this study and its attendant research questions, and not from that of another study.

Although I did not begin with a “provisional start list” of codes, coding was also deductive to the extent that the larger Co-Production project was guided by a conceptual framework which framed the formulation of interview questions. Codes were applied to textual material that had been elicited as a result of semi-structured interviews, and many coding categories followed from the interview questions themselves. Coding was also guided by my knowledge of the literature to that point and my familiarity with project material. I had coded project data before beginning this study and was familiar with the general categories and codes which might emerge and the kind of text to which these codes might be applied.

Marshall (1984) cautions against what she perceives to be the use of overly mechanistic data analysis, such as that employed by Miles and Huberman, which might possibly undermine the strengths of qualitative research. “Qualitative research,” she explains, “must not be beaten into submission to the approximations of the methods and criteria set by positivists . . . It must preserve the chance to explore, capitalize on

divergent analyses, and continue to capture the insights of the human research tool” (Marshall, 1984, p. 28). Although coding here was guided by the work of Miles and Huberman (1994) the data were not beaten into submission by the techniques used. The chance to explore and to capitalize on insights was maintained.

Data Analysis with HyperRESEARCH

The computer program HyperRESEARCH (Hesse-Biber, Dupuis, & Kinder, 1991) was used to code and analyse interview data. Before working with HyperRESEARCH several decisions must be made. The first is that of determining what constitutes the “case.” The case is the unit of analysis within HyperRESEARCH and may be either an individual (a single interview) or a group (several or many interviews). When generating reports of material that has already been coded the case or cases to be included must be identified. In producing the report HyperRESEARCH then accesses the case or cases specified and produces the text material in a reorganized format. Any number of cases may be selected for a HyperRESEARCH report, but the program cannot subdivide for analysis cases which contain more than one source of textual material (for example, a case which contains a parent and a student interview). Since I wished the flexibility of being able to generate reports that included textual data from any single student, parent, or teacher interview, or any combination of these interviews, I defined the case as a single individual.

In working with HyperRESEARCH one must also decide what constitutes the “study.” The program works with one study at a time; a study consists of one or more cases. Since my qualitative data were already grouped in sets by “Time” I decided to work with three separate studies, one each for Time 2, Time 4 and Time 8. Because of the volume of qualitative data in this study, one HyperRESEARCH study (combining all Time 2, Time 4, and Time 8 interviews) would have been too unwieldy. Although separating the data even further (for example, by subdividing each “Time” study into three smaller studies consisting of parent, student and teacher data respectively) would have made the HyperRESEARCH studies somewhat easier to handle due to reduced bulk, this would also have limited flexibility. Each study would have contained coded references to only that particular set of interviews and thus the generation of reports which included parent, teacher and student data, or some combination thereof, would not have been possible. Holding the number of studies to three had the added advantages of economy and efficiency of code development in addition to that of flexibility of report

generation. Once developed initially, a code could then be easily applied within a study to any of the referent groups for that “Time.”

First Level Coding: Summarizing the Data

Once the case and study were defined and text data were prepared for HyperRESEARCH access, initial first-level coding (“summarizing the data;” Miles & Huberman, 1994) began.

Coding Unit

Miles and Huberman (1994) note that “codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). Here codes as “units of meaning” were assigned to units of textual meaning, each code representing one textual idea. These units of meaning were either words, phrases, a sentence or groups of sentences, and sometimes paragraphs.

Coding Coverage

All spoken text was coded, including “yes,” “no,” and “I don’t know” responses. These answers, at face value, provide little and sometimes questionable data, unlike more elaborated responses. However, they are substantive if one accepts that they assume the question posed. Given this assumption, a “yes” answer provided by a student to the question “Do your parents help you at home?” means “Yes, my parents help me at home.” Another way to address this problem is to ask whether any important data would in fact be eliminated if these answers were not coded. I believed this indeed to be the case, and that respondents’ answers assumed the questions asked, and so coded these answers. In the case of the example above, the code “pt helps st” would have been applied.

All textual material was coded. I suspected as I began coding that not all material would be relevant to the research questions, but made the decision to code all of it so that it would remain available through “coded access” should meaning or connections to other data become apparent at some later point. In this case I could then investigate these data via HyperRESEARCH report generation. Since there was a huge volume of data, coding all of it at the outset was also seen to be a measure of economy. Material which turned out not to be relevant to the study could then be accessed at a later date, for different purposes.

Directionality

First level coding was directional. The basic code indicated positive instance; negative instances were indicated by “not” or “none.” Thus, “p helps s” represents an instance of parent helping student in the home; “p helps st not” indicates that the parent does not help in the home.

Double-Coding

Textual material was often double-coded. Sometimes a particular phrase or sentence included two “ideas.” In these cases, the unit was coded once to record the first idea and then again to record the second. While the material was double-coded the ideas were not.

Often large chunks of textual material that included three or four or more ideas were coded correspondingly three or four times, once each with the relevant code for the respective idea. This was done in order to maintain the surrounding contextual detail which illuminated the specific reference, without which the quote would have been less meaningful. This was dictated in part by the application of computer technology to data analysis. Coding on paper allows one to highlight textual material, and add the code in the margin, without losing the context which remains visible on paper. The wider view can be lost in HyperRESEARCH which generates reports with only the material selected for coding. If pertinent context is not highlighted, it does not appear.

When respondents made repeated reference throughout an interview to a particular “unit meaning” this item was recoded each time it appeared. Coding repeated information captures the salience of issues and concepts for particular individuals. For example, in the Time 4 data Teacher 27100 made repeated reference to three-way conferences in response to various questions. Coding all instances of discussion about three-way conferences revealed the importance of this practice for Teacher 27100 and its impact on his students and their parents.

Specificity of Coding

Coding varied in specificity. It was often done at the lowest level of specificity as, for example, with barriers to parent involvement. For this concept (in each of the three HyperRESEARCH studies) there are a series of “p inv barrier” codes with attached “trailers” specifying the barrier—for example, “p inv barrier methods,” “p inv barrier time,” “p inv barrier st reluctance,” etc. Coding was usually conducted at this level of

specificity when there were a variety of “categories” evident within the general code (in the case of the example above, a number of particular barriers to parent involvement).

Often first level codes were more general, capturing only the salient point. “Clrm gd place to ln” is an example of this, reflecting only the fact that the student considered the classroom a good place in which to learn, and not particular reasons for this belief. Sometimes general codes were applied that were appropriate and sufficiently specific (for example, in the case of a string of yes/no answers from respondents) until finer detail arose in other data later in the coding process (more elaborated responses). In these cases the specifics of the later data were not hidden or lost, but available upon the generation of a HyperRESEARCH report for that code. At that time, if necessary, a more specific secondary (paper) coding took place (if renaming had not taken place during initial computer coding). In the case of the above example, “clrm gd place to ln” this would involve a simple listing of the characteristics of the “good classroom” enumerated by students. Often codes that initially appeared to be “general” on first application were in fact sufficiently specific in that they represented the complete concept and no further “level down” enumeration of ideas was required.

General codes did provide at least two advantages. One was in preventing the development of a too lengthy, unmanageable list of codes which would make subsequent (computer) analysis more difficult. The second was facilitating the emergence of general trends and categories which could easily remain submerged by codes that were too detailed.

Collapsing and Reducing Codes

At the completion of first level coding no reduction of codes took place. Because of the volume of data, collapsing and renaming of codes would have been a time-consuming and lengthy process. With a large number of codes this would have been necessary in paper and pencil coding to facilitate analysis. However, the efficiency of the HyperRESEARCH program in handling codes through report generation made this unnecessary, methodologically, at the coding stage. HyperRESEARCH is able to quickly generate reports on one or as many codes as specified, and these reports may be given any category name. Because of this capability I made the decision to transfer any required code reduction activity to the report generation stage. This would also allow greater flexibility should I wish to generate reports on any of the less-frequently applied, but more detailed or idiosyncratic codes.

Marginal Remarks

Marginal remarks were recorded during first-level coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) define these as “ideas and reactions to the meaning of what you are seeing” (p. 67). Since I was using HyperRESEARCH to code data, rather than paper copies of the transcripts, these were recorded in a separate notebook.

Memoing

Memoing, “the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser, 1978, pp. 83-84, cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72) also began during first level coding. These are conceptual, tying together different data into clusters, “often to show that those data are instances of a general concept.” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). They are “powerful sense-making tools” (1994, p. 72), and can go beyond codes to personal, methodological and substantive aspects of the study.

Coding Reliability

During the first year of the larger Co-Production project coding of Time 2 data was completed by the research team members for other purposes. For these data I was able to compare my coding to that completed during the first year by the research team members. While the actual names applied to codes were different, no glaring conceptual differences were revealed. During subsequent years of the Co-Production Project I coded Time 4 and Time 8 data for other purposes, as did the principal university researcher. I was thus able to compare my coding of Time 4 and Time 8 data to the coding I had completed earlier as well as to that completed by the other team member. Once again, no major inconsistencies were perceived.

Coding by “Time” and by Triad

Coding of one data “Time” was completed before proceeding to the next. Time 2 interview data were coded first, then all of Time 4, then all of Time 8. In each “Time” a teacher interview was coded, and then the interviews of parents and students associated with that teacher. During coding of Time 2 data two approaches to coding the student and parent interview for respective teachers were attempted. In the first, all of the interviews of the group of parents associated with a particular teacher were coded consecutively and then all of the students for that group subsequently. In the second approach, matching

parent and student interviews were coded in sets, one set after another for each particular teacher. Ultimately, the second method was deemed to be more useful and meaningful as it maintained more faithfully the integrity of the triad, both methodologically and conceptually. Conceptually, meaning from one interview (either parent, student or teacher) arose in part from the comments of the other members of the triad. Coding, and in-process analysis (the development of themes and categories, within triads, as well as across triads) was facilitated by the coding of sets of related interviews rather than the coding of sets of individual referent group interviews. This method was therefore used exclusively for coding for Time 4 and Time 8 data. It was considered to be consistent with both the grounded theory approach to data analysis, as well as the ecological/systems approach to the study.

Code Development

Constas (1992) claims that, “contrary to what some have claimed, categories do not simply ‘emerge’ from the data. In actuality, categories are created, and meanings are attributed by researchers who, wittingly or unwittingly, embrace a particular configuration of analytical preferences” (p. 254). He adds that information about how and when these are developed should be made available to the reader.

Constas divides the coding process into three “procedural elements” which are: (1) origination, (2) verification, and (3) nomination. Origination refers to the source of the (descriptive) categories. In this study codes originated both from the views and interests of the researcher and from literature investigating similar issues. Temporally, coding categories originated at various points throughout the study, both during data collection and throughout data analysis.

Verification, the second of Constas’ procedural elements, justifies the creation and application of the categories. Here, creation and application of code categories was justified in three ways: rationally, referentially, and technically. Verification was rational, first, in that it was based on logic and reasoning, and referential, second, in that it was based in previous research. It was also technical in using inter-rater reliability (repeated coding procedures) to substantiate the existence of categories. Justification of categories in each of these three ways was made after the collection of data.

Nomination, the third procedural element, refers to the source of the names for the designated categories. In this study code names originated from both the researcher and the literature during data analysis.

Code List Development

Code lists were developed separately for each of the Time 2, Time 4, and Time 8 studies. That is, the Time 2 code list was not transferred to the Time 4 study. During coding of the Time 4 data, however, the Time 2 code list was consulted as a reference. In cases of similar “unit meanings” the Time 2 code was often adopted. When Time 2 codes were not appropriate new codes were developed for the Time 4 data. The same process was used for the Time 8 study, using the Time 2 and Time 4 code lists. As such, the code lists were developed separately, but were not entirely independent of one another. Because some changes had been made to the interview schedule over the three years of the study this method of code list development was seen to be most appropriate. While many of the same codes applied over Time 2, Time 4, and Time 8, new ones were also required. Creating separate but overlapping code lists for the three HyperRESEARCH studies enabled me to be sensitive to new and emerging data, without having to “squeeze” data into codes that weren’t entirely accurate. This method was considered to be consistent with the grounded theory approach to data analysis adopted here. Code lists are found in Appendix F.

Second Level Coding: Reducing the Data

Following first level coding of all of the interviews using HyperRESEARCH, several stages of data reduction took place.

Full Reports and “Reduced” Reports

Reports “by code” were generated for each teacher and all of the parent/student dyads for that particular teacher, for each year of data collection. This yielded forty-four meta-reports which contained all textual data for all of the codes applied to each teacher and his or her parent/student sets, reorganized by HyperRESEARCH so that all text from parent, teacher and student respondents appeared under the corresponding code heading, arranged alphabetically by code. These reports were then transferred to word processing files whereupon the data were reduced manually. That is, brief directional answers such as “Yes” and “No” were removed leaving only the code, which reflected the directionality of the answer. Much data that were not relevant to the research questions were removed, such as, for example, teacher comments about Parent Advisory Council activity, but again codes remained. Also, respondent comments that were not considered particularly salient or illustrative were either summarized briefly in a phrase or sentence

or two or removed entirely. Since these data remained within the HyperRESEARCH files it was not eliminated, but remained easily accessible for the generation of subsequent reports on various codes and groups of codes.

This data reduction step was time-consuming but facilitated both handling and understanding of the data by reducing bulk. The “reduced reports” provided easy access and quick reference to what was in total hundreds of text pages. I was able to easily read and reread these condensed forms of all the interview sets and thereby develop “simple knowledge” (i.e., names, places, situations) as well as a deep, meaningful understanding of the teachers and their student/parent dyads. Upon these transcripts marginal remarks were also recorded, and memoing took place as themes and ideas continued to emerge from repetitive readings. Using these reports I also corrected simple first-level coding errors (for example, coding of a positive instance with a “not,” or the reverse) and any instances where data were accidentally coded twice with the same code name.

Tabulated Reports/Code Counts

Reports were generated for Time 2, Time 4, and Time 8 studies listing all codes used in each case, “by case.” These reports consisted of a catalogue of all interviews for each Time, numerically ordered, with individual listings of all the codes that appeared in each interview and the number of times the code was applied. Reports were also generated for Time 2, Time 4, and Time 8 studies listing all codes used, “by code.” These reports consisted of an alphabetic catalogue of all codes for each Time with a listing for each code of all the interviews in which that code appeared and the number of times the code was applied. Neither of these sets of reports included any textual material. The first set of reports—“by case”—enabled me to see at a glance all of the codes used in each interview, and the code frequency for that interview. The second set of reports—“by code”—enabled me to see the names of all the interviews to which a particular code had been applied and the overall frequency for that code. These tallied reports (“code counts”) showed which codes had been used frequently, and which codes appeared consistently across cases of student, parent, and teacher interview data, thereby permitting comparative analysis. I employed these code count reports cautiously because codes themselves, as labels, do not inherently reflect the salience of an issue for the individual. In addition, lack of frequency is not always a signal of lack of salience. However, these reports provided an overall view of coding and of category patterns emerging across the data that were not as easily discernible in the “reduced reports” because of the inclusion

of the textual material. In conjunction with the content of the qualitative data they were used to provide a framework for the second, quantitative analysis, as noted earlier.

Developing Themes and Categories

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) pattern coding is a way of grouping the summaries of first level coding into “a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs” (p. 69). These “meta-codes” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69) are explanatory or inferential, identifying emerging themes or explanations.

In this study pattern coding began generally as part of the memoing and noting process during initial coding, and continued during the data reduction states reported above, in working with both the “reduced reports” and code count reports. At this point HyperRESEARCH was also used to assist in pattern coding through the generation of thematic reports. Reports were generated for themes and categories which had been noted earlier. That is, reports were produced for codes gathered into thematic groups. This second level coding of textual material was a second level computer “cut and paste.” For example, a report entitled “student choice,” which represented that theme, included a variety of individual codes such as “st chooses activities,” “t chooses activities,” “st makes sugg to t,” “st makes sugg to t not,” etc. Generation of reports for themes which had already emerged was a type of verification activity. However, themes and categories continued to emerge through this process and, as such, report generation was part of pattern coding activity.

Reports were also generated based on the (two-part) demand of the research questions: (a) What are the expectations of each referent group for the other? and (b) Are these expectations met? In order to answer the first question reports were produced for codes that reflected or might potentially reflect the expectations of one individual for another. Using emergent themes and categories, reports were also generated for codes that reflected or might potentially reflect outcomes based on these expectations, that is, the extent to which each party is satisfied with the practices and attitudes of the others.

Presentation of Findings

Once report generation and data analysis were complete “expectations” and “outcomes” findings summaries for each of the three triad referent groups were developed. Each of the written expectations summaries, presented in the first section of Chapter Four, focusses on one of the individual members of the triad, but is three-part, including

expectations for both self (with respect to each of the other two parties) and for the other two parties (with respect to self and the third party). In contrast to the expectations profiles, the outcome summaries, presented in the second section of Chapter Four, focus on the three different relationships rather than on one referent group each. The analysis for expectations revealed that expectations of teachers, students, and parents are focussed on attitudes and practices *in relationships*. For example, a parent has expectations for her child's teacher with respect to that child, or with respect to herself; a parent has expectations of her child with respect to herself or with respect to the teacher; a parent also has expectations of herself with respect to the other two parties. These expectations apply to either one of the three relationships within the triad: teacher/parent, parent/student, and student/teacher. This schema lent itself logically to the presentation of data within the second part of the findings chapter which reflects the outcomes or satisfaction level of each party with regard to the relationship between self and the other two parties respectively. The three relationships ("interactions") thus form major headings of this section of the chapter which are then subsequently divided into three parts, each of which profiles the comments of one member of the group about that relationship.

In this study, analysis of findings was complex and organization of findings was complicated because of the participation of and interest in three separate referent groups, each of whom reflects not only directly on their own relationships and experience with the other two parties, but also indirectly on the relationships between the other two parties. The framework outlined above seemed to capture most effectively and easily these intricacies.

Based on the expectations and outcomes (or satisfaction) findings several triads were then selected for full profiling as triad "exemplars," of either positive practice and high satisfaction among parent, student and teacher or negative practice and low satisfaction between parent, student and teacher. These exemplar profiles were written using both the original interviews of the three parties and the reduced reports which had been generated for each triad, and are presented in the third part of Chapter Four.

One might argue that this organization and presentation of findings in part abandons the stated focus on the triad (as conceptual unit) since both the expectations and outcomes sections are presented as referent group findings, rather than triad findings. Originally, my intent was to maintain the triad unit as unit of presentation. However, in this multisite case study the data were too voluminous to present simply as a series of triad "stories." To choose a number of triads to present would likely have meant that some salient points would have escaped presentation, that the larger view, which I sought in addition to the

detail of the particular, might not be completely or authentically presented. Since it became evident during coding that there were strong, consistent themes emerging within referent groups that also extended across triads I decided to present the findings in the manner explained above. In this way points about referent groups were clear and remained distinct (the “general”) and at the same time these were drawn together in the profiles of exemplar triads (the “particular”). The exemplar triads were selected not just on the basis of the one criterion of high or low satisfaction (a judgment facilitated by the previous referent group analyses), but also on how effectively and powerfully they illustrated the general themes presented in the first two sections of the findings chapter. Logically, this presentation is also consistent with the format of the research questions and, ultimately, I believe, does not abandon the triad as conceptual unit.

All three sections of the findings chapter use quotations extensively. Quotes for the first and second parts of the findings chapter were selected based on their ability to eloquently and effectively convey the particular point raised. Quotes are representative of categories and illustrative of group response. Typically, many could have been used, and I was often tempted to include four or five in order to further support the validity of the claim. This tendency was tempered as much as possible in the interests of efficiency and clarity, to avoid both unnecessary length and the dilution of concepts presented within a flood of related but less illustrative quotes.

In quoted passages dashes are used to signal a sudden break in the speaker’s thought. Ellipses are used to signal the deletion of material not relevant to the particular point being illustrated or, occasionally, the omission of speech (such as the repetitive use of “like” or “um,” for example) which would have caused confusion and made the quoted passage difficult to understand. In all instances, the punctuation within quotations was applied with the intent to facilitate understanding by the reader and best convey the speaker’s intended meaning.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four is composed of four separate sections. Part A details the expectations of each of the three triad referent groups for both self (with respect to each of the other two parties) and for the other two parties (with respect to self and the third party). This section provides response to the first research question: What are the expectations of each party for the other (and for self) with respect to partnership based on instructional concerns? Part B focusses on attitudes and practices in relationships. This section presents the experiences of the three parties with regard to each of the three relationships: those between self and the other two parties respectively, and that between the other two parties. It provides response to the second research question: Are triad member expectations met within the web of instructional relationships among the three parties, and, if so, how? These findings reflect the “outcomes,” or satisfaction of each party with the others based on their prior expectations. Both Parts A and B are presented as referent group findings. Part C includes profiles of four triad “exemplars.” Two of these profiles represent positive practice and high satisfaction among parent, student and teacher and two of them are examples of negative practice and low satisfaction among parent, student and teacher. These profiles illustrate the presence of strong home-school partnership and the absence of home-school partnership, respectively (and their principles and characteristics). Part D, the fourth and final section of Chapter Four, presents two sets of quantitative analyses. The first is based on the generation of a hypothesis from the findings outlined in Parts A and B, and the second on a “satisfaction” rating of teachers based on student and parent data from Part B. Parts C and D provide further response to the second research question, at the levels of the triad and the entire student and parent samples, respectively.

Although this study included Time 2, Time 4 and Time 8 data collection rounds, and all data were analysed here, most quotes for Parts A and B of this chapter have been deliberately drawn from the Time 8 data set because it is the most recent and also because material from Time 2 and Time 4 data has been more extensively presented in previous Co-Production of Learning papers and reports. Where Time 2 or Time 4 quotes more

effectively captured the issue in question these were used (and “Time 2” or “Time 4” was attached to the end of the student, parent or teacher code number). When differences are apparent between the three data sets, and of particular interest, these are pointed out. All quotes—from either Time 2, Time 4 or Time 8—have been chosen to be illustrative of group response and should be read as such unless otherwise indicated.

In Parts A and B students and parents are referred to by code number, for two reasons. First, the use of code numbers for parents and students was deemed to be less confusing than the use of pseudonyms because of the large number of student and parent participants. Second, code numbers clearly link students and parents to their particular classroom teacher whereas names do not. Because there are fewer teacher participants than students and parents these individuals are referred to by both pseudonym and code number in Parts A, B and D. In the profiles of Part C pseudonyms are used for all three parties. Any names appearing in quotations from participants are pseudonyms.

PART A: TEACHER, PARENT AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Part A is divided into three major sections: Teacher Expectations, Student Expectations and Parent Expectations. Each of these sections is subdivided into three parts, reflecting the individual’s expectations for self, and the other two parties respectively. The subheadings which follow indicate categories and themes.

The tables below summarize the themes which emerged from the data for teachers, students and parents. Those themes listed in italics are major; those in regular typeface are considered to be minor. Themes were determined to be major or minor based on three criteria: (a) frequency—high or low code counts, (b) the importance of the issue to family/school partnerships and instructional collaboration, and (c) the contribution of the finding to the family/school partnership knowledge base. Some minor themes are either not pursued in the text, or are referred to only briefly, in a summary statement or two, in order to allow full attention to be paid to the more important issues. Code frequencies are not cited extensively in this section. The themes were prioritized using the criteria above. The collection of major themes here is meant to represent an inventory of important expectations.

Table 6: Teacher Expectations

	Teacher Expectations of Self	Teacher Expectations of Students	Teacher Expectations of Parents
With Respect to Self/the Classroom		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Work Habits • Independence and Motivation • <i>Student Respect for Teachers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Professional Respect</i> • Personal Comfort • Communication • <i>Support of Teacher</i> • <i>Disciplinary Support</i> • Volunteering • Mutuality/Team Work
Vis-à-vis Students (in the Classroom or in the Home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable, Caring Environment • Meeting Individual Learning Needs • Teacher Respect for Students 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Support in the Home</i>
Vis-à-vis Parents/ the Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to Parents • Ease of Communication • <i>Mutuality of Communication and Ease of Communication</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Completion of Homework</i> • Getting Help at Home 	

Table 7: Student Expectations

	Student Expectations of Self	Student Expectations of Parents	Student Expectations of Teachers
With Respect to Self (in the Classroom or in the Home)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Helping with Schoolwork</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Support</i> • <i>Rich Learning Environment</i> • <i>Respect and Care</i>
Vis-à-vis the Parents/ the Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Homework • <i>Seeking Help from Parents</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No a priori voiced expectations
Vis-à-vis the Teacher/ the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeking Help with Schoolwork</i> • Doing Well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No a priori voiced expectations 	

Table 8: Parent Expectations

	Parent Expectations of Self	Parent Expectations of Students	Parent Expectations of Teachers
With Respect to Self/the Home		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good Work/Study Habits at Home</i> • <i>Asking Parents for Help</i> • <i>Reading</i> • <i>Participation in Social Activities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Openness</i> • <i>Receptivity and Availability</i> • <i>Comfort</i> • <i>Willingness to Involve Parents</i> • <i>Teacher Respect for Parent Knowledge</i> • <i>Collaboration/ Mutuality in Instruction</i> • <i>Open Communication</i> • <i>Comprehensive Communication</i>
Vis-à-vis the Student (in the Classroom or in the Home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeking Information</i> • <i>Helping with Schoolwork</i> • <i>Encouraging Academic Effort and Promoting Education</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect and Care</i> • <i>Help and Explanation</i> • <i>High Expectations</i>
Vis-à-vis the Classroom/the Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supporting the Teacher</i> • <i>Seeking Information</i> • <i>Participation in the Classroom</i> • <i>Advocacy</i> • <i>Volunteering</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Doing One's Best at School</i> • <i>Asking the Teacher for Help</i> • <i>Solving Problems Independently</i> 	

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF SELF

Teacher Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis Parents/the Home

Communication to Parents

There is a general expectation among teachers that they communicate to parents. According to Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson)

the ideal situation is that there is communication going back and forth whether it be, you know, you are on a field trip and you hear about everything that's happening in the family and how that's affecting the child. Those are some of the most important meetings and they are not really meetings, they're just things that come up, or when they are standing at the door or when you see them cooking somewhere in the school and you happen to bump into them, or whatever, just being able to chit chat really easily. That to me is the ideal situation. I don't like having to think that oh, no, she's not going to listen to me, or whatever.

For Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) the ideal "would be to have contact with the home once a week with every child. To have the parents contact the teachers as much as the teachers would contact the parents in that situation."

In both of these quotes the ideal of mutuality surfaces, that is, an expectation among teachers that they communicate with parents, but also that parents communicate with them. Interestingly, although the ideal of mutuality is apparent, both of the above quotes focus almost exclusively on the active role and initiating behaviour of the parent in the communication exchange, and not on the teacher. Even Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay), who acknowledges that she has an important role to play in communication, emphasizes the participation of parents: "I'm the one that needs to be seen to be giving out good news, but I would like to have the same thing. To be mutual."

Ease of Communication

In an ideal relationship teachers not only communicate with parents about their child but are comfortable doing so. For Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) an ideal teacher/parent relationship is one in which "it's not a big deal to phone home, that they are used to being called." The sense that "it's not a big deal to phone home" is reflected in the comments of Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom) who describes an ideal relationship between parents and teachers as one in which both parties are "comfortable and open where you feel comfortable phoning the parent, both with good news and bad, and the parent also feels comfortable, both with concerns and maybe congratulations." Here again in both of these quotes teachers express concern for mutuality.

Mutuality of Communication and Ease of Communication

Teachers express a preference for mutuality of both communication and ease of communication, as outlined above. That is, they see communication with parents as important, but would also like parents to communicate with them. They prefer to feel comfortable with parents, but also want parents to feel comfortable with them.

There is little sense or expectation among teachers of the need to understand parents' perspective. Amongst the data Teacher 75100 (Ms. Fraser) is the only one who says that she'd like to see herself "be more understanding of where parents are."

Teacher Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis Students

Comfortable, Caring Environment

Teachers occasionally comment on the need for a comfortable, caring environment in the classroom. When asked about the ideal teacher/student relationship teachers summarize this ideal quite briefly without elaboration. "Respect, openness, caring," says Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke). Another, Teacher 51100 (Mrs. Kosko), says, "open, honest, caring." They do not provide detail about how caring and openness are demonstrated in the classroom or how they can be identified by observers.

There is some expectation among teachers that they will create a classroom in which students are comfortable, and act in ways such that students will feel that the teacher is concerned about them. Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) describes this as "an atmosphere where the students would feel comfortable bringing up suggestions, [a] non-threatening environment. They realize . . . both parties are learning."

Meeting Individual Learning Needs

There is a sense among teachers that part of their responsibility as teachers is to meet the academic needs of students, both for challenge and assistance. An ideal relationship between teacher and students is, according to Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson), "when you're trying to work to please them, to keep it interesting and to keep it at their level and challenging and that kind of thing and for them to want to produce." Another teacher discusses students who have learning difficulties and struggle in school. What teachers need to do, notes Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel), is "try and adapt, but sometimes you do forget and they don't want to be different and trying treading the line between not making them different but not overwhelming them [is] very difficult."

Teacher Respect for Students

Teachers do not often state explicitly that respect for students is an expected or required element of the teacher/student relationship. The emphasis in teacher talk (see also the following section, on “Teacher Expectations for Students”) is on the importance of and need for student respect of teachers. When the issue of teacher respect for students arises it is most often couched within discussion about mutual respect. For example, when asked to describe the ideal teacher/student relationship, Teacher 56100 (Mrs. Weir) replies, “I would say mutual respect.” This response is typical.

When asked how they might specifically demonstrate respect for students, teachers are often vague. Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie), for example, comments that “there has to be a million ways to do it. And it is all in the opinion that you have of individuals because it needs to be pervasive in everything we do.”

Very occasionally teachers are more explicit about how teacher respect for students might be demonstrated. When asked how this could be done Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) provides a comprehensive inventory:

I think personally being caring enough when they’ve got something to say . . . whether it’s a problem or whether it be “Oh, look, I brought my pet frog today.” A pet frog being brought to school is not earth shattering news but I think the teachers in this school crouch down and look at it and ask questions: “What did you name it?” and “Where did you find it?” I mean, that really, I think [is] a demonstration of respect. Respecting students learning and where they’re at . . . knowing that they can’t read, for example, and helping them through that and asking them to stay after school or having a conference with them and the parents and saying “These are the materials that I think can help you.” Putting an arm around their shoulder when you’re walking down the hallway and “How was your weekend?” and “Gee, it’s good to see you back” if they were away for a period of time. Celebrating their successes in assemblies; recognizing them. Recognizing them in individual classes too. The tone of voice that’s used in the school. Talking to students with a respectful tone. Not putting them down.

For Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) the issue is simple. When asked how teachers can demonstrate respect for students she says: “I think by giving them choices. Letting go of some of the power that could at times be abused.” The kinds of specific responses provided by teachers 77100 and 62100 are rare, however.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Teacher Expectations of Students with Respect to Self/the Classroom

Good Work Habits

All teachers expect that students will get their work done. According to Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) students show responsibility “by getting their assignments in on time.”

As far as longterm assignments are concerned, this means working steadily and progressively so that these projects will also be completed and submitted on time.

Teachers not only expect students to complete their work, but to apply themselves diligently and “work to the best of their ability” (Teacher 28100, Ms. Thompson). Students, teachers contend, should be concerned about the quality of the task. Ideal students, says Teacher 63100 (Monsieur Laurent), “take their learning seriously; they take their assignments seriously. They do their best. They want to achieve and that’s very evident in their attitude.” By contrast, students who are not responsible, according to teachers, do not display care for work and commitment to quality. This is demonstrated, according to Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin), by “leaving things to the last minute. Just throwing together anything, so that it’s there to give to you. Not that they should necessarily care about their marks but they don’t really care about what they did. . . . It’s good enough, as long as it has got three pages; that’s what he asked for.”

According to teachers, having good work habits also means being organized. Students who are organized have the materials that they require, keep track of current assignments and projects, and know what they are doing from day to day, and over the longterm. Organized students, teachers contend, are busy. They have time to do other things and use that time productively. Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) notes that students demonstrate responsibility by “helping out around the school, being involved in other things, such as student council and showing that they are organized.”

Preferred work habits are summarized by the Teacher 22100 (Ms. O’Hearn) who says of students who exemplify this ideal: “They are well organized, actually quite independent. They quite like learning. They enjoy it. They take pride in their work that they’ve done.”

Independence and Motivation

Teachers also prefer students who take initiative and work independently. Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel) describes the ideal student as one who has “confidence, that they’re independent and they are curious. They want to find out more.” These students take the initiative to go ahead on work, consulting with the teacher if necessary, but not relying on the teacher for all direction and assistance. A responsible student, says Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) is

someone who, if I’ve given instruction to, and they are not sure, they ask me. You know they don’t wait for me to find out when they hand in their assignment, or whatever. Students who will check part way through the assignment. If it’s a lengthy one, a two week or whatever, they’ll check: “Is this what you are expecting?” Unless I give an outline, however. Students

who maybe confer with one another, you know, "What are you doing in yours?," that kind of thing. They sort of do a little bit extra like if they can't find the information they need in our library they'll maybe either ask me where they could look or they'll take it on their own initiative to go to the library, public library, that kind of thing. I don't know, it seems generally that those students who really enjoy education a lot more. Because it is sort of more their education.

As this teacher suggests, student independence does not mean complete independence from teachers. Teachers stress that independent students don't hesitate to ask questions of them especially if they do not understand something. In fact, teachers expect students to ask them questions, and also to follow up on suggestions made to them about their work. Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) says that responsible students demonstrate

care and concern. Asking questions. Getting responses back. They want to make corrections and understand why they didn't do as well or those kinds of things. You know it's a hard one, but they really do take responsibility for their learning. They want to read your comments and try to follow through and try to put them into practice. If they don't understand, come and really ask for some help.

For these teachers motivation is also a part of student independence. They prefer students who are intrinsically motivated to learn and complete their work. "The intrinsic motivation," notes Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais), "that's what should drive the children in order to be successful." Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) describes a strategy that she uses to motivate students, but then adds: "It has to come from within. There's always—I can find ways to motivate them, but ideally, they need it." Teachers appreciate students who apply themselves to their work, but also for whom this work is important.

In general, teachers say little of expectations for student learning and student growth either academically or personally, although the comments above about work habits and independence assume academic application and learning. Interestingly, teachers make no comment about student enjoyment in learning, that they either expect or hope for it. Teacher 29100 notes, however, that the ideal student is "excited about school, not all the time. But generally, they like school, not—they are not closed off."

Student Respect for Teachers

The main theme that emerges from teacher data about the ideal relationship between students and teachers is that of respect. Teachers prefer students who demonstrate respect. Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) describes the ideal teacher/student relationship as one in which "students respect the teachers as much as the teachers are showing respect to the students. . . . But I think the big thing is the respect. An ideal situation, odd as it may

seem, is students showing respect for the adults in this school. It should be a given, shouldn't it?"

There is a sense of mutuality with regard to respect, as the quote from teacher 77100 above suggests, and which was noted earlier in the "Teacher Expectations for Self" section. Teacher 63100 (Monsieur Laurent) elaborates on this idea: "I think the ideal relationship between student and teacher would be one where first of all there's a mutual respect between the two and I think that in teaching elementary kids it's very important that the child have a confidence and trust in the teacher. With confidence, trust and respect it's usually—it's a sure thing, you can't miss." This teacher speaks of mutual respect, as do the others, but the emphasis remains on the role of the student in the relationship and expectations for the student's participation.

In speaking of their expectation for respect teachers do not provide much detail about how exactly this respect is to be demonstrated by students. For Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) "being rude in the classroom is not acceptable, between themselves or with me, or to interrupt." This quote and the ones above suggest that respect is shown through appreciation, appropriate manners and language, and deference to adults.

Teacher Expectations of Students Vis-à-Vis Parents/the Home

Completion of Homework

The expectation from teachers that students complete their daily assignments also extends to homework. Responsible students, says Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer), "get their homework done."

Help at Home

Qualitative data reveal that in practice some teachers ask or tell students to seek help from their parents at home. That students get help at home, however, does not seem to be an a priori expectation of teachers. They do not, for example, describe the ideal student or preferred student as one who seeks help at home. They do not expect that all students should or will do this. Since the data regarding this issue reflect what happens in classrooms, it is addressed in Part B of Chapter Four which reports on actual practices and outcomes in the classroom and home. It appears to be a question of practice for some teachers, but of expectation for none.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Teacher Expectations of Parents with Respect to Self/the Classroom

Professional Respect

Teachers hope for a respectful relationship between themselves and parents. Respect represents, in part, cordial, well-mannered relations between one another. For teachers respect also signifies professional accord, a recognition by parents of teachers' professional knowledge and discretion. Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel) describes this ideal relationship between parents and teachers as "friendly, but professionals to us. I think that's important." When asked to elaborate on what she means by professional Mrs. Wenzel explains:

That we're not just friends. You could—I could be friendly with lots of parents in here, and I am, we're almost on a first name basis. In fact, I do call some of them on a first name basis if I've known them for awhile. But if there's something they want to know what we are doing that's academic and how I teach it, then there's—I have some expertise in that area that they recognize.

Personal Comfort

Teachers hope that parents will feel comfortable with them in general, that they will feel they can approach teachers and will not be intimidated by them. Teacher 79100 suggests that "ideally you need to have a relationship where the parents can come to the teacher, feel comfortable coming to the teacher if there's a problem. Just like the kids, I guess." Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel) hopes that parents will "feel that they can phone you anytime if they're worried about something—that would be the ideal. I'm sure sometimes they don't because they think we're too busy. I don't think we're unapproachable. You never know, perhaps we are to some of them." Her suggestion that teachers may be responsible, at least in some cases, for parent discomfort is unusual among these teachers.

Communication

Parents should, teachers note, not only feel free to communicate with teachers, but actually do so. When asked what parents can do to promote an ideal relationship between parents and teachers, Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) claims that a willingness on the part of parents to talk to teachers is essential: "Well, what they do do, I think, is by chatting, just by coming in and talking." For Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) this is crucial to student learning and bonding with school: "I think a lot of it as far as reaching a student and holding on to them has a lot to do with what's going on at home. If you have

a supportive family who is in full contact, or written contact, or personal contact with you, even if it's just coming to pick up the child and it's 'Hi, how are you doing,' . . . or 'Dear Mrs. Brewer, We are going away for two days . . . please supply Susie with work that she will miss.' . . . Those are the kids that you're going to hang on to."

Support of Teacher

Teachers expect that parents will respond to efforts made by teachers and the school to initiate contact and/or communicate with parents. This means that parents will attend the Open House or Meet-the-Teachers night typically held in September, and formal parent/teacher conferences.

Teachers also expect that parents will be actively supportive of what they say and do in the classroom by expressing interest and appreciation, as Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) suggests above. Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) would like to "feel that parents are interested in what their child is doing and also that what I'm doing with their child too, so that we can—I'm the one who needs to be seen to be giving out good news, but I would like to have the same thing. To be mutual."

According to teachers, being supportive also means not disparaging teachers in the presence of students. Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) captures this idea:

I know what they shouldn't be doing, cause I see it happening sometimes with parents, sort of saying negative things about (a) the teacher or (b) the school system in general or the school itself, in front of the student, saying, "You know, those stupid teachers." I know, I've heard this before in the hallway, "Oh, your teacher's such an idiot" and blah blah blah. Well, that may be true, but it shouldn't be said in front of the student because then that is where their perspective comes from, you know, if they start, "Oh, that school is just ruining them." da da da. Then the kid thinks, wow, this school system is just a bunch of idiots and they don't know what they are doing.

Disciplinary Support

Teachers also expect that parents will be supportive of action they have taken regarding student behaviour in the classroom. This means that parents will generally cooperate with teachers, or speak to the teacher if they disagree. Cooperating means openly supporting the disciplinary action in front of the child and perhaps also responding by taking action at home. The comments of Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) are illustrative of this expectation. When asked how parents can promote the ideal relationship between themselves and teachers she replies:

I think by being supportive, if you're saying something to them over the phone or in a note or whatever, knowing that something is going to be done at home to support what it is that you

have let them know about. For example, if they do something wrong, or whatever, and you have asked the students to write out some rights and responsibilities, which are the classroom rules, and it goes home to get signed, that parents do sign it and know that there's always two sides to every story and that if they wish to pursue to call, but not to send it back saying that we don't feel that this was appropriate therefore so and so isn't going to do anything about it. You know . . . we need that support to say, yes, something must have happened at school otherwise why we would be getting this home and if you don't agree, then give us a call or come in and see us. But don't just try to toss it off and not do anything about it on their end, because we have tried to handle it from our end and . . . we just need that support otherwise we are kind of doomed.

Mutuality/Team Work

There is a sense, or expectation, among some teachers that ultimately an ideal relationship is one in which teacher and parent (and sometimes student) form a team that works together. In cases where teachers express this kind of expectation or ideal hope, the expectations voiced are for both parent and self. For example, Teacher 56100 (Mrs. Weir) describes an ideal relationship as “caregivers, co-educators, collaborators, I would say.” Teacher 63100 (Monsieur Laurent) describes mutuality in greater detail:

Well, ideally, I think it's where parents and teacher can meet and discuss the progress of the child in such a way that it's beneficial for the child and at the same time to reinforce what is being done at school and at home. It's a two way street because the parent can help the teacher at school a lot, just like the teacher at school can help . . . what's happening in the home by supporting, by mutual support, wherever learning is involved.

According to these teachers mutuality incorporates the ideal of support which is also mutual.

Mutuality is seen by Teacher 78100 (Mrs. Brewer) as overlapping categories of responsibility which also involves the student. For Mrs. Brewer this ideal parent/teacher relationship is “some kind of team. I think that we need need to work together to establish what's important for the children to be taught. Work with the child to meet those goals. We initiate the actual learning activities and we can follow up at home and they're the ones you hope initiate values and priorities and that we can reinforce that at school.”

Teacher Expectations of Parents Vis-à-Vis Students

Academic Support in the Home

Teachers expect that parents will provide academic support to their children at home which means that parents will monitor their child's homework, ensure that it is completed, and provide assistance at home if needed. Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) articulates her expectation that parents “have the children do their homework religiously

every day, have the students ask questions when they don't understand." For many teachers this is a key component of parent involvement. "If they are there for their kids to help them with their homework," says Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom), "I think that is the most important—to supervise and help with homework so that it is completed."

Teachers categorize parental support for students at home as supportive of them even though it is first and foremost supportive of students. Teacher 23100, for example, describes this kind of activity as "just support" and adds an interesting qualifier: "I don't think they have to do any of the teaching. I think we can handle that, but they have to ensure that child has some time and some space to work and maybe a little guidance in how to do it. Perhaps the parents need a bit of educating on how to help their children."

COMMENTARY ON TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Although teachers express a number of preferences or expectations for their own behaviour and relations with parents these expectations (communication to parents; ease of communication; mutuality of communication and of ease) are not articulated by many teachers apart from the focus on mutuality which is a more common theme. Code counts for these teacher data are low. In addition, teachers have fewer expectations of self with respect to parents than they do of parents with respect to self. That is, teachers say more about what parents should or could do for or with them than about what they should or could do for parents. Teachers do articulate an ideal in terms of the parent/teacher relationship. However, in their minds the implications for parents of that ideal relationship appear to be more clear and numerous than behavioural implications for themselves. While they too emphasize mutuality, a teamwork between themselves and parents, they are less clear, or explicit—perhaps less open—about what mutuality means for their own participation, and they focus on what parents need to do. At the same time, their expectations for parents focus on parental activity that is or will be supportive and respectful of them and that recognizes their special role as professionals.

Interestingly, teachers also have far more expectations of parents with respect to self than expectations of parents with respect to students. As far as the home is concerned they expect only that parents will provide academic support by helping their children. As far as self is concerned, they expect, at a minimum, moral and behavioural support and professional respect. In terms of expectations there is generally little sense among teachers of the presence and interaction of parents and students in the home, even among those teachers who are parents. Within the context of home/school partnerships this

finding is particularly important; it is fundamental as it shapes, and indeed limits, all that teachers do with students and parents.

Among these data about teacher expectations for students, parents and self, respect stands out as a major theme in addition to the apparent teacher blind spot regarding parent/student interaction in the home. Teachers do not only speak of respect for students from teachers, but also make very clear and emphatic their expectation that students respect them and that parents respect them.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF SELF

Student Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis the Teacher/the Classroom

Seeking Help With Schoolwork

Students maintain that they will seek assistance when they need it, from teachers or friends. They aspire to do well. Student 25301 explains what she does if she doesn't understand in class: "[I] put up my hand usually during math and I will ask her something, or if I was having trouble with spelling I would go over to her desk and ask for help." This is a typical approach. Often students will look to friends for help before approaching the teacher. "I usually ask a friend," says Student 28316, "and if they can't help, then I go to the teacher."

Student Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis Parents/the Home

Completing Homework

That teachers and parents expect homework to be completed is clear to students. This expectation has been internalized. Most students generally want to complete their homework and try to do so. "I know it is important and I want to get it done," notes Student 25305, "but I also don't want to get in trouble from it." Student 22301 reveals that homework is his/her least favourite thing about school, a not uncommon view, but he/she says, "I have to do it."

Seeking Help from Parents

Students expect that they will and can approach their parents at home for assistance when they need it or if they do not understand something at school. "Usually I do homework by myself, but if I need help then I ask," explains Student 16322 (Time 2). About getting

help Student 14305 (Time 2) says, “If I’m having trouble like on a math question and I don’t know how to work it out and like I couldn’t go [to the school] in the morning or something then I would ask [my parents] to help me figure it out.” Students also expect to seek assistance from their parents if they are not able to get help or explanation from their teacher at school. Student 11301 (Time 2) comments: “Well, sometimes there is a question, maybe I didn’t hear what he said or something like that and then I kind of just ask my mum or something.”

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Student Expectations of Parents with Respect to Self

Helping with Schoolwork

When asked how their parents might support them in their education, and prepare them for the future, students consistently voice their expectation that parents help them with their schoolwork. When asked how her parents can support her in her education Student 24304 says, “Keep me on track and make sure that I do my work.” For Student 62303 support means “helping you with your work and being there when you need help with school or school projects.”

Students also anticipate, however, that parents will leave them to work independently when they can do so. A fine balance is to be maintained here. Students do not appreciate over-attention, or assistance or monitoring from parents that is not required. For Student 23306 quiet solitude facilitates the completion of major research projects: “I do much better if I’m working by myself, up in my room with the door closed, reading and taking down notes and stuff like that.” Being able to complete schoolwork on one’s own also builds confidence. As Student 73306 explains, “I like doing things by myself so I feel good about myself doing it by myself . . . so I learn it.”

Student Expectations of Parents Vis-à-Vis the Teacher/the Classroom

Interestingly, students voice no expectations for their parents with regard to the teacher. That is, they do not articulate any a priori expectation that their parents should speak with the teacher generally, or approach the teacher on their behalf about concerns or problems. Although students do not voice any explicit expectations about parental role in the classroom or schools, data presented in Part B reveal that students do talk extensively at home about both their pleasures and frustrations at school, and that these frustrations often become the basis for parental intervention at school on the student’s behalf. By

inference one can assume that there is a latent expectation among students that parents will stand up for them at school, even though there is no explicit expectation on the part of students here.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS

Student Expectations for Teachers with Respect to Self

Academic Support

According to students, good classrooms are those in which teachers teach well. Teaching well means explaining concepts so that students understand. Student 54301 characterizes her favourite teacher as one who “would explain the work.” According to Student 22301 her favourite teacher “showed us to do the steps.”

Students note that good teachers also “explain things when you are in trouble” (Student 24304). That is, they provide help when students do not understand. Student 24306 remembers her favourite teacher for this reason: “She was really nice to me; she helped out whoever needed help.” For students immediacy with help is also important. “Like, we would ask for help with our work,” says Student 25301 of his favourite teacher, “and he was right there.”

In a supportive learning environment preferred teachers also encourage and facilitate help between students. Sometimes very simple instructional strategies suffice such as that described by Student 24306 in speaking of her favourite teacher:

I like the way that she taught math because she put some questions up on the board and then she would assign all of us to one question, and then we would all be up on the board and then we would be writing down the math equation and the answer and then she would have us all sit down and see if it was right, and if we were wrong, she would have the children explain to the person who did the equation what happened and what they did wrong.

A supportive learning environment is also one which is encouraging of student effort and accepting of mistakes. Students prefer teachers who do not ridicule their mistakes or get angry when they need help. Student 77308 notes that his favourite teacher “was nice and if we got something wrong she wouldn’t have a fit, like lots of teachers I’ve had.” When asked what the favourite teacher did when he got something wrong this student replied: “She helped you fix it.”

Rich Learning Environment

In preferred classrooms learning takes place. Students expect and hope that they will learn. Student 56304 says: “One of my favourite teachers was in Grade Three. . . . I

learned a lot of things in that class. . . . I learned a whole bunch of math skills and everything like that in class. She made it really fun.” As this student points out, the fact that learning is made fun and enjoyable by teachers is important. When learning is fun, as it was with her favourite teacher, adds student 29304, “you can get more excited.”

Although not all students specify exactly how teachers can turn the common and mundane—an essay, a book report, or times tables—into something fun, many students do refer to instructional methods. Students appreciate teachers who seek and use innovative or exciting teaching methods. Student 62303 describes these preferred teachers: “Somehow they just find ways not to make you sit there and write everything out. I have had teachers that do that. They write it all over the board and then you have to write it all in your book. They just find different ways to present the material.” These ways are “new and exciting.” According to these students effective instructional methods are sometimes as simple as games. “We had fun,” states Student 79307, “she had games for homework.”

According to students, rich learning environments are also characterized by choice. Preferred teachers are those who create opportunities for student choice and then encourage students to take up these opportunities. This is not only a means of meeting individual needs, but also demonstrates respect for students’ decision-making abilities, and helps to make learning fun. Student 23306 says of teachers that “they don’t really let us make our own choices and like one teacher I had . . . would make us, like she’d tell us if you are in the computer lab writing stories, okay, you have to write about this topic, it has to be about this topic, it has to be about this person.” Student preference for choice applies not only to assignments, but also to general behaviour and responsibility in the classroom, and the selection of work partners. Student 23306 vividly summarizes the absence of choice: “Some teachers I’ve had, they’ve sort of kept everyone on a leash, like they don’t let them do anything, like just keep them.” Preferred teachers are those who, in contrast, give students some freedom.

Students are also appreciative of teacher efforts to maintain a quiet, orderly classroom where students can work and learn. Even if learning is made fun it can be difficult in a noisy, chaotic classroom. When asked about her favourite teacher and what made the classroom a good place to learn, Student 62303 states simply: “Well, she kept the class under control.” Student 29304 adds that her favourite teacher did the same thing, “but she was nice.” “Controlled” classrooms, as this last student suggests, are not necessarily or do not need to be regimented and authoritarian, but do need to be calm.

Students also think highly of teachers who meet individual student needs: those who need assistance are helped; those who are very capable are challenged. When asked what he would do as teacher to improve the classrooms he has been in Student 72304 replies: “I wouldn’t put everybody on the same level as everybody else. Like, I think everyone should do work at their own level.” Student 22301 notes that teachers should know how students “feel about the work and see how they are going to process the work that they are doing. See if they understand it or not. See that they are not pushing them too hard or letting them off easy.” Meeting individual learning needs means checking with children to understand their perspective.

In a rich learning environment teacher expectations are high. Students often characterize these teachers as “strict.” “If you don’t do your homework,” says Student 29304 of her favourite teacher, “she just doesn’t let you go. She makes you do it.” When asked whether the teacher is like this all the time with everybody, the student replies, “Yep . . . she is strict on like when you can get your work finished.” These teachers expect, at the very least, that all students will complete their work. They are consistent and firm and characterized by students as “fair.”

Although students prefer high and strict expectations, this does not mean cheerlessness. Fun and humour are also aspects of a warm learning environment. Students are most satisfied with teachers who have a sense of humour. This does not necessarily mean being a jokester, although some are and being able to create humour in the classroom is not a bad thing. A teacher with a sense of humour—even one who doesn’t tell jokes—is able to see the funny side of things. He or she openly acknowledges the humorous moment or occasion in the classroom, and shares that with students freely. Student 63304 remarks that his favourite teacher “has a really good sense of humour.” When asked whether that means someone who simply cracks jokes, the student replies: “Yes, and who laughs. When someone says something funny, he laughs and says something else.” Humour can also make classroom work fun when it serves to diffuse tension and ease the difficulty of learning and making mistakes. Student 61303 describes the approach of his favourite teacher: “In math he gives us some questions and then when we don’t understand he explains it in a funny, weird way.”

Respect and Care

Students prefer teachers who respect them. Respect means treating and recognizing students as individuals. For Student 51314 an example of this kind of teacher respect is when “[my teacher] let me do something that nobody else could do. . . . If she asks you to

do something and then everybody puts up their hand and they picked you.” Student 24306 was acknowledged in another way. Of her favourite teacher she says: “She was really nice. . . . When she moved away she wrote me a letter and that just made me feel really special.”

Teacher respect is also demonstrated when teachers listen to students attentively and seriously as they would any adult. The words of the Student 79305, who describes his favourite teacher, exemplify this ideal:

She was the best. She was nice. She would listen. I’m not saying the other teachers wouldn’t listen, but she would be more interested in everything you say. She would always pay attention and never—she’d think we were her kids. She would pay attention to the kids.

Preferred teachers are not only interested in students as people, but also demonstrate that caring. Of her favourite teacher Student 25305 says: “She was really, really nice . . . and she always understood me. She listened and when I was feeling sad she tried to comfort me and stuff.”

Respect and trust are also demonstrated to students by teacher efforts to share their lives with students, to allow students to get to know them. Student 61303 contrasts the behaviour of his current teacher with that of teachers in general: “You know, some teachers say, if you ask something, they say something like, this person used to do something, and instead of saying something about somebody [my teacher] talks about himself. So you get to know him a lot better.”

Respect also means, at its most basic level, not yelling at students. Student 25301 comments on the respect demonstrated by his favourite teacher and its meaning for the classroom: “He was just nice. He never yelled and everybody was quiet because he wouldn’t yell and scream at them.”

Student Expectations of Teachers Vis-à-Vis Parents/the Home

Students do not voice any specific expectations for their teachers with regard to their parents. They do not suggest, for example, that teachers should speak to their parents personally, or that teachers should communicate to their parents in some way about teacher expectations or classroom curriculum.

COMMENTARY ON STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students have many expectations of teachers with respect to self, some of which relate to teaching practice, such as the preferences for explanation and help and for challenging work. The fact that many of these expectations relate to instruction is not surprising since students spend a great deal of time in the classroom with teachers, and more time in formal instructionally-focussed interaction with their teachers than with their parents. Of major importance to students is a quiet, controlled classroom in which they can concentrate and work productively. This theme appears consistently, in all student comments.

What is particularly interesting about the preferences that students express is that so many of them, whether they refer to teaching practice or to personal attributes of the teacher, are relational. That is, they focus on personal interaction between student and teacher. Teachers, in contrast, do not typically voice expectations for self or for students about personal interaction such as student and teacher getting to know each other better. They expect only that students do their work.

Both students and teachers expect respect from one another. While respect is but one aspect of students' expectation for teachers, it is a major expectation of teachers for students. Although teachers speak of respect for students and a comfortable, caring learning environment when referring to expectations of self, they are not explicit, as are students, about these factors. Unlike student respect for teachers, teacher respect for students is not a major theme among teachers.

Although students have many expectations of the teacher with respect to self, they have no expectations of their teacher with respect to the home, and at the same time no expectations of their parents with respect to their teachers (interestingly, given their focus on interaction with teacher in the classroom). In terms of expectations there is generally little sense among students of an instructional relationship between parents and teachers, or even of much interaction of any kind between these parties.

As far as expectations for self are concerned, students do have expectations of self with respect to their parents and the home, but they have only one expectation of self with respect to the teacher and school—that they will seek help from the teacher. They do not expect anything else of themselves with regard to the teacher. In terms of expectations students do not seem to see themselves in powerful, proactive, assertive roles with respect to their teachers. Students' expectations of self both at school and at home and their expectations of parents at home all relate to the successful production of work.

Understanding their schoolwork, and getting the necessary help to understand it—from friends as well as teachers and parents—are extremely important to students.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

PARENT EXPECTATIONS OF SELF

Parent Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis the Classroom/the Teacher

Seeking Information

Parents believe they should be informed about what their child is doing at school. “Well,” declares Parent 63204, “I think the parents should be supportive and informed about what’s going on.” Being informed means taking the time to talk with the teacher. “Open up the lines of communication,” suggests Parent 24202, “phone and talk to the teacher, go in and see the teacher, write little notes in the student planner, help with the homework, understand what she’s doing, make sure you know what’s going on.” Parent 23206 emphasizes the need to get information “one way or the other, either through the office or through the teacher or something like that.” Parents expect to attend parent/teacher interviews or parent/teacher/student conferences. “There’s two conferences in the year,” recounts Parent 23203, “and we try to do both. One is more scheduled than the other, but we always like to go to both.”

Interestingly, there is little expectation among parents that they should or are expected to communicate information to the school about their child. The following quote reflects the belief of Parent 28216 that this is important, but no expectation that it is part of the norm: “Well, I think it’s important that the school know that if there is some kind of personal problems going on, obviously in the home, that type of thing, or health problems it all reflects on how they do in school.” While this kind of communication may occur at casual meetings with the teacher, or even possibly through formal interviews, it is not a formal expectation that parents carry with them into their child’s classroom each year.

Participation in the Classroom

According to parents, basic responsibilities involve attending both classroom-based and school-based activities if they are able. “I go to any sort of activities that they invite to,” comments Parent 62203, “or parent nights, just the social things. I try to go to the Christmas concerts.” Parents also note that they try to attend meetings that pertain to the

classroom activities of their children. They do not, however, voice any expectation that they will or should be involved in the parent organization or parent council at their child's school.

As far as participation in instructional activity in the classroom is concerned, there is no expectation among parents for this kind of involvement. Parent preferences about participating by observing in the classroom are mixed. Generally there are two views. When asked whether she would like to observe in her child's classroom Parent 54201, a proponent of the first view, said: "Yes, I would. I would really enjoy sitting in on that classroom. . . . I would be most interested in watching the behaviour. . . . I think it would be just to see how the class actually runs and is it as chaotic as he seems to think it is. That would be my most interesting thing to see." When asked the same question, Parent 28201, a proponent of the second view, replied: "Not particularly. I feel that's their job and, I don't know, I guess I figure that they know what they're doing and they have gone to school. I figure that they can help, they don't need the disruptiveness of a parent being in there. Their child doesn't need the disruption either." There is less of an expectation that observation in the classroom is desirable or necessary among parents of children who are either very capable academically or happy and generally doing well.

Advocacy

There is an expectation among parents that they should and will approach the teacher if problems arise. Parent 22201 comments that she goes in to speak to the teacher "if something comes up, or I'm not too happy about." Parents are prepared to approach the teacher when the need is clear. They will stand up for their child's interests at school—explaining or defending their actions—when situations occur which warrant this action. Parent 24204 says, "I would probably be a little leery unless it was something I felt very passionate about, in which case I would go in there and it wouldn't matter, I would just show up at the door and say, I need to talk to you and [will] wait here until you can talk to me."

Parents expect that they will not need to stand up for their child's interest if he or she academically capable and if behaviour is not a problem. The following mother, Parent 63204, notes that she has not had to stand up for her son's interest, but says: "If I felt I should, I would. . . . but you see again we're fortunate because Ryan is okay. We're lucky."

Parent Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis the Student

Seeking Information

Parents expect that they will become informed about what is happening at school and how their child is doing by talking to him or her at home on a daily basis. Parent 23206 states this quite emphatically: "I think that [parents] have to be aware of what their children are doing in school. Keep asking questions of the student, don't expect them to volunteer information. I guess you have to kind of be a nag, I suppose, to make sure you know what's happening." For some parents, particularly those who are not able to visit the classroom throughout the year, communication with the child is especially important. Says Parent 63204 in this situation: "I do rely on Ryan to keep me informed, definitely."

Helping with Schoolwork

Parents expect that they will at the very least monitor their child's homework efforts or help their child more extensively at home with assigned daily homework, and with longer term assignments and projects. For most parents basic involvement in homework is determining whether the child does have homework to complete and ensuring that it is completed. As Parent 23206 notes, "Homework is basically—we have a habit of asking Amanda when she comes home everyday from school, 'How was your day,' and does she have homework and what type of homework if she has any." Parents also expect that they will provide assistance to their child when necessary, and help them find resources. "I always help Cassie if she has problems with her homework," states Parent 25205, "and if she needs information and cannot get it from the school library I will take her to the public library. Things like that. It is not a formal thing." For parents, assistance also entails keeping their child "on track," that is, providing reminders and helping the child to schedule and plan for his or her schoolwork. Parent 22201 explains that "for those longer term projects, in socials or science you have kind of to remind to do a little bit each night or every other night, or something and not get too close to the due time."

PARENT EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Parent Expectations of Students Vis-à-Vis the Teacher/the Classroom

Asking for Help

Parents realize that even though a child may always do his or her best, difficulties are sometimes encountered. Parents expect that their children will ask the teacher for help when they do not understand. The mother of a learning disabled son (Parent 51204) who

was having problems with academic work says: “He was really struggling with his homework. . . . So I sit there and I talk with him and I say, you know homework’s hard and I can’t help you and that’s what your teachers are for. Why don’t you ask them? If you’re having problems why don’t you ask them; don’t not do it and just leave [it]. That’s what they’re there for.”

Parent Expectations of Students with Respect to Self/at Home

Good Work/Study Habits at Home

Parents expect that students will complete their daily homework. Often there are rules regarding its completion. “Every night he brings it home,” says Parent 51204, “and the rule is you come home and you do your homework and after your homework’s done, then you can watch TV or that kind of thing, or go out and play or stuff like that.” Even though there are no formally established rules in many homes the expectation is routine and there will be parental follow-up. Parent 24202 explains that her daughter “knows that at one point that somebody is going to ask her, ‘Did you do your homework?’ so she has gotten to the point where she will come home and sit down and start doing her homework when she is having a snack, try and get it over with.”

Parents also expect that students will plan for and complete longterm projects or assignments that become part of homework. When asked what she’d ideally like to see her daughter do differently with regard to schoolwork Parent 22201 responds: “Maybe just a little bit more attention in getting it done, not to leave the longer term things. The ones that she has math every day then she’ll get that little bit and if it’s a longer term she tends to drag a little behind.” Parent 24202 characterizes this problem in terms of organization. Her comments reflect general parental concern about procrastination: “I’d like to see her get more organized with her time because she often does leave things till the last minute. I would like to see her think it’s more important than she does.”

At the Grades Four to Seven levels parents see daily attention to and completion of homework, and systematic planning for and completion of longterm assignments, as student responsibility. Responsibility is a general expectation of all parents which they often clarify with respect to schoolwork. Parent 29204 describes her approach and experience: “In that way, like my helping her out has certainly decreased over the years. When they are smaller, they need you more for those kinds of things. Yeah, I try, but she’s—again I try to make clear to her that she has to plan these activities and that in some ways I want her to suffer the consequences at this level.”

Asking for Help

Although parents expect their children to do their homework, plan for and complete longterm assignments, and study, they do not always expect their children to do all of this without assistance. In fact, parents count on their children to ask for help with their schoolwork at home if they need it just as they expect this of their children at school. Parent 54201 expresses her pleasure about the fact that her son has finally started to request her assistance: "This year he does. Mind you, this is the first year he has ever brought work home and without hesitation he will come in and say, 'Mum, I don't understand this new page in math,' and I'm just so happy that he will ask. I keep telling him 'Thanks for asking. It's better to ask right away than a month from now.'"

PARENT EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS

Parent Expectations of Teachers with Respect to Self/the Home

Within this category—parent expectations of teachers with respect to self—there are two major, overarching themes. These are: (a) a general openness on the part of teachers to parents, and (b) open communication between parents and teachers.

Openness

Teacher Openness represents the receptivity and availability of teachers to parents, the personal comfort felt by parents in the presence of teachers, the willingness of parents to involve parents literally and figuratively in the classroom, and the willingness of teachers to listen to parents and welcome and respect their participation as collaborators.

Receptivity and Availability: Parents expect, first of all, that teachers will be approachable and friendly, receptive to parents in general. According to Parent 74211 the ideal is "to know that you're always welcome in the school, that it's always open." Parents then anticipate that once given this welcome teachers will be available to them after school, or by telephone, to talk. What is important is being able to get in touch with the teacher without difficulty. For Parent 54201 the ideal in availability would be having "the teacher's home phone number. Being really able to call without hesitation and being able to reach them quite easily."

Willingness to Involve Parents: Parents hope that teachers will demonstrate their willingness to involve them in the classroom in a variety of ways, and not just on special occasions. "For starters," explains Parent 78202, "they could open up their class to

parents. I feel once the class is in the classroom, it's closed. And basically the only time parents are needed is when it does come to out of classroom activities whether it be fund-raising for certain things, or field trips."

Teacher Respect for Parent Knowledge: Parents also expect that teachers will be willing to listen to their comments and concerns, and respect them for their knowledge and expertise about their son or daughter. Parent 25205 captures this hope: "When she got Mr. Raju in Grade Five, he was teaching the gifted that year and he sent her to be tested. Before that, well, we knew she was really smart but how do you know whether your child is smart enough to be called gifted or not. I mean, you know, and you don't think you can go to the teacher and say, 'Oh, my child is gifted,' and they'll say, 'Oh, yeah, right! These parents!'" This same parent is quite explicit about the kind of response which she would like from teachers, one that acknowledges all parents as repositories of knowledge about their children:

I guess they would have to change their attitudes. Well, I mean, I suppose that parents come with all levels of education and backgrounds, and all that, and maybe some don't know about it as much as others, but parents should know their children best, really, if anybody does, so if they have certain things that they feel about their child, they should be able to communicate it to the teacher and the teacher should pay attention to it.

Collaboration/Mutuality in Instruction: Ultimately, parents hope that teachers will not just listen to what they have to say, but perhaps incorporate parent knowledge of child and parent goals for child into classroom practice or, even better, co-construct both a set of parent/teacher expectations and a learning plan for the child. Parent 78210 characterizes openness to parent knowledge and goals as "talking it over." However, she adds that the ideal parent/teacher relationship is one which goes beyond that, in which teachers "don't hesitate to phone if there is a problem and talk it over with you rather than just dealing with it themselves. They talk it over, let the parents be a little bit more involved." The kind of relationship, in which parents are also expert contributors, is collaboration or "mutuality." According to Parent 29204 a relationship of mutuality is "directed at attaining a goal, or a particular set of goals for the child with the help of that child." When asked to elaborate Parent 29204 replies: "I don't want to meddle in a teacher's affairs. I don't want to change her teaching style. I just want to find out what her assessment of the situation is, what my assessment of the situation is and together if there's any difficulties then we can work through it."

For parents mutuality defines a relationship that is not always equal, but that is complementary. Sometimes parent participates or does more; sometimes teacher

participates or does more. This sense of an ebbing and flowing of the efforts of the respective parties in a relationship of mutuality is reflected in the following quote by Parent 74204 who was asked to describe the ideal parent/teacher relationship:

It's hard to describe a perfect relationship. Some will be stronger on one area, some weaker in another. But, hopefully, I feel that it should be a situation, and the same for the parents I'm sure, but it should be a situation that you try to emphasize our strong points and try to take care of our weak points and we create an environment for our children where they can succeed, learn, or socialize and all the other objectives that we every day add onto the school system.

For the above parent a relationship of mutuality is one in which parent and teacher support one another, each working to their strengths, to create a learning situation most beneficial to the child. The emphasis in the above three quotes is not just on collaboration of parents as permitted by teachers but on teacher and parent(s) as equally important contributors and initiators.

Open Communication

The second major theme within the category of parent expectations of teacher with respect to self is open communication. "Well," says one Parent 74204, "an ideal situation is obviously having communication and an open line with the teacher all the time. If you don't have that, you don't have any situation at all. You have them and you have us and the child is running back and forth in between. And that's not good." According to parents open communication from teachers is that which is honest, complete, free of fear, timely (immediate) and frequent.

Honest and complete communication is that in which teachers communicate to parents in a "no holds barred" way without withholding important information or concerns about the child. Parent 51214 looks for "an open relationship that, hey, she feels that she should be able to phone me and discuss something and be very open about it and, hey, say it, and me the same. If I had a problem I could discuss it with her and try to resolve it or whatever. And I hope she feels she could talk to me and I can talk to her." Parent 23206 sees ideal communication as that which is "open, where both parties feel they can speak to each other at any time about the student and keep the student's interests at the heart of the issue and not the teacher's or parent's personality get in the way. As long as their best interest are there I think that would be the ideal." The ideal of mutuality is also apparent here with respect to the idea of communication. Open communication is that in which both parties feel free to express their opinions and concerns.

This kind of open communication should also be characterized by freedom from fear and recrimination. According to Parent 24202, in the ideal parent/teacher relationship “the lines of communication are open, and that there’s no fear on either end.” Ideally, parents want teachers to communicate freely to them; at the same time they would like to be able to communicate concerns to the teacher without having to worry about the teacher’s reaction. Parent 25205 explains:

I’ve found over the past years, when there were problems, Cassie felt that I couldn’t really talk to the teacher about it in case the teacher would take it out on her, if it was something that the teacher didn’t like, so when she was in Grade Five I went and talked to the vice-principal about a problem and then she talked to the teacher about it and she didn’t tell him who, which particular parent was complaining, you know, because sometimes we felt that way, that if you have something critical, even if you are trying to put it diplomatically, that it doesn’t go over very well.

This expectation, as the above parent suggests, is not only one which relates to parent and teacher but also to student. Parents are often fearful that their child will suffer in class as a result of parents’ comments and concerns expressed to the teacher. About recriminations in class Parent 25201 says of the teacher, “[They] should have an open-door policy that’s known to the parents, I think, without feeling [parents] have to be on the defensive, without worrying it was going to be taken out on the child.”

According to parents open communication is also that which is timely. Problems and concerns, notes Parent 24202, are “verbalized immediately.” The ideal relationship is one in which “there’s no discomfort with talking to each other, that you don’t feel that you’re taking up much of his time, or something, that the teacher doesn’t hesitate to call and or write in the student planner.” Parents expect that teachers will communicate with them immediately when a problem arises, or when the information that they have to pass on is still current especially so that they can respond in time if an active response is appropriate. “I just feel it’s really important that you feel comfortable to communicate,” says Parent 73204, “that if there is a problem with the child, I want to hear about it, and I appreciate hearing about it so that I can—because a lot of times it’s something that needs to be handled at home possibly.”

For many parents true timeliness of communication is not possible through only the minimal number of required written report cards, as Parent 28216 explains when speaking of the ideal relationship between teachers and parents:

I think mainly it’s communication. That a situation where something the parent should know about, you know, where the children are falling behind in some of the things at school, that the parents should know right away. Like I’ve certainly heard of situations, where they find out a month after there’s been some kind of a problem, that there was a problem. So I think

it's really important that teachers should keep in touch with parents. Rather than from one parent/teacher interview to the next. You can't let it go that long.

Frequency of communication, to which the parent above refers, is also very important. As Parent 25201 contends,

I don't want to just know when a report card is due if he is having problems. I want to know, and I always help the kids, always, and I have no problem with that, so I think there should be more communication between the parents and teachers and I think it is more the teacher's responsibility, whether it is done through a note with the child, whether it is done through a phone call, whether it is done through the vice principal, I don't think that is relevant. I think what is relevant is that the teacher communicate with the parent and the parent be open minded about the communications.

The preference for more communication is felt by most parents whether their children are having difficulty or not, and applies to regular day-to-day schoolwork. Parent 28201 speaks for parents when she says that she would like "probably more talking, I guess, one on one. There should be more interim reporting going on, or even if it wasn't necessarily verbal, but written, just a little thing saying, okay, these are some of their test marks and just sort of let parents know."

Comprehensive Communication

In addition to having expectations about how teachers will communicate to them—honestly and completely, and in a timely and frequent manner—parents also have expectations for the content of the communication, that it be comprehensive, covering curriculum, expectations, and student achievement and progress.

Parent expectation for communication about curriculum includes not only day to day work, but also the general themes that students are studying. "Something I haven't really felt I've ever known really was the curriculum thrust at the time," explains Parent 72204. "You get a curriculum summary with the report cards, but I almost think I've liked to have known ahead of time so you can add to and supplement what is going on in the room."

Parents would not only like information about curriculum content but also expectations. When asked what teachers could do better, Parent 72207 comments: "I think communication about what's being taught at school. We get that at report card time, but sometimes the kids bring home assignments that they weren't that clear about the instructions. Maybe if it was, if they'd written the instructions down or the teachers would send a xeroxed copy it would help."

Parents are also keen to obtain information from their child's teachers about the child's academic achievement and progress, especially if there are problems. "I would like to be notified if Roger has a problem," says Parent 25201. "Whether they need me to come into the school or if we can deal with it over the phone, it doesn't matter to me. Or if they just want to send work home and let me work with him, you know, I am fine with that as well." Parent 77208 agrees that teachers should phone home about problems, but suggests, as do many other parents, that positive reports would also be welcome: "I think that they should, should be more, more one on one and if your child's doing good they should let you know about that too."

In addition to being informed casually by telephone or in person about their child's achievement and progress, parents expect full and informative formal written and conference reporting. Full reporting includes, first of all, information about both the child's strengths and weaknesses. Speaking of report cards Parent 78202 comments: "They never really gave the—where he needs more strength put into. Everything was, Jonathan is good at this, Jonathan is good at that . . . where does Jonathan need help, you know?" In addition, parents want to know not only how their child is doing with respect to his or her own capabilities and potential, but also in comparison to the group norms of the classroom and within the context of the teacher's knowledge of general norms for that age and grade. Parent 23204 says of her child's anecdotal report card: "You don't really know where you stand with this anecdotal stuff. You don't really know. I mean, we basically know that she is an average student, but we really [don't] know exactly where she fits into the slot."

During the course of the research project some of the Ministry of Education's Year 2000 initiatives were in place. Consequently, some students who had received letter grades in earlier years no longer did, and some had never received letter grades. The comments of the parents here emerge from that context. Despite the context, the themes are clear: parents expect that the reporting from the classroom teacher be thorough and complete, informing parents from the teacher's perspective about the child's strengths and where improvement is required. Parents also expect the report to be contextualized, that is, to give them some sense of the child's performance relative not only to his potential but also to others in the class, the school, the district. "He's doing the best to his ability," states Parent 28201 succinctly, "well, what do you mean by that?" Reporting of the kind imagined by the parent above situates teachers' comments so that parents are clear about the meaning of strengths as well as where weaknesses are and how they can be addressed.

Parent Expectations of Teacher Vis-à-Vis the Student

Respect and Care

Parents hope that teachers will respect and care for their child as a person and as an individual, and they believe that this has implications for learning in the classroom. According to Parent 25205, “the personality of the teacher definitely makes a difference too. I think it really makes a difference. Maybe not to some children, but I think maybe to most children . . . that if the teacher obviously is interested in them and cares about what they do, and things like that, that certainly they would learn better.”

Help and Explanation

Parents also count on the willingness of the teacher to help the student and “explain things.” Parent 51204 reveals that her son had not been doing his homework because he didn’t understand it, but had not asked for help, she believes, because he felt “stupid.” Although she couldn’t help him she reassured him that if he returned to the school with the problem “Someone will explain it.”

High Expectations

Parents are also keen to see high expectations established in the classroom based on students’ needs and not beyond or below their capabilities. Speaking of her experience Parent 26304 says, “I was hoping for higher expectations of the teacher. . . . individual needs weren’t as challenged as they might have been.” While high expectations are desired, parents also look for teacher support and encouragement to accompany high academic expectations.

Parents also prefer high teacher expectations with respect to classroom discipline and organization. Parent 29204 comments that “the teachers over here, as most parents would say, are really too lenient and easy on the kids, in terms of discipline.” Parents are especially concerned about disruptive environments which inhibit learning. “In the past,” says Parent 25205, “because of having a lot of problem children in [my daughter’s] class the class was disrupted constantly, although she is smart so she would still learn things, but it wasn’t a very pleasant sort of atmosphere to learn in.”

COMMENTARY ON PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Parents have expectations of self for both home and school. That is, they expect that they will have a role to play with regard to instructional concerns, both with their children at

home and with the teacher at school. They not only expect to obtain information from their children and help and encourage their children at home, but also that they will seek information directly from the classroom, and participate and advocate on their child's behalf at school.

Parents have more expectations of the teacher with respect to students than with respect to self. This is perhaps not surprising given the primacy of the instructional relationship between students and teachers. Expectations for the teacher with respect to the student relate to the instructional relationship in the classroom, and to the demonstration of respect and care. Expectations for the teacher with respect to self relate generally to communication about the child, and the characteristics of communication from teacher to parent. Parents want teachers to be open and to communicate openly, to invite them in, to listen, and to collaborate. However, their expectations of self suggest that they also recognize that they will need to take the initiative to seek information, to participate and to advocate on their child's behalf. They are clear about exactly what collaborative activity means for them, for their own role and that of teachers.

Interestingly, there is no mention among parents of expectations for teachers regarding curriculum or methodology in the classroom. The academic and pedagogic competency of teachers appear to be assumed by parents.

Unlike students, who have no expectations of parents with respect to the teacher, and no expectations of the teacher with respect to parents, parents have expectations of students for both home and school. Although parents are not "of" the world of school as are their children, they see their children, in terms of expectations and role, at home and at school and focus on academic support in both places. Where interaction between student and parent is concerned, there is much similarity of expectation. Both students and parents expect that students will do their homework. Students expect to get help at home, and also expect that they will seek out this help. Parents expect that they will provide help at home. Both parents and students expect that students will seek help with schoolwork in the classroom and that teachers will provide this assistance.

Help is a major theme of students' expectations for parents at home, and for teachers in the classroom. It is at the same time a major theme of parents' expectations for teachers in the classroom and for students at home and in the classroom. Parents would like students to be able to get the help they need, and to actively seek this help from themselves and from teachers.

PART B: STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS IN RELATION

INTRODUCTION

Part B is divided into three sections: Student/Teacher Interaction, Parent/Student Interaction, and Parent/Teacher Interaction. Each of these is further subdivided into three parts which present the perceptions of each of the three individuals regarding the interactions between the two particular individuals of each of the three dyads above. The focus in this section is on attitudes and practices in relationships, on the experiences of individuals with each of the other two parties, and of their experience of the relationship between the other two parties.

The charts below summarize, respectively, the themes for the three interactive dyads. The data presented in each of the thematic categories listed in the tables below represent the perceptions of individuals. Within the tables some of the category headings summarize the findings for that theme and thus the perceptions of that referent group. For example, "Students Talk About School" (which appears twice, once for parents and once for students) signifies that parents and students generally perceive that students talk to parents at home about school. "Lack of Student Respect for Teachers" signifies that teachers generally perceive that student respect for teachers is lacking. Those category headings that do not indicate directionality simply summarize the theme but not the specific findings for that theme. In these particular cases specific findings varied and relevant details about saliency are provided in the text.

Table 9: Student/Teacher Interaction

Teacher Perceptions	Student Perceptions	Parent Perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers Respect Students • Lack of Student Respect for Teachers • Developing Student Responsibility—or Not • Providing Choice for Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning Environment • Academic Support • Respect and Care • Student Choice/Student Voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Student Needs • Help and Explanation from the Teacher • Varying Teacher Respect for Students • Listening to and Talking with Students • Recognizing and Valuing Students as Individuals • Inclusion and Participation in the Classroom

Table 10: Parent/Student Interaction

Student Perceptions	Parent Perceptions	Teacher Perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents Ask About School • Students Talk About School • Students Ask for Help • Positive and Productive Helping Relationships at Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents Ask About School • Students Talk About School • Students Ask for Help • Positive and Productive Helping Relationships at Home • Developing Student Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate Help and Support in the Home

Table 11: Parent/Teacher Interaction

Parent Perceptions	Teacher Perceptions	Student Perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to Parents • Ongoing Communication from Teachers • Teacher Efforts to Involve Parents in Instruction • Teacher Efforts to Communicate and Collaborate with Parents • Parent Communication to Teachers • Parent Advocacy: Parent Efforts to Collaborate with Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to Parents • Ongoing Communication to Parents • Teacher Efforts to Involve Parents in Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to Parents • Ongoing Communication to Parents • Parents in the Classroom

STUDENT/TEACHER INTERACTION

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Teachers Respect Students

When asked if they respect their students all teachers, like Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer), reply that they do: "I highly respect all of my students," she states, "I wouldn't be in this position if I didn't." No teachers say, outright, that they do not respect students. A positive response is assumed by teachers who do not respond as forthrightly as Teacher 77100. As pointed out earlier in "Teacher Expectations of Self Vis-à-Vis Parents," teachers do not often indicate explicitly how they could or should demonstrate respect for students. It is even more difficult to get a sense among individual teachers about whether they actually do demonstrate respect towards their students.

There are, however, two teachers among the Time 8 group who do not just reflect on how teachers could and should demonstrate respect for students, but speak openly and sincerely about what they do personally. Although spoken of highly by parents and students these teachers do admit to failings. When asked how teachers demonstrate respect for students Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) speaks personally:

Well, it's a lot on how you interact with them, you know, when you talk with them and things like that. Like I tell the kids, this is the way I like to be treated, so I try to treat people this way and there's been a few times this year where I've sort of lost it. I shouldn't say that—one time, where I can think of, where I actually yelled at someone and then afterwards, I felt really bad and I apologized to that person. You know, I think that's sort of important because it lets that student know that once in a while someone is going to lose their temper but this is how to deal with it. . . . And let them know. I say I feel really bad about yelling at you, because I really don't like to be yelled at. This guy, this is one of my behavior problems and then we just started talking, you know, and it was really good and um, so there's that. There's that. There's respecting their abilities. You know . . . there's kids in my class that I know that just aren't going to get it—a particular concept, you know. Well, I say, well, you know this is what you can do, kind of thing. So, you sort of respect them, you know. You don't—I don't—I think I don't—I try to not to belittle them, you know. Everybody's got their own abilities, you know. Everybody's got their good points and their weak points.

For Mr. Griffin it is important to treat students of all abilities equally as individuals, and respond to their unique learning needs. For this teacher respect is a question of demonstrating what you expect to be demonstrated to you, and apologizing for behaviour that is not respectful.

When asked how teachers demonstrate respect for students Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) also speaks personally, discussing somewhat different issues than Mr. Griffin. When asked how teachers demonstrate their respect for teachers she says:

I think by giving them choices, letting go of some of the power that could at times be abused. And I realize myself—especially at one time, my pregnancy was really difficult and I felt I was going to vomit at any minute; for two weeks it was everyday, all day—that at times I was a bit more directive and that it was easy, just, “OK, that’s enough,” but then for me that’s not the approach that I want to use. . . . But also it’s important that they don’t feel ridiculed at any time. I will never talk, if we have marks, I will never talk . . . it’s always a personal thing. If they want to share with their friends, it’s their option. And go from top to bottom or bottom to top—never. Also, to try to find—which is difficult—to try to find time to talk about individually about what’s going on in their lives so they’re not just a student in the classroom, a human being involved in skating, in music and in other things as well. And also to console them. And to accept if I make a mistake and to apologize if I have to. If I feel that I did make a mistake, I will apologize. Like I’m not always right and I want them to know that.

Like Mr. Griffin, Madame Tremblay also expects respect from students. As noted earlier in the “Teacher Expectations of Students Vis-à-Vis the Classroom” section, she cites interruption as rudeness that she is loathe to tolerate. About this she says: “That’s something we try to be working on [sic]. So it’s some rights but also some obligations that they have. I think it’s fairly understood.” For Madame Tremblay student participation in the classroom—in part through choice—is important. Students must be acknowledged and treated as individuals, both as students and as people outside the classroom. For both of these teachers respect is not uni-directional; it cannot be expected of others and not of self. Ultimately, it must be mutual.

Lack of Student Respect for Teachers

These data suggest that teachers commonly believe that students do not respect teachers. Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) noted earlier (see the “Teacher Expectations for Students Vis-à-Vis the Classroom” section) that an ideal situation is one in which “students respect the teachers as much as the teachers are showing respect to the students.” However, clearly she does not believe this to be the case. She relates an anecdote about a child in her school telling a teacher to “shut up” and then says:

I just look at the difference between the students of the sixties I guess. I was a student of the sixties and students of the nineties and I think that because of the way that society has developed, students are freer to express what they think, what they want to do. And I find teachers and adults they’re less powerful now than they used to be in consequences. I’m not an advocate of bringing a strap back, for example, but a child can be caught doing something pretty desperate and, oh, what do we do? Well, we send him home for a couple of days and sometimes there’s not a parent there so it’s just “Good, I’ll watch TV all day, play Nintendo all day. This is cool.” I guess that goes back to what is the family life like? And what kind of a child are the parents sending to us?

When asked the same question, about whether teachers can show respect to students, Teacher 74100 (Mr. Winton) also focusses on lack of student respect. He is somewhat more optimistic that this can be cultivated in classrooms, but not that it can be

cultivated permanently in children: “That respect you’re talking about will be prevalent or start in your classroom and stay in your classroom, but once they go out the door, it’s the law of the jungle and that’s it.”

Developing Student Responsibility—Or Not

Among the teachers in this sample a small group (three of the nineteen Time 8 teachers) feels that all students can and do take responsibility for their own work and learning. A second small group of teachers (two of the nineteen Time 8 teachers) feels categorically that students do not take responsibility for their own learning. A third group (the majority: fourteen of nineteen teachers) feels that some students can and do take responsibility for their own learning and others do not. Some of the teachers of this latter group, however, are more confident than others about the ability of students to take responsibility, and more positive about the percentage of those who can than those who can’t.

Responsible students, according to teachers (and noted in the “Teacher Expectations of Students Vis-à-Vis the Classroom” section), are those who are organized, do their best and complete their work. They work well all the time and will seek out the teacher for assistance, but proceed independently.

Those teachers who feel that students do not and cannot accept responsibility for their own work believe that students are usually choosing not to do so. Teacher 75100 (Ms. Fraser), for example, says: “I don’t think it’s that they can’t, it’s that they won’t. I think they’re quite capable should they make a decision to. And anything that’s required, any kind of directive learning or self responsibility, they’ve balked and complained and whined and refused. They want me to do it.”

Those teachers who believe that some students can be responsible and others cannot do not typically feel that all students who are not responsible are making that choice. They believe that some students may lack ability or are constrained in other ways. Teacher 22100 (Ms. O’Hearn) does believe that some of the students who aren’t responsible “are just lazy; they choose not to do the work and waste a heck of a lot of time. “ She adds, however, that “for some of the ones that can’t, it’s because I think that they lack confidence and self-esteem and they don’t think they can.” These students “need to be reassured that they are doing it right, so working on an independent project you can’t just leave them alone. You have to be monitoring them all the time to keep them on track and to stay focussed on what they should be doing.” Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel) explains that some students who are not responsible “are not particularly low

students, or anything like that” but are more focussed on social rather than academic concerns. “They should be in Grade Nine,” she comments. “They’re in the wrong grade level. I don’t think it’s too cool to be here. I think they’re thinking more of boys/girls.” Others, she says, “are probably ones that have learning difficulties sometimes and find it a struggle.” Generally this group of teachers believes that children can be taught, but many, especially those who are less optimistic, characterize the issue of development of responsibility as “a constant battle.” “Many of the kids,” says Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie), “are very resistant to it. It has always been the teacher giving them some kind of stuff and they either do it or don’t do it. And they’re resistant from having the responsibilities.”

Those teachers who are more confident about the ability of children to take responsibility for their own learning and work, and teachers who act on this belief, are far less likely to suggest that children choose to be irresponsible. They acknowledge that some students may be more mature than others, but even in these cases, as Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) suggests, “they should be able to take a certain amount—some can take full responsibility—for their own learning, absolutely.” Teacher 79100 (Madame Boucher) notes that children “goof off and they play—they’re kids, right?” However, she explains that even so they can take responsibility:

For example, last week we had a lot of track stuff going on and kids were being called out to practice during the day and what I did on the morning on the board I wrote them what they were expected to do during the day and I barely heard them. They were all working quite well. . . . I wasn’t always there. They had a sub in sometimes. Sometimes we were only half the class, but they continued to work.

Those teachers who do speak affirmatively and confidently about students being able to take responsibility for their work and doing so often discuss, at the same time, structures or expectations that they establish in their classrooms that support the development of student responsibility. They also discuss opportunities that they provide for students to have some choice in the work that they do. In contrast, those teachers who are less positive about the ability of children to take responsibility, and those who do not believe that children can be responsible, do not often provide examples of what they do to teach or encourage responsibility.

About structures or procedures for developing responsibility Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson), who believes that students can and most do take responsibility for their own learning, says:

We have them get up and go to the homework board and that shows a little bit of responsibility to the rest of the class. . . . A student will come at the end of the day and go over everything that’s needed. They keep track of it and they go over it with the rest of the class, and that sort of demonstrates responsibility. Some of them are on homework books and that

demonstrates, you know, they have to be responsible enough to get the assignment in the day, and get their mom to sign it at the end of the evening.

Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer), who, like Mr. Griffin (Teacher 24100), believes “absolutely” that children can assume responsibility for their own work, describes an example in her classroom in which students demonstrated responsibility by showing her their commitment to a group research project:

Actually they just finished one on astronomy and they had to choose their own groups and I talked about working well with friends. Sometimes you can work well with them and sometimes you can have a good time with them and sometimes that good time doesn't fit in a work situation so choose your groups wisely which they did. I gave them the criteria for the project and the time line, what they had to accomplish, and basically the bottom line today was, “Well, you've got thirty five minutes and it has to be done. Get it finished.” Some children weren't finished by quarter past twelve which was the end of the period and they came and asked me if they could stay in at lunchtime to finish the project. To me that shows that they're responsible to finish that work.

Providing Choice for Students

Almost all teachers report that they give students choices in class (thirteen of the fourteen Time 4 teachers; fifteen of the nineteen Time 8 teachers; nine of the Time 2 teachers) but some do this, in fact, more or less than others. When asked whether he offers students choices, Teacher 74100 (Mr. Winton) says: “Oh, marginally, but for the most part it's usually directed by me. They get some choices but I wouldn't say that it's a consistent approach that I use.” For Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom) the problem is covering curriculum. “I went through a style when the Year 2000 first came in,” she explains, “where we actually made choices in class, but I found then I wasn't covering curriculum so the kids don't get choices in classes, but I have a core material that I want to cover in each.” When probed about choices in class she says, “I guess phys ed, you know if it is a games day they get to choose.” Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) refers to things that are “just given,” that are “so sequential that we don't have very many learning options out there. There are just some things that have to be done at certain times and just aren't as flexible.” While other teachers are aware of curriculum, fixed schedules and sequence, these kinds of restrictions don't seem to pose the roadblocks for them that they do for Miss Halstrom and Ms. Lurie.

When choice is provided students often choose from among some options given by the teacher, or they have the freedom to choose from within a prescribed framework. Teachers often refer to this as catering to different learning styles. When teachers provide examples of options they typically mention novels and novel projects. For example,

Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais) says, "I'll give them a list of perhaps thirty activities and they'll have to choose one, so they can illustrate their learning in a lot of different ways." When the student is given freedom to decide within a prescribed framework the choice is usually a little more open. Here the student develops or decides on an activity or topic of his or her own within broad guidelines set by the teacher. Sometimes the student is also free to decide how to present that learning. Examples given by teachers often relate to projects or reports in Social Studies or Science. That is, the teacher provides the overarching theme or topic and students focus in specifically on what they would like to study. For example, Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) says: "We'd been studying the environment and stuff and I said, 'Okay, in two months . . . I want you guys to hand in . . . an assignment on something to do with the environment. That's all I'm going to tell you. You can do a model, you can do anything you want, as long as it has an environmental theme.'"

Teacher 51100 (Mrs. Kosko) describes the choices above as "choices within limits." She provides these to students in her class and cites various examples: which novels to read, which assignments to do for novel projects, and which math units to complete first. However, she also refers to a wider participative role in the classroom—beyond simply choosing one project over another—in which her students are sometimes engaged. "Sometimes," she says, "I'll sit down and brainstorm with them. The kinds of themes that they would like to learn about, anything they'd like to know about and then I'll maybe choose a science theme out of that or a socials theme." Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) also refers to participation in the classroom: "We have negotiations in the classroom for certain things. If they want to or if they feel . . . two or three times in the year we decided to remove the point system because they felt they didn't need it anymore. . . . So for general management in the classroom we have—they can participate, they can suggest things."

Interestingly, none of the examples of choice here, even those referring to greater participation in the classroom mentioned by Mrs. Kosko and Madame Tremblay, are those in which students would make or be given choices on a routine or extended basis. Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke), however, does refer to an example of choice in her classroom which goes beyond curricular choices or options being offered perhaps a few times a month. She describes weekly "Time Management Fridays." On these days students "get an outline of all the things which are scheduled. They have an outline of all their assignments, and they sit down and they put in the time and they decide what they're going to do when." Students, notes Mrs. Munke, love Fridays. "I guess the thing

that I've noticed the most with that," she states, "is they have become more responsible and I think that carries over into the other days of the week." In this example, like the brainstorming of Teacher 51100 or the negotiating of Teacher 62100, students participate more widely in their life in the classroom, and on a regular basis.

Interestingly, although most teachers give students choices in class, not all of them discuss these strategies in the context of the development of student responsibility as do those teachers who are confident that students can be responsible, and work to develop student responsibility in their classrooms. For example, Teacher 78100 (Miss Davis) speaks of offering choices to her students. Of her class and responsibility she says: "I think they're a good group of kids that can, and do. . . . My class had to, a while ago, complete a novel assignment and I let them choose from about five different novels, let them choose from a couple of different assignments. One of my students did not one, but three assignments and only one was required so That was part of the goal setting I did with them. They set goals of what they wanted to achieve by the end of June." In Miss Davis' classroom being able to choose widely is a part of the development of student responsibility.

Apart from acknowledging the need to allow students to demonstrate their learning in different ways, teachers rarely speak about the benefits of choice for students in classroom. Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) and Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke) are the only Time 8 teachers who do. Madame Tremblay notes that as a result of offering more choice to students she has seen

a willingness. . . . In the beginning . . . the students didn't seem to have much pride in what they were doing and it was just, "It's done, that's what you asked me to do, it's done now." So that's when we started doing more projects that not twenty-four would be the same, it's all different. . . . It seems to me they seem to be more proud and to produce more, to do more and to increase the motivation.

This benefit is not likely to be seen by the few teachers who offer no choices in class.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

The Learning Environment

Disruptive Classrooms

Some students (nine of the thirty-four Time 8 students) describe their classrooms as quiet places which are conducive to learning. The classroom, explains Student 78301, is "easy to work in . . . cause it's not very loud and everyone respects you and stuff." Student 79307 says simply: "It's quiet and you can concentrate. It's fine for me; it's quiet."

Unfortunately, more students (fifteen of the thirty-four Time 8 students) report that their classrooms are noisy and disruptive and that under these conditions it is difficult to work. Student 62307 says, "Sometimes it's loud in the classroom and you cannot concentrate so you just can't work." This student also notes a concern of adolescent students about talk in the classroom: "And everyone's talking and you think that they might be talking about you. So you just can't think." Students who are uncooperative and disruptive are perceived to be a bother by others, and a burden to the classroom teacher. Student 24305 notes that disruptive students demand more of the teacher's time and attention: "They goof around and waste time, and then the teacher will have to talk to them, and like the children might interrupt his lesson, and then he will have to talk to them and we are sort of waiting for him to teach again."

Certainly disruption and unruliness occur more in some classrooms than others, but in general disruption is an ongoing or worsening problem for these students over their late elementary school careers. All students comment on the problem of noise and disruption even if they are currently in a quiet classroom. Student 25301, for example, notes that "stealing other people's things" is a problem in his classroom. He adds, however, that "this is the only class I have been in that steals things," but that "just about every class is noisy." Student 54301 says that his classroom is "usually rowdy." There are, he adds, "some kids that really act up every now and then." When asked how many he replies, "almost half the class." He points out that he can't concentrate on what he's doing, and when asked how the situation compares to other years, says, "It's worse this year." Three students in the Time 8 data who are in team teaching situations, where double classrooms of students are assembled together, cite noise and disruption as a particular problem.

When asked what he would do to remedy the noise situation in the classroom if he were the teacher, Student 25301 says: "I don't know. I would make sure the noise level was down so that people would work." He adds, however, that "everybody, including me, could try to be a little quieter, and not let the noise get out of hand." Although this student acknowledges that he and his classmates are ultimately responsible for the noise levels, students in general suggest that setting the direction initially for the tone of the classroom and expectations with regard to working conditions is their teacher's responsibility. The desire among students that teachers rectify the problem of noise and disruption is common. Student 62307 would like the classroom to be quieter and has spoken to the teacher who has said, "It's a problem that you just have to put up with." When asked whether the student has explained to the teacher that he is a student and can't make his

classmates be quiet, he replies, “Sometimes I think that.” This student adds that he has been in classrooms where talking and disruption have not been a problem and it has been due to “teachers; sometimes the teachers, sometimes the kids are just more responsible.”

Meeting Individual Learning Needs

For many students school is not a fun place to be, and learning is not engaging because they are not learning anything new. Eight of the thirty-four Time 8 students, for example, comment that they are bored. While some students have more difficulty learning, none mention that the work itself is too complex. Student 26304 (Time 4) says: “I get bored because most of the stuff, like French, I had already been in French Immersion and I already knew all that stuff . . . and I get bored easily in Math. A lot of times I just get bored.” For some students school is boring because they are doing what they have already done before. Others are insufficiently challenged, and the pace of instruction is too slow. “Sometimes, “ notes Student 73306, “I feel like it’s too easy and I want to have more challenging things to do. And sometimes I don’t think that, it’s just boring to do that.” When asked to provide more detail about what she finds too easy this student declares, “Because like for division, she wants to teach us how to do division, but I’m really good at division and I find that’s really boring just waiting there and I just finish the questions in a couple of minutes.” Student 51304 tells a similar kind of story: “Like most of the time we do, like math, and then we keep on doing the same sort of math. We keep on getting questions over and over again . . . and we have to do all the stuff we learned all over again and it gets boring at times.” Examples of boredom in math, in particular, are especially common among these students.

Occasionally students speak of teachers who are able to provide sufficient but not excessive instruction, and sufficient but not excessive time, to meet the needs of all students for either assistance or for challenge. Student 23306, for example, notes that

lots of times my teacher explains it, like if we’re doing a new page he’ll sometimes even—he spends the whole lesson how to do it. But if everyone really gets it, then he’ll let us get right down to work and if everyone is finished then you get to play a math game or something. Like there’s one unit when we were doing fractions and multiples, we still had to play. You sat up on your chair and then the first person around the room, starts with one, say we were doing multiples of three, every time you would hit a multiple, you had say beep or boop or whatever the sound was and then he kept going . . . and if you missed it you had to sit down.

Although there is mention of curriculum modification for students with learning difficulties, students rarely if ever speak of modification of curriculum for those who are very capable. No students mention challenge groups or challenge projects. Student 23306

is alone in noting that his teacher gives capable student opportunities to move ahead on work at their own speed. Interestingly, this is done, in part, as a way of meeting the needs of these students for a quieter work environment:

And if it does get lot of noisy, or something like that, our teacher, if we are being good, our teacher gives us some of us pages to go into the hallway or wherever it's quieter and to do something, like sometimes in math we'll get ahead of the rest of the class, like I'm almost a chapter ahead of everybody, and like there's a couple of kids at the end of the book, so like we're allowed to go out into the carpeted area or in the hall and work at our pace.

When students report that they like school they comment, almost without exception, that they like school because they like to learn, and they are learning lots. Most students (twenty-one of the thirty-four Time 8 students) report that they like coming to school. The sentiments of Student 74311, that "school is fun because you learn different stuff" are echoed often in the comments of others. Student 24304 says, "I like school and I like to learn and my teacher makes it fun to learn." When asked what she means by "fun to learn," she distinguishes between fun for its own sake, separated from learning, and learning that becomes fun, but struggles to articulate this. "Like not really fun," she comments, "but we sometimes play games and . . . we do things. I like doing problem-solving and stuff like that."

The students, like Student 24304 above, who are in classrooms where students are engaged and learning is fun will sometimes comment on instructional methods. Student 62303 also likes school because of her teacher who is "lots of fun and she's new at it so she tries different things. . . . Like in science I really don't like science but we did a forensic science chapter that was lots of fun." Says Student 28216 of her classroom: "We just finished our project. We had to read a novel and then choose what we did and most people chose to do a skit, so you could get as many friends and do a skit and that was kind of fun."

While projects and other kinds of creative assignments are popular and satisfying to these students, generally few students mention instructional methods that are new, exciting and satisfying. These kinds of activities are often discussed in the context of desired change. Student 23304 explains: "I don't like science. There really isn't anything interesting in the things we do and talking about it and writing down notes, doing some work." Instead of simply recording notes this student would like to "do some more projects, maybe do a skit." Student 22302 (Time 4) explains that he likes "doing labs in science and stuff like that. I don't really like doing countries and all of that, but we have to." When asked what he would do if he had a choice he says, "I would want to try to make up like my own country and make up my own laws for it and all of that." Exciting,

non-traditional ways of demonstrating learning are favoured by these students over copying notes from the blackboard, but they are not found in all classrooms.

Academic Support

Lack of Teacher Explanation

About half of the students from the Time 8 data collection round report that their teachers explain things well. “Our teacher,” says Student 24304, “makes sure that we understand everything, which makes everything much better. If we don’t understand anything, then it’s kind of hard to work and do everything.” Of her teacher Student 22301 says: “Well she explains our work really well. She gives us time to work on it. . . . If we don’t get what she is saying, we put our hand up and let her know that we don’t know and then she explains everything.

Receiving instruction before being asked to complete a task is particularly important to students. Student 72307 notes this: “My teacher is really good. . . . She gives us a lesson before we do anything, like for math if we’re reading a page, she gives us a lesson and that helps a lot.”

Unfortunately, not all classrooms are like these exemplars. According to Student 74303, her classroom can be “at times” a difficult place in which to learn. This occurs, she adds, “when we’re learning something new.” The specific problem is “figuring out what we’re supposed to do.” In the Time 2 data, for example, only six of forty-three students claim that their teachers explain things well.

Interestingly, as the earlier section on learning needs suggests, for some students there is too much explanation. Student 24302, whose math teacher is Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom), says that she would like to see changes in math. “I don’t like it,” she notes. “We always get homework in math. My teacher never gives us enough time to do your work.” When asked why she says, “She always keeps on explaining it over and over again.”

Soliciting Help from Teachers

Among the Time 8 teachers there are some who help out students unstintingly. The comments of these students are without reservation of any kind. Student 28301 reports that this year her classroom is “fine” because “the teachers are helping us lots.” Student 24306 notes positively that in her class the teacher “helps everyone . . . he helps us all.”

The students quoted above, however, are among only fifteen of thirty-four Time 8 students who report that their teacher helps students. Among the Time 2 data only thirteen of forty-three students comment that their teacher helps them, and only six in Time 4.

Many student reports on teacher helping in the Time 8 data are qualified by comments that the teacher is available at times for help, that he or she will help out, or would probably, when the student approaches with a question. Their comments differ from those above in that they suggest that teachers are not proactive about providing assistance. Student 74311, when asked whether he has opportunities to talk to his teacher about his school work individually, says, "Do you mean does he ask you?" When told yes the student replies, "No." When asked whether students can get individual help the student then adds, "Yeah. . . . You just usually put up your hand and he helps." Student 62307 says, "And like if you need help all you have to do is ask and she'll probably help you." Students must take the initiative, seeking out assistance specifically when they require it. Even then it is not always available or provided.

Although some students (sixteen in twelve classrooms in the Time 8 data) report that the teacher will occasionally make a comment to them individually about their schoolwork, a number of students comment that individual discussion with the teacher about schoolwork does not happen at all (ten of thirty-four Time 8 students). When asked whether the teacher talks to her individually about her schoolwork Student 61303 responds definitively: "There is no time that I remember that she has to me." She adds, however, "She has done it to other people." When asked when the teacher sets aside special time to speak to students about their work she states again: "She hasn't done it. I don't think she has ever done it to me." Student 28316 reports that her teacher does not talk to students about their work during the schoolday, but does so "usually only like [at] parent/teacher interviews."

Peers Helping Peers

There is strong comment from students about helping one another to learn and positiveness about classrooms in which teachers encourage and facilitate help between students. Student 61303 describes her classroom as "easy . . . because I know everybody and I know I can ask them and I don't need to be shy." Student 28316 also describes her classroom as an "easy" place to learn "cause there are some older kids and like if you need help you look to the older kids and they can help or the younger kids will help you."

In the classroom of Student 28316 above where the younger and older children help each other the multigrade (5/6/7) structure of the classroom facilitates cross-age interaction. In other classrooms simple grouping strategies facilitate student-to-student help. About working in groups Student 63304 says, "When I work with [friends] it's fine, it's easy work too." Student 72307 suggests that "they can help you with things. As long as it's a good group you don't get too noisy." As much as students appreciate being able to work and seek help from friends, this is not a feature of all classrooms. Only seven of thirty-four Time 8 students report that they receive help from or give help to other students in their classrooms. Seven of forty-three students (from four classrooms) in the Time 2 data report on student-to-student help, and only two in the Time 4 data.

Classroom 24100 is one of a few that stands out where help from the teacher and help from other students is concerned. Student 24306 explains that in her classroom the teacher helps students, seeking them out, rather than simply waiting for them to seek him out. In addition, students help one another, and help the teacher help one another. The teacher uses a variety of strategies including grouping practices. Student 24306 explains: "He goes around to groups and asks how we are doing and if we understand it, and then we answer, and if we are having difficulties then a group of students can go to the front and he'll explain more about what to do." When asked whether she and her friends like working in groups, this student replies, "Yes, because usually if we are not in groups, if we are separate, then if we need help there is nobody to turn to and we have to walk around the classroom to get help and if we are in a group we can talk and we can discuss things." "Some people," she adds, "if they are finished their work quickly and they know what they are doing, if someone has a question they will help Mr. Griffin answer the questions." When asked why she likes this classroom, in which there is much cooperative and group learning, she replies: "I don't know, just being with everyone else and knowing how to work together. Well, everybody works together, and I find it better to work in the classroom with everyone else."

Occasionally, however, students comment that they prefer working on their own. Student 22301 says, for example: "If we are doing a project and somebody [doesn't] finish it, it doesn't get done. All by yourself and you don't have to rely on another person, if she's done it or not." There is some comment from students like this about the difficulties of cooperative learning that is not appropriately structured to include both individual work and group tasks, and individual and group evaluation, or not monitored adequately by teachers. Students are unhappy if group work means they end up shouldering the burden of work for all or some of their group members.

Getting Help from Home

Some teachers communicate to their students that they can or should ask their parents for help with schoolwork at home. When asked whether the teacher encourages students to get their parents' help with homework Student 23306 says: "Yeah. He says if you don't understand, get your parents to help you, that's what your parents are there for." When asked whether her teacher expects her to get help from her parents, Student 62303 replies: "I think so. . . . Well, she usually says that if you need help you can always ask your parents or her."

Some teachers are more specific about how and with what parents should help their children. When asked whether his teacher expects him to get help from parents, Student 63304 explains: "Well, for homework, if you have homework, like he usually says you do it without your parents help, like I mean your parents can help you, like, say what if you add that and that, but they can't tell me to write the answer and do it. But they can help." Student 28301 says of his teacher, "She asks something like proof-read our stories to our brother or sister."

There is not a consistent or unanimous perception among students that their teachers expect or would like parents to help their children, or that they expect children to seek out that help from parents. Only six of thirty-four Time 8 students (from five classrooms) state explicitly that their teacher either asks, encourages, or expects them to get help at home from their parents (seven of twenty-four students from six classrooms in Time 4; nine of forty-three from six classrooms in Time 2). In fact, many are unsure about whether the teacher does expect them to get help from their parents. Student 72304 reports: "I guess. I'm not too sure though." This answer is common. When asked whether the teacher expects that students will get help from their parents if they are having trouble Student 56304 comments: "I don't really know about that. I have asked my parents before to help me with my homework. But the teacher hasn't really brought anything up like that before."

There is a sense among students that although seeking help from parents is acceptable, their teachers are available and would like students to ask them for help first. When asked whether the teacher expects students to get help from their parents, Student 24304 says: "Sometimes. He usually helps us. He doesn't really expect us to get help from our parents, but he said if we need help from our parents that we can ask him, he doesn't mind helping us." When asked whether the teacher expects students to get help from their parents, she says: "No. . . . He usually tells us what to do, he explains it."

Although students can comment to some extent on whether their teacher expects them to get help from their parents, they do not have a sense that teachers communicate this directly to their parents, or to parents overall for all students. Only two of the Time 8 students (in two classrooms) and four of the Time 2 students (in one classroom) report that the teacher speaks directly to their parents to ask them to help their children, and it is certainly not something about which teachers call home. Teacher requests for help to which students refer are usually made on an individual basis. For example, Student 77308 notes that the teacher phones his mother personally when he is having trouble, “to say my Mom needs to help me at home or if I have to do something at home or if I haven’t got my homework done in lots of time. Like some people don’t do all their homework so they get in big trouble. That’s what she does.” As this student notes, when teachers ask parents to help their children this is typically because there is a special learning need or the child is not completing his or her homework.

Respect and Care

Sensitivity to Student Sensibilities

According to students, ideal teachers are those who are sensitive to both the academic and emotional needs of students. These teachers take care not to embarrass students in front of their peers. Often this simply means speaking to students about work or behaviour privately, rather than in settings in which others can overhear. Students do not cite examples of teachers who extend this kind of courtesy. However, they are quick to point out when their teachers do not do this. Student 22305 indicates that she always needs help at school, and says: “I always I feel embarrassed. Ms. O’Hearn always talks out loud when I ask her something. I feel embarrassed.” The student adds that she doesn’t feel comfortable asking the teacher to repeat an instruction “cause she always talks out loud.” When asked whether she would prefer that the teacher come to her when she puts her hand up she notes that “even if she does, she still talks loud.” When asked what she would change the student says, “If she would talk lower, so it was not so loud so everybody could hear.” Asking the teacher for help is also difficult. She fears that her classmates “might start laughing cause maybe I don’t know what to do.” This student wishes for teacher sensitivity in both determining that she needs help, and in providing that help.

Sensitivity to student sensibilities also encompasses respect for the process—the mistakes and fumbles—of learning. About this there are also few positive comments. Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais) is Student 23306’s favourite teacher so far. When asked

why he says: “Well, he has a really great sense of humor. Like he doesn’t get all angry if you make a mistake and he’s patient and if we do something wrong, he’ll sort of make a little bit of fun of it, so we don’t feel that, or anything.” Student 79305 likes school because “the teacher’s really nice and she lets us . . . like she doesn’t get mad if we forget our homework or nothing. She’s really good.”

Sometimes this kind of support and respect for the process of learning is not the case. Of her teacher Student 25305 comments: “Sometimes I think she expects too highly of us, like I always feel that . . . I am not allowed to make mistakes, like if I make a mistake then she will be mad or something.” When asked what happens if students make mistakes Student 25305 says: Well, some people she kind of—if they have been making really stupid mistakes, sometimes she kind of ridicules them a bit. . . . I don’t think it is really fair.” In classroom 75100, explains Student 75304, the teacher is “always raising her voice and yelling at us . . . always sending somebody out of the room.” For students yelling is disrespectful and discouraging.

Interestingly, one student in Time 8 refers to classroom expectations for positive behaviour and sensitivity among students, and the benefit to students when these norms extend beyond teacher/student relationships to student/student relationships as well. In classroom 62100, says Student 62307 there is “mainly one rule—respect each other.” Student 62307 appreciates this because, as he explains, “in past years like I have been criticized because I kind of get good marks on tests and like I’m called names but during this year it hasn’t been as bad because of that rule, respect each other. It has really helped.”

Minimal Personal Interaction with Teachers

Although students dislike public acknowledgement which might embarrass them personally or academically, they are keen to be recognized as individuals by their teachers in personal interaction. Some students (nine of thirty-four from Time 8) report that teachers will talk to them occasionally about things they do outside of school and take an interest in what they do. Students are pleased about this. Student 63304 says that his teacher is “interested in what we do.” Sometimes, accounts vary within classrooms. Student 79305 reports that the teacher doesn’t talk to them about their friends or activities outside of school, but Student 79307 reports that: “She says about cross country skiing; she asked how I did in the race. I was in marathon on her birthday.”

In most classrooms very little of this individual personal exchange takes place. The kind of teacher interest in student lives demonstrated above is not widespread. Student

28301, for example, says that the teacher does not talk to him about life outside school and Student 54301 reports that his teacher talks to him neither about his schoolwork nor what he does outside school. When asked whether she gets to talk to her teacher at all about things that she does outside the school, Student 74304 replies, "Kind of, but not really though." When asked whether he has the chance to do that Student 74311, in the same class, says, simply, "No."

Two Time 8 students report on more in-depth teacher interaction with students, on an individual basis based in curriculum. Student 29304 explains, "In our journal [the teacher] writes little notes after comments and stuff." When asked whether he talks to the teacher about things that he does outside school, Student 72304 says, "not really" but then, upon further thought, adds, "Well, everybody has sort of like a chance to say something that they did every morning. . . a discussing, to talk about stuff." These kinds of in-depth exchanges as part of daily classroom routine are rare.

Most often when students are asked whether the teacher talks to them they report incidents in which they initiated conversation or volunteered some information themselves. For example, Student 51314 comments that she talks to her teacher about herself: "I told her about my older brother. . . . His wife had a baby on St. Patrick's Day and that's her birthday and I was just telling her about that." Student 78310 says that students talk to the teacher "if we did something fun or something."

About teacher revelation of self, there is only one comment among Time 8 students. Student 51314 notes that her teacher "says what she does on holidays." Two other Time 8 students report that their teacher shares personal interests, but they provide no details about this information. Teachers don't often share their personal lives and selves with students.

Student 24304 reflects thoughtfully about teachers and students getting to know one another more personally, and the importance of this for students: "I talk to him about dance all the time. Like sometimes it doesn't feel he is a teacher, like he's seems like he's my friend sometimes when I'm talking to him about things." This teacher is one of her favourites: "I think that's why because if you really don't like a teacher, like you're not really going to do the work."

Teacher Fairness

Of the thirty-four Time 8 students, only seventeen (in twelve of nineteen classrooms) report that their teachers are fair. Five students (in three classrooms) report explicitly that their teachers are not fair or sometimes not fair. According to Time 8 students fairness is

demonstrated through consistent application of standards, appropriate discipline, and inclusion.

Students report that some teachers apply standards and expectations consistently and others do not. Student 29304 says of her teacher, “With homework, she has to do the same thing with everybody even if you just forgot your book.” When asked whether he thinks his teacher is fair, Student 78302 says, “Yeah, I’d say that, yes . . . because if they don’t finish their work when they’re due, she would make them stay after school or whatever because their work should be finished when it’s due.”

Students who report that their teachers apply standards consistently, however, also suggest that this is informed by understanding and empathy. According to students, teachers who are fair also realize that sometimes extenuating circumstances apply. Student 28316 considers her teacher to be fair: “Sometimes if homework is supposed to be due today and it’s not, she’d give you an extra—say it was due at 8:30, she’d give you until 2:30 or until tomorrow morning. But if it’s not in by tomorrow morning then you’ll have to stay after school till it’s finished.” Student 23304, however, says that her teacher is fair, “sometimes, sometimes not.” She cites an example: “Well, for being late, sometimes it’s not your fault for being late or maybe you went to the orthodontist. Once I was five minutes and he gave me the [late] essay. I didn’t think that was fair.”

When asked whether her teacher is fair Student 24304 sums up quite philosophically the issue of consistent expectations versus allowance for human failure and unforeseen circumstance:

Yeah, what you really have to think about is what is fair. Like we were talking about this the other day at school. What is fair? Some kids come in and they never do their homework and one kid, who has always done their homework and they have both forgotten their homework, he lets the one kid that has always done their homework off and the person well, that’s not fair. The whole class decided that it is fair, if that person just forgot once and the other person is forgetting all the time.

When the interviewer comments that students in this class talk about a lot of things, Student 24304 replies: “Yeah. We talk about feelings in our class and how to watch other people and learn their feelings. Like, I guess it’s good for us to learn.” This kind of open discussion about fairness and standards is unusual in classrooms.

For students, appropriate discipline is also an aspect of fairness. Fair teachers punish or chastise those who are deserving, but do not do so to those who are undeserving of punishment. Justice is an extremely important issue for students. Student 28301 reports of his teacher that “she is fair. She, like, she sees, like, somebody bugging you she stops them and maybe they, like, try to lie, she tells them that I saw that or something like that.

She's fair." This student adds that "like sometimes when we get a class detention, like one person is not doing anything, she lets them go home. Like she watches some people and they get to go if they're not doing anything but they're working."

Teachers who impose class detentions are clearly seen as unfair. "Well, states Student 25305, "the teacher says that we should be quiet, but some people don't listen and she gives us detentions if we talk and stuff and sometimes she gives class detentions. . . . I don't think they are fair, because some people weren't doing anything and the other people were." The teacher, this student maintains, "could just give out individual detentions." According to Student 54301, Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) is also unfair for this reason. Student 54301 provides a detailed example, prefacing it with a caution:

This may sound kind of stupid. . . . Like we were in these groups of three and one boy in my group he acts up like every day. He's not quite sane I think and he was putting paper balls up his nose and running around the class and sneezing them on people's desks and we got caught laughing at him so we had to, so everybody who got caught that day had to write a three page essay on behaviour. So we got caught laughing at him and he didn't have to do it. . . . And another boy, he was laughing too, but she didn't really take him into consideration because whenever she looked at him he would be like writing on some topic but every time she was looking at the class he would be "Oh, yeah, yeah," and laughing around and stuff.

As Student 25305 suggests above, fairness is simply a matter of addressing students individually about transgressions which Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) did not do according to Student 54301. Fair teachers do not, or rarely, impose class detentions. Student 24306, who describes her teacher as fair says, "There has been a few times that he has lost his temper, like he has gotten mad at the whole class and given the whole class a DT, but other than that he talks to people individually." Teacher 61100 also talks to students individually about transgressions. If they are misbehaving, says Student 61303, "she brings us outside and starts talking to us." This approach to discipline displays the teacher sensitivity defined as lacking by Students 22305 and 75304 in the "Teacher Sensitivity to Student Sensibilities" section above.

Fairness is also demonstrated by teachers when they make efforts to include all students and ensure that all students participate. "She never picks just like one student all the time, " states Student 62307 of his teacher, "she always tries to pick each student so that it isn't just one student doing everything and the rest are always working. Every student gets a chance." Student 72307 believes that her teacher is fair because she also "doesn't just pick the ones who always know, that always put their hands up. She goes around and I like that idea. Because people who don't know will just sit there."

Those teachers who are reported as fair by their teachers also do not favour one student or a group of students over others. Student 63304 says of his teacher, "He is like saying to every student, he doesn't prefer one student or another." Student 63308 testifies, similarly: "Well, he doesn't just stick up for that person. He just likes everybody."

Student Voice/Student Choice

"Additive" Listening: Listening to Student Ideas and Accepting Student Suggestions

In classrooms in which teachers listen to students basic courtesy is extended to students by teachers: they take the time to listen to students' ideas and opinions. Student 54301 explains that if something is said in class discussion the teacher "would give full attention to it." When asked to describe what "full attention" means he says: "Well, she won't interrupt or say I don't think that is a good idea and stuff. She would listen to it and [say] 'I'll take that into consideration,' and stuff like that."

In classrooms in which teachers listen to students, teachers not only listen courteously, but also act on that information if possible. In classroom 62100, for example, the teacher "listens to our ideas and she decides with our information and she's usually pretty good," says Student 62303. Listening to student ideas does not mean, however, that teachers accept all ideas. Some ideas are better and more sensible than others, and teachers make judgements. Student 24304 confirms that "if it's a good idea, he'll do it and stuff like that."

Often when students affirm that teachers listen to their ideas and opinions this is in the context of certain subject areas or activities such as physical education, free time and field trips. Student 23301 says that students in his class "put up . . . hands first, and suggest what to do in the free times. . . . She says, 'Okay,' and she says the one she likes." Student 61303 also says that his teacher pays attention to students' opinions and ideas "especially for gym." However, when asked whether students are given other choices, or asked to contribute ideas for other subject areas he replies, "We never really do that."

In some classrooms students may make suggestions and share ideas, but these are not necessarily considered seriously by teachers. Almost all Time 8 students report that their teachers will listen to them, but that teacher responses vary. Not all teachers take student ideas seriously; not all teachers will act or try to act on student ideas. Student 25305 says that her teacher listens to student ideas. However, when asked whether she

acts on them the student says, “not usually, but sometimes.” She explains that students in the class feel that their ideas are not listened to, but they “still give their ideas. Sometimes they think it is unfair that she doesn’t listen to them.” When probed again about whether students have input into what goes on in the classroom she replies, “Nope, not usually.” Student 72304 says simply, “No.”

Sometimes students are given curricular/subject area choices by teachers: a choice from among several options, the opportunity to choose a specific topic within a broad topic area, or a method of presentation from various alternatives. Twelve of thirty-four Time 8 students report that they make choices of these kinds in their classrooms (eighteen of forty-three students in Time 2, and eleven of twenty-four students in Time 4). For example, Student 73304 says of her teacher that “lots of time in art she gives us about four things that we can do and we can choose which one we want to do.” Student 23304 reports that for a particular science assignment students “had a choice of either doing a skit or a drawing of it.” In these cases students are given choices, but the options from among which they must choose originate with teachers. Thus, these choices are constrained or limited. They do not represent full participation by students, but are “listening” insofar as they indicate an awareness by teachers of the various needs and preferences of students.

Students have many preferences and ideas about how the classroom situation could be improved and they sometimes approach teachers with ideas and suggestions. Six of the Time 8 students (in five classrooms) report that they have approached or plan to approach the teacher with an idea or suggestion; eleven students (in ten classrooms) report that they have not. More often than not, however, students will not approach the teacher because they either know the teacher will not respond at all, or they are not convinced that their teachers would be receptive to these ideas. Although Student 25305 believes that her classroom is too noisy she has not mentioned this to the teacher even though she thinks that the teacher “would probably agree with me.” She would not, in general, approach the teacher with a suggestion or criticism because, as she says, “I am just really shy about it. I wouldn’t want to—I would be afraid that she would disagree and stuff.” She adds, “Sometimes I get nervous when I’m talking to Miss Halstrom.” Student 23304 would like to do more projects in class, but has not suggested this to the teacher. When asked what she thinks the teacher might say she responds, “I’m not sure.”

Class meetings are a convenient and appropriate forum for eliciting and addressing student suggestions and ideas, and for giving students voice in general. However, only

two Time 8 students (in two separate classrooms) and one Time 4 student report on this practice.

Attentive Listening: Focus on Individuals

Sometimes, but rarely, the kind of teacher listening that students describe is a deep and thorough attentiveness to students. In contrasting the listening of her current teacher with that of a favourite former teacher Student 79305 effectively illustrates the subtle difference between listening in which a teacher accepts students ideas, and deeper pedagogical attentiveness to students as unique and valuable individuals with legitimate concerns. When asked whether her current teacher pays attention to what students have to say, Student 79305 says, “Oh yeah, she—when we raise our hand and give her an idea, she—sometimes she changes her ideas and gives our ideas.” When asked to give an example she says, “Okay, let me see, like uhm, in math we would do a question and she would show us a way to do it and then someone would say, ‘Oh, last year we got a way how to show it,’ and she goes, ‘That’s a good idea, you can do it that way too if you want.’” While this is certainly a positive practice, the student speaks even more emphatically of the deep, respectful attentiveness of her favourite teacher which was reported earlier in the Expectations section: “She would listen. I’m not saying the other teachers wouldn’t listen, but she would be more interested in everything you say. She would always pay attention and never—she’d think we were her kids. She would pay attention to the kids.” The listening of this favourite teacher goes beyond student ideas. The teacher demonstrates a pedagogical attentiveness to the child as individual, a listening which enables the teacher to get to know the child better both personally and academically.

When teachers listen attentively to students issues discussed are often significant, and sometimes personal, going beyond simple curriculum choices. Student 23306 says, “One thing that I really like about our teacher is that even if you disagree with him, he likes to hear your opinion.” This student goes on to explain that “there’s this one girl in our class and she’s kind of a feminist and he doesn’t get mad at her. . . . So because of her he tries to be a little more fair between boys and girls.” When asked to provide more detail about this she explains that

in the beginning of the year he was kind of partial to the boys because he’s a real fan of sports and all that kind of stuff, so he was more partial to the boys than the girls, but then the girls started to make a fuss about it. . . . Like say, if we needed someone to go to help [the vice-principal] to set up something he’d always pick the boys because the boys have always been

stronger than girls. But then we started a fuss about we're just as strong as they are. So he started [to be] a lot more better about that.

About her teacher Student 23306 says in summary, "It's not like he listens and then doesn't do anything about it."

Importantly, these teachers (five among the Time 8 group) listen to all students, and, like Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais), always respond. Of their teacher who listens attentively, Student 24302 says, "He takes the time to listen." Student 24304, also in the same class, says, "He listens to the kids, he doesn't just listen to himself." Listening attentively means taking the time to do so, and being sincere in one's interest in what children have to say.

Participative Listening: Collaboration

Sometimes, the listening that students describe signals a willingness of teachers to draw students in as participative members of the classroom. Giving students choices is a good first step. However, in a more participative classroom students are not simply or only asked or allowed to choose from among a number of limited curricular choices. They participate more widely in curriculum and in direction-setting and decision-making for the classroom.

Regarding curriculum Student 62307 explains of his teacher: "She doesn't just say, 'Now, do this, do that.' It's like, 'You want to do that?' and, 'Well, it's your idea.' Like she doesn't mind if we do something." When asked whether her teacher gives students choices, Student 24306 replies: "Yes, he does and we usually ask what he would prefer, but he usually says whatever we want to do. . . . like he asks what we think we should do and just how we feel we should go about doing it." In these classrooms students take a greater part in determining the nature and direction of their work.

In classrooms characterized by "participative listening" (five in Time 8) students feel less constrained. They are considered to be responsible by the teacher, and are aware of the consequences if they are not. Student 23306 comments on the approach of her teacher:

I don't know, he just lets us, like he's—some teachers I've had, they've sort of kept everyone on a leash, like they don't let them do anything, like just keep them. Mr. D. lets us sort of have a freedom, but sometimes he says I give you a bit of freedom and you take it and run away, so if he does give us something, like say if you're allowed to work in twos or go sit wherever we want, and we do get too wild, he'll put us back where we were before. But if we're being good then he lets us stay there and he trusts us.

Participation in the classroom is also demonstrated by the teacher's approach to classroom management and discipline. For example, some students participate in setting rules and organizational guidelines in the classroom and some do not. Twelve Time 8 students (from six classrooms) report that rules in their classrooms were determined by both teacher and students together. Student 24304 speaks of the rule-making process in her classroom: "Well, the first or second day of school, we all sat around and we thought of a lot of rules together and then we just wrote down and we picked the most important ones we thought. So it wasn't mostly the teacher saying, These are the rules and you have to follow them; we all thought them up together." Fifteen Time 8 students (from ten classrooms) report that the teacher set the rules in their classrooms. When asked whether students took part in a meeting or were asked their opinions about rules Student 22305 says, "No, [the teacher] just told us that we just have to go by the rules." In the classroom of student 74300 the rules also came "from [the teacher] . . . he tells you."

In classrooms where students participate in establishing rules and guidelines teachers do not abdicate all responsibility. Teacher participation and teacher input are important. This is a collaborative effort, and agreement is key. The comments of students in these classrooms are notable for their references to a collective that includes the teacher. As Student 77305 notes: "We all thought up the rules at the beginning of the year. We all decided on what good rules would be for the class."

PARENT PERCEPTIONS

Meeting Student Needs

Some parents, although not a great many (seven in Time 8, from six classrooms), report on the efficiency, effectiveness and dedication with which the school and the teacher respond to their child's needs. Parent 72204, for example, has a child with a learning difficulty. Of school personnel, she says:

I've found they're really willing to listen and work it out, but it's been really difficult for the teacher this year to try and get inside of what's happening with his problem because he's a very bright little boy who appears totally normal and it's uhm . . . she's really struggles and I've appreciated the fact that she has not given up the struggle, that she has really tried. It's not easy for me to understand and I live with him."

She adds that "they've been really good this year about modifying the amount of work . . . the adjustments that have been made in the curriculum for his learning problem." Although this parent is pleased with the school's and the teacher's efforts to meet her child's needs, the satisfaction came only after much effort of her own on her son's behalf. A knowledgeable parent who is a district consultant, she intervened over evaluation and

reporting. Of the process she comments, “When we decided to get in and modify the report card, what we discovered was that my concept and [the teacher’s] were totally different.” She adds that she got the psychologist involved and “the teacher was resentful of that.” As much as all of this was difficult for the teacher, the parent sums up positively: “I don’t know that anything more could have been done that hasn’t been done. I’ve asked [the teacher] to look at videos regarding his problem that she’s willingly done. We’ve had long conversations about what it means to have a processing problem. It didn’t come easy, but certainly over the course of the year we’ve both worked very hard at making it the best possible situation that we could.”

Very occasionally parents whose children are capable report on teacher efforts to provide extra challenge in the classroom (three parents from Time 8). For example, Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson), says Parent 28216,

always has suggestions. Like, Sandra does well and what she has been suggesting is that Sandra push herself that much further, because she is very capable of doing work, instead of just sitting back and saying okay I did that, now I’ve got free time. Actually, what she does, too is she has ideas on the board on the side of the classroom for kids that are sort of at that level, where they can look. It gives them ideas of what they should do. Or if they are doing some kind of project, where the basics of the project, everybody does, but if kids want to do more, she gives them ideas. “Go do this, or go do that.” That’s definitely helpful, because sometimes I think the kids can’t think of what else they can do She’s good that way.

Often, however, parents report that their children are not challenged in the classroom, or comment in no way about their children’s specific learning needs being met. This is particularly the case for children who are academically capable. Parent 77205, for example, believes that her son is not challenged in class, but is quite generous nonetheless regarding the teacher’s efforts:

You have to understand with Jared that I spent the past three years trying to get him into some kind of advanced education because he is absolutely tired of learning the same thing over and over again. So that way it’s hard to keep him motivated and I think Mrs. Brewer has that trouble too; but she has such a big class she just doesn’t have the time. That’s been the case all the way along and what happened with Jared was up until this grade, he was the teacher’s helper and he helped in his brother’s class and he helped other students, he helped his teacher and so rather than sort of pushing him into more academic things, they used him, I feel, you know what I mean?

She adds, “They still haven’t given Jared something that he comes home and he has to come to me and say, ‘I can’t do this Mom, I need help.’ So they’re not—they’re still not challenging him to that point. He brings homework home and he sits down and he’s done in ten minutes.”

Generally, parents perceive there to be greater efforts made in classrooms to meet the learning needs of children who are experiencing difficulty, such as Student 72304,

above, than those who are not, such as Student 77305. About this issue Parent 25205 explains that there are no longer programs for gifted children, in which her daughter took part the previous year: “They just cut it right out of the budget, because I guess, well, if you have to choose between gifted children and children who have learning disabilities, you really have to help the ones who have learning disabilities, right? I mean, I think so, so I don’t know. Cassie, she can do everything, and she doesn’t really get bored. . . . I mean sometimes maybe she gets bored, but” Comments from parents like this about insufficiently challenged children who are bored in class are also not uncommon.

Often parents of academically capable children will report that the child seeks or is provided with challenges outside of school. Their daughter, says Parent 72207 “has a rare combination of drive and ability” and “may not get enrichment at the school, but she gets it with—she does her own poetry at home and she’s in the band and conservatory piano and composes her own music. So she does it on her own outside of school; so she gets it.”

Help and Explanation from the Teacher

There are few comments from parents about the nature of the helping relationship in the classroom. Five Time 8 parents and eleven Time 2 parents comment that the teacher helps their child. Typically, comments about help provided by the teacher are from parents whose children need remedial assistance. Parent 24202 notes that the teacher has put her in daughter “in a help-in-math class, so she’s getting individual help with her math, which has definitely improved.” In addition, she notes that, “he spent extra time with her . . . at lunch hours or after school. If she’s having trouble with something, he’s available.” Parent 72204, whose son has a learning disability (see comments in the previous section) also comments positively on the help that is given her son:

The extra time that’s taken . . . at the end of the day there’s always an extra few minutes to make sure that he gets to fill his agenda book out, because he doesn’t always catch things if they come orally. She makes sure that she spends a couple of extra minutes at the end of the day making sure that he understood what it is that he’s supposed to do, which has been tremendously helpful.

Certainly, the fact that teachers provide remedial assistance when and where it is necessary is good. Comments about teachers being helpful to all students, or making help available daily or on a regular basis, however, are less frequent. In this regard Parent 77208 affirms that “the teacher is good about that too.” “If he brings homework home and if he doesn’t understand it and we don’t understand it then he can bring it back the next day and she explains it to him and he has time to do it.” Parent 21209 (Time 4) also speaks of the help made available to students. This particular teacher, and only two others

among the entire teacher group make help available to students in the morning. Parent 21209 explains:

Mr. Sutcliffe does everything he can and he's available to them early in the morning. . . . When [my son] was falling behind he was going in at eight every morning and that made a big difference. When he did poorly on a test, especially in math and things like that Dave would let him come in early for another week and then redo another test, and the differences were just—and it was Dave's way of catching up what they didn't comprehend.

In some classrooms, on the other hand, parents clearly perceive there to be less help provided to students overall. Of Teacher 78100 (Miss Davis) Parent 78202 says, "I feel that there's times when Jonathan . . . he'll come home with some difficulty in regard to math and I will sit down with him and explain something to him which might simplify his problem, whereas maybe at school he didn't get the same type of attention." This is something about which parents feel strongly, and which arises in comments about their children's schooling overall. Parent 24202, for example, comments of "other years, when there's been times when I've been annoyed thinking that the teacher isn't doing the teaching, I'm doing the teaching because she is coming home consistently, everyday, not understanding the concepts and I felt that I was learning and teaching her more than the teacher was."

Varying Teacher Respect for Students

Parent sense of teacher respect for student varies. Almost all parents (twenty-seven of thirty-four Time 8 parents (and thirty-six of forty-three Time 2 parents) comment that the teacher does respect their child and they cite a variety of examples, ways in which the teacher demonstrates his or her respect: praising students (seven parents), listening and talking to students (eight parents), and acknowledging and treating students as individuals (twelve parents). Teacher respect for students is seen by parents as a recognition of students as individuals and a demonstration of that in the classroom.

Typically parents obtain a sense of whether the teacher respects their child through communications from the child him or herself about the teacher and the classroom. For example, Parent 24202 is sure that the teacher respects her daughter: "It's a feeling I get and it's also the feedback from ways she comes home and to says, 'Oh, I got this today,' or 'He said this today.' She gets to do something special, you know." Because parents don't often witness interaction in the classroom and therefore do not gain firsthand evidence that the teacher respects their child, there can be uncertainty about whether respect is demonstrated to all students, even among parents who are certain that the teacher respects their child. When asked whether she thinks the teacher respects all the

children in the class, Parent 28216 says: "That's hard to say, because I haven't ever actually spent time in the classroom during class time. From a personal point of view, I would certainly think that she does, but as I say, I certainly can't say for sure." When asked whether the teacher respects all students Parent 22205 replies, "I guess, I don't know." Many parents are not certain that respect for students is a general feature of teacher interaction with all students.

Despite the fact that twenty-seven of thirty-four Time 8 parents reply affirmatively when asked whether the teacher respects their child there is doubt among some of those parents. Parent 28201, for example, is not sure. When asked whether the teacher respects her son she says, "I would think so." When asked how she would expect the teacher to demonstrate that respect she adds: "That's really tough. I don't really know. I've never really thought about that. . . . I would hope she would, but distinctly, I don't know. . . . I don't know." Parent 13214 (Time 2) also says, "I don't know. I would imagine he respects her. I have never seen him deal with her a lot."

For five of the Time 8 parents and six of the Time 2 parents there is absolutely no doubt: they are certain that the teacher lacks respect for students. When Parent 25201 is asked whether the teacher respects her sons she replies: "I think she's very strict on him. Respect him? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I don't think she respects his feelings at times. I think she respects him as a person but I think at times when a little bit of understanding probably should be applied in respect to someone else's feelings at the time and how they feel is not." When asked whether the teacher respects her son, Parent 28202 (Time 4) states: "No, absolutely not. She thinks that he's a little pain, he's stubborn, he tells lies. It's all negative."

Occasionally parents will report that their child's teacher has demonstrated both respectful and disrespectful behaviour. When asked about the relationship between his son and the teacher, Parent 63208 speaks both positively and negatively about the teacher:

Well, like I said, it's just been maybe the last month that things have gotten worse. He's been saying that Monsieur called him a jerk one day, but he didn't say, "Jason, you are a jerk." He said, "Jason, you can be a jerk sometimes" and so Jason took that quite offensively and he's had a hard time being as close to him since then cause he hurt his feelings. But on the other hand, he's—like I said he kept Jason an hour and a half after school for a heart to heart talk on helping him on how he could have a better relationship with friends and I thought that was pretty good of him.

This sense that teachers are disrespectful sometimes is also reflected in the comments of Parent 54201. When asked whether she senses that the teacher respects her son she says:

Somewhat. She has a bit of a sarcastic nature and I think he found her very hard to get used to at the beginning of the year. Actually the first teacher he hasn't been really comfortable with. And his teacher that he had for the two previous years was very easy going and very kind and think he found that a big shock this year to get somebody who was sarcastic would be a very good way to describe her nature and abrupt and I think he had a hard time getting used to that.

When asked to rate her child's teacher on a scale from one to 10, however, Parent 54201 is very accommodating: "I'd would still put her up at a seven or eight. She speaks very highly of Darren when she talks to me about him and she is respectful to me, I guess.

Interestingly, these instances of lack of respect share a common theme: the use of insensitive or less than tactful language by teachers. Parent 33211 (Time 4) comments on an incident of this kind and sums up the issue incisively: "We have been very concerned about a comment made by a teacher to my son asking if he was deaf. I want to talk to the teacher about why. There are better ways of communicating with a child. He is growing. He should be nourished."

Listening to and Talking with Students

Eight Time 8 parents (seven classrooms) report that the teacher listens to their child. Only one Time 4 parent and one Time 2 parent feel this strongly enough to report it. Parent 78202 explains that her son's teacher "listens to what they have to say. Whether she agrees with them or not, she still listens to them." When asked whether the teacher respects his son, Parent 62207 says: "Yep. I think she does. She's a very caring person." He adds, "I think she takes the time to talk to them."

When teachers listen and talk with students both are able to get to know one another better which is positive and beneficial according to parents. Parent 24204 believes that for this reason her child has found it easier to learn in class. "I would say," she explains, "that he spent a lot of time talking to her. I think he spends quite a bit of time, of personal time, or I think he has a lot of interactions with the kids. She stays around quite often after school and helps him clean and stuff and he just spends time talking to her so in a non-structured situation. She's got to see him as a person and I think that's really important." Only Parent 24204 and one other Time 8 parent comment that the teacher shares his or her personal interests with their child.

For Parent 79207, too, the fact that her child's teacher has taken the time to get to know him has been helpful. This teacher is "younger so she just communicates the best with the children. I find the younger the teacher, they understand the children better. Cause he's had an older, much, much older teacher and she didn't talk to the children as well as this teacher did, really trying to understand them." Teacher 79100 (Madame

Boucher), she adds, is the one her son has “liked the most.” Because this teacher communicates well with students, explains Parent 79207, “that makes it easier for me cause he’s just a happier child. Cause he’s had one teacher before that he just did not get along with at all and he was going through a really tough time. He couldn’t talk to her, she wouldn’t listen to him and so with Jeanne, she communicates really well with him and so it really—it’s just communication which makes it a lot easier.”

This is not the case in all classrooms. Parent 14211 (Time 2) recounts an incident in which the teacher did not listen to her son:

Apparently he wasn’t given an opportunity to say what had happened and the least you could do is hear him out, since she made sure that he heard her. I think she should have at least, even if he was wrong, which chances are he probably was, but the point is that she should have let him explain, “Well, I was out here getting a drink. That’s why I was on the other side” or “Sean asked me to get his runners and that’s why I was talking to Sean” or, you know, but she kept saying, “No, no, no, no” and she wouldn’t let him say anything and that annoys me because often what you see isn’t what had happened and that happens a lot in school.

In situations such as these, the teacher demonstrates disrespectful behaviour to students by failing to listen.

Recognizing and Valuing Students as Individuals

Some parents (five in the Time 8 data) comment that teachers see and acknowledge students as individuals and demonstrate respect in this way. When asked whether the teacher respects her daughter Parent 22201 says: “Yes, because when you go to the classroom, in the three-way conversations that you have in the interviews or even just greeting, she responds to the child. Some people kind of overlook kids, go around and talk to the adults, so it’s kind of nice. She really values their opinions and acknowledges them being there.” Parent 23206 says of Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais): “Her teacher tends to be a bit of kid of himself, he fools around with the students, and teases them and sort of thing. I think he thinks of himself more as a peer than a superior. . . . He appears to be a good teacher and I think he does respect his kids and treats them all as individuals and as people and takes them for what they can do. . . . I think he tends to be the kind of person who values a person individually.”

Most often when parents note that the teacher responds to and acknowledges their child as an individual they cite as an example the fact that the teacher asks their child for help or singles them out to complete special tasks. When asked whether she has a sense that the teacher respects her child Parent 24204 responds: “Oh, yes, most definitely. . . . if Mr. Griffin needs some help, I think he talks to her because she comes home from time to

time and tells me that he needs this or he'd like that and could he borrow this and could he borrow this and could he borrow that, because we have the art store in the house there."

Teachers, these parents note, will often call upon the special talents or skills of their students. Capable students are often asked to help the teacher and to help the teacher help others. Parent 28216 says of the teacher and her daughter, who is academically strong, and the teacher: "They have a very good relationship. . . . She used Sandra's help a lot for different things that she's doing, if she needs some help she tends to ask Sandra to help a lot."

When calling upon students for special assistance teachers typically focus on students' strengths. Most often, as in the case of Student 28216 above, these are academic strengths. However, Parent 72204 says that her son, who has a learning disability is "often asked to do things, especially around computers and any technological things; he's sort of become the school expert. He's even requested by other teachers to come to their room and come and help organize and set things up. He's been allowed to do that." In the case of students who experience difficulty, such as Student 72304, teachers will sometimes highlight other particular skills and strengths in order to recognize these children. In these data, however, there is less evidence of teachers calling upon those who are not academically strong than those who are.

Although most parents see teacher attempts to call upon children for special tasks, especially those who are capable, as a positive sign of respect, not all do. Parent 77205, who earlier notes that her child is not challenged in class, mentions that he has typically been "teacher's helper." "Rather than pushing him into more academic things," notes his mother, "they used him, I feel, you know what I mean?"

Apart from teacher efforts to single children out for special tasks there is little evidence of general appreciation for all students by teachers or attempts by teachers to develop this among students. When asked about whether the teacher respects her son Parent 63204 says: "He gets recognition in the class. . . . I think they appreciate what each other does. They applaud I think. Ryan told me where they've clapped for him and I think they do that for other kids too, if somebody's made progress or done something." Parent 63204 is the only parent in these data who reports on classwide efforts to recognize students. In addition, few parents mention ongoing teacher efforts to individually recognize their children other than academically. Parent 56204, however, says that students in her daughter's class "are always getting letters from the teacher. Oh yeah, during the year she would send something like, 'Thank you Serena, you have been

cleaning the blackboards every day this week and it is so nice to come in the morning because you have done such a good job,” and, you know, just little things like that during the year. She would send a note to express the appreciation.” Parent 56204 is the only parent who mentions this kind of personal expression from teachers.

Inclusion and Participation in the Classroom

There is little said by parents about inclusion and participation of students in the classroom, about teachers inviting students to collaborate, apart from their comments about teachers listening to students and their recognition of students as individuals. No mention is made by parents of teacher/student negotiation of curriculum or classroom rules, for example, or even of class meetings although there are several teachers in the Time 8 sample who hold these meetings. The closest any parents come to references of these kind are comments from Parent 23206 and Parent 24206. About involving students Parent 23206 says of Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais): “I think her teacher in particular wants to make them feel involved in the school and feel wanted as people. I think that’s a general theory in the school, I think a policy they’re committed to, it seems to be.” Unfortunately, this parent does not specify what she means by involvement. Parent 24206 comments, “I feel all around that Mr. Griffin encourages the kids to take an active part in the classroom and you know he really stresses cooperation.” This parent is not specific either about what an active part in the classroom means, or whether the cooperation to which she refers is that between students, or between students and teacher.

SUMMARY: STUDENT/TEACHER INTERACTION

Teachers here do not generally believe that students respect them enough or even at all. They are firm in their belief that they themselves should respect students, but it is not always clear from what they say that they do always demonstrate respect, or even if they do this sometimes.

Some teachers in this sample think that students are and can be responsible. Others believe that students are not or cannot always be responsible about their schoolwork. Those who do believe that students can be and are responsible typically have developed structures or implemented procedures in their classrooms to facilitate the acceptance, demonstration, and growth of responsibility by students. They also provide choices to students. Most teachers contend that they offer students choices in class, but these are usually limited choices: “picking” from alternatives rather than “choosing” based on their

own interests. Those who offer the most opportunities for real choice—teachers who believe that they have an active role to play in the development of student responsibility and who focus on responsibility in the classroom—often comment on the benefit to student motivation and interest.

According to students here their classrooms are often noisy and disruptive. Some are more quiet and conducive to learning, but even these are punctuated occasionally by disruption that is irritating to students. Students like learning when it is “fun”—and when innovative and interesting methods and curriculum are used in class students notice. These, however, are not often mentioned. Students are, in fact, often bored in class. Modification of curriculum is more common for students with learning difficulties or disabilities, than for those who are academically gifted. According to students, choice in their classrooms is limited. Although students do have classroom preferences (especially about noise, curriculum, and student groupings), they rarely approach teachers with suggestions. In some classrooms teachers do elicit suggestions and listen to student ideas. Some go further, listening more attentively to students, and actively involving them in a collaborative classroom.

There is little evidence presented by students of regular, individual interaction with teachers about their schoolwork. Some teachers help, and explain satisfactorily, but not all. For students who are satisfied with their teachers help is an important feature of the classroom. Students also appreciate opportunities to provide and receive help from one another, and seek this out even if formalized opportunities aren't available. They are especially positive about classrooms in which help among students is encouraged.

Little mention is made by students of teacher support and respect. Some teachers demonstrate fairness through consistent application of expectations and standards, appropriate discipline to individuals, and inclusion of all students; others do not. Students cite occasions of public embarrassment caused by their teachers which sometimes occur. According to students, positive personal social interaction of a general nature with teachers does happen in some classrooms, but is not frequent and is often initiated by students. Little interest in students' personal lives is demonstrated by teachers, students contend.

Among these students there is not a sense of a consistent approach or attempts by teachers to have students seek assistance from their parents at home in formal ways. They do not, either, have a sense that teachers communicate this directly to their parents, or to parents overall.

As for parents, many here believe that students are insufficiently challenged in the classroom. Although there is little parent comment about the helping relationship in the class, weak students usually seem to get help (but not always immediately) and strong students are not challenged. In some classrooms, parents maintain, teacher praise and encouragement serve to support students; in others little of this is apparent. Some parents comment that teachers listen to and acknowledge students as individuals. These are seen as signs of respect which are not evident in all classrooms. Teacher respect for students is most commonly demonstrated by singling out students for special tasks, and this is cited more frequently than any other signs of respect. There is little sense among parents of choice in classrooms, of inclusion of students in collaborative ways, or of respect for students overall.

PARENT/STUDENT INTERACTION

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Talk About School

Parents Ask About School

Students report consistently that their parents ask them about school. About half of the thirty-four Time 8 and forty-three Time 2 students comment that their parents initiate school-related discussions at home. Typically, students note, parents will ask their children about the day and whether they have homework. When asked whether her parents ask her about school Student 23306 replies: "Yup. Like if there's something coming up or something we are talking about, if something interesting happens we'll sit there and talk about it for a few minutes and then they always ask me, 'How was school today?' They ask, 'Do you have any homework?' . . . If I say that I do have homework, they ask if I understand it or need help with it."

Sometimes, as the above quote suggests, parents' questions are about homework or lead directly to assistance with homework. Sometimes they are simply a spark for discussion about the schoolday. For example, Student 22301 explains that "after school [my mother] usually asks, 'What did you do today?' and I say the same thing. Computers or math and show her my library book. If there's something in computers, I tell her about it, whatever I do." Often these discussions take place around the evening meal. Student 62307 says, "Usually at the dinner table every day they say, 'Oh, what did you do today?'"

and we tell them.” This comment about conversation over dinner is common among students.

Students Talk About School

While parents do ask their children about school, students also initiate school-related discussions at home, informing their parents without prompting about what they did and what happened. When asked whether he talks to his parents about school student 62307 says: “Yes. Like whenever I feel as if it is time to talk I usually just go up to them and I talk to them about how my school work is doing, how good it is, what I could do to improve it that my teacher says.”

Either way—in response to parental inquiries or on their own initiative—students are typically not hesitant to offer information. When asked whether they talk to their parents about school almost all students reply that they do (forty-two of the Time 2 students; thirty-three of the Time 8 students). “Yeah, all the time,” states Student 72307. And usually students are not uncomfortable talking. Twenty of the Time 2 students volunteer that they like talking with their parents. As Student 73304 says, “I like talking to my Mom about things that are happening at school.”

Student 79305 sums up the range of discussion about school that occurs in the home:

I talk to them about activities going around; track and field that's coming. And yeah I talk to them about researches, about how I'm doing. . . . Homework. It's not my favourite subject but, um, I'm good with it. . . . We talk about gym. We talk about friends, like how we're getting along. Is there any trouble with your—with your friends.

A few students mention that they do not (two only of Time 2 students) or do not often (three of Time 2 students) speak to their parents about school or things that happen there. Student 22305 says that she speaks about school “only if [my mother] asks me.” She adds, however, that she tells her mother “if we are doing something. If we are doing a project on Canada, when it's due and I tell her about science.” Although some students will not seek out their parents to talk about school, conversation often takes place anyway, usually because parents pursue discussion.

Students Ask for Help

Students do not hesitate to ask their parents for help. Twenty-six of the Time 8 students and thirty-six of the Time 2 students report that they will ask their parents for help. “I ask my mom for help all the time whenever I need it,” notes Student 22305. Almost all

recount how and under what conditions they ask for assistance. When asked whether he goes to his parents to ask for help or whether they check with him, Student 62307 remarks, "I ask them, like if there is a complicated math question or another question that I just can't get through I go to them and I check with them just to see that it's done right so that I didn't get it wrong."

Interestingly, student data suggest, parents are not the sole providers of assistance in the home. Student 73304 describes the circumstances in which she requires help from someone other than her mother: "If she can't help me . . . like with those word things they're kinda . . . they're in math and at the end of your page and each page is like if Brian had five cookies and Melanie has eighteen how many would there be? Then my brother usually helps me cause he's really good at them." Students also call on their friends for assistance. Student 51314 documents a common practice among these Grade 4 to 7 students: "Usually, like if I'm not sure about the answers, I'll phone my friends."

Not surprisingly, capable students often note that they do not require or desire much help from their parents. They do not seek out assistance as much. Student 23306 explains that she will be taking Advanced English in Grade 8 "so I don't really need help in that subject." In these cases, parents offer their assistance, but are called upon less often.

Positive and Productive Helping Relationships at Home

Student data show that overwhelmingly parents help their children with schoolwork. In Time 8 data, for example, thirty-one of thirty-four students recount instances of parent help; in Time 2 data forty-one of forty-three students report that parents help them. Students comment that parents are willing to help with any schoolwork, wherever the child requires assistance. "Whenever I have trouble," says Student 77305, "they always help me." As noted earlier, parent help is not solely dependent on student request. As part of after school discussions parents typically ask if students have homework and if they need assistance.

Like most students, Student 62303 maintains that her parents will help her "if I need anything." Student data suggest, however, that typically parents help more with mathematics and language, particularly spelling, than any other of the subject areas. When asked about the subjects for which her parents provide the most assistance Student 62303 notes, "Probably math, spelling and English." This is so for most other students as well. Math is a subject area in which students encounter particular difficulty for which they seek specific help at home. Almost all students report working on math with their parents.

In addition to helping students with math and spelling parents also provide assistance in a variety of other ways. They help students study, proofread materials, give opinions and suggest ideas, and assist with projects. They help students gather resources and take them to the library, and also provide specialized assistance based on their own interests and expertise.

While students acknowledge that they will accept help from “whoever’s there” (Student 51314), there is helping-task differentiation among mothers and fathers. Typically and consistently, students perceive their fathers to be more capable mathematicians and approach them for assistance in math. Mothers, on the other hand, are more capable with language, spelling and social studies, according to their children, although a few fathers are reported to have skill in literature as well. Student 25301 says simply, “My Mom is better at spelling, my Dad is better at math.” When asked where she goes for help with math Student 23304 replies, “Math and science, my dad helps me.”

Nineteen of the Time 8 students report that their parents can help them with their schoolwork all the time. When asked whether his parents are able to help, Student 25301 replies: “Yes. The odd question they don’t understand.” Student 61303 says, on the other hand, that he will ask his parents for help, “if they understand it, which is very unusual.” Since student 61303 is a French Immersion class, this comment is not surprising. However, student perception overall of parent inability to help is rare

Generally, the helping relationship at home between students and parents is a positive one and students are appreciative of the help their parents offer. Twenty-five Time 8 and twenty-six Time 2 students report that they enjoy having their parent help them, and/or that they and their parents work well or comfortably together. “I like their help,” says Student 24306, “because if I can’t understand something they will tell me and then I will realize how to do it right.” Parent help is a particularly welcome “last chance” when students have not understood at school because the teacher has not or was not able to explain well. About math help, Student 23304 says, “Sometimes the teacher doesn’t explain it so I just go home and my dad explains it a lot, if I don’t understand.” Where help is concerned a positive parent attitude is especially reaffirming and encouraging to students and also makes working together enjoyable. Student 72307 says of the assistance she receives from her parents: “It helps me a lot. My dad will explain it. And explain it over and over until he knows for sure that I understand. He never gets annoyed. It really makes me discouraged if I can tell they’re getting annoyed.”

Although most students indicate that helping exchanges generally proceed well, problems do occur and sometimes parents and students have difficulty working together.

Fifteen Time 2 students and sixteen Time 8 students reveal that they and their parents encounter difficulties from time to time. Parents, students suggest, sometimes have difficulty with subject matter knowledge. Students typically describe this as “not understanding.” Sometimes students are simply learning new content in school or using new systems (e.g., metric measurement), technologies (e.g., computers) or teaching methodologies that were not part of their parents’ elementary school experience. In these instances parents must learn something new or reacquaint themselves with material that they learned long ago. About helping with math, for example, Student 74304 says: “My mum, she usually does the question a couple of times cause she hasn’t done it for such a long time before she can actually help me. . . . She usually has to refreshen her memory cause she doesn’t quite get it at first.” Although students are conscious of difficulties posed by curricular knowledge, their comments are ultimately positive. Students report parents can usually help them in the end.

Interestingly, time is a rarely cited constraint among children. Although parental work schedules can affect parent/student collaborative efforts this is mentioned in the Time 8 data by only three students, and not at all by Time 2 and Time 4 students. For students, time constraints in their parents’ lives are not a significant impediment to in-home helping relationships.

PARENT PERCEPTIONS

Talk About School

Parents Ask About School

Parents consistently report that they ask their children about school. Commonly when children and parents gather in the home each day—after school or at dinner time—parents ask how the student’s day was, what they did and what happened. They also ask whether the child has homework and offer their assistance. The comment of Parent 74211 is typical: “When he comes home, like our normal practice is first we ask what have you done today at school, what homework do you have or assignments and do you need any help with that?”

Sometimes student will volunteer information on their own to their parents, but often parent questions are necessary in order to elicit information from students. For some parents asking questions is a regular strategy. “I think I have to ask him more,” says Parent 78202, “I ask him first how school went, what was exciting to him that day.”

Students Talk About School

According to parents, students will generally talk quite willingly and openly about school. Twenty-nine (of thirty-four) Time 8 parents report positively on this. Their comments suggest that a rich discourse about school and academic matters takes place in the home.

Parents note that students discuss their academic work and what they are learning, especially if it is of particular interest to them (usually during homework time), and results from tests and assignments. “She’s always telling me how she did on her test and what she did and how many pages of math she got completed and things like that,” states Parent 79205. Students will also talk about the general happenings of the day, special events and activities, and what others have done. Parent 23206 reports that her daughter “volunteers ‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’ if they happen to somebody else.” According to parents students also share information about the social aspect of school life. “Her priority is not schoolwork,” admits Parent 24204 “so I know more about the social aspects of the classroom than I do about what’s actually being learned and taught until it gets to be homework time and she is having trouble.”

Students’ personal problems are also the subject of after school conversation, although as they enter adolescence and seek more independence students often become more reticent and private. Parent 25201 notes that her son talks about “more the bad. He doesn’t come home and say, ‘I had a really good day today,’ but he will come home and say, ‘You know, I had a detention today’ . . . something like that.” Parent 73206, on the other hand, explains that her daughter will “express that she’s upset but a lot of times she won’t go any further, but it’s usually just something amongst a group of friends that’s— so I guess she’ll confide in me only to a certain point.”

Students Ask for Help

As noted above, parents ask their children if they need help with homework, usually as part of their discussion about the schoolday. Parents also explain, however that students will generally ask for help if they require it (twenty in Time 8). Parent 24202 explains that her daughter “consistently asks.” This mother adds that her child also asks her father for help: “She doesn’t ask me for help with math, she asks her dad. . . . I’m definitely better in the English and Socials department and he’s definitely better in the math department and they’ve figured that out, so she goes where she figures she can get the most help.” Typically, parents note, children will ask for help in subject areas that are difficult for them or with special problems that they have encountered.

Parents explain, not surprisingly, that students who are capable and can easily complete their work on their own, ask for help less often. Parent 79205 provides an example: “When [my daughter] needs help, yes, she does ask, if there’s something, but like I’d said, she’s a pretty strong student there; she comprehends basically everything that’s going on around her.” Students who prefer to complete work on their own, who are becoming more independent, also seek help less often. “She’s very independent that way,” explains another Parent 74204, “I’ve offered and offered till the cows come home . . . and ‘Nope I can do it, mom.’ But when she does bring us something to proof read or a math situation—‘Can you help me with this?’—then we do help her.”

Occasionally, parents note, students will hesitate in asking for help because they feel confident, or, rather, falsely confident, that they can complete the work on their own. They may fear that their parent may not be able to help and do not want to risk embarrassing him or her, or are uneasy about working with a critical parent. Each of these factors is cited only once in the Time 8 data, however, and ultimately did not prevent the students in question from obtaining the help they needed.

Positive and Productive Helping Relationships at Home

Qualitative data from parents reveal that all parents help their child at home, with schoolwork directly and with a variety of other things indirectly related to homework and assignments. Naturally, parents whose students are capable academically provide less direct assistance than those whose children are experiencing difficulty. As Parent 28216 notes, “just for the most part she gets her homework, she’s capable of doing it and doesn’t really need my help.” However, parent data suggest that most homes are hives of activity related to schoolwork, that parents support and try to support their children’s schoolwork as much as they can.

Parents help with homework in general, and respond specifically when the child needs or requests assistance. They answer questions and assist their child when he or she is stuck or does not understand. Parents also help their children review material learned at school and practice for tests—especially spelling—and proofread and edit written assignments. They provide assistance with school projects which include suggesting ideas, helping to obtain resources from the library and elsewhere, organizing material, and providing general guidance. When asked how she supports the learning of her child at home Parent 73204 explains, summarizing parental effort in general: “Well, certainly just helping with homework and projects and things like that. . . . I just always make sure it’s done and if there’s any questions certainly help with that.” In addition to helping

students directly parents provide reminders to students, helping to keep them on schedule, particularly with longterm assignments and projects.

Parents report that they are conscientious about following up teacher suggestions for help or review at home. They will work with their child if he or she has missed something at school due to absence or has failed to understand new learning entirely, even if the teacher does not specifically ask them to do so. "If I notice that she needs the help or the teacher has commented that she's a little behind in something," states Parent 79205, "then I help give her the push." When parents are not able to help they will often point their child in the direction of assistance (other family members or the teacher) or towards resources that are not available in the home. Like students, they also report that there is gender differentiation with respect to help: fathers tend to help more with science and math; mothers tend to help more with language and social studies.

In addition to providing assistance and material support that is directly related to homework and projects, parents also try to provide opportunities and materials, such as books and encyclopedias, and encourage activities which support general learning at home. This include visits to libraries and museums as well as other cultural, sport and travel activities. Parent 24204 epitomizes these efforts: "I get in extra books, extra reading material, videos, art supplies, you name it. We either have it, have done it, have bought it, rented it, borrowed it. We go to museums, musicals, plays, take them on trips and do tourist stuff and read. Send her to Japan, spend money on them."

Parents also make efforts to talk with their children about world issues and other academic matters, and encourage their children to read. When asked to describe how she helps her child Parent 24204 replies: "The same thing that I been teaching her, oh, life, and every time something new happens we talk about it and discuss reactions and discuss what ifs. How do I help her to learn? It's a daily thing."

Most parents also do their best, within their capacity and means, to provide the in-home kind of care, support, encouragement and extra-curricular activities that will provide a firm foundation for the child's learning and work at school. Parent 73204 explains:

I'd like Alison to participate in a lot of things, so I think support to try things even if she thinks that she can't do them . . . just the support. Getting her to bed where she has enough rest that she can function properly and making sure things are completed . . . keep her healthy . . . I don't know, just all those things that make a child able to function properly at school."

Parents, like students, typically report that the helping relationship at home is a comfortable one (twenty-one in Time 8). Parent 63208 comment typifies parent response to helping: "Yeah . . . I like doing stuff with them." When asked whether her son enjoys

the experience, she replies, “Definitely, yeah.” Parents are satisfied, as Parent 78202 points out, when they are able to help their child: “I feel good when I’m able to help him understand. I won’t help him do anything, but . . . it makes me feel good when I show him a system that works for him.”

Like students, parents also comment that problems occur and sometimes the two have difficulty working together. Twenty Time 8 parents reveal that they and their children encounter difficulties from time to time. Parents too describe the major problem as “not understanding” but do not perceive this to be an insurmountable problem. Lack of understanding and lack of skills, rather than lack of intellectual ability, are often a problem for parents whose formal education is minimal. Parent 22205, whose daughter is in Grade 6, comments that she is still comfortable helping her child with schoolwork, adding that “they haven’t got into any of this stuff that I don’t know yet. It’s pretty well basic.”

“Not understanding” may also mean that parents have forgotten the particular material the students are learning, that they are not familiar with new methods and terminology, or that their children are learning content in school or using new technologies that were not part of their own school experience. Math is the most difficult subject area for parents; both the content and the methods can be a problem. Understanding is also a problem for parents of French Immersion students who do not speak French. However, this barrier doesn’t forestall help entirely. French Immersion parents do their best. “Oh sure, yeah . . . my French is limited,” notes Parent 63204, “but I help as much as I can.”

There is a greater sense among parents than students of constraints upon helping originating from the teacher. Three Time 8 parents, eight Time 4 parents and eight Time 2 speak specifically of this kind of obstacle. Parents comment that not knowing what is happening in the class prevents them from assisting as they might. When asked if there is anything that prevents her from doing more to help her child at home, Parent 72204 says, “Not knowing the content of the curriculum—not the content, I know the content of the curriculum—but the what the teacher happens to be focussing on at the time, the theme work.” Parent 16222 (Time 2) suggests that “if they do a project and . . . they know it is going to be a kind of difficult project, they call you and say, well, we are are working on this and this is what our aim is and this is what we are after and if they told me a little bit more of what they wanted then I could probably help her easier.” In addition, parents comment that they cannot help their children at home when they do not know that the child is having difficulties. If teachers alerted them to problems, which does not always

happen, they could provide remedial assistance at home. As Parent 17211 (Time 2) notes: “We don’t find this out until we see the report card. And we would say, ‘What’s this? What happened here?’ I did talk to Mr. Kelley and said ‘Look, I can’t help you unless you tell me what’s going on.’” When teachers alert parents, parents maintain, problems are often easily remedied. Parent 32205 (Time 4) notes that her son “hadn’t understood one concept in math. The teacher hadn’t taken him aside and helped him. Once we knew what it was we spent twenty minutes one evening and he is now back getting A’s again. That is the kind of feedback we are looking for.”

Like students, parents comment that helping is more enjoyable and easier when students are receptive to parent help, and that “Who’s right” arguments can also cause difficulty in the helping relationship. Parents also acknowledge that their approach to helping is important, that helping relationships are less productive and less harmonious when parents are demanding and critical. Most parents—whose lives are busy with work and family concerns—comment that time is scarce, but none report that lack of time impedes them entirely from helping their children.

Despite the difficulties and limitations to which parents refer, they generally feel that they are helping their children to the best of their ability and resources. When asked whether she is satisfied with what she currently does to help, Parent 22201 replies: “I think so. I think that I do as much as I can.” Most parents comment similarly, but at the same time twenty-six Time 2 and eleven Time 4 parents report that they could and would like to do even more.

Developing Student Responsibility

According to parents, responsible students are those who know both what work they have to do, at school and at home, and do it to the best of their ability. At home this means completing homework; at school it means completing one’s daily work. For parents responsibility also means participating and responding in class, and planning and organizing for tests and longterm assignments. Responsible students do not procrastinate and leave everything until the last minute. Twenty-eight of the Time 8 parents report that their children are generally responsible, although some (eight) indicate that their children are weak in some aspects of responsibility. Six parents report that their children are not responsible.

Of the elements of responsibility cited above, students, parents note, have the greatest difficulty with studying and planning ahead and completing longterm assignments. “She tends,” says Parent 28216 of her daughter, “to kind of leave things to

the last minute. . . . Instead of saying, 'Okay, I have two weeks, I'll do a bit,' and kind of get a time schedule for how to do it, she tends to leave it to the end." This child is one whom her mother otherwise describes as having "everything done that's supposed to be done, handed in on time and she does it very well. . . . She's responsible. She knows that it has to be done and she does it."

A number of those parents who comment that their children are responsible claim they have always been this way, that it is an inherent characteristic of the child that is independent of time and place. As Parent 24204 explains of her daughter: "There's no problem. The kid's a keener-beaner. She's a self-starter." Parent 74211 says of her son: "He's extremely responsible. I think that's his personality; he's been that way since he was really young."

Those parents for whom responsibility, and developing responsibility, is a concern, see a role for themselves at home. Many parents characterize this role as one of "reminding" not only with regard to homework, but also and especially longterm assignments and studying. Parent 63204 comments that as far as responsibility is concerned, her son is "pretty good for a Grade Four. He knows what he's got to do. We have to nudge him . . . remind him. I mean he's not perfect, that's for sure. "Nudging" is especially important, Parent 54201 points out, when students are first assigned work to complete at home, but also for longterm assignments and studying for upcoming tests, even when students are generally responsible and always complete their homework. "This year," says Parent 54201, "was the first year he has had homework and he is bringing it home and mentions this project is due in a week and so I might then say, 'You have hockey on Wednesday and you're going out to a baseball game on Thursday. That leaves you with two nights.' I might give him that kind of direction but he is bringing the stuff home."

Many of these parents, even those who comment that their children are "naturally" responsible, suggest in their comments that there are variables or factors that contribute to the degree to which their child is responsible. These factors include the work itself, the child's interest in it, and the teacher. Parent 63208 characterizes her child as one who lacks responsibility, who knew about a book report for two weeks, but "left it for the last night from start to finish." She adds, however, that without procrastination he completed a research assignment on Alexander Mackenzie which "he thoroughly enjoyed. He talked about it all the time and ended up with an A on it, and he did it on the computer and he was quite proud of himself. . . . He did that all himself." Parent 23204 comments that generally her daughter is responsible and knows what assignments have to be done, but

that “some are a little bit harder to get done because she is not as interested in it. It’s not a very interesting subject. It’s boring, so you have to prompt her along, and say, ‘Well, if you get it finished then you don’t have to worry about it anymore.’”

Many parents who comment that their children are responsible mention at the same time the use of a student planner. The planner helps students to organize themselves, and helps parents to help their children. Parent 73204 explains that her daughter takes responsibility for her work and adds: “I think with the daytimer . . . certainly she knows what has to be done because it’s written down. She gets upset if she doesn’t get it completed.” Not bringing the planner home is seen as irresponsibility by parents.

The planner also acts as a springboard for involvement for parents, especially if they are requested by the teacher to look at, and possibly sign, the planner every day. The planner helps the parent to “nudge” the child. Parent 79207, for example, says:

There have been a few times where he has forgotten his homework. Now there is a little bit of—I guess there’s been a few times where he hasn’t been responsible for his homework and I have to sign an agenda every morning and it’s written on there what he has for homework and there has been a couple of times that I can remember that he is supposed to do one hour of math and one hour of reading and there was no books brought home. . . . There’s been a couple of times I’ve made him go back to the school and get it.

Parents whose children use planners also note that their children begin to use the planner more independently on their own. They see their children becoming more responsible over time. Parent 51204 explains that “they have this daytimer that he brings home and he has to have his homework all charted in it, and I have to sign it when he does it. He’s very good at that. It was hard in the beginning getting him started on it. But he’s getting good at it now, cause he does his homework and he gets me to sign it and stuff. Yeah . . . he’s very good.” Parent 24204 explains that her daughter was “on a daily planner” the previous year and that it was helpful: “I could keep track of things last year. That was very easy and if there was problems we could tune into it. This year she’s not on the planner, not the one where I have to sign it everyday, anyway. So she’s kind of been cut loose from that.” When asked whether she would prefer to have her daughter back on a daily signing system the mother says proudly, “No, she doesn’t need it.”

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Inadequate Help and Support in the Home

When asked whether parents generally feel capable of helping, there is little positive feeling among teachers. Only eight of the Time 8 teachers maintain that parents generally are able to help their children. And even among these teachers there are some doubts: “I

don't know, I wonder about that," says Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais). Teacher responses are often framed in the conditional tense. For example, Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) says, "I mean as far as education I think most parents could help in some way, be involved some way." Teacher 28100 elaborates: "I think in most cases, the stuff that we are doing that they should feel qualified. I don't think that there's anything that we are doing that would be too much, like judging on meeting the parents and meeting on the conferences, they all seem quite capable to me of handling what it is that we are doing and I guess that is why we do call upon them to proofread and sign things. But generally speaking, I think they should."

Teachers' comments that parents "could" and "should" be able to help and "could" and "should" feel capable of helping suggest that they are not confident about the extent to which help is taking place in the home. In fact, nine Time 8 teachers believe that parents could help their children more and only three of all of the Time 8 teachers claim that parents are doing all that they can to help. The perceived absence of parent help in the home is seen by teachers as lack of parent support for their efforts. Teachers often describe this problem as lack of follow-through in the home. Teacher 25100 contends that "some parents honestly believe that when they say to their kid, 'Do you have homework,' and the kid says, 'No I finished it,' the parent without checking that, they honestly feel that they have supervised." Teacher 72100 describes a student in her class who "lives with his Dad and his Dad means well but there's just . . . I guess there's just not the commitment there to make sure he's got his work complete and it upsets everything."

In the last quote above, the implication is clear that many parents are not really interested in what their children are doing. There is a strong sense among teachers that parents, or at least some parents, do not help because they do not want to. They are not interested. Among Time 8 teachers, for example, there is only one teacher who states explicitly that not wanting to help may not actually be a problem. Eight of the Time 8 teachers comment outright that parents do not want to help. Teacher 62100 says, "Some parents seem to choose not to be completely involved." She explains that she tried to get six of her students involved in a home program to improve their times tables mastery: "They had to do it at home. Four out of six worked really well, but two—unfortunately the students didn't get the support at home." Interestingly, she focusses on the negative, the two whom she claims did not help, rather than the four who did help.

Among the teacher data here positive parent support is reported most strongly from the French Immersion teachers and from teachers in the Time 4 private non-denominational school. French Immersion Teacher 63100 (Monsieur Laurent) notes that

he gets “a good response” from parents. “I found parents are very concerned about how well the kids achieve in the classroom and how they compare also, with their peer group,” he explains. “I find parents very supportive with the homework and if they find that the child is having particular difficulty with it, they’ll usually phone and set up an interview or something similar. And then behaviour, the same thing.” The private school teachers, in contrast, see at-home help as negative. Parents, they contend, help their children too much with schoolwork, especially projects. Teachers report that they have had difficulty discriminating the child’s work from the parent’s and they are concerned that students have the opportunity to do and learn from their own work. Teacher 34100 (Time 4) says: “The only problem that I personally have had is parents doing too much of the work. I have set it up better this year so that parents are more educated about what they should be doing. They have started to realize what their role is and that has been different this year.” Sometimes these teachers will request that parents take a slightly less active role in the completion of projects. Teacher 34100 says that she has sent parents “a little note: Don’t help the children too much with projects. It’s the child’s job, not the parents.”

While teachers seem to focus on the deliberate non-involvement of parents they cite at the same time a number of constraints external to the classroom that affect the helping relationship at home including lack of time, language, and the challenge of adolescent/parent relations. Teachers also point out that parents may not understand the curricular material of the classroom or have the skills to help their children. They emphasize, to a much greater degree than parents, inherent parental inability and lack of education, and the discomfort and lack of confidence which may result from this. “A lot of parents can’t do the work,” explains Teacher 51100, “not just language problems. Some of them can’t do the math or don’t understand what they’re supposed to do.” According to teachers, not knowing the curriculum or methods also poses a problem for parents in helping their children. When asked what prevents parents from doing more to help their children learn Teacher 24100 replies: “That’s a tough question. Maybe just a lack of knowing what’s going on in the school.” In addition, teachers occasionally remark that expectations may play a part in difficulties with helping at home. School and home expectations may differ and parents may not always know what the expectations of the classroom are and what to emphasize at home.

Interestingly, when teachers speak of the barriers posed by curriculum, methods, or expectations they neither suggest that they might be responsible in part for this difficulty nor that there may be a role for teachers in remedying this problem by informing parents and helping them to understand. Only one in all of the Time 8 teachers suggests, and

rather subtly and indirectly, that she might have some responsibility in sharing either expectations or information or both with parents. When asked what prevents parents from helping their children more with schoolwork French Immersion Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) says: "Probably a lack of communication. Ideally I would like to have them more informed in certain subject areas."

SUMMARY: PARENT/STUDENT INTERACTION

According to students, parents ask about school. Students also report that they themselves initiate discussion about school. Most often this takes place on a daily basis. Students also ask for help with schoolwork and parents offer assistance. Helping relationships in the home are extensive and intensive. Parent data are consistent with that of students in suggesting that there is huge "academic" discourse in the home and strong helping relationships, that students ask parents for help, and parents offer assistance. Typically parents and students are comfortable and enjoy working with one another, but there are occasional difficulties and tensions. Personal relationships between adolescent students and parents often become a problem at the Grades Four to Seven levels. Students contend, however, that parents are usually able to help, and they appreciate this assistance. For their part, parents strive to provide assistance in the home whether the teacher works to facilitate this or not. However, both helping and talking appear to be facilitated by teacher practices.

Among teachers there is doubt about whether parents are able to help their children at home. Teachers focus overwhelmingly on barriers to help in the home. They perceive there to be a great many obstructions, among which are lack of parent interest, parent inability and lack of education. According to teachers parent "could" and "should" help, but they are not convinced that parents actually do so. Teachers do not at all perceive the home helping relationship that parents and students describe nor do they have a sense of the extent to which discussion about school takes place in the home. They are not aware of how much help students are getting at home, and how much parents and students actually talk about school.

In general, teacher perceptions about student/parent relationships and activities differ from those of parents and students. In addition, there is more consistency within and between parent and student comments about the parent/student relationship than there is in teacher comment about student/teacher interaction. Although homes differ in their membership and by socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics they are strikingly similar in these data with respect to the nature of student/parent relationships and

activities regarding school. Homes appear to be more alike one another in this regard than classrooms.

PARENT/TEACHER INTERACTION

PARENT PERCEPTIONS

Reporting to Parents

Report Cards

In British Columbia schools report cards are mandated and use is standard. Five reporting periods are required. Three of these reports must be written; two are informal reporting periods which schools can determine individually. School practices vary, not in the quantity of “reports” made available to parents, but in the specific nature and quality of the report to parents. Differences among teachers and schools are most apparent in the range of informal reporting practices. Sometimes schools will decide on a schoolwide approach to the informal reports; sometimes teachers are free individually to decide on the kind of informal reporting to be done, at least for one of the informal reporting periods. Typically, one of the informal reports is designated as a formal parent-teacher conference. Holding at least one parent/teacher conference is standard practice.

There is among these parents much discontent about reporting strategies and report card format. Only nine of the thirty-four Time 8 parents report positively on the communication of information about student progress and achievement from teachers. In general parents often don’t feel that report cards tell them enough. “I have felt out of touch,” notes Parent 34202 (Time 4), “I have had very little contact. We would get report cards but they are not very informative.”

According to Parent 78202, not being fully informed or aware of their child’s achievement and progress is “a parent’s biggest concern nowadays . . . especially the lower intermediate grades. We don’t know where our children stand.” This parent speaks specifically of anecdotal report cards:

It’s very hard for a parent to understand how their child is doing when all they’ve had are written reports. . . . His last report card that he did get, um, the teacher did indicate whether he was average or not, or below average or above average, but I don’t know if she’s taking that on a classroom level, or on a school level, or if she’s taking that on the district level. So it really doesn’t tell me, percentage wise, where he is.”

For this parent, and for many, report cards, particularly those that are anecdotal, do not provide enough information about a child's weaknesses which is crucial for parents who want to help their children.

According to parents letter grades provide them with more information about how their children are doing, about how they "stand" in the class. Once again, parent preference for this information arises from concern about providing assistance. For Parent 28201, like the others, knowing how her child is doing "on a scale in the classroom" is important "because if he's falling down, like when is all this going to be caught up, right? He's falling behind the average student he obviously needs extra work." Parent 28201 suggests that not only is comparative data (letter grades) important but also full information about classroom standards and norms. All of this enables parents to contextualize their child's achievement and better cues them to the need for assistance. Parent 28201 refers to how her son is doing "in comparison to other students. Like if the average kid, if the test was out of ten, and the average kid got four and Craig got five, then to me that must have been a hard area and nobody understood. Or if the average student got ten and he only got two or three, then he must have missed out somewhere." She notes that she has received this kind of information from her elder son's high school math teacher and it helped her to understand the challenges of the course and her eldest son's achievement and effort. Parent 28201 and others point out that this kind of information about the class as a whole (e.g., class means, mode, median) can be given to parents without jeopardizing confidentiality at an individual level.

Those parents who do receive regular interim reports, or weekly reports in a work folder (as opposed to required informal reports) point this out and speak favourably of these procedures. Parent 54201 says of her child's teacher: "She sends home a thing every Friday. It's about their behaviour in class, whether their assignments have been met and stapled to an "R", probably at least two assignments a week, a spelling test, say, and maybe a math quiz and I really enjoy seeing that. Every single Friday it comes home. And that keeps me on top a lot more than a three month report would do. So I am quite happy with that." These frequent reports enable parents to be current with their child's progress and achievement. Often they include mid-term grades, or percentage scores for tests and assignments in different subject areas, which also keep parents up-to-date, especially in the absence of letter grades. Many parents, like Parent 54201 above, suggest that three written report cards is not enough. Too much time elapses between these reports, and parents are not kept sufficiently up-to-date. Parents who receive interim reports appreciate them especially for this reason. They are not a common feature of

regular classroom reporting practices, being provided by only two Time 8 teachers and three Time 2 teachers.

Three-way Conferences

When parents comment extensively about conferences with teachers, they do so about three-way conferences which are reported by eight Time 8 parents (from six Time 8 classrooms). Regular interviews are referred to by only three of the remaining Time 8 parents. Parents who are involved in three-way conferences are pleased that students are involved, that the discussion includes them, and believe that these conferences are beneficial for students. Parent 23204 has always been positive about even traditional conferences because, as she notes, “we always discuss what happens after anyways.” However, she adds: “It is a little bit better doing it with the students, as well, especially when they get older. Cause I think they get something out of it too.” Parent 23206 describes their three-way conference and its benefits:

He basically went over the report card with us and why he gave the marks he did for the subjects, how she was doing in what subjects and if she was having any particular problems in relating in one area. Amanda was also there at the interviews. The student is also there with the parents, so it's the student, the parents and the teacher together So the student knows exactly what the teacher is telling the parents and vice versa She gets to have input. If she disagrees with the teacher's view . . . she is allowed to say so and it creates a discussion and you know what exactly is happening.

Conferences in which a discussion between student, parent and teacher is created are collaborative; all participate.

For parents three-way conferences are also beneficial, particularly if they feel that they are not just passive observers. In the best of situations parents are invited to participate, to contribute their knowledge about their child and their responses to their child's progress and achievement. Says Parent 73206:

With the parent teacher interview I found—and students too, it was actually student led—um, I felt very comfortable mentioning the things I would like to see Thea have the opportunity to do. I was asked what I thought were her strong points and it's something I've never been asked before. I think it was a very positive time for Thea too because we were dealing with a lot of her strong points.

While three-way conferences do involve both parent and student, these individuals may not necessarily be involved any more effectively than in traditional conferences. This depends on how the teacher structures the conference. Preparation, and a clear understanding by the individuals involved of their roles and responsibilities, appear to be key. Of three-way conferences in her child's class Parent 28216 says:

It works out well. The way they set up is the children prepare; they have a basic formula that they want the children to use. They photocopy an outline of the steps the children are supposed to go through and then all their work in a folder, that they decorate and everything, they make it special. They actually make up an invitation, that you're invited to. Basically the children run the interview, the teacher just sort of pops by at some point and adds a bit more information and she's got the written report that she has done with the evaluation. The kids do a sample evaluation and the parents are asked to do an evaluation.

This conference involved the participation of all individuals. Although the child lead the interview, parent and student assessed the child's work and, importantly, the teacher also provided an evaluation.

When there is little teacher participation and when teacher abandons responsibility for the conference, this is apparent to parents, and is perceived as a weakness. Parent 54201 comments:

I guess the first meeting they had these child-lead conferences instead of reports or as reports and this year she never really spoke too much about Darren. Darren lead the little conference and we were there for about half an hour and saw his work and that was it. There wasn't much contact, mind you there was another mother in the room at the same time and she was talking with her a lot so I really didn't have the opportunity to talk with her.

When a number of parents and children are in the classroom at the same time because other conferences are being conducted concurrently, access to the teacher, who must circulate, is limited.

The fact that other parents and children are in the room at the same time also means that there is more noise and disruption. For parents here, appropriate setting and conducive atmosphere are key to a productive conference. "I don't like the way parent/teacher interviews are conducted at all," says Parent 28201, "you've kids running around, you've got parents that have got younger ones and older that are interrupting you." Of her own conference she says: "There was a two year old running around, like taking papers off and the mother screaming and I'm trying to carry on conversation with this teacher, right. It was awful." The fact that there were other people in the room was particularly distressing to this parent, apart from the lack of calm, because of the issues of privacy and confidentiality. She recalls her conversation with the vice-principal: "Like I said to Mr. Chong, I really didn't know that Johnny, that his behavior problems were because his parents were divorced last week. That's none of my business. And this is what was going on."

Teacher/parent confidentiality with respect to the student is also important to some parents. Parent 22201 also liked the three-way conferences but wonders "whether it's a bit more guarded conversation when the child is there." She adds: "Perhaps I'd like to have one when the student isn't there. I think it's a good idea to get the three-way

exchange, but then I'd like to be interviewed separately too." Parents do occasionally mention that they'd also like to have the option to meet with their child's teacher alone.

When parents discuss traditional parent/teacher interviews they often comment that they feel rushed, that ten or fifteen minutes is not enough in which to go beyond superficial conversation, and that they feel pressured by the schedule, and sometimes by the teacher, to get in and out of the classroom quickly. Parent 23304 is one of the few parents who speaks positively of the time her daughter's teacher accords to individual parent/teacher meetings. In fact, she maintains that they don't often need to meet with the teacher apart from formal interviews because of the time spent in these meetings. "Oh, yes," she says, "I don't feel that—because it's quite extensive, he takes quite a long time and explains everything and shows everything and the work and all that, so we don't feel the need to go more often than twice unless there's something that happens." This kind of comment is unusual. Parent 28201, for example, was not satisfied with her original parent/teacher interview because she felt she did not have the time to discuss with the teacher the problems her son was having in class. Even for parents whose children do not have learning or academic difficulties, ten or fifteen minutes is insufficient discussion time.

Ongoing Communication from Teachers

Student Planners

The student planner is the most widely reported teacher practice of communication and involvement reported by Time 8 parents, and it receives the most favourable comment among all parents. Fifteen of thirty-four Time 8 parents comment directly on its use (six in Time 4 and 5 in Time 2); thirteen of seventeen Time 8 teachers speak of its use in their classrooms. For parents the planner is a source of information about the classroom and about what their children are doing. Of the planner Parent 51214 says, "Karyn . . . puts down what she's supposed to do and we have to initial that so we know exactly what's happening." Parent 23204 adds, "I like that kind of thing—the journal, so that you know that this is what they had to do and yes, indeed she did it."

For Parent 24202, and for many others, the planner is not only a means of keeping up to date about what her daughter is doing. It is also a valuable and convenient means of communication to and from the teacher, especially about academic matters. Parent 24202 explains:

I really like the idea of passing notes back and forth in the student planner. I think that this is really a good idea. I was really impressed when it first came out a couple years ago. . . .

Because it really did open up the lines of communication, because you could see everyday, oh, well, you have this and this and this to do and oh, this was due by then and the teacher's also looking at it and initialing it and seeing that you're initialing it and you can write in there something about oh, you know, excuses about something. Or, it's like with the teacher, he said to me, "Please make sure that you check her homework" because—and then of course that opened up the fact that I didn't know that she wasn't doing her homework. She just said, "Oh, no, I did that."

Because the planner comes home daily, information exchange is regular and immediate. Parents also see the benefit of the planner for their children and "not for just their homework" (Parent 56204). For many parents this is an important organizational tool in general, which helps to teach students to become responsible for their own school and home lives. "I put very little value on what was written down," says Parent 56204. "What I valued was that they had to keep the book and write things down. . . . So now she looks at that list and it may be something like, not just page so and so for math, but ask about, can you drive for a field, or ask about something else for the next week type of thing. So it's got these kids into that mode."

For Parent 72204, whose child has a learning disability, the planner has been important in helping her son remember and organize his work. This mother points out, however, that she also found it facilitated closer relations between teacher and student. The teacher got to know her son better, as a whole person with interests outside school. When interviewed, Parent 72204 was so enthusiastic about commenting on the student planner that she preempted the interviewer's question:

You didn't ask me about the agenda book. Isn't that one of the questions? Maybe I should have mentioned it. I've found that, particularly with Ian's problems, with having short term memory problem, absolutely invaluable. He never forgot it. It came home regularly every day and that really was helpful and Cathy and I used that to great advantage, sending notes back and forth. And I feel that he'll carry that on in high school now that he's used to it. I certainly will encourage him to because it has been really useful. I didn't want to miss commenting on it because it is such a strong force in his life and the teacher commented on how nice it was because I used it too. Because he has difficulty remembering things, I wrote down his piano lesson, . . . what nights he went shooting, what nights he had this to do and that to do and when she looked in the book, she said she started to see him as a whole person. She was really interested in seeing his other interests and the other things that he did. So I thought that it really opened up the communication.

It is important to note that planner use varies among classrooms. Some teachers are more consistent in their use of planners, and more careful about requiring daily use and following up with students. Parent 24202 notes that her daughter's teacher encourages the use of the planner: "They get a detention if the student planner is not signed by the parent." Parent 22201 explains that in her daughter's classroom parents also have to sign each night. However, she isn't sure if the teacher looks at the planners everyday, but notes "written things coming home and Carly will write notes for her in it too. So I think

she must read them.” The planner is a help to her daughter, but she adds that regular and consistent use is important: “They had them last year, but there wasn’t a mandatory they sort of keep on with it. They sort of kept on top of it the first year and they kind of sluffed off with it and think she would have got a lot more benefit if she had better planning and organization.”

Parents often become less concerned about the issues of consistency and regularity of use, and follow-up by teachers and themselves, as their children become used to using the planner and more responsible about keeping track of and completing their tasks independently. Parent 23204 notes that her daughter has “sort of gotten into the habit” of using the planner regularly. About seeing the planner and signing it everyday herself she says, “I can’t quite remember if we did it at the beginning of this year, for a time, then Lindsey was so good about that we just stopped doing it.” Interestingly, however, she adds that her daughter used the planner last year and parents were required to sign everyday: “It used to be a requirement that we sign, like last year for instance, she brought the book home everyday and we initialled it and made sure that we looked it over.” So, her daughter benefited from the “better planning and organization” to which Parent 22201 refers above, becoming more responsible through consistent use of the planner, after which time the parent stepped away.

Work Folders

Parents also comment favourably on the use of student work folders sent home regularly, or the receipt of schoolwork sent home for signature on a more informal basis. Parent 74204 reports that Teacher 74100 (Mr. Winton) sends student work home in a folder. When asked to describe some ways in which she and the teacher work together she cites this as an example and says:

Whenever they have a test, or there’s a notice that comes home or an assignment, he wants us to look at it. He sends it home and we have to sign, like a homework sheet. We have to sign that and date it and comments we can put on there with Leah. So there’s a communication there, so he knows that we are having a look at the tests, that she does and what she’s doing on it and he knows that we’ve looked at them cause we’ve signed them. So if there ever was any problems, I’d feel I could phone him or talk to him at the school.

Parent 74211 in the same class also replies similarly, in response to the same question above: “Um, he has homework lists that he has to bring home and then homework has to be looked over and assignments that he has finished . . . and then we sign the sheet and send it back with comments to the teacher. And that’s done, I believe once a week.” This practice is reported by some parents, but is not widespread. Eight of

thirty-four Time 8 parents report on work being sent home by teachers (and ten in Time 2 from four classrooms). Two other parents from the Time 8 data all in the same school report on work being sent home in their child's "Communication Day" folder (a schoolwide effort) which is received once a week on the same day and contains all school and classroom correspondence. Although samples of student work may also be included in the folder this is not necessarily the case every week. In only two Time 8 classrooms and three Time 2 classrooms is schoolwork sent home on a regular basis, in a weekly work folder. These teachers also send home interim reports which are a part of the work folders. Only those parents who receive work folders for that express purpose cite its regular, anticipated arrival. Other parents who receive work or tests for signature on a more ad hoc basis do not comment on regularity of arrival.

Information from the Classroom: Previews, Overviews & Newsletters

When asked about information coming home, parents often mention school information newsletters and notices from classrooms which are typically about upcoming events such as field trips. These kinds of communications help parents to feel less excluded because there is at the very least basic communication from the school about what is happening. Parent 23206 notes that her child's school has a

Communication Day on Wednesday, where they bring—all the students bring home the notices in a plastic bag and there's a little form that the parent has to sign saying that they received the forms and if there is anything to go back you're supposed to send them back the next day in the same envelope with the form. . . . So the communication system is quite good, so we don't usually miss any notices about what's happening.

Parent 25205 also refers to the "general newsletter they send out," meaning the school newsletter. When asked whether newsletters are received from individual teachers about what they are doing in the classroom she says, "Not usually." This is true for most classrooms here, as well as for the receipt of previews, newsletters that outline the curriculum for the coming term. Only one Time 8 parent (62207) reports receiving classroom newsletters on a regular basis and only one Time 8 parent (22201) mentions the receipt of previews.

Only four of the thirty-four Time 8 parents report specifically on receiving information from the teacher about curriculum and instruction in the classroom. Parent 22201 does note that her child's teacher is "very organized and has a set course of what things she wants to do. Like I think there's always been a good feedback through the year of things they are planning to do." Teacher 22100's efforts to inform parents also extend to more detailed information such as project outlines. Says Parent 22201: "She sends

individual notices through the classroom that things that are to get done presently or in the future, so you know if you have to get up to the library to get books, materials and you have to collect things at home to do, and how much time you're going to have for it, stuff like that. Again last year there wasn't proper deadlines and all of sudden something was due and there she was in a mad panic to get it finished." When parents do not know what is going on in the classroom they often feel excluded from their children's education, as does Parent 24202 because "sometimes [my daughter] comes home with an assignment or a project without full instructions or I'm not sure, I'm asking her questions, like, 'Well, how long is this supposed to be?' and 'When is this due?' and 'Where's your instructions about?'"

Most parents are not as fortunate as Parent 22201 and Parent 51214 who also receives home project outlines. Parent 72204, for example, notes that she has never really known "the curriculum thrust at the time." She has received "a curriculum summary with the report cards" but adds: "They tend to bring home a fairly distorted view of what's going on. The math has been very easy to follow because the text book has been coming home and you know which chapter they're working on, but social studies and that, it's somehow I've had trouble figuring it out."

Often, as parent 72204 points out above, parents do receive an overview note in report cards about what students have studied over the previous term with perhaps some indication about what is coming up, a practice that is expected of teachers in many schools. This seems to be a more prevalent practice than regular classroom curriculum newsletters or advance previews about upcoming study. Parent 29204 says: "We've always been kept well informed. This year they sent us progress letters throughout the year. . . . Just kind of like, at the end of a quarter, like November or so, she sends a letter saying that the last two months we've been focusing on social and science." In most cases these are, as Parent 29204 indicates, "after-the-fact" summaries, and while they inform parents, do not facilitate the provision of parental help while study is ongoing.

Telephone Calls

While the receipt of general teacher telephone calls home is not common, parents do report more often on these than on the written information cited above. Seven Time 8 parents mention having received telephone calls from teachers (seventeen in Time 2). When parents do mention that they have received telephone calls their comments are often accompanied by a remark that the calls are more often about behaviour than academics, and always negative, that teachers only call home with bad news. Parent

25201 says, "I have never gotten a phone call regarding Roger's academics, which really upsets me." This was particularly bothersome to Parent 25201 because over one term her son's marks declined and she was not informed immediately: "Roger went from being an A/B student to a C- student and I never once got a single phone call regarding his academics, or he is struggling, or anything. I didn't know anything about it until I got his report card." She adds that over the same time period she did receive telephone calls about behaviour.

According to these parents teachers rarely make "good news" telephone calls. Of phone calls home to report good news, Parent 23206 says, "No, the teacher's never done that." She adds, however, "I would be very pleased with that." When teachers do make good news calls parents are typically pleased. Parent 16206 (Time 2) feels part of a team with her son's teacher and explains why:

I feel he has tremendous concern for Keith . . . just because of the phone calls I get and he—in fact, he phoned a couple of weeks ago to tell—I wasn't here but [my husband] took the call and he said that Mr. McPhail phoned to tell us that he felt that Keith handled a situation quite maturely in school here and he thought it was great and he just wanted us to know that and I think for a teacher to do that—he is thinking about and he is taking time to make the call and make us aware of that.

When asked how she and her husband felt about the call the mother said, "Oh, we both liked it." As the comments of Parent 16206 suggest, teachers who take the time to call parents about good things are rated highly by parents. Parent 17226 (Time 2) feels that she hasn't really worked with her son's teacher, but adds that "we have talked about his courses a few times and he has phoned me—twice—to let me know that he is doing really good. So, I feel that he is a really good teacher."

Teacher Efforts to Involve Parents in Instruction

Parents rarely mention that teachers have asked them to help their children at home with homework on a regular, ongoing basis. Only three Time 8 parents report that the teacher specifically asked them to work with or help their child at home. For example, Parent 22201 says: [My daughter] was having a bit of trouble with the unit and so [the teacher] sent a little bit extra work home for her to get caught up in that, so she understood it. When we had the parent interviews she went over some things she was having problems and to work on at home a bit." Only a very few parents note that the teacher has requested that they work with their child on a particular project or a home learning project, other than Science Fair projects. Typically teachers make blanket recommendations that

parents help their children with times tables, and that parents read with their children or encourage their children to read.

Parents often note that teachers gave them ideas or helped them learn something that would enable them to help their child better, which they seem to distinguish from being asked to help or work with their child. Nine Time 8 parents from seven classrooms report on this (six Time 4 parents in four classrooms, and 23 Time 2 parents in 10 classrooms), usually the result of parent request. Parent 28201 says of her son's teacher: "She gave us several ideas, say like we made up cue cards, small ones, very small ones, for math so that we could carry with us if we were in a car and you are stuck in traffic and he could do that. Or we'd be sitting cooking dinner and do them up or read the instructions on the soup cans—not that there was anything I needed to know, but I needed him to read it. So, you know, she came up with several good ideas." Parent 79207, mother of a French Immersion student, comments: " Yeah, yeah, um, yes, a certain French/English dictionary. Also, helping us out by getting us their math book in English so that when he brings his French math book home, we know exactly what it's all about."

While most teachers do little to involve parents at home, some are more active than others in this regard. In these data Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke; Time 8) and Teacher 21100 (Mr. Sutcliffe; Time 2 and Time 4) stand out. Parent 73204 notes a wide range of activities that the teacher has organized or suggested that students and parents work on together at home. Both Parents 73204 and 73206 refer to home activities that the teacher recommended specifically to them as individuals or to a small group of students and also those which she has implemented for the whole class. For example, when asked whether there are ways in which she and the teacher have collaborated to help her child learn Parent 73204 refers to the teacher's efforts to involve them at home:

We've certainly been working on a lot more reading and spending a lot more time reading and that was certainly one of Mrs. Munke's recommendations is just to work on that. . . . And letting her read to me. Yes, definitely. And multiplication, helping her. We made little rhymes up on how to— 6×8 is 48, Alison go close the gate, or some silly little rhyme we worked up and that's how we worked on that. And that came, of course, from the interview with the teacher. Just the weaknesses and the areas she felt Alison needed to work on. And right now . . . they're working on where they have a story that is sent home with them and they have to analyze and by the title of the story they had to figure out What do you think this story is about? and then read the story and there was certain questions and then how close was what you thought the story was going to be about from reading the title to what the story was, this type of thing. So this is on top of her regular reading each night. . . . And of course, I didn't mention with the reading record, that is initialled by the parent and the time frame in which they read is also marked down each night; so that is really kept track of as well.

Parent 73206, in the same classroom, also mentions the reading record and refers to an activity which the teacher designed for her daughter and a small group of other

students in the classroom: “Well, she sent home a booklet on study skills which Thea worked with and I’ve gone over with her.” A full battery of home activities for all students such as that organized by Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke), and referred to by parents 73204 and 73206, is rare. No Time 4 parents mention home learning activities. Five speak of never being asked by the teacher to help their child, and one parent from the private non-denominational school reports that the teacher specifically asked her not to help her child. Home learning activities are a feature of only three (Time 2) classrooms.

There is little involvement of parents in classroom in instruction. Of Time 8 parents sixteen mention volunteering efforts at the school, but only four report on involvement in the classroom during classtime. Often parent volunteer efforts are related to the classroom, but don’t take place inside the classroom. Parents perceive little sense of invitation from intermediate teachers, which contrasts with the full welcome extended by primary teachers. When asked whether an invitation has been extended Parent 25205 replies negatively and then comments on the kind of help desired by intermediate teachers: “They only want you if they need someone to drive them somewhere or something like that.” Occasionally parents are in the classroom for special events, but none report having been invited into the classroom simply to observe the class in progress, and twenty Time 8 parents make quite explicit the fact that they have not done so. About observation in the classroom Parent 72207 says: “I didn’t know that opportunity existed. I would have figured the teachers would have felt they were being scrutinized.”

Interestingly, parents comment on the value of being in and out of the classroom for volunteer-related tasks which give them an opportunity to see “accidentally” what is going on inside the classroom. The sight of the class in progress is intriguing and interesting to parents. Parent 54201 laments not being able to help out in her child’s class: “Maybe it would be a lot better if I still be able to attend his class through grade four, five and six Because when you’re in the classroom you see what is going on. Even if you are there just cutting vegetables in the back corner you get the whole atmosphere of the classroom.”

Teacher Efforts to Communicate and Collaborate with Parents

When there is little communication from teachers to parents either about what is happening in the classroom, or about the child’s work parents often feel excluded from their child’s education. Four Time 8 parents, five Time 4 parents, and thirteen Time 2

parents report feeling excluded from their child's classroom and education. When there is communication from teacher to parent parents are pleased and they do not feel excluded.. Those parents who characterize their relationships with their child's teacher as good (thirteen each of the Time 8, Time 4 and Time 2 parents respectively) typically mention satisfactory communication. At the very least they receive simple communication from the classroom (and school), either through newsletters, student planners, telephone calls, meetings with the teacher, report cards, or a combination of these.

Although parents often describe specific teacher practices such as planners and newsletters when speaking of the communicative efforts of teachers, quantity of communication is not the sole criterion necessary in order for parents to feel informed or that communication is taking place. Parent 23206 says of the relationship that she has with her child's teacher: "Well, I kind of like the way it is now, actually for this year. This open communication and making sure that everyone knows what everyone is doing, that's what I like most." She then adds of the relationship: "We haven't had any communications with [the] teacher, other than the interviews we've had. Like I said, he never rushed us out of there, we tended to go into discussions about this sort of thing. It's always been very good and we've been very pleased." In commenting on "open" communication and the fact that she was not rushed this Parent 23206 suggests that the quality or characteristics of the communications are as important as the means or frequency

As this and many other parents note, openness is a key quality of communication, Openness represents teacher willingness to communicate openly, and to do so honestly and without concealing or withholding information. When asked to describe the ways in which she and her child's teacher work together Parent 24206 says: "Just in that he is really open. If I do need to go in to speak to him about something, he'll tell me exactly what is. . . . When Samantha was picking course outline for next year, I was asking about some of the things that might be available to her and he was very frank." Sixteen of thirty-four Time 8 parents (twelve of Time 4, and three of Time 2) report that the teacher is open with them; two Time 8 parents report that the teacher is not. Responding to parents is also an aspect of open communication. The most basic teacher response is answering parents' questions thoroughly, without sidestepping, or prevaricating, or concealing, or withholding. About the teacher's response to her concerns Parent 79205 says: "Problems are taken care of, questions are answered. I've never felt frustrated or anything with the teacher. I've always gotten her cooperation on whatever I've needed." Parent 51214 comments, "The questions I've had are . . . you know, she answered."

Satisfactory, open communication is also characterized by a willingness on the part of the teacher to listen to parents, demonstrating a respect for them and their point of view, taking them at their word. Parent 23204 acknowledges that teachers can not always meet every parental demand or preference, but that these must be taken into account. Speaking of her child's teacher, she says, "I mean, you can't always act on everything, but at least he listens to them and accepts them." Seventeen Time 8 parents from eleven classrooms report that the teacher listens to them; three parents report that the teachers do not.

Teacher openness and open communication ultimately extend to collaboration, a sense among parents that not only are they free to communicate, and that they do so, but that they are also able to participate equally. Parent 24202 gives some sense of this kind of collaborative relationship: "If there is a problem on either end that it's verbalized immediately. . . . there's no discomfort with talking to each other, that you don't feel that you're taking up much of his time, or something, that the teacher doesn't hesitate to call and or write in the student planner. The lines of communication are open and . . . there's no fear on either end." This collaboration is also characterized by response on the teachers' part, a response that simply goes beyond answering questions or listening to parents' suggestions which might simply mean considering parents' views but abandoning them. Responding means acknowledging and respecting parent comments and suggestions and acting on that communication. Of Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke), Parent 73206 says, "I've had the opportunity to speak to her through being at the school sometimes but I find that during the parent teacher interviews you feel very free to have any input that she would like and that what you say is taken into consideration." In this collaboration parent input is permitted and sought. As Parent 73206 comments of a conference with her child's teacher, "I was asked what I thought were her strong points and it's something I've never been asked before."

In collaborative relationships both parties not only communicate freely and openly, but work together. As Parent 78210 notes of her relationship with her child's teacher: "They don't hesitate to phone if there is a problem and talk it over with you rather than just dealing with themselves; they talk it over. Let the parents be a little bit more involved." The idea of mutuality is communicated clearly in the comments of Parent 23204 who says of Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais): "He sends the information home; he's very open and warm at the meetings. I don't know, he's just an easy person to talk to, you know he seems to share your ideas of what you want to achieve that your child

achieves in school. He's doesn't seem to have a barrier between you and him and that's what I like."

Parent comments about collaborative relationship also refer to the role of parents in these relationships. Parent participation is required; mutuality requires that parents interact with teachers as they would like teachers to interact with them. Parent 74211 appreciates the fact that "the door is always open if there are problems there. I think we are kept up to date with what he's doing with what's sent home." He adds, however, that "we ourselves as parents, we are continually communicating with him." Parent 23204 refers to the teacher's honesty and emphasizes that this is as important for parents as it is for teachers: "We've had very good communication with the teacher that Lindsey's had. He's been very open and honest and he's a very casual person, but he tells exactly up front what all. He tells you straight up what's up. We appreciate that and we in turn do the same thing."

Of the thirty-four Time 8 parents eighteen (from twelve classrooms) believe that they and their child's teacher are working together; six parents (of five classrooms) state explicitly that they do not believe themselves to be working with their child's teacher. In the Time 4 data, on the other hand, only six parents feel themselves to be working with their child's teacher. Three of the Time 8 parents who believe themselves to be working with the teacher cite only the student planner as evidence of this relationship. When asked to describes ways in which she works with her child's teacher Parent 22201 says, "Well, I guess again those homework books." Thirteen of the others who responded positively (of a total of eighteen) cite the fact that they receive some communication from the teacher, or feel that they are able to get it if so desired. This suggests that a basic level of non-face-to-face interaction between teachers and parent—communication to and from one another, and basic information received by parents about what is happening in the classroom—is considered to be collaborative. The counts also suggest that a greater degree of collaboration is far more rare.

Parent Communication to Teachers

Visiting the Classroom

Although parents may not often participate in the classroom those who are able often visit the classroom—when picking up their children, dropping off lunches or forgotten materials, obtaining work for a sick child, or taking care of other school-related tasks. Eighteen Time 8 parents (six in Time 4 and ten in Time 2) report visiting the classrooms in these ways. These visits, typically before or after school or at break times, bring the

parent into casual contact with the teacher at which time questions can be asked, and comments offered. Parent 78210 says, "I pick Lauren up occasionally and then I go in and Carol's always really good about chatting if there's a problem." Often parents will visit the school or classroom expressly to create a presence and initiate informal contact with the teacher. Parent 29204 explains that she visits the classroom "probably once every two weeks, I just pop in, say hi and how's it going."

Parents are quick to point out that visiting the classroom does not necessarily mean that they do or can drop in at any time. Parent 28201 says: "I pop in to visit quite regularly. I've never been when they've actually been inside the classroom. You know, when you go into to pick them up when they have a dentist appointment or something." Although five Time 8 parents do report that they have observed the classroom in progress (or were free to do so) their comments reveal the observation consisted of surreptitious or covert glances they managed to gain from outside the classroom or while passing through on other activities. Of her presence in the classroom, Parent 61203 notes, "I've dropped in to give [the teacher] notes to give home to the children a few times, so I've stood and listened at the door and felt quite pleased with what I've heard." Parent 72207 confirms that she has not formally observed a lesson, but adds, "Actually I did walk in to get Belinda one day but I didn't sit in on a lesson, but I've been in there and I've seen . . . she has good class control." Parents' visits to the school, and volunteering efforts, provide glimpses into classroom life not easily gained otherwise.

Calling and Meeting with the Teacher

Twenty-nine of thirty-four Time 8 parents indicate that they feel free to call or visit their child's teacher (seven of twenty-four Time 4, and ten of forty-three Time 2 parents). Says Parent 78210 says, "I think just, you know, . . . they're approachable, you can phone them anytime . . . same as Miss Davis, they're always available." While parents comment that they are free to do this only eleven parents report that they actually do telephone or have done so. Twelve report that they have not or do not do so. When parents do contact their child's teacher these calls are often made to obtain or clarify information. Parent 79207 says, "Just one time he was mixed up with his homework and I phoned her to confirm it, just exactly what did he have to do and she was just very informative. "That's really about the only time I've had to call her," adds Parent 79207, "there really hasn't been any problems." In other cases parents call the school if the child is having a difficulty which they wish to address or there are ongoing problems in the classroom about which they are concerned. Sometimes these concerns are addressed over the telephone, but usually these

calls are instrumental, made to arrange a meeting with teachers, or ultimately lead to a meeting being organized, in order to discuss parent concerns.

Ten Time 8 parents report having met with the teacher, apart from formally scheduled interviews. When parents meet with teachers they often have questions, are gathering or clarifying information, or have a behavioural or academic concern about the child or the classroom. Parent 54201 notes a variety of concerns about which she has seen the teacher: "I think the spelling has always been a problem and I discussed that again this year with this teacher and the handwriting and the disruptive class and the problem with the student teacher. I think that was about the only things we've had to deal with this year."

When students are behaving appropriately, are capable academically or not having any problems in school, there is little need, parents say, to either call or go to the school. Parent 25205 explains that she hasn't called the teacher "because Cassie does very well in school and there really hasn't been anything. She doesn't get into any trouble either, she is good." Occasionally parents who do not call, or feel they do not need to call the school express confidence that the teacher will call them if there is a problem. Parents also feel less of a need to meet with the teacher when they are confident about communication from him or her. "She'd let me know if there was anything I need to know about or a problem," says Parent 78210. This confidence that the teacher will inform the parent immediately about a problem is, however, not widespread among parents.

When teachers are available to parents and make themselves accessible, parents are satisfied that they have sufficient opportunities to meet even if, in fact, few face-to-face meetings take place. Most Time 8 parents (twenty-five of thirty-four), for example, report that they have sufficient opportunities to meet their child's teacher. (Only six Time 4 parents, by contrast, report positively on this.) When asked about opportunity to meet Parent 28216 says: "Yes. You know, she's there every day at school and in the classroom and is always available to talk to." When asked whether she feels she can visit her child's classroom to talk to the teacher Parent 51204 replies, "Yeah, regularly, whenever I want to, whenever there's a problem, they're right there." For some parents being able to call even extends to the teacher's home. "I can call her anytime day or night, at the school or at home. I feel very comfortable with her teacher," says Parent 79205. Although making their home telephone numbers available to parents is received enthusiastically by parents, few do this, only three among all of the Time 2, Time 4 and Time 8 teachers. The fact that only twelve Time 8 parents report that the teacher is consistently available to them suggests that for many parents this is not the case, be it by telephone or in person.

Parent Advocacy: Parent Efforts to Collaborate with Teachers

The collaborative relationships described earlier (in “Teacher Efforts to Communicate and Collaborate with Parents”) are those which teachers initiate and guide. These teachers draw parents in to collaborative relationships and activities; they work in ways which are collaborative. Data here, and that presented earlier in “Visiting the Classroom” and “Calling and Meeting with the Teacher,” suggest, however, that parents are also intervening or advocating for their child. Parents are prepared to stand up for their child’s interests at school should there be need to do so, and many actually do so, on their own initiative and independent of teacher efforts.

Often parents’ intervention or advocative efforts take place in response to conflict, from problems that parents or the child or both are experiencing. In advocating, parents signal a wish to be heard, to be made part of the instructional relationship in the classroom—and in so doing to resolve the conflict. These problems often concern children who are academically talented and whose parents believe they are not being challenged in the classroom, or children who have some learning difficulty and whose parents believe they are not getting the help or support that they need. Parents may also be concerned more generally about the learning situation in the classroom, or about the child’s behaviour and the school’s response to it.

Sometimes parents’ advocative efforts do not meet with success (although this is not frequent in Time 8 data). Five Time 2 and two Time 8 parents report that the teacher did not follow up on their concerns. Three Time 8 parents, five Time 4 parents and two Time 2 parents comment that the teacher does not listen to them. By not listening to parents or not following up on their concerns, teachers demonstrate an unwillingness to collaborate. Both listening and responding are two of the characteristics of open communication as cited by parents, and are important aspects of collaboration.

Parent 54201, for example, is concerned about the fact that her son’s classroom is a disruptive one, that there are a number of students who create mayhem, as a result of which it is hard for her son and others to work. About this she has made a suggestion, which the teacher and school have not taken up:

I think maybe she could offer . . . those children who are working, offering a chance—they’re all in portables right now—offer them a chance, Okay, you have finished your project, would you go to the library to work on a special research project or have some computer time in the school. . . . And offer them those kinds of almost rewards for finishing your work and a chance to get out of the zoo in the classroom. And I think those could be set up fairly easily.

When asked about the response, she adds: “I think that actually even the principal said that was a good idea that they would follow through with it. But if it has been followed

through I think [my son] mentioned once he got out for something or other but it has only been once and that was a good two months ago that this happened. So I don't think that the response has been good."

When asked whether in fact the teacher is open to her concerns this parent responds: "She is quite willing to talk about concerns, but I get the impression that she feels that she is doing everything that can be done about it and take it or leave it. That's sort of the attitude I'm getting." When asked whether in fact the teacher listens to her and uses the information that she provides she says: "To her liking I think. I think she probably tunes out what she doesn't want to hear and maybe absorbs a small amount of it."

In the following example, the parent has persisted over a number of years, and has not yet met with success. Her child, she feels, has not been challenged in school. This year's teacher (77100: Mrs. Brewer) has not responded to efforts that Parent 77205 has made on her son's behalf. When asked what the ideal parent/teacher relationship would be like she replies that

it'd be . . . they'd do what you ask. . . . You have to understand with Jared that I spent the past three years trying to get him into some kind of advanced education because he is absolutely tired of learning the same thing over and over again. . . . I've been asking for three years for Jared to be pushed a little harder and I've always been told that we'll get to it next week or we'll get to it next month or we just can't get to it cause we can't find the resources or time or. . . . I feel a little like I've been strung along. . . . But then, now we're here in another year and it's the same old thing.

Despite her lack of success, she, like other parents who are persistent, continues to advocate on her son's behalf. "Maybe that's my personality," she says, "I don't like to let things slide if I think it's an issue." These parents want to work with the teacher, but in neither case does the teacher respond to parent efforts. Had they done so communication would have been productive, and collaboration would have been effected.

When parents advocate on their children's behalf, teachers sometimes do respond and collaboration begins to occur. Often this takes place after much persistence on the part of parents, sometimes over several years. When asked whether the teacher is attentive to her concerns and suggestions Parent 78202 comments:

I think she listens to the parents' opinions. She understands, I think, more so now than last year, since she's known me now for a few years now, what Jonathan is like, so when I sort of go in there at the beginning of the year and introduce myself and say this is what my son's like and this is what I'd like to see, she's aware of it and . . . he's the type who needs to be pushed: . . . Now you've got to do this, now get it done. And she does do that. She is aware of certain things and I think maybe this is one reason why I don't get as many phone calls probably because she is pushing him and making sure he gets it done.

The following example, in which the teacher responded to the parent's advocative efforts, involves a parent whose son is having difficulty at school and also needs "to be

pushed.” Here the parent was persistent and a collaborative relationship evolved from her efforts to work with the teacher. Parent 28201 acted as an advocate for her son, approaching the school near the beginning of the year. She had been unhappy with her son’s progress, whom she characterizes as a low-achiever, and the situation in class, in particular what she saw as the lack of both academic press and support. Of her son and the situation she says: “He’s not a bright student, he’s average, maybe even at the lower average. He seems to get lost in the shuffle. Like it’s go at your own speed. The type of child he is, he’ll do it when he’s forty-five and he needs somebody on top to say, ‘Craig you have to do it, you have to do it by this time, it has to be done this way and do it,’ you know what I mean?”

Parent 28201 and the teacher saw each other during the first parent/teacher interview, but the parent was not satisfied with her initial discussions with the teacher:

At first, no. Then I end up going to Mr. Chong, the Vice-Principal, because I was really upset. This was last fall in September/October. . . . He set up a private meeting for the teacher and I to go over. Cause at the very beginning Craig was having an extremely [sic] amount of trouble. . . . We went right back to basics because he was going into Grade Five not even being able to add two and two, or subtract five and three and whatever. Not being able to spell because up until this year everybody said it wasn’t important. Just put your words down the way you think, just get your words down on paper. All of a sudden you’ve never been taught how to spell. Gee . . . saying this [is] all wrong and I’m not going to accept it. So he felt that he was defeated before he even started. . . . What we ended up setting up was a correspondence every day through the student planner where she wrote in it what she expected out of Craig for the day and we would write back saying, “You know, we spent an hour with Craig tonight and he still didn’t get the concept.” Or, “Yes, he did his work and it did take him a longer time than was projected to.” And so we did that every single day.

Finally, by the end of May, parent and teacher were no longer working so closely in tandem. “We’ve decided to let Craig have the responsibility of getting his work done and to do it on his own” comments Parents 29201, which, she adds, has been working out “not bad.” When asked whether the teacher listens to her and uses the information she provides she says:

Now, I think so. . . . I don’t know whether it’s because I had gone to Mr. Chong and he became like a mediator between the two of us, I don’t know. Or the fact that we actually finally got to sit down and say this is the way I’ve been with this kid for ten years, and we have, not behavior problems, but this thing where you have to structure him in a way that this energy is there, right. But that he uses towards his schoolwork, or whatever. And being his parent and knowing that you have to be sitting on top of him and saying “Craig you have to do it this way and you have to do it now.”

When asked if her son responds well to that kind of structure she says, “As long you keep it and you don’t let up. Don’t say, ‘Oh, you can do it later.’ Then he’s fine; it’s got to be constant, though.” When asked if that is happening more in class she replies, “I think so.”

In this case the parent's persistence at working with the teacher eventuated in a meeting at which time they were able to sit down and discuss the child's situation at length. During the meeting the parent was able to fully inform the teacher about her son (a characteristic of parental advocative effort common to all examples here). With this information, teacher and parent were able to devise a plan in which they would both work with the child, attempting to build his ability to work responsibly. They communicated daily in the student planner about their efforts and the child's work. They developed a collaborative working relationship which had an impact on the student.

Strongly advocative parents like Parent 28201 and Parent 78202 are often very persistent. Their efforts are ongoing, unflagging and zealous. They may even intervene before potential problems can occur, anticipating their child's needs, and then informing the teacher about this. Parent 23206's comments about herself effectively describe these parents: "If there is a concern, what I do is I go to the school and I ask to talk to the teacher and it doesn't matter whatever time or period it is, if it's a subject or if she has a problem with another student, or she is upset about something, I make an appointment and I discuss it with the teacher or with—if he's not available, I go right to the principal and speak to the principal about it." For some parents this is important above all other involvement. These parents often comment that they are not excluded from their child's schooling because they do not give the school the opportunity to do so. As Parent 78202 notes, "I'm down at that school everyday . . . basically most of the time after school, but I'm always at . . . my kids' classrooms and . . . they've never had that chance." The efforts of this particular parent paid off, as noted above, when the teacher in whose class her son had been for two years, finally began to exert some academic press on her son in response to input the mother had given her.

Unfortunately, not all parents have the opportunity to be at the school frequently to create a strong presence, and many parents who are not constrained by work or time are not advocates to this extent anyway. Some give up after having met frustration along the way, becoming alienated from the classroom and school. Parent 25201, for example, notes that when she has received telephone calls from the school they have been about behaviour problems and never about things positive or academic. After trying to respond, but not feeling that she was part of an effort that included both home and school, she gave up. She explains:

We don't even punish [our son] anymore. We've had, I think, three phone calls this year and we've told him we're not punishing him. You can punish him at school and we'll back you up 100% on that. Roger lit a match in Science which was—and he shouldn't have had matches so he did get in trouble at home for that. He lit a match in Science and blew it out and he was

suspended for two days for that which I didn't agree with. I agree with, yes, he needs to be punished in some way, but I thought that was pretty harsh. But I told him at the time that I'll support it and I'll explain it to him but as far as being punished at home, there won't be any.

She adds: "There have been times, when I have chosen—me and my husband both have chosen—to just stay out of it and explain to both of the kids that those are the consequences of his actions and that those are the school rules and whether we agree or disagree with them, he has to abide by those rules. . . . And he knows I'm not going to phone the school up and defend him." It is interesting that the parent characterizes her action as supportive of the school, when in fact she does not support what they have done at all. By stepping back, however, she continues the cycle of abdication of responsibility in not approaching the school on her son's behalf and attempting to develop some kind of collaborative relationship with them. Neither one tries to collaborate with the other.

Sometimes parents will not approach the school to advocate on their child's behalf for fear that there will be repercussions in the classroom, that the teacher will "take it out" on the child. Three parents from Time 8 (from two classrooms) do not intervene for this reason, including Parent 25201 above (and two in Time 2 and two in Time 4). About being involved at the school, and approaching them with problems Parent 25201 says: "Not this year; I didn't even make an effort. In the past I have and found that it just made it more difficult for both my kids so this year I didn't even make an effort." This parent explains further, speaking of her child's teacher, that "she should have an open-door policy that's known to the parents, I think, without feeling they have to be on the defensive, without worrying it was going to be taken out on the child. Parent 54201 says that although her son was initially happy that his father was going to the classroom to talk to the teacher about the disruptive students in the class, "he expressed some concerns: 'Well, am I going to get into trouble because this has happened?' And we reassured him that, no, this was to help the situation.'"

Sometimes parents do not intervene immediately, depending on the nature of the problem, because they are interested in developing in their child the ability to handle problems independently. This occurs most often when the problems are of a personal relational nature, between the child and friends or the child and teacher. Parent 29204 comments: "Well, we discuss it at home and if she has a problem then I suggest to her that there are alternative ways that she can handle it. And I suggest that she handle it. Only when I feel undue pressure is being placed on her, do I intervene." Parent 62207 refers to a problem that his son had with friends at school and then explains that "we've instructed our son as to ways that he could solve the problem and eventually it sort of

worked itself—turned around. I don't—in many cases going there and trying to solve the problem for him is likely, well, a short term solution. It might work for the next couple of hours but the minute you're off the parking lot, things are often times worse." It is probable that parents advocate less in these situations not only because they want to develop responsibility and independence in their children, but also because they involve a third party, another child. In these cases the situation is more complex and difficult for both parent(s) and teacher.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Reporting to Parents

Report Cards

Approaches to written reports do not vary much on a school to school basis. Teachers are required to complete three written reports and two "informal reports." Teachers comment little on written report cards, and practice among them appears to be similar. Only very occasionally does teacher approach to the written report vary. Teacher 61100 (Ms. Collerson) is notable in this regard:

One thing I did this year before the report cards . . . I sent a note home saying besides the obvious on the report cards, "Are there any particular areas you'd like me to address on your child, any things that you'd particularly like to know?" because we often have . . . parents say "This report card doesn't tell me anything . . . it doesn't tell me what I want." So I sent that home so that parents could ask specifically about the child's reading comprehension, specific things sometimes they wanted to know. . . . I think parent were glad to get that input.

This kind of invitation for input and feedback is rare. Ms. Collerson is the only teacher here who speaks of it.

Some teachers do report in written form more often than twice or three times a year to parents, sending home interim written reports (between formal reporting periods) which are not required. Only Time 2 Teachers 14100 (Mrs. Wilder) and 15100 (Mrs. MacLeod), and Time 8 Teachers 54100 (Ms. Lurie) and 74100 (Mr. Winton) report that they do so. Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) notes that a weekly report is sent home "that has work that was done during the week." She describes the report:

[It] has behaviour, whether they have done homework. So it's a little check list and then clip and a little place on the back where either I can write a note or the parent can write a note. So sometimes it's you know, "X" really needs help on multiplication facts and should do this. That kind of stuff. So it's a two way communication through that. And then sometimes some of the kids, the daily kinds of things and they're really not getting their work done. So, yeah, there are some specific kinds of things and then also they can see actually what's happening. . . . Sometimes we have encouraged them to go over it together with the kids. Kids to do the corrections. It varies."

According to Teacher 74100 (Mr. Winton), who includes a short interim report in student work folders sent home weekly, the reports have “really helped to bring about change.” The reports not only “managed to keep a record” of student progress throughout the year, but were a clear, concise, and regular means of communication to parents.

Teacher comments about reporting also reveal the use of a variety of required informal reporting strategies which include conferences (reported on separately here), brief written summaries, rounds of telephone calls, student and parent evaluations of student progress and student goal statements and evaluation. Apart from conferences (and voluntary interim reports), little is said about these by teachers.

Poorly-Attended Interviews

All teachers report on parent interviews or conferences that are held at their schools. Parent-teacher conferences are traditional and typically happen once before Christmas. When the second written report card is issued parents are generally invited to call to make an appointment with the teacher if they feel a need; teachers may make specific requests for some parents to come in again. Teachers 22100 (Ms. O’Hearn), 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais) and 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel), all at Nightingale School, as well as Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson) report that their schools set conferencing times for all parents in the spring also, as a second informal report. Teacher 23100, alone among the teacher group here, notes that he held two meetings with parents (in line with the practice at his school), but found these to be so positive that he extended the invitation to parents for the third written report as well.

Although school approaches to conferencing with parents vary (the number of conferences, the format of the conferences), comment among teachers on parent participation rates is quite consistent. Typically teachers are disappointed in less than complete attendance by all parents at interviews. Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) reports that interviews were held at his school, but adds that he has “a very poor turnout for interviews. I think for my first report there was an interview and I might have seen a dozen.” He explains the procedure:

We let them know that was considered a reporting period and there was a schedule set up and they could either come in and fill in and I would put it down for them or send a letter with your child and I could put it down and a lot parents just didn’t contact me. . . . What I put down in my letter was . . . this is a time, days, and the interview will go from such and such hours and to such and such hours. If you can’t make it, I can make other arrangements. Please phone me and I’ll let you know. A lot of parents even that can’t make, I still expect that they will phone.

That interview was what he calls “an informal report.” Written reports did not follow directly, but came later.

Interestingly, three Time 8 teachers report complete or almost complete attendance by all parents at interviews. Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke) remarks that she had “parent teacher interviews with every single parent in the classroom.” She comments: “We wrote the report cards with the parents. . . . We sat down and we went through all of their work and I had the form there and I filled it in and essentially what went home on that report card was everything that we’d discussed during the interview, including comments that parents wanted to see on their childrens’ report cards about their children.” For parents at the schools of these three teachers—Teacher 51100 at Meadow Brook (Mrs. Kosko) and Teachers 73100 (Mrs. Munke) and 72100 (Mrs. Graham) at Beachside—conferences were structured such that a written report was completed at that time and receipt of the student report was contingent upon parent participation at the conference. Thus, parent participation was virtually guaranteed.

Successful Three-way Conferences

Those conferences on which teachers report in greatest depth among all the data involve teachers, students and parents. Nine of the seventeen Time 8 teachers (from 7 of the 8 schools) speak of three-way conferences specifically. Mention of these kinds of conferences is most frequent among Time 8 teachers who consistently report favourably on them and on the positive reaction of parents. For Teacher 22100 (Ms. O’Hearn) three-way conferences were an interview option at her school. She chose to do this and describes the procedure:

The students and the parents had to both attend. The portfolios the students had went home prior to it. They shared their portfolios at home and then brought them back to school. At that point there was discussion by all three. . . . Then we reviewed and then we looked at the next conference and then we set new goals or just continued with what we had set in the first term.

As noted above, Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais), at the same school, was so pleased with the conferencing format that he conducted three-way conferences a third time for the parents and students in his class. Of the interview process in general, he says: “You know in my interviews that’s the big time when I really get to communicate and sit down and it’s really been positive experience. I ask them quite frankly if they like the interviews or would they rather not and maybe its because I’m sitting face to face, but they all say, or 85% of them say, they like it and want to do it again, even in our final report where they don’t need interview.” When asked specifically about the three-way process he notes, “I

give them the report card about fifteen minutes prior to them coming in and they read it over and then we discuss the issues and set goals at that time.” This, he says, is done, with the child and “if there’s a problem, or the parent has a question, then often I’ll just direct it to the student. . . . It’s very informal, really. I just sit down and chat with them.”

Ongoing Communication to Parents

Calling and Meeting with Parents

Almost all teachers report that they call parents on the telephone (fourteen of nineteen Time 8 teachers). However, teachers do not usually call all parents and they do not usually call for a variety of purposes. Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie) says that her calls, which are like that of most teachers, are “mainly around a specific need to talk with parents.” Most often these “needs” involve incomplete schoolwork or homework, or behaviour problems in the classroom and, thus, notes Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer), the calls to parents are “usually the bad news calls. Johnny did this today and I need your support. Please talk to him and whatnot.”

Seven Time 8 and seven Time 4 teachers report making telephone calls. Only occasionally are these “good news” calls. Teacher 78100 (Miss Davis) explains: “I don’t make as many good news calls as I would like to, but I make them once in a while, especially if it’s somebody who I normally make a call home if it’s not good news. And if they’ve had a really good improvement, I try to let their parents know that.” Among teachers in general, however, these “good news” calls are rare; the negative calls outweigh the positives.

When teachers do make calls—especially good news calls—they comment on positive response from parents, and benefit to themselves and parents. Teacher 36100 (Time 4) speaks of

how appreciative parents are when you take the time to do the followup. Just taking the time when I am home in the evening, taking the time to give a call and the parents are so excited. . . . The phone calls are so easy to make. I have lessened the number of actual interviews through phoning and making the parents aware of things before they take place. I see attitude change, I can make the parent aware before they show up in test scores. One of the things I have learned is that parents don’t like surprises. They don’t like being called in when the damage has been done. A lot of them think that no news is good news. If they don’t hear from the teacher things must be O.K.

Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) explains that he calls parents “to set up meetings to discuss their child’s behavior or how they are doing in academic subjects and that sort of thing.” When asked how parents respond to these calls he says that “usually, they like to be in touch with what is going on.” As for parent response to good news calls he adds, “Parents

let me know that they really like that.” Teacher data suggest that parents appreciate telephone calls which provide them with information, which update them about their child’s progress.

Often teachers comment that when they call about academic problems they receive positive responses and support, but when they call about behavioural problems they do not. Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) notes this distinction:

There are occasions where I phone and I’m questioned: “Well did you get information from the other parties involved?” etc—which usually you go through the process before you make the phone call—and they’re doing that out of a sense of two things: (1) This is their precious child—and I’m not saying that facetiously— . . . this is their child and that’s the one and only person they’re concerned about, and; (2) I think they’re just curious: “What was the process that you followed?” if it was, say, a conflict situation on the play ground. If it’s a homework situation, it’s not usually like that. It’s like, “Well, we have been busy and I realize that Suzy hasn’t been attending to her homework but we’ve been having some . . . we’ve been a busy family over the last couple of weeks and, yep, we’ll get back on track again.”

It is likely that “negative news” and “behavioural concern” are more often synonymous than “behavioural concern” and “positive news.” Certainly, teachers rarely report calling home about positive behaviour. In addition, Teacher 56100 (Mrs. Weir) suggests that parent participation is an important component of telephone interaction. She explains that “for the most part if I have been phoning where I have wanted to solve a problem with the child I found for the most part that the parents have been very receptive and very appreciative of the fact that they are being involved in the process of dealing with the problem and saying, ‘Thanks for calling,’ and ‘Keep me posted,’ and that kind of thing.”

Interestingly, three Time 8 teachers who have made greater efforts to communicate with parents note that response has been positive. Teacher 79100 (Madame Boucher) says: “I find that I’m communicating more with parents and I’m getting positive results and so it’s much better. I should have been doing it a long time ago.” Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) notes that at the beginning of the year parents sometimes approached the principal before speaking to her about problems. But, she adds: “Since I’ve been phoning them regularly that hasn’t happened. I also have parents phoning me at home because I have left that open. They were able to phone if they wanted to. And kids too, they phone on work.”

In addition to making telephone calls throughout the year teachers will occasionally meet formally and specifically with individual parents apart from scheduled conference times. This is not common. Only five of the Time 8 teachers comment on these kinds of meetings. Teacher 78100 (Miss Davis) explains that she held more meetings with parents

before Christmas. "They've been a really nice bunch of kids this year," she comments. "I've really enjoyed working with them and I haven't really had any concerns or felt a need to meet with them face to face."

Student Planners

All Time 8 and almost all Time 4 teachers were either using planners in their schools or were provided these by the research project. Five Time 2 and seven Time 4 teachers speak of this practice. Evidence of teacher use of planners is particularly strong in the Time 8 data. However, the use of planners by teachers in class with students and their expectations for planner use by students, parents and themselves, varies quite dramatically from teacher to teacher as parent data presented earlier also suggest.

Teacher 22100 (Ms. O'Hearn) comments that she signs student planners "daily, just to make sure that the kids are doing their homework. Some moms don't sign if their kids don't do their homework which is good." When thinking further about planner use she adds: "I think the parents have learned that I like to be organized well in advance. I'm not the last minute kind of person and that I really stress and emphasize that at the beginning of the year. I think that in some respects some of my parents have been forced to be more organized. Just the signing of the student planner. Some of them, I know, haven't ever done that daily before." When asked whether this is the first year that she has insisted on daily use by every student, she replies: "Throughout the entire year, usually by January or February some of the kids are never signing them. But this year I'm doing all of them to the end of the year. . . . It was just easier. Last year it was an organizational nightmare trying to figure out who was and wasn't and who should go back on it. So this year I just decided to keep them all on. . . . It's just easier." The consistent and careful use of planners by Ms. O'Hearn contrasts with that of Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais) who is also in the same school. When asked whether he has used student planners, he says, "Not in the last couple of months I haven't." When asked how planner use had worked up to that point, he adds, "It worked really well. I did communicate with a few parents on a fairly regular basis and the other kids I just gave them the opportunity to use it and I didn't enforce the use. . . . They would hand it into me in the morning and I just checked it. Again, I informed the parents that we were using and that it was there for our use and if they wanted to send it back for me to see do it through the planner. That way it encouraged the use." He explains that some parents used the planner to communicate with him and that some continued to do so by the traditional "scraps of paper" method. When asked what might have been the reason for irregular use of the planner (by both

students and parents) he says, “Probably me not enforcing that I see the planner every single morning. I just did spot checks to make sure that they were using it and then I sort of left it up to them. And that was mostly a time thing for me.” Mr. Desjarlais explains that for “organized” students planner use became a habit: “I’d say probably 30% are using the planners on a regular basis.”

For Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin), and other teachers, the planner is especially important as a means of communication about classroom assignments, and for general communication between parents and teachers about students. When asked about parent use of the planner Mr. Griffin indicates that he informed parents about planner use at the beginning of the year in a newsletter home: “If you can’t phone, write a little note in there and we’ll see it everyday.” Not all parents have communicated in the planner, he adds, but says: “A lot of them did, you know. They might be something like, ‘My daughter—we have to leave at 1:00 on Friday for a dentist appointment,’ and even that little bit of communication [is good].”

Work Sent Home

In order to communicate with parents about their child’s performance and progress two Time 8 and two Time 2 teachers use weekly work folders to send home students’ work. Two other Time 8 teachers use “theme books” which are compilations of work sent home at the end of a themed unit of work. Teacher 61100 (Ms. Collerson) explains what she does, why it is important for her and the impact on students and parents:

I used your idea or suggestion, which I have used in the past but not as regularly as I have this year . . . about the folders, sending the work folders home and that I found to be very successful. I always send it home with a newsletter with an explanation of each assignment, particularly because the assignments are in French quite often, explaining what each assignment is about, what is expected and then I always get the kids to make up a little sheet. . . . The comments back were “It’s great to see the work. I feel like I know what they’re doing in the classroom.” It was a great opportunity for the kids because they know the work is going home, there’s another audience and a more important audience than me. And so to quality—I don’t know, how do you ever know if that’s affected the quality of your assignments. But they certainly—I’ve been very pleased with the quality of the work that they’re taking home and the parents have been and also then when it comes to report card time there are no surprises for the parents. . . . If the child is consistently bringing home low marks on a comprehension test that will alert the fact.

When work is sent home parents see it and are aware of the performance and progress of their child. Importantly, there are “no surprises” at report card time.

Some teachers do not have formal work folders organized, but make efforts to send student work home for parent signature. Five Time 8 teachers report on this. Three of these, all at Nightingale school, report on the schoolwide use of Communication Day

folders in which all school and classroom newsletters and notices are sent home every Wednesday

Newsletters and Project Outlines

Six Time 8 teachers report that they send newsletters home from the classroom to parents. Typically these are sent out only once at the beginning of the year, as Teacher 29100 (Mrs. Wenzel) notes, “to say if there’s anything they’d like to know, if they’d like to come in and see me” or to outline general intentions for curriculum, and expectations for behaviour and work in the classroom. When teachers refer to newsletters other than those sent initially, they are usually sent out, like those of Teacher 78100 (Miss Davis), “once in a while” during the year to communication about “just what’s happening in the classroom.” Rarely are regular newsletters home a feature of classroom practice.

The use of project outlines among these teachers is also rare. More typically teachers will ask students to list important dates in their planners. Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom) comments on her use of the student planner which sometimes includes a “research note.” Detailed lists of expectations and requirements for projects and large assignments are rarely sent out by teachers. Only two Time 8 teachers refer to this.

Teacher Efforts to Involve Parents in Instruction

Often, as the teachers above point out, interim reports, project outlines, and especially work sent home in a folder act as a springboard for parent-initiated involvement in assistance at home. Some teachers simply have parents sign work or inform them about projects or student progress, and are pleased when assistance is provided in the home as a result. Other teachers, however, go beyond that to specifically ask parents to become involved in some way.

Thirteen of the nineteen Time 8 teachers report that they ask parents to help or work with their child in some way. However, when asked how they involved parents in instruction ten of the thirteen teachers provide examples of sending home extra work for one student or a small group of students, as opposed to initiating involvement of all parents. For example, Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay) says honestly: “I didn’t do anything this year [to involve parents], unless some specific parent asked me for math, what can I do to help so and so. Or when I phone and mention that their child has difficulty in this area they ask what they can do, but no, in the general sense I didn’t do it with all the parents.”

Sometimes teachers do involve the parents of all the students in their classroom in a specific kind of work at home with their children. Seven of the thirteen teachers report on this, usually assistance with weekly spelling tests, or practice with math facts. In addition to asking parents to help their children practice math or spelling skills, teachers also comment that they urge parents to read with their children, or encourage their children to read.

Interestingly, when teachers seek to involve all parents in the kinds of activities referred to above, the invitation and encouragement are usually aimed at parents through students, and not extended directly to parents. When asked whether she does anything to encourage parents to work with their children Teacher 79100 (Madame Boucher) says: "No. I usually just talk to the kids about that." "I know when we were doing the math facts," she adds, "I tried to get them to work with their parents." When asked whether she has directed these requests specifically to parents she says, "No, nothing . . . where I've asked them to specifically work with their child." This is an important distinction. The kind of indirect invitation to which Madame Tremblay refers is generally representative of teacher effort.

The involvement of parents by teachers in learning tasks together with their children—as collaborators and co-learners—is much more rare. For example, teacher initiation of home learning activities (special home learning projects to be completed by child and parent together) is infrequent. Only three Time 8, one Time 2 and two Time 4 teachers report on this kind of activity. Teacher 21100 (Mr. Sutcliffe, one of the Time 2 teachers) mentions a novel reading and discussion project that parents and students were to do together. Teacher 36100 (Miss Antonio: Time 4) explains that she organized a math project for parents and students to do together in which they were to "interview professionals to see how they used math in the workplace. I got a couple of interviews on videotape, so that . . . was very positive."

When asked whether they have helped parents learn things that make it easier for them to help their child learn or better assist their child with schoolwork teachers' initial reply is often negative. When probed, however, most teachers—thirteen of the nineteen Time 8 teachers, seven of the Time 4 and eight of the Time 2)—are able to recount instances where they helped parents to learn on an individual basis in after school meetings, on the telephone, or at interview time, usually by giving advice or suggestions about what to do or how to help, or by sharing teaching strategies or providing materials. Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer) says of her efforts with parents:

I've had them come in after school, or before school, whenever is convenient for them, and I've given them text books or materials that I have that will help them out. I have run off some sheets of a teacher's guide because say, for example— math is a good example—if the child is having problems with math I'll run off the teacher's guide because first of all it has the answers in it. Secondly, it has a process that I have probably followed in order to teach the concept. Some parents know how to, for example, divide, but they learned how to do it differently but they want to teach it to the child the same that they're being taught in school. So I guess giving them an opportunity to have access to the instructional materials that we have here at the school.

It is also important to note here again that the efforts of teachers to help parents are done primarily on an individual basis, not with all parents.

As far as instructional involvement in the classroom is concerned, only two of the Time 8 teachers report on the presence of parents actually helping or working with students in the classroom (four in Time 4, and three in Time 2). Eleven of the Time 8 teachers report that they invite parents into their classrooms, but typically these invitations are extended once at the beginning of the year in a general newsletter or at the Meet-the-Teacher Night and they are very general and open. Teacher 51100 (Mrs. Kosko), notes, for example, that parents are "free to come any time and watch and participate." In these cases the onus ultimately rests with parents to initiate participation. Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin) says: "I know at my grade, I don't get a lot of parents involvement. I do for field trips and things like that." However, when asked whether he has invited parents into the classroom during instructional time this year he replies, "I haven't made the invitations for that, no." Although the two teachers who have had parental involvement in the classroom suggest that it is helpful to them, most teachers here have not had parents in the classroom at all during instructional time, and have not made great efforts to initiate this kind of activity. The practice of Teacher 78100 is representative of typical teacher effort to involve parents in the classroom: "I've mostly just used them for field trips."

There is a strong sense among teachers that parents are simply not responding to their invitations to come into the classroom. Nine of the eleven Time 8 teachers who state that there is little or no parental involvement in their classrooms report that parents simply do not participate. They perceive this as lack of support for their efforts. When asked whether she has had parents in the classroom much during the year, for example, Teacher 56100 (Mrs. Weir) replies: "Not really. As I said, we extended the invitation in September but they haven't really taken us up. I have had one mother who came and spent at least half a day with us cause she just wanted to see what was going on."

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Reporting to Parents

Report Cards

Little is mentioned by students about report cards either in terms of conveying information to parents or to students. When asked how their teachers let parents know about what they are doing in class a number of students, like Student 79305, state, “Oh, mostly report cards.” Report cards are not often mentioned (by only eleven of thirty-four Time 8 students) and only very rarely as a means, or even valuable means, of communication. The comment of Student 62307 about her teacher stands out for its uniqueness: “She really brings out the—in report cards, really precisely. Like she doesn’t leave out details that could jeopardize anything.”

In some classes regular interim reports that are not part of the required five reports are sent home. This is infrequent; only three students in two Time 8 classes and two students in Time 2 recount its occurrence. Student 54301 says, “We get like a weekly performance chart kind of thing and like, working well, assignments complete and homework complete and stuff like that.” This student adds that “the whole school does it” or, at least, “most classes.”

Interviews

When asked whether the teacher has ways of letting parents know about what they are doing in class students often cite the interview setting. Half of the thirty-four Time 8 students speak of this. “We usually have parent/teacher interviews before our first report card and then he is telling us how we are doing in the classes,” states Student 24306.

Although all schools hold parent/teacher interviews, those interviews which garner the most comment from students are three-way conferences. Seven of the thirty-four Time 8 students speak of these meetings. “We write on our report how we think we’re doing, “ comments Student 28316, “and then she writes one and she’ll discuss with our parents. What we do good what we do pretty well. . . . We have a folder we show parents our work and we discuss.” When asked whether her parents have to write something out too Student 28316 responds, “Yeah, at the end of the thing they write what they thought we did well on and what we could improve on.” At that point they all discuss the report, adds the student, including “what our goal for next term is.” Student 23306 reports that, “one thing that the parents say that they really like—during the year they complain that they don’t know what’s going on, cause the kids forget to tell them. One thing that they’ve done and the parents really like it, right before report card everyone gets an

interview, the student, the parent or parents and the teacher all go in and talk about what you're doing and the parents can get that if they want to. Most of them get in three report cards." Although this student comments that parents like three-way conferences she doesn't provide any comment about what she thinks. Student comments about reporting practices are typically factual; students rarely provide personal evaluative comments or opinions.

Ongoing Communication to Parents

Telephone Calls

Sixteen of thirty-four Time 8 students report on teacher telephone calls home. However, not all of these students have received telephone calls from their teachers. Typically, students report, teacher telephone calls are about incomplete homework and poor behaviour and so are made to specific homes. When speaking of these calls, however, students are often referring either to calls the teacher made to other homes, or to teacher practice in general. For example, Student 74304 comments: "Well, we have a homework club and if you miss out on homework three times you're in it. Or if you miss out on homework he'll talk to your parents or something. He usually phones your parents." When asked whether the teacher has ever phoned her parents she says, "I think once." When asked whether the teacher has phoned his parents Student 74311, in the same class, says: "No, but he's phoned my friends' parents before. . . . I think he just phones if you're bad or just checking up on you. . . . if your homework wasn't done for a couple times."

According to students teachers rarely, if ever, call home simply to inform parents about what students are learning or to inform them generally about the student's progress. When asked how the teacher informs her parents about what she is doing in school Student 23304 explains: "He once called to confirm the interview, but he doesn't call and say, 'Oh, we're learning this.'" About the issue of the teacher informing her parents about what she's doing Student 24302 claims that, "he could call them. He hasn't done that before." This kind of call is reported only twice in Time 4 data, and six times in the Time 2 data.

Occasionally, teachers will choose to make a round of telephone calls as one of their informal reports. In this case, the call is more likely to concern student progress and involve "good news." Student 62307, for example, reports that the teacher "usually phones home if there are any problems or if we're doing really good, because like there is informal report cards where she phones home." Among the teachers here this practice is

not common, undertaken by only two Time 8 teachers, two Time 2 teachers and 1 Time 4 teacher.

Notices, Newsletters and Overviews

Most often letters that are sent home from the classroom are notices about events and field trips, or are school newsletters. Twelve Time 8 students report on these kinds of missives. For example, Student 22305 speaks of the communication folder that is used every Wednesday in her classroom: “We’ve got this big piece of paper, it’s for notices to go home and the date, and you get Ms. O’Hearn to sign in this little box beside the date and then we got how many notices you have, and a little box and beside it any returns and the other side is where my mom signs.”

Some teachers do send home class newsletters to inform parents about classroom events and curriculum, but this is rare, reported by only three Time 8 students. Student 56304 comments that her teacher will “sometimes . . . send home newsletters and things like that to parents to tell them what they would be doing, what we’re doing, things like that, what kind of project we will be doing next.” No Time 8 students report that classroom newsletters are sent home on a regular basis.

Several students (four in Time 8) report that teachers send home overviews detailing what students have done in class. Usually these are included “in the report card,” states Student 29304, “not only the comments—she sends home a note about what we’ve been doing.”

Work Sent Home

Some students (five in Time 8 and seven in two Time 2 classrooms) report that their work and information about their work is sent home regularly. In the classroom of Teacher 56100 the work folder is called a “theme booklet.” “We put all our paperwork that we’ve done into that book,” states Student 56304, “and then we take it home to show our parents.” Student 15314 (Time 2) provides a little more detail about his folder:

On the first page it is about what happened during that week and then what our teacher has done is in the middle. She has put down all the subjects and a check beside them if they are handed in and stuff and then she will tell if they are not there. You have to tell why they are not there, like you are sick or whatever. Then in the folder itself they will have the tests that you did in the past week and some daily work. It depends if we did a math sheet or whatever that would be in it, newsletters, stuff like that.

Student 15315 (Time 2), in the same class, comments that the folder has made an impression on her parents: “Yes, because before we started to get the folders out my

parents didn't see the work that was happening in my class and now they are seeing a lot more."

Student Planners

Among the Time 8 data there are more reports and more detailed reports about planners as a means of organization for students and as a means of communication than any other practice. Twenty-seven of thirty-four Time 8 students comment on their agendas. Student planner use is reported by only three Time 2 and two Time 4 students.

Although many Time 8 teachers use planners, usage varies from classroom to classroom. Typically students record daily homework and assignments and teachers will often include written comments to parents about homework and student progress at school. Sometimes parents are required to sign after the student has completed his or her evening's work. Some teachers sign daily as well. Student 24306 explains that "we have daily planners and we have to write down what we have for homework and then he has to sign it and some people who forget their homework books or they are not understanding it, then he will just have a little comment asking if [parents] can sign it and make sure this child is doing it." When asked whether all parents have to sign this student explains that, "it depends, because some people who have forgotten their homework books or who are not understanding it, their parents will just have to sign and the people who do know what they are doing, they won't have to sign it and the people who don't understand it, their parents will only have to sign it for a certain amount of time." Differential planner use, such as that described by the student above, is the most common teacher modus operandi reported by students here. About half of the Time 8 students report that parents are required to sign everyday. Although many students note that the teacher scans the planner at the end of the day, and often signs, signalling to student and parent that the planner has been correctly filled out, there is far less comment from students about teachers following up on planner use and parent signature in the morning.

Consistent use is important. In the class of Teacher 23100 (Mr. Desjarlais) the planner has been used sporadically. About the planner Student 23306 comments, "We haven't used them in a long time. . . . they just sort of drifted away." Student 23304, in the same class, confirms that

We don't use the homework book very much. . . . At the starting of the year, [parents signed the planner] but then we didn't have to anymore and he used usually to sign them, but then he stopped signing to make sure we had our homework. It didn't really help me that much.

Students see the benefit of planner use for both themselves and their parents. Student 22301, like many others, notes that she likes the planner “because if I forget something on the my math page I can find it in the planner.” According to Student 62307 daily signing of the planner by parents is important because “they find out and the teacher finds out that the parents are finding out what the homework is and if kids need any help, like it’s easier to go to your parents for help, so it really helps.” Students, like Student 78310, also note that their parents like the planner “cause they know what we’re doing.”

Meeting with the Teacher

Apart from parent/teacher interviews conducted in the fall, and sometimes in the spring, students rarely mention specific meetings between their parents and the teacher, other than occasions when parents visit the classroom casually, while volunteering or picking up or dropping off students or lunches and other items. Student 78302, for example, notes that his parents visit the classroom frequently: “My teacher always lets my parents know what I’m doing in class because my parents are always in class after school because they pick me up.” Among students there is far less mention of this kind of parent/teacher interaction than among parents.

Student 54301 explains that his parents are “pretty excited about the rowdiness because my dad had a meeting with the principal and my teacher about it. He’s quite concerned about it.” Mention of these kinds of meetings is unusual, however. Apart from this incident there is little mention among Time 8 students of the kinds of intervention and “advocacy” meetings between parents and teachers that are orchestrated by parents.

Parents in the Classroom

As Student 78302 above notes, parents are often seen in the classroom when making quick visits, attending special events, or assisting with transportation or supervision for field trips. Student accounts of parents helping or observing in the classroom during regular instruction time are infrequent. The comment of Student 25302 (Time 4) is representative: “I don’t see them often in there.” Reports do vary from classroom to classroom, however. Student 16301 (Time 2) notes that “almost every day one parent comes in and does computer with us and one mum comes in and does artwork, carves in wood.” Here the Time 8 data are not representative of all student data. Student comments about parental visits to the classroom are less frequent in the Time 8 data than for Time 2 or Time 4. Accounts of parents in the classroom helping with instruction are more

frequent for Mr. Sutcliffe's classroom (Teacher 22100 in Time 2 and Time 4) than for any other teacher. "Some of the parents help with new art projects that we do that we don't know about," comments Student 21307 (Time 4), "they help us understand how to do them more. Some parents come in to help with math if they have the free time." Mr. Sutcliffe's classroom is exemplary in this regard.

SUMMARY: PARENT/TEACHER INTERACTION

Parents help at school when they can. There is, however, little involvement during the day as most parents work. Those who do work try to be at the school when they can. Parents are around the school and classroom, but they are not often *in* the classroom. Although most parents indicate that they feel welcome, that they can see or speak to the teacher at any time, from an instructional point of view they do not feel that the classroom is open. They rarely receive specific invitations into the classroom. Although some teachers are more welcoming than others in this regard, there is a general sense among parents of a "closed classroom."

While most parents feel free to call, typically they do so only when there are problems. Most parents feel that there is not enough teacher communication to parents, or that it comes too late. When it does, they say, the communication is negative. Among parents there is much discontent about reporting. Parents need and want teacher evaluation on report cards, and they seek information about context. In cases where teachers send home interim reports or folders of student work, parents are pleased to receive this information, particularly as they perceive traditional reporting to be too infrequent. Parents see work folders, student planners and three-way conferences as collaborative practices. Planners keep parents up-to-date with curriculum, and are effective for student organization and developing student responsibility. Work folders are, and planners optimally can be, a means of communication between parents and teachers about student achievement and progress. Three-way conferences see parents and teachers involved together—with students—in discussing and evaluating student growth. When teachers do communicate, listen and respond to parents, parents do not feel excluded. Parents also do not feel excluded when teachers collaborate with them, a characteristic of the practice of some teachers, but not all.

Parent advocacy can be a key to bringing teacher and parent(s) to collaborative activity. Parental advocacy is not always successful or productive, however, and some parents choose not to do so. Generally there is less parent advocacy if there are no

problems with students, especially if the student is capable academically. There is also less need to intervene, or advocate, when the teacher communicates more to the home.

Invitation to parents is perceived by teachers as specific to events or for volunteering, or a general, beginning of the year invitation to come in or contact the teacher at any time. According to teachers, there is little parent participation in general for "Meet-the-Teacher" nights or interviews, other than when the school somehow requires parents to be in attendance. Teachers do, however, see three-way conferences more positively.

According to teachers there is also little parent involvement in the classroom. Parents, they say, are invited but don't come. Although parents are invited to attend special events and to volunteer, they are rarely invited by teachers to be in the classroom during instructional time, either to observe or help students. Teachers perceive there to be a number of barriers to parent involvement, but despite an understanding of the obstacles that prevent parent participation at school, they believe that parents could do more at the school during the day, and at home with students.

As far as communication to parents is concerned, all teachers call some parents, but mostly about things negative. Work folders and interim report cards are used by only a few teachers. Project outlines and newsletter are rare. Planner use is more widespread, but varies between classrooms. When teachers use planners consistently, student use tends to be more consistent and regular as well.

Attempts made to involve parents at home vary a great deal between classrooms. Most teachers report that they have not helped parents learn things that help them help their children, but most do offer suggestions to parents on an individual basis, often through the child. A few teachers go directly to parents and build instructional relationships on a classwide basis, through the use of such strategies as planners, newsletters, home learning activities and project guidelines.

Compared to parent comment about parent/teacher interaction, student comment is minimal. Parents are often around the classroom, and do volunteer for field trips and other classroom activities, but student accounts of parents *in* the classroom during instructional time are infrequent, consistent with parent reports.

As far as communication is concerned, students note that teachers seldom make telephone calls home, but that they do call some homes on some occasions, usually about poor behaviour or academics. Students report that teachers and parents meet at interview times, and occasionally schedule other meetings. Three-way conferences, which are

collaborative and involve both parents and students, have special impact on students compared to other means of communication.

Students whose teachers use planners regularly and consistently are impressed with this tool, mentioning both its role in communication between teacher and parents, and in helping them keep on track with their work. Although students mention other teacher efforts when they do occur, such as class newsletters, overviews and work sent home, these do not appear to have the same kind of impact on students as planners and three-way conferences and some, such as newsletters and previews, are rare.

PART C: TRIAD PROFILES

INTRODUCTION

The following section includes profiles of four triads. These profiles are presented as a means of summarizing the various points made in the previous sections of this chapter, particularly the second section in which the characteristics of triadic relationships are explored. These particular examples were selected because they best illustrate triad satisfaction and triad dissatisfaction respectively. The first two cases represent triads in which parents, teachers and students are satisfied with relationships and interaction amongst and between one another. The second two cases represent triads in which parents, teachers and students are dissatisfied with interaction and relationships between and amongst one another

Triads were selected that are representative of both best and worst “practice,” but individual imperfections and idiosyncrasies are maintained. The profiles are “composite” insofar as they are representative of the themes to the greatest extent possible in their entirety as a group of four (or, two groups of two). As a group of four they are “saturated,” containing as many of the points and categories explicated in the previous two sections of this chapter as possible.

In speaking of different programs of research on teaching Shulman (1986) refers to “exemplars of practice or malpractice” (p. 27). These, he says are “normally case descriptions of teachers, classrooms, or schools. They do not necessarily claim empirical generalizability. They are presented as instances of exemplars, documenting how education was accomplished (or stymied) by a particular group of teachers and students in a particular place” (p. 27). The first two of the cases here are exemplars of practice; the final two are exemplars of “malpractice” between students, parents and teachers. These cases document how education was either accomplished or stymied by a particular teacher and parent/student set. Individually the profiles cannot claim empirical generalizability. Not all strong and all weak triads are exactly like these. However, as a group these four triads best and most effectively capture the characteristics of those triads in which strong and satisfying relationships are developed between students, parents, and teachers, and those in which they are not. The referent and triad group characteristics, rather than the individual profiles could perhaps claim some empirical generalizability.

In speaking specifically of cases Peshkin (1993) quotes Wolfe who says that “one hopes that one’s case will touch others. But how to connect? Not by calculation, I think, not by the assumption that . . . I have discovered a “universal condition of consciousness.” One may merely know that no one is alone and hope that a singular story, as every true story is singular, will in the magic way of some things apply, resonate, touch a magic chord” (p. 25). The characteristics and nature of triads in which satisfaction exists and those in which it does not were outlined to the reader in discrete categories in the earlier sections of this chapter. In analysing and presenting the data as I did in the two previous sections, however, some sense of the wholeness and integrity of individual triads is lost. The profiles here, while typical rather than singular, are nonetheless intended to bring alive to the reader the characteristics and nature of triad interaction in the wholistic, resonant way to which Wolfe refers above.

TRIAD ONE: “WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN LIVES; WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE THINGS WE LEARN AND HOW WE LEARN THEM”

The Teacher: Mrs. Munke

The Classroom/The Students

Mrs. Munke teaches a Grade 5/6 class in Seaside Elementary School. She believes that students can be responsible and she encourages a sense of responsibility in her students which, she believes, has developed over the year. This is, she explains,

because we talk about that everyday, that we are responsible for our own lives. We are responsible for the things we learn and how we learn them. So I have noticed that their attitudes about responsibility have changed, not for all of them, but for a lot of them over the year, and whereas in the beginning when I talked to them we would discuss they are responsible for all of the things that they are learning, their behaviour, the results of their behaviour, a lot of them didn't like to hear that at the beginning of the year and now they're accepting it and as they accept that they internalize it and they act in responsible ways.

There is a difference between boys and girls, however. “Boys,” she maintains, “are more resistant because they want to be very independent. They are rebellious about what expectations are and want to be very independent.”

According to Mrs. Munke, students learn responsibility by making wise choices. “I try to do as much as I can,” she states, “give them a feeling of owning their own work and being part of this class, consulting with them, so this isn't all being done to them, but they're a part of the decision-making process, the things that go on here. Because if

they feel it's their school and their classroom then they're—I'm not going to have to manage so much."

Mrs. Munke encourages student choice in Social Studies where students participate in choosing the themes for study. She has also implemented a "Time Management Friday" where students are provided with an outline of all scheduled activities, and all assignments to be completed, and then they plan their own day. Mrs. Munke explains that she expects "responsible choices and so they have an outline and they fill it in and they evaluate how they have spent their day." It's not, she insists, "just a free for all day." She adds that as time passes students become more responsible about planning their time and ensuring that they complete the work that had been set for the day. "They evaluate how they have spent their day," she comments, "and this changes over the months in their evaluation of them initially wasting their time or they weren't focussed or they didn't allow enough time, and these are their own comments." As time goes on, she adds, students realize how much they enjoy planning their own day. "But with that," notes Mrs. Munke, "comes the responsibility of making wise choices so that they're not disrupting other students and they have to consult with another student if they want to have chess time. I guess the thing that I've noticed the most with that is they have become more responsible and I think that carries over into the other days of the week."

Mrs. Munke uses students planners in her classroom for all students and she believes they have also helped students to be responsible:

I look at the student planners. My students still all have their student planners and they still all bring them to school. They don't all still write in them every day but they do as necessary. Whereas I was checking these planners everyday at the beginning of the year, I'm no longer doing that. . . . I find that has helped them to be responsible because they're looking everyday in terms of their academics, and in terms of other activities they're looking and they're learning to look ahead and to take responsibility. Planning—planning, time management. Very big things I really focused a lot on this year. They can take responsibility for that.

Mrs. Munke believes that respectful behaviour in the classrooms is important and tries to model it for her students: "I expect them not to put others [down], or not to put me down and that means that I don't put them down." "It's character, trust, integrity, respect, those things," she adds, "I think they're very important and that's the way I try to live my life. I try to teach that in my classroom. I try to talk about character and I try to talk about stewardship, all of those things that I think are very important to me in my [life], those values which I think are—or principles—that are necessary in any kind of a successful society. I try to model those kinds of things." The ideal relationship between teachers and students, she notes, is one of "respect, openness, caring." Mrs. Munke shows respect for her students "by listening to them."

As an example of developing respect for students and student respect for teachers, Mrs. Munke relates a story about a student for whom a daily journal—in the student planner—was set up between the school and the home. As a result of the daily monitoring that took place through the use of the journal, the student's behaviour changed and the teacher began to see the student in a new way:

The problem I was having with the one student was because of a very negative attitude and always calling out in class when I was teaching, refusing to participate in most of the classroom activities. And I was having such a difficult time dealing with him. It was everytime I tried to do something. So that was when we started the journal. And now what I'm finding with this child is, he is really careful about his behaviour now because it'll be written in the book. He's started to speak, but what he's starting to do now is that he's showing he has a very bright mind and he's a very questioning child and instead of being the negative callout person that he always was he's starting to use his questioning mind in a more positive way by putting up his hand saying, excuse me, reflecting before he calls out, and thinking. I'm starting to see him as a new child, another type of a child and I can see, I feel a kind of respect developing between us although I never did feel that I'd treated him with disrespect before.

In focussing on the child as an individual and getting to know him better through communication with the home, Mrs. Munke developed respect for a student she had not seen in a positive light before. Linkages between home and school in the form of daily communication also had a positive effect on the child. His behaviour changed.

Mrs. Munke tries to be effective with every student in her class by being sensitive to their individual needs and ways of learning and enabling them to work in those ways. She reflects that "it isn't always that easy because you have a classroom full of kids with many, many different ways of doing things. But I find that . . . if you teach the skills, your students will often work in their own ways if given the opportunity and not everyone is expected to do things the same way." Mrs. Munke gives an example of one student in her class who demonstrates his strengths and displays his learning in ways that he is able: "I have one student, for example, who has a really tremendous problem with writing and spelling and he's a very bright student so his—he's not self-conscious about that fact. He can show his knowledge in other ways which are acceptable and so . . . it's almost like in a certain area he's successful."

Mrs. Munke maintains that meeting all needs is very difficult. "There are," she says, "many different people with many different needs," including physical and emotional in addition to the academic. Ultimately, Mrs. Munke is not sure that she is effective with every child. "Let's just say that I try to do it," she reflects, "but I'm not sure that I'm one hundred percent successful because when I'm making a particular effort to reach certain students, I'll often reflect that I'm missing others. . . . I try really hard but I'm not always successful at it."

The Home/The Parents

According to Mrs. Munke parents are welcome at her school. She lists a number of activities—breakfasts, open houses and teacher interviews—to which parents are invited. She adds that, “even if only a few of them can come, at least they know they’re welcome.”

As far as her own classroom is concerned, parents have been in for an open house, they have been in during instructional time, and they have popped into the classroom. Mrs. Munke notes that it has taken her a while as a new person to the school and school district to settle in and begin to feel comfortable with parents and students. As she has gotten to know parents and students she has felt more comfortable and she has noticed the difference in herself during her second year there. All around, she states, “I think the comfort level increases as the parents feel more comfortable with you, kids feel more comfortable with you. They get to know you.” And, indeed, as she gets to know them.

Mrs. Munke maintains that having had a special needs student in her classroom has been beneficial as there have been a number of people in and out of the classroom everyday:

Having a special needs student in my classroom . . . has really helped me to feel more comfortable with people in my room. At the beginning of the year it was difficult because it was so overwhelming and I thought it extremely disruptive and I found it hard to teach, but as time went on I found it easier to let people know what my values were and what the expectations were and to relate to people and not to feel self-conscious, to be so aware the people are watching, but to just go on and to do what I do anyway.

As a result of this increasing comfort with the presence of other adults in her classroom, Mrs. Munke wants her classroom to be more open next year. “I want to communicate that to parents a lot,” she says, “so that I can say that I’m feeling more comfortable with that, whereas I didn’t before.” Ideally Mrs. Munke would like to extend an open invitation so that parents can come in whenever they want to. “I think I’m starting to feel more comfortable with that, “ she adds, “but, once I get to know parents I can communicate to them individually to come and just feel free to drop in and watch at any time.” Mrs. Munke acknowledges the fact, however, that there are still some parents she would not want in the classroom: “There are one or two people who I wouldn’t want in the classroom, you know? Cause they would disrupt the classroom.”

Despite the fact that she feels she has not opened up her classroom as much as she might have, Mrs. Munke gets as much help from parents as she needs: “Absolutely. More than I need. If I ask for help I get exactly what I need.” She explains that parents volunteer on field trips and also work with their children at home. As far as help at home

is concerned, Mrs. Munke has run a regular reading program in which parents and students work together: "There's a home reading record that's been going home all year long. It works from Monday to Thursday. Parents write on it everyday and sign it and write down how much time the children have spent. That communication goes home all the time." In addition to the regular home reading Mrs. Munke also asks parents to work with their students on special projects: "The new project that's coming up in social studies is a self-directed one which will basically be done at home with help from their parents and they've got that on their assignment list already." Mrs. Munke also asks students to have their parents proofread their writing and then bring it back to school. In addition, she sends tests and other work home for parents to sign, as well as students' weekly reflections on their work. Mrs. Munke also works with individual parents and students, depending on need. She developed an individualized math program for one student and clearly explained to the parent how to help the child. She focussed on work habits with a small group of capable but disorganized students, giving these parents literature to read, ideas about how to set up study areas, suggested routines their children could follow and check lists.

Mrs. Munke notes that parents cannot always help their children especially if they're not clear about teacher expectations in the classroom or do not understand content or methods in math, "because we do things differently than when they went to school." In addition, parents often don't have the writing skills to help with proofreading. However, this does not stop her from expecting and requesting of parents a range of supportive activities at home. She expects that all parents will work with their children at home, and asks them to do so.

In order to communicate with parents Mrs. Munke often telephones. She explains that she hasn't called every parent, but, "is going to get there before the year is out. That is my goal." Her telephone calls to parents are well-received. She adds that she doesn't call some parents because she sees them often at the school. She emphasizes that she talks to parents, "at every opportunity that I have. When they're in the school to pick up their child I talk to them. I've done a lot of communicating that way." Mrs. Munke tried making good news phone calls last year but stopped because it was difficult to reach parents. She found herself having to call three or four times. She turned to sending good news notes home with students.

Mrs. Munke has her students use planners and she finds them useful for school/home communication, using them extensively to sent notes home to parents: "I find that a lot of the communication that goes on is because of the student planners.

Those things go home. I write notes and more and more as they year goes on I will get a note from the parent in the student planner. . . . It really seems to have opened up the communication. It's the one thing that is really steady. It's been more effective than a weekly reflection. . . . Newsletters are great too cause they're giving out ideas about what the kids are doing, but this is a communication device and that is very important."

Because of this communication teacher and parent can often get to know each other better. At one point during the school year Mrs. Munke used the planner as a school/home journal to address the behaviour of a particular student. She is not explicit about whether this is the same parent/student set she referred to earlier, but she is clear about the impact of this communication on herself and the parent. She describes the situation:

We started a journal going back and forth home, and that has been so effective in solving this problem with the parent and the child that I can't speak highly enough for it because really we were talking about a really serious situation. The child was going home and saying things that weren't really happening and the mother was believing the child. . . . Even the phone calls, the phone calls didn't work. The only thing that has worked is the journal. I write to the mother and she writes back to me every day. I think it works because we're doing it on a personal level. It might seem that that is an obvious comment but I don't think that happens all that often in the school situation. The kind of criticisms that are levelled at the school, where they come from, attitudes that go back to people's own years in school, attitudes that may not have anything to do with the situation so if you can deal with them on that level, they get to see you as a person.

Importantly, Mrs. Munke was able to get to know the parent better, understanding her perspective and her attitudes toward school, and the teacher was able to get to know her better. In going beyond the surface interaction of acquaintance the interaction became personal—deep and meaningful—and parent and teacher were better able to focus on and resolve the problem.

As far as formal reporting to parents is concerned, Mrs. Munke explains that parent/teacher conferences were three-way, with students participating. She and the parent(s) wrote the report card together. In conference Mrs. Munke transcribed everything that was discussed during the interview and parent comments were added. All parents but one liked this format. The lone dissenting parent did not support the student self-evaluation aspect.

The Parent: Mrs. Boden

The Home/The Student

According to Mrs. Boden, Alison is a responsible student. As far as her schoolwork is concerned, she knows what homework she has to do, because it is written down in her planner, and she does it. In fact she gets upset if she doesn't get her work done.

The students in Alison's class don't receive grades, but the comments Alison does receive on her report card "are always positive." In addition, the teacher points out what areas the student should continue to work on, but, Mrs. Boden adds, Alison "realizes what those things are. It's not as if they're any kind of a shock to her. She knows the areas in which she's weak." Mrs. Boden encourages her daughter: "She knows that she doesn't have to be the best at it, just has to do her best at it."

At home Mrs. Boden helps Alison with the classroom home reading program, with reading comprehension activities sent to all families by Mrs. Munke, and with multiplication. She monitors homework and helps with any problems that arise. She also assists with projects. Mrs. Boden makes sure her daughter gets enough rest and is healthy: "all those things that make a child able to function properly at school." She offers emotional support, "to try things even if she thinks that she can't do them" and encourages her daughter to get involved and take part in extra-curricular activities. She notes that Alison is in the band, the choir, and in sports. She also tap dances, does jazz, and is fluent in sign language. Mrs. Boden believes that it is important for students to be involved in activities and likes to think that her daughter is well-rounded: "She just has so many interests to keep her busy all the time. It keeps Mom busy all the time as well, but I think it's really important to keep these kids that way and not give them opportunity to get in trouble."

Alison is happy and likes school. She "adores" her teacher and wants to be in her class again next year. This is crucial, according to Mrs. Boden: "The thing is, my daughter really likes Mrs. Munke so I mean that's a big deal. The first year at this school she absolutely hated her teacher and so that has a lot to do with your entire year, how you handle your year."

Alison likes the school she attends. Her parents are also happy with the school. They bought a new house but stayed in the same neighbourhood so that their children would not have to change schools, "because not only are we happy with the school, and how well the kids are doing, but we're also happy with the children . . . they are socializing [with] which I think is really important."

The Classroom/The Teacher

Mrs. Boden has been working full-time so she has not been able to help much in Alison's classroom. She was, however, able to participate in an overnight camping trip with the class. She does not attend PAC meetings, but does attend those interviews and meetings "just . . . regarding Alison." Mrs. Boden has not observed in the classroom, but could do so and would feel comfortable visiting the classroom.

Mrs. Boden is comfortable with Mrs. Munke. "I feel real easy with Mrs. Munke," she comments, "and when I've sat and discussed Alison at interviews I have found her extremely easy to discuss anything with which is really nice."

Mrs. Boden feels she has had sufficient opportunities to meet with Mrs. Munke and the teacher has made it clear that if parents have any concerns they should talk to her. Mrs. Boden is confident that if there is a concern about Alison Mrs. Munke will call. Although Mrs. Boden reports that she has not had to stand up for her daughter's interests at school, she did write a note to Mrs. Munke at the beginning of the year about a misunderstanding on Alison's part regarding the amount of time to spend doing homework each evening. Mrs. Boden did not feel that a reply from Mrs. Munke was necessary, but thought that it was "kind of nice that Mrs. Munke . . . followed up on [the] letter . . . because I wasn't expecting an explanation for it." Mrs. Munke, Mrs. Boden explains, listens to and uses the information that parents provide.

Mrs. Boden feels that she and Mrs. Munke have worked together to help Alison learn through the projects specifically assigned by Mrs. Munke to be completed with parent assistance. Mrs. Boden also feels that she has worked with Mrs. Munke by helping Alison with her homework and making sure it is done and that Mrs. Munke has worked with her by making specific suggestions at the parent/teacher interview about how to help Alison at home with reading and multiplication which Mrs. Boden has carried through at home.

Mrs. Boden is pleased that Mrs. Munke uses student planners with her class because they help students to remember when assignments are due and what they might need to bring to school. A planner, Mrs. Boden states, "really keeps them on track and I was so impressed with that because I use a daytimer all the time and I think it's wonderful to get these children organized and used to organizing themselves. And I have found in years past, Alison will come home and say, "'Oh, we were supposed to have done this last night' but now they know when it's due because this daytimer comes home and everything's in it. It's absolutely wonderful." She adds that planners are also good for home/school communication: "If I have a concern or something that I want to question

the teacher on or whatever, I can send a note home in the daytimer which goes back to school the next day.”

According to Mrs. Boden the ideal parent/teacher relationship is one in which “you feel comfortable to communicate, that if there is a problem with the child, I want to hear about it, and I appreciate hearing about it so that I can—because a lot of times it’s something that needs to be handled at home possibly.”

Mrs. Boden notes that Mrs. Munke is strict with students. She doesn’t let them get away with anything and insists on some periods of quiet time in day when no talking is allowed. According to Mrs. Boden, Mrs. Munke is sensitive to student needs and their interaction, especially squabbling between girls: “I think Mrs. Munke, she’s aware when there [are] problems between the children and she just sort of moves them around a little bit. This is what I’ve found. There’s not been a problem in the classroom at all.”

Mrs. Boden believes that Mrs. Munke respects Alison. She thinks Mrs. Munke enjoys Alison because she is confident and not afraid of giving the wrong answers in class, because she is full of life, and likes to participate in everything.

The Student: Alison Boden

The Classroom/The Teacher

Alison is a student in Mrs. Munke’s class at Seaside School. Her classroom, she says, is sometimes quiet and generally is an easy place in which to learn. There are classroom rules, and students are rewarded with “Munke money” for doing something nice or good. Alison notes that she likes coming to school “because I like to learn” and she maintains that she learns lots at school.

Mrs. Munke is one of Alison’s favourite teachers because “she just has really good ways of, ways to make—to try to help you out. And she always has really really good ideas.” For example, says Alison, “Yesterday she said if anybody needs help in long division to come up to the board and she would help them on it and I can’t do long division very good and so she really helped me.” Mrs. Munke is also fair. “Yeah, oh yeah,” states Alison, “and she always—if she’s not fair, she always tries to fix it. And it usually always works.”

According to Alison, Mrs. Munke gives students choices in the classroom. They may choose from a variety of project or assignment topics, or the specific focus of an assigned project, and they participate in the selection of student groupings. They may choose whether they want to continue with an activity they are already working on or which of two activities they’d like to do first.

Alison explains that students in her class use planners which she really likes. "I love that thing," she states, "I couldn't live without it." The planner helps her to avoid the problem of forgetting what she has for homework: "If you just look in it it tells you what you've got for homework and when it's due." In this way, adds Alison, "you don't have to keep it all in your mind. There's too much stuff in your mind then." Alison notes that students write in their planners every afternoon just before the end of the day. Mrs. Munke signs the planner and then will often write a note to parents if she has a concern: "If she has a problem or if something's bugging us or if we don't get enough time to do something then she'll write it in our student planner and talk to us about it. And then our parents will know." Alison notes that sometimes Mrs. Munke will call home instead.

As far as calls home are concerned, Alison doesn't know if the teacher has called her mum. "Well, usually she's got so much things to do," explains Alison. "There's more people in our class that, um, like they're not learning properly or they can't concentrate and so she usually phones their parents."

Alison feels able to talk to Mrs. Munke individually: "If there's a problem that I have or a student is getting more attention than everybody else is, then I can usually talk to her. The whole class can. I usually write a note to her and leave it on her desk if she's not there or just talk to her straight face." She adds that Mrs. Munke talks to students individually. She listens to students and asks their opinions. Alison is happy in the class and wouldn't change anything.

The Home/The Parents

Alison explains that her mother helps her often with homework and that she enjoys working with her mother except when she herself is "tired and grouchy." If her mother can't help her with math word problems then her brother helps her because "he is really good at them." Alison enjoys talking to her mother about her teacher and about things that happen at school. She brings her planner home regularly and her mother looks at it and will sometimes write a note to the teacher if she has something to tell her.

TRIAD TWO: “SHE SAID, ‘IF YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND IT, THAT’S WHAT WE’RE HERE FOR”

The Teacher: Mrs. Kosko

The Classroom/The Students

Mrs. Kosko, a Grade 5/6 teacher at Meadow Brook school, believes that her students are able to take responsibility for their own work. She mentions that they are currently preparing lessons individually that they are then teaching to their peers. They have been able to prepare the lessons, and then settle down in the morning and begin their lessons independently even when she has not been in the room: “They were teaching their own lessons and assigning homework to kids and the kids were doing their homework. I couldn’t quite believe that.” She adds that she believes the student planners, which she likes and uses regularly, have helped in developing responsibility: “It’s helped them to organize themselves and get into a routine, what they have to do.”

Mrs. Kosko declares that generally she feels effective with every child: “I can sort of say a qualified yes.” She has felt less successful with one child in her class with low self-esteem: “I don’t know if I have actually made a difference in her life at all. Her biggest thing is ‘I can’t,’ you know. I have been telling her all year, ‘Yes, you can, you can, you can.’”

According to Mrs. Kosko the ideal student/teacher relationship is “open, honest, and caring.” In order to develop that kind of relationship with students, she says, teachers must “talk to kids on a one to one about problems they are having or problems you’re having with their behaviour, so everything they do . . . they know how you feel about [it]. Praise stuff, things that they do well, and let them know how you feel about them and what they are doing.” As an example of the way in which she acknowledges student individuality and effort in her class Mrs. Kosko mentions an end-of-year awards ceremony:

We are getting ready for an awards ceremony in the classroom and the kids are brainstorming for possible awards for themselves. They are going to choose what their award will be and then we have invited the parents in and then I’ll say what I have really appreciated about each one of those students and give them that award. And that always makes them feel really good because they have been part of that process. I like to be really honest with kids about what they are good at, what they are not good at but it’s okay because they’re not all good at the same thing.

Teachers show respect to students, Mrs. Kosko explains, by modelling appropriate, respectful behaviour in the classroom: “I know a number of times this year I have really lost it with some of those kids and . . . I wasn’t very confident. But I do apologize to them when I do something like that. Basically, what I don’t appreciate is put-downs. And I

really try to not to put other kids down. I'm finding that they don't do that as often either."

The Home/The Parents

Mrs. Kosko has met all the parents of students in her class: "They all had to come in for student led conferences. So I met them then. It's more of an interim report card so unless they came they didn't get it." As far as help with schoolwork is concerned, Mrs. Kosko asks parents to help with ongoing projects and "occasionally we will send home an assignment saying, 'Please help your child with this.'" She also asks parents to help students study or practice if they are having difficulty with certain subject areas and adds that she makes "those kind of notes in the student planner because they look at those every day." Unfortunately, Mrs. Kosko states, many parents cannot help their children because they can't do the schoolwork: "A lot of parents can't do the work. Not just language problems, some of them can't do the math or don't understand what they're supposed to do."

Mrs. Kosko makes telephone calls home to parents for various reasons including behavioural problems or if students are not getting along with one another. Often these are opportunities to offer suggestions to parents. She cites the example of a student with low self-esteem, not many friends and a lot of emotional problems and says, "I would phone mum occasionally and talk about things that she could try at home." Mrs. Kosko also calls home about homework. Incomplete work is not a major problem in the classroom, but Mrs. Kosko is keen to ensure that parents are seeing and signing the student planners. "In some cases," she explains, "the parents aren't following through. They're not signing, they're not checking so then I would phone and say 'Please do this. This is in your child's best interest.'" According to Mrs. Kosko, the ideal parent/teacher relationship is one of honesty: "Tell parents and let them know what's going on."

Mrs. Kosko notes that she has invited parents into the classroom but not too many have come even though she believes that parents are comfortable in the school. Some parents who have participated in the class have been involved in teaching during a class camping trip. The students were divided into activity stations and parents were responsible for the stations. Mrs. Kosko was pleasantly surprised with their teaching contribution.

The Parent: Mrs. Irving

The Home/The Student

Mrs. Irving reports that Tyler asks for help all the time at home. She enjoys helping him and he enjoys working with her. However, because of her own limited education and reading difficulties she is often unable to help Tyler with his schoolwork. She consequently encourages him to ask his teacher for help. Convincing him to do this was difficult at the beginning of the year as Tyler was hesitant to approach either his teachers or his mother for fear of feeling embarrassed. He was especially concerned about embarrassment for his mother. Mrs. Irving persisted in her attempts to encourage him:

I say, "You know, homework's hard and I can't help you and that's what your teachers are for. Why don't you ask them? If you're having problems why don't you ask them. Don't not do it and just leave them. That's what they're there for. They want you to say 'Look, I don't get this.' And even if they explain it and walk away, say, 'Excuse me, I still don't get this.'" Sometimes it takes four or five times to get something and that doesn't mean you're stupid; it means it takes four or five times to get something, right? Sometimes you get it like that, sometimes you don't.

In response to this early problem Mrs. Irving initiated a meeting with Tyler's teacher who echoed what Tyler's mother had to say and made Tyler feel more comfortable about approaching her for help. "She said," explains Mrs. Irving, "If you don't understand it, that's what we're here for.' And they backed up what I said. And the fear was gone."

In general Mrs. Irving doesn't feel comfortable helping her sons with reading, spelling, grammar, and even though her math has been good she reports that the work that Tyler is doing is getting hard for her and he has now stopped asking her for help in that area. She continues to encourage him to ask his teacher and teases him about helping her: "I'll just say, 'Can you get your teacher to explain that to you? Can you work harder on that one and then maybe if you get it you can show me.'"

Mrs. Irving feels her lack of education inhibits her from helping her children and she would like to be able to help them more, but if they do need assistance and she is unable to provide it she suggests other alternatives which are available to them: "I don't say to them, 'Oh, Momma's stupid and Mom can't do this.' If I don't get something, then I'll say, 'Well, wait till your Dad gets home,' and if he doesn't get it then I say—I'm fortunate, I've got my brother downstairs, he just graduated a little while ago, very smart and—'Someone will explain it.'" In addition, Mrs. Irving points out that she and her husband have a Grade Nine foster boy in the house who is very bright, especially with math and he is also able to help.

According to Mrs. Irving Tyler doesn't get anxious about his grades but strives at doing the best that he can do. He works hard and they encourage him:

Because it's hard for him, he doesn't slack on it. He knows he has to work hard on it He's not, by far, an A student, but he's doing the best he can do, and he knows that's all anyone wants out of him is the best he can do. We don't push him for As; we don't push him for any kind of honour things. Everything he does . . . is great As long as he's doing it, and he's making an effort, then we're right there applauding it.

Mrs. Irving would be happy to see things become easier for Tyler, but doesn't think that will happen soon.

According to Mrs. Irving Tyler demonstrates his responsibility by using his planner, and by coming home and doing his homework. He doesn't like it, but it is now part of the routine: "It was hard in the beginning getting him started on it. But he's getting good at it now, cause he does his homework and he gets me to sign it." Because of his difficulty with reading Tyle doesn't study for tests, but he has good verbal memory—which masked his reading problem until Grade Three—and he relies on this in exam situations.

Tyler likes school now because, Mrs. Irving maintains. "Before he was getting the help that he needed, he didn't like school at all," she explains, "not at all." Now, however, he is "fine with it" which is demonstrated by the fact that "he gets up and goes to school." Mrs. Irving is convinced that help is key to this change.

The Classroom/The Teacher

Mrs. Irving doesn't hesitate to call the school when there is a problem regarding any of her children. She feels free to call Tyler's teacher at anytime and is comfortable talking to her. Their communication is "totally open . . . really good." Mrs. Irving has felt free to visit the classroom to talk to Mrs. Kosko and has done so regularly. She notes that whenever there's a problem, "they're right there" and always available. Mrs. Irving has always had sufficient opportunity to meet with Mrs. Kosko and has never felt excluded.

Although Mrs. Irving has always felt hindered by her reading problems this year has marked a turnaround through her experience with Tyler's teacher (and the team teacher, Mrs. Weir) who have helped her by informing her that she can help and by showing her how to help her son. Mrs. Irving movingly describes her own reading difficulty, how she has always felt incapable of helping her children, and the ways in which the teacher(s) helped her to overcome these problems:

I couldn't even read those little books. I never read a book in my life. Not one book. I didn't finish it. So I told the teacher that and it was embarrassing for me to say that, cause you can look good on the outside but be completely . . . on the inside, so I said that to them and she just said, without any degrading or anything like that, she said, "Well, listen, your child will respect whatever you do with them. Any kind of time is worthy time." So she just said "Read as best as you can to them, you know, and the more you read the better you'll get." No one had ever told me that, not one person had ever told me that, except this teacher and so I started

reading the little books—you know, the green eggs and ham ones, you know what I mean? And I would stutter all the way through. It's like a phobia kind of thing I have, reading out loud, because of the problems, the dyslexia stuff so I just started off really slow and I guess they teach them that in school . . . Tyler would say, "Look. Mom, that's okay," cause I'd get really nervous, and I would say, "Well, let's just not read," and he'd say, "Come on, let's go" and so eventually I got better, he got better and then we all would just read a page each and do stuff like that. So, it worked well with us through what she said, by not belittling you.

Mrs. Irving notes, furthermore, that the teachers not only encouraged her to read for and along with Tyler but, most importantly, dealt with her respectfully and acknowledged her desire to help as they would any other parent's. With Tyler's teacher (and the team teacher) she has not experienced any of the feelings of ineptitude and inability that she had previously:

They're very good not to make you feel stupid. I'm not highly educated or anything like that . . . that's where I got this learning disability from. I was never worked on, I just got passed on through the system, kind of thing . . . I never read. And I still don't read that much. And so as parents you feel really bad when they say you should be reading to your child and all this and all that and you look at them and you say "I've got dyslexia, I've got a form of dyslexia here and I'm not a reader." . . . And so I would feel really stupid sitting there and talking with them saying, "Oh, well, I don't do that." But I haven't experienced that with Tyler's teacher.

Tyler's teacher understood her difficulty with reading, encouraged her to help and showed her ways in which she could. Furthermore, their knowledge of her problem energized their efforts to understand Tyler's language difficulties and help him:

Well, they understood that and that's why they really went gung ho into finding out what his problem was and doing the extra work with him and stuff like that. When I couldn't do, they would do and then they would say to me, why don't you just try to, and they would give me different things, different alternatives to do. Which was what I needed. I didn't need somebody to talk down to me, I needed somebody to show me.

Because Tyler's teacher has been sensitive to Mrs. Irving and quick to respond to her concerns Mrs. Irving has felt comfortable talking to the teacher and approaching her with any problem. Most importantly, she has given the teacher her full support which she feels is very important:

I'll let them know if I don't like something or I don't understand something or, you know, if they need me for something I'm here. Just be flexible for them. Be there for the teachers too, because they're working with your kids, cause that's the important thing, right? I'm not there in that area to work with them. Like, in the capacity that they are. So for me to be there for the teachers so that they can do their job, that kind of thing. Support them.

Mrs. Irving and her husband don't attend meetings at the school. Both of them work, but she does volunteer work, will sometimes drive on field trips when she can, and attends parent/teacher meetings. Mrs. Irving has observed in the classroom, taking three day off to help with woodwork projects. She appreciated the chance to see her son in the

school setting where, she noted, you “see a different side of your kids.” Tyler was not at all embarrassed by the presence of his mother in the classroom. “Actually he’s more open when I’m there,” she adds.

Mrs. Irving notes that the student/teacher relationships in Mrs. Kosko’s classroom are positive. She is impressed by both of the teachers and their efforts to get to know and help their students:

Tyler has two teachers in his class. It’s a split class and both of them know Tyler They get to know the child, the personality of the child. They take the time to get to know the child. Do you know what I mean? I don’t think they did that before. Nowadays they’re taking the time to get to know the individual child like almost, almost like a parent would know them, in that sense. They get to know that side of him and they can judge his character. Once you get to know them, then you can help them.

Tyler has benefited from this because both of his teachers have made constant efforts to help him learn by explaining things to him in a variety of ways, by using different methods, by exploring alternatives and being persistent. “They bend over backwards for him,” Mrs. Irving notes, “and he knows it and he appreciates it because, you know, he knows he’s getting all this special help” Mrs. Irving is grateful that Tyler is not being repetitively “failed” as she was and that he is being given every opportunity to achieve: “He’s not made stupid and they’re teaching him. It’s so great. They’re finding methods to teach him, instead of just expecting him to learn this way.” Tyler’s mother and his teacher discuss his reading problem and she adds that at the same time Mrs. Kosko provides “constant reports of his humour, his singing abilities. I never get a negativeness about him.”

According to Mrs. Irving her relationship with the teacher is ideal. The two teachers continuously communicate with her and “bend over backwards to make sure that the kids have everything that they need. . . . They’re actually there for the kids and they help me to understand even what my kids are going through at school. What they need and everything.”

The Student: Tyler Irving

The Classroom/The Teacher

Tyler reports that his classroom is generally a good place in which to learn. Tyler’s teacher teams with another teacher and although this makes a bit of noise Tyler doesn’t mind the organization. The classroom is interesting and quiet most of the time, although Tyler reports that there is a lot of repetition—especially in math—and that the classroom

can be boring for this reason. If he could he would change silent reading; thirty minutes is too long. Tyler has never shared these perceptions with the teacher.

Tyler likes coming to school “because it gives me something to do through the day. And cause I learn lots when I go to school.” He reports that at school he is trying his best and is “getting good.” For Tyler trying his best means “working hard” and “trying to ace the test, trying to get all of them right and when I don’t, at least I should get close.” On a “working hard” scale from one to ten he rates himself a seven or eight.

Mrs. Kosko is Tyler’s favourite teacher so far. She is fair to all students, treating them equally, but is not too strict. She is nice, especially because sometimes she modifies curriculum for him. Tyler isn’t sure whether his teacher expects students to get help from parents at home. He thinks so, but reports that the teacher doesn’t say anything in class.

According to Tyler, students participate in the classroom. They decided on some of the classroom rules and his teacher decided on others. Tyler explains that his teacher has a class meeting with all the students “every once in a while” where they discuss a variety of classroom issues. The teacher listens to student input about the class. “Well,” says Tyler, “sometimes we talk about, like, our seating plan, if you don’t want to sit in this group or you don’t want to sit in that group. Sometimes we talk about, like, what days you want to have some games and sometimes what days we don’t. When we want our free time and that.” Although Tyler says he doesn’t talk to Mrs. Kosko about things outside school, and doesn’t “hang around” especially to talk to her, he does write about these things in his journal and the teacher reads it.

Tyler is not sure whether Mrs. Kosko calls parents about work, but he does remember the teacher having called his parents once when he forgot his homework, for which students get detentions. Students in his class use planners in which they are to note “no homework,” if that is the case, and their parents must sign daily. Mrs. Kosko lets parents know about what students are learning during interviews, maintains Tyler. In at least one instance this was a three-way conference which Tyler describes: “Well, one time we had this—parent meetings where they came and I showed them all the work that I was doing and then they talked to the teacher.”

The Home/The Parents

Tyler explains that he talks to his parents about school sometimes and sometimes not. When he does he tells them about math and, “what I did at school.” He also talks about his teachers, about things he’s learning, and about when he has current events.

Tyler's parents help him with schoolwork which includes current events, spelling and especially math, where they explain how to do things. He is comfortable asking his parents for help, and works "okay" with them, but doesn't usually ask for help with projects. His parents are able to help him although "sometimes it will take them a while to figure it out." His parents don't help him study for tests. He explains that he doesn't study for tests, adding, "I just cross my fingers and hope for the best."

Tyler isn't sure whether his parents like his school or not, but they do talk to him about education. His mother talks about how important school is, and stresses that it's important not to stay home. His parents say it is important to get a good education.

TRIAD THREE: "YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO HOME AND TELL THE PARENTS EVERYTHING"

The Teacher: Ms. Fraser

The Classroom/The Student

Ms. Fraser, responsible for a Grade Six class at Cedar Avenue School, does not feel that students can take responsibility for their own learning. "I don't think it's that they can't, it's that they won't," she explains, "I think they're quite capable should they make a decision to. And anything that's required, any kind of directive learning or self-responsibility, they've balked and complained and whined and refused. They want me to do it." She adds that she has difficulty getting kids to stay with a task and finish it. "I'll give a project that'll take three to four days and they'll work on it in class and they'll talk about pacing ourselves and I'll only get ten of them in. And I'll hound and hound and hound and make phone calls home and then I might get a few more in. It's just not important." She explains that she has tried to put choice into every project that students have done, but adds that she hasn't been too successful in getting students to respond.

When asked about whether she feels she is effective with all students, Ms. Fraser focusses on the trouble she has had reaching two students. One she describes as an aggressively negative girl and adds, "as far as trusting that what I ask her to do might be of value to her . . . there's no trust between the two of us." The other student is a boy from a "really angry family, a family that'll display anger quite quickly." Ms. Fraser says that the father has made "a judgement" about her and "that's impacted on the child, so the child is not going to work with me . . . or allow himself to trust cause he's going against his parent."

Ms. Fraser believes that students don't respect teachers, that their friends are more important to them. She would like respect and says that "a little bit of appreciation"

would be nice. She contends that teachers demonstrate their respect for students by listening to them and hearing them. Apparently, this is not common either because, she adds, “I think that’s a common complaint I have from kids. What I hear on the playground is teachers not listening.”

The Home/The Parents

According to Ms. Fraser the parents of the students in her class don’t involve themselves much in their children’s homework. They don’t ensure that it is done, and don’t set up the systems within the home to facilitate its completion. Parents, she says, don’t insist that “‘You can’t go out until it’s done’ or ‘You’re going to get your privilege taken away unless it’s done.’” That doesn’t happen very often, but I get the sense it’s ‘You have to do it and let me know when you’re finished.’” She feels that parents expect that students do homework “when it’s convenient for the family,” but don’t involve themselves by actually monitoring that work.

Ms. Fraser does not feel that parents are helping their children with homework, and she maintains that they do not ask her how they can help at home. In fact, Ms. Fraser believes that they are actually not much interested in this. She cites as evidence the fact that there was not much positive parental response to either her use of a learning log or student planner:

We did the learning logs where the kids would take it home on Friday and the parents would sign it and it would come back. I tried last year to do daily and it was just a disaster. And then we did the student planners after Christmas. Well, that only lasted about a month. And they never came back, so we went back to learning log and they’re very rarely sent home. I have hardly any parent signatures in there. The policing and the monitoring, of trying to get these back has been absolutely horrendous. And I’ve checked them off every morning . . . while the kids were doing some reading. I still have twelve or thirteen or fourteen that never got back; I never ever saw them. So I have a feeling that in this community that there’s a dissatisfaction with the schooling, but there’s also a lack of interest.

Interestingly, however, she makes no mention of how she informed parents about these initiatives, what she expected them to do, and how she followed up with parents, if indeed she did.

Ms. Fraser adds furthermore that these parents do not seem to take an interest in the work their child does in class. Ms. Fraser notes the example of one of her “consistently positive students” who had not done much work from Christmas to March and had consequently gotten very low marks on the March report card. She explains that the girl’s parents came in, “absolutely livid that this child had gotten such low marks and they were angry with me, but they had not seen her work. So when her work came out, they could

see how, indeed, she had not done very much since Christmas. There had been no actual exchange of seeing that she was actually doing it.”

In addition, Ms. Fraser notes that parents of the students in her class do not respond to overtures from the classroom. A student self-evaluation was sent home as an interim report card between the March and June formal reports. The students were to include work samples, comment on their progress and set goals for themselves. Ms. Fraser discusses the parental response they evoked: “So all of those went home—as far as I know they all went home—and I requested that they come back . . . so that at the end of the year the kids could make a sample book to show their work. I only got four back, so I don’t even know if the parents have seen them.”

Ms. Fraser also feels that parents have not been supportive of her efforts to inform them. She notes that she does get a positive reaction from parents when she calls them about something positive, and explains that she has used the phone more this year, and more often for positive calls, but not as much as she had hoped. When she calls about something negative, however, she gets a defensive reaction from parents: “When I have called about a concern, a behavioural concern or something, I’m challenged. ‘Well, that’s not what he said happened’ or, ‘Well, that’s not what they said.’”

When asked about whether she involves parents in instruction at home with their children Ms. Fraser states that “We haven’t done very much of that here, as far as telling them what it is that they can do.” About inviting parents in to the classroom she says, “It’s always an open invitation on the newsletters,” but since she is the vice-principal, the newsletters that she refers are likely school newsletters, and the invitation an open one to all parents.

Ms. Fraser reveals that she does get lots of complaints from parents and so she invites them into the classroom so that they can see for themselves what is happening there. She states that “always within my complaints I try to hear what the complaint is and I always invite them to come in.” She adds that parents typically ask to have a timetable sent home so that they can find out what is happening in the classroom and at what times. “So I’ve done that,” adds Ms. Fraser, “but they’ve not come.”

Ms. Fraser notes that there are a number of barriers to parent involvement in instruction at home (or in the classroom), and one of them is the number of extra-curricular activities in which children are involved. She explains that during baseball season she stops giving homework “because all I would get was ‘I got a game’ or ‘I got a practice’ or ‘I can’t do that.’ Ball season is absolutely all-encompassing. If one kid doesn’t have a practice or a game, two others in the family [do] and the family goes.” As far as

helping in the classroom is concerned, Ms. Fraser tried to establish a reading program but couldn't because of lack of parent help. "It was really difficult to get parents," she notes in general, but credits this also to the fact that "there are a lot more parents working than there have been in previous years."

Despite the fact that Ms. Fraser claims that parents of the students in her class seem not to help with homework or be interested in either that or their child's progress, student-led conferences were well-attended. The meetings were held in the evenings in order to facilitate the attendance of as many parents as possible and Ms. Fraser notes that all but two of the parents in her class attended.

Ms. Fraser believes that generally the parents who are part of the PAC feel welcome in the school. There are, however, a great number of "agitators" who come only to complain: "No matter what we do, nothing is right. Nothing is okay. Do they feel welcome? I think they hate the school. They hate everything that we do." She adds that the school did a full theatre production at Christmas and says, in a pejorative tone, "We even had our agitators who were thrilled on that one."

Interestingly, Ms. Fraser displays an awareness of the potential discomfort of parents in schools when she recounts an incident involving a parent who had arrived early to take part in a school-based team meeting about his child. The parent had waited in the office, but felt very uncomfortable there and had almost left. Ms. Fraser notes that many parents "bring their baggage from previous years." However, she does not suggest that she or the school could take steps to alleviate the discomfort of these parents.

According to Ms. Fraser the ideal parent/teacher relationship is one in which the parents trust "that teachers know what they're doing and ask." This, she contends, is not the case in practice. As she explains: "I would have liked to have seen a trust on the part of the parent that I was not deliberately going out to hurt, destroy, wreck, wrack or ruin their child, or blame their child. Cause whenever I've contacted parents about something that's not positive, that's the assumption is that I have deliberately tried to discredit their child in some way." Ms. Fraser would like to see parents trust teachers more, but she also adds: "I'd like to see myself be more understanding of where parents are. Or be able—I think I am understanding, but I don't think I demonstrate that, or obviously I haven't demonstrated that to them—to help build that trust."

The Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten

The Classroom/The Teacher

Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten participate in school events, but are not able to volunteer in the class because they both work. This has also prevented them from visiting the classroom during instructional time.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten describe an initial meet-the-teacher evening at which time they met Ms. Fraser, there is some confusion about parent/teacher interviews. Mr. Van Netten states that “we used to go for parent teacher meetings but this year they haven’t had any at all.” He adds: “It’s the first year that we’ve not had regular parent/teacher meetings. That goes for our other child too. I don’t know why they’ve stopped it.” Ms. Fraser does report that one parent-teacher conference, a round of student-led conferencing, took place before Christmas. Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten did attend this to discuss their daughter’s report and “obtain feedback.” However, apparently their experience during this year contrasts with others in which more parent/teacher meetings occurred.

Ultimately, Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten do not feel they have received sufficient information about their child’s progress at school. Mrs. Van Netten does not believe that they have worked together with Lisa’s teacher at all: “Not her, no, but then Lisa does fairly well in school so we don’t get a lot of feedback from school, other than her report cards.” And, these reports, Mrs. Van Netten notes, are always positive: “Whenever we’ve gone in to talk to the teachers about their reports, like on occasions, everything was always great because it’s just comments.” Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten also explain that Lisa hasn’t had a lot of homework either so they have not been easily able to make personal judgements about her work. They explain further that “we haven’t had any reports that she’s not getting her work done either so we’re assuming that all is well. They say that they’ll contact you if there’s a problem.”

Although Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten have felt they had to assume that Lisa was doing well because they were not informed otherwise, they did notice at one point during the year that Lisa’s mastery of the times tables “seemed to be way down for her grade level” and so they began practicing with her at home. Lisa’s teacher, however, did not seem to feel this was necessary. “That was one thing that was lacking that I felt they should have let us know a little bit more,” says Mr. Van Netten, “and even on asking, they still seemed to think that she was fine, but she wasn’t even at the point of knowing her six times table in grade five.”

Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten also feel that Ms. Fraser has not communicated enough with them about what is happening in class. "In other years," states Mr. Van Netten, "we were always told. Well, the teacher would kind of give us a summary: 'Well, this year we're going over this kind of work and this is what's going to be expected of her to do,' and we haven't had any of that." The ideal parent/teacher relationship, Mr. Van Netten notes, is one in which there is "some form of regular feedback."

According to Mr. Van Netten, they have had more problems this year with Lisa and her classroom situation than they have ever had: "Not in that Lisa gets into much trouble, but she's not very happy for the first time since she's ever gone to school. Whether it's just Ms. Fraser or—well, that specifically seems to be the problem." In the fall conference Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten approached Ms. Fraser with their concerns. Mr. Van Netten explains: "She was doing things that we don't agree with such as keeping the whole class in when one or two misbehaved We discussed with her that we didn't feel that it was constructive to punish everybody for one or two students who misbehave and she didn't understand that keeping after class was punishment." This issue was not resolved.

About student/teacher communication Mr. Van Netten says: "We get reports back from Lisa once in a while that Ms. Fraser has indicated that you don't have to go home and tell the parents everything, which of course makes us suspect. . . . It of course does the exact opposite." Lisa, they add, is uncomfortable with Ms. Fraser. "It would be nice," states Mr. Van Netten, "to see a teacher communicate with the child so that the child's comfortable with going to the teacher and talking."

In general, Mrs. Van Netten has not been "overly pleased or enthused" with Lisa's teacher and doesn't "care for the way she handles things." Mrs. Van Netten characterizes Ms. Fraser as a negative teacher who is not willing to listen. "She's got certain things that she does in class that I disagree with," declares Mrs. Van Netten, "and when you bring it to her attention, she feels that she's right so she doesn't listen to anything you have to say anyway. She's right and that's all there is to it. She's not willing to change or look at your opinion. . . . She's very negative, the most negative teacher I've ever met." About Lisa in Ms. Fraser's classroom Mrs. Van Netten says, "I can hardly wait till she's out of there."

The Home/The Student

According to her parents Lisa is a responsible student. Her father explains that "She takes care of herself, she babysits, she's a mature child; she's responsible. We can leave her in the house and not worry about something happening or something silly being done."

Mrs. and Mrs. Van Netten help their daughter at home if she requires assistance. She doesn't resist their help, but her father says, "We get the impression she's capable of handling it" because she doesn't ask for help unless she has a specific problem. Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten are available to help Lisa with projects and have also worked with her on times tables.

Lisa has always enjoyed school and participates in sports, but her mother notes that "She'll be glad when this grade's over . . . but she still enjoys school." Lisa does not like Ms. Fraser, explains Mr. Van Netten, even to the point that "she is becoming insolent at school, in class, and from what we understand from other teachers there has never been this situation." She talks only occasionally about school, about special events and if something specific happens. She doesn't talk much about day-to-day classroom life. "You ask, 'Well, what did you do today?'" says Mrs. Van Netten, "and it's 'Oh, well . . .'"

The Student: Lisa Van Netten

Unfortunately, only minimal data are available from this student because of technical problems encountered when recording interview data. In addition, the student provided very little detailed information in answer to the interview questions. This, in itself, is telling. The few answers available from the tape are quite revealing, however, and, together with parent data, help to provide a picture of her teacher and the classroom situation.

Lisa's teacher shares teaching duties in her classroom with another, male, teacher. Lisa affirms that all the students in her class prefer the other teacher to Ms. Fraser. Ms. Fraser, she notes, "is always raising her voice and yelling at us, always sending somebody out of the room." The other teacher does not do this. Consequently, Lisa explains that whether the classroom is a good place to learn or not "sometimes . . . depends on the teacher." There is one new student, she adds, who disrupts the class a lot and is a bad influence. This does not help to make the classroom a pleasant place to be and a good place in which to work.

Lisa's favourite teacher is a male teacher she had in a previous year. When asked why he is her favourite she explains that he did not yell and send students out of the room when they were not behaving.

TRIAD FOUR: "I WOULDN'T KNOW HER IF I FELL OVER HER ON THE STREET"

The Teacher: Miss Halstrom

The Classroom/The Students

When asked whether children can take responsibility for their own education Miss Halstrom, a Grade Six/Seven teacher at Mountain View School, says, "I think so. As in any class you have those kids who do and the work is always complete and with very little supervision. They take a pride in the work they have done." About responsibility Miss Halstrom adds that if students "know that home and school are working together they know they have to work and hopefully it will become habit forming." She has seen this developing in at least one student during the year who wrote in a report card that "at the beginning of the year he never got his work done but now he always gets it done. He gets no help at home and the fact that he has learned that is good." Miss Halstrom says further of developing responsibility: "We have done a lot of cooperative work all year and there has been a real growth that way. That feeling of letting the group down in that effort. It has reflected right through to their homework."

When asked whether students have opportunities to choose what they will learn Miss Halstrom says that "they can often select from a choice. I give them the ideas. I am moving more towards that. We have developed a set of things that they can do on the board. Their science unit. They chose what they could study. There is more choice."

About reaching all students Miss Halstrom notes that there have been "two notable failures. I feel that I have not got to them at all." Overall, however, she feels that she has reached all students. At the beginning of the year, she says, "there were a lot I was missing, that I hadn't figured out how to get to."

When asked whether parents could help more in the school Miss Halstrom notes that the school is drawing in more students from "the lower income area." "We can see we are getting more and more of those children rather than the middle class," she states. When asked if this means lower levels of participation she says: "I don't know if it inevitably does. I think schools have to work a whole lot harder to get those parents involved. There are different ways rather than the traditional to get those parents involved." She says, however, that she is "not sure what they are." There has not been much effort in the school, she notes, to get parents more involved in the daytime or in other ways at the school, apart from Open House and the spring concert. Over the year there have been a few more parents in the school, she thinks, but usually these are "the

same ones repeated.” She contends that with so many working parents “there is much frustration in trying to get parent volunteers for anything.”

Miss Halstrom says that she has asked for parent volunteers for field trips, but has had “a really poor turnout.” “I have a whole lot of single parents,” she notes, “and low income children . . . usually two working parents.” Miss Halstrom explains that she doesn’t have many parent volunteers, but adds, “I never stop parents coming in and never discourage parents at the door.” She states further, however, “As far as parent volunteers go I haven’t really tried since the beginning of the year.”

The Home/The Parents

When asked to describe how she involves parents in instruction Miss Halstrom repeats her promise: “I keep saying, come the fall.” She explains, however, that “the biggest way,” is through the homework book and “keeping them more on top of the kids.” Miss Halstrom has called “lots of parents,” but adds, “Unfortunately because I have dealt with a lot of parents about difficulties their kids have I haven’t been good at doing the good news calls or the ‘Do you have any concerns?’ calls. Not as good. I have to set a schedule for myself next year.”

When asked whether there are things which prevent parents from doing more to help their children learn Miss Halstrom explains that at the Grade Seven level “there is a lack of parent confidence to do the work that the students are doing. That is a real factor and in supervising with their homework.” “I suppose you could offer some parent workshops,” she suggests, “but we would get the parents who already know. The problem [is] how do we get the parents . . . We all have to find the ways.”

About the relationship between parents and teachers Miss Halstrom maintains that “with most parents it has been quite supportive. That is the feeling I have got. Most are quite supportive. Maybe others [are] the silent majority, but I don’t get a whole lot of anger.” When asked whether there has been any change in her relationships with parents Miss Halstrom is positive: “I think so. It has been easier this year. Not meeting the parents socially this year it has taken longer to get to know them. During the year I have felt a definite warming. I definitely feel more comfortable with the parents than I did during our last interview.”

The Parent: Mrs. Goode

The Classroom/The Teacher

Mrs. Goode does not feel welcome in her daughter's school in part because of the principal whose "attitude stinks." She doesn't feel welcome in her daughter's classroom either. Of the teacher Mrs. Goode says, "I don't like her. . . . I don't like her attitude."

Mrs. Goode is not involved in the school at all. She has neither visited the classroom nor been in to see the teacher. Mrs. Goode has spoken to Anna's teacher, "numerous times on the phone," but adds, "we always phone the school. She never phones here." Miss Halstrom, she explains, has not called her about helping either nor has she sent home any written communication apart from school newsletters.

Mrs. Goode did not meet with Miss Halstrom at the parent/teacher interview because the teacher said "we didn't have to." An appointment time was sent home which was inconvenient for the Goodes so Mrs. Goode telephoned the school to reschedule. Mrs. Goode relates the conversation: "She said to me on the phone, 'Do you have any questions concerning Anna?' Well, I'm not teaching her school so I said, 'No, I have no problems with her. Do you?' 'No, I don't, so we don't really have to reset this meeting.'" During this conversation Miss Halstrom did not request a parent/teacher meeting, and Mrs. Goode did not request one at that time or after any of the other reporting periods. According to Mrs. Goode, the fact that Miss Halstrom said that the parent/teacher meeting was not necessary is "not telling you anything. . . . That's not trying to have communication between the school and home and expecting the kid to go along with this." Since Miss Halstrom "hummed and hawed" on the telephone, Mrs. Goode wonders, "What was the point?" Ultimately, about this incident Mrs. Goode says: "You just get the feeling that they don't want you there. That's the feeling I get. So if I don't have to talk to them that's fine because if I do talk to them I'm going to lose my cool."

Mrs. Goode is no more impressed with the teacher's relationship with her daughter and with the students in the class in general. She notes that Anna's father and the teacher had arranged that Anna would stay in after school to get some extra help in math. However, Mrs. Goode explains that Anna came home "and she still didn't understand." According to Mrs. Goode Miss Halstrom "doesn't explain. She expects the kids to pick it up when she says we're doing such and such and blah, blah and that's it and the kids should know. And I don't think that's right because every kid does not pick up the same as the next one. . . . She doesn't take the time. . . . And I feel they should—not just because of Anna—they should take the time." Since Anna was in several times for extra help, but still did not understand Mrs. Goode wonders whether the teacher "really takes

the time or does she brush it off. . . . Does she really take the time to explain and it's the kid that's not grasping?" Mrs. Goode tried to get a better understanding of the situation, but her conversations with the teacher did not help in this regard. "How can you find out?" says Mrs. Goode, "Nobody wants to talk."

Mrs. Goode contrasts her daughter's teacher to another teacher in the school: "He seems to be—he gives the kids what I feel they should have or maybe what we had when we went to school. Like, he takes the time to sit with the kids after school and explain out and make sure that they understand. . . . he seems really concerned, more so on the kid level. . . . Like, it's not, we're not there to teach and three o'clock we go home. He's there. If the kids have a problem the kids feel and know that they can come to him. And that's good, I think."

In addition to her concern about the lack of help in class, Mrs. Goode also fears that the teacher is singling her daughter out negatively in class: "One thing she does—I can't say positively because I'm going by what Anna says—she says that Miss Halstrom will centre her out in class. Well, to me that's wrong. . . . Like, I just—I don't go for that. That's not right. They want these kids to listen and learn a little bit of respect, well, they should show some of that back to the kids." This lack of respect which Mrs. Goode attributes to "some kind of a slight personality clash" between her daughter and the teacher is compounded by the fact that Miss Halstrom doesn't listen to students or consider their point of view: "I mean [the teacher's] going to come out ahead, right? The kid's going to be wrong. Doesn't matter what she does, she's going to be wrong."

According to Mrs. Goode, children are not heard at all in her daughter's school: "It's the principal and the teachers against the kid and it doesn't matter what the kid says, the kid is wrong and that's wrong because the kids aren't always wrong." About this Mrs. Goode says, "I'll sit and I'll listen to their side, but I expect them to listen to my side too and if they won't—and obviously they won't because they won't listen to the kids."

For Mrs. Goode communication from Miss Halstrom has been a problem throughout the year. About conversations with her on the telephone Mrs. Goode says: "She just hums and haws on the phone. She doesn't say anything. It's just, 'Um, whaa, uh, um, yeah.' That's the whole conversation. Like, is she that afraid to talk to parents then she must be doing something wrong? Or because she's afraid to talk to parents is she taking it out on the kids? I don't know." Miss Halstrom, she believes, doesn't seem prepared to tell parents anything. These conversations leave her with a feeling that she "can't explain. It's a really strange feeling, like I couldn't care less if I ever talked to her. That's the way she comes across on the phone. And I don't think that's right."

Asked whether there were times when the teacher missed an opportunity to gain her support Mrs. Goode replies: "Oh, I would say lots of times just because she doesn't talk. . . . I mean, if you take the time to call, she should take the time to talk to you. Anna has been raised that if you have a problem you talk about it. And if she can't talk to her teacher or the teacher can't talk to use then there's obviously no communication, right? So you're not going to gain anything."

Mrs. Goode does not feel that Miss Halstrom sees her as a partner, "because you never get involved." When asked if there were times when she felt excluded from her daughter's schooling, she replies: "Um, well if you're not involved I guess that makes you excluded, right?" Mrs. Good sums up her relationship with the teacher as a "big joke. Just because I don't think it's there. There's nothing there." By June Mrs. Goode and the teacher had not met face to face. "I wouldn't know her if I fell over her on the street" proclaims Mrs. Goode.

The Home/The Student

Mrs. Goode reports that she helps her daughter most at home with math, but not without difficulty: "Well, I know how to do math. She knows how to do math, but the two of them don't coincide. You know, I mean, we both come out with the same answer, but it's wrong because they aren't doing it that way at school. So, how can you help her? And she gets frustrated because you can't help her." This problem is compounded by the fact, adds Mrs. Goode, that Anna seems not to be able to get the help that she needs from the teacher at school.

Despite the difficulties with math Mrs. Goode has felt "pretty much" comfortable about helping Anna with her work and says that she and her daughter enjoy working with each other. In addition to math she has helped Anna with her spelling for Friday tests. This has been "no big deal" compared to math which is Anna's "biggest problem."

Mrs. Goode reports that Anna has gotten much better at doing her homework independently. Although previously she would often not have her homework done in the morning lately "she knows that her homework has to be done. If she's got homework she does it when she gets home from school." However, when asked how her daughter takes responsibility for her own education Mrs. Goode replies: "I would say mainly because she's still going to school.

Over the year Mrs. Goode has noticed a decline in "attitude—like something is going to pot because now she's finding excuses why she doesn't want to go to school and that's not Anna. Something is happening. . . . there's some reason when she starts making

up excuses why she doesn't want to go to school and different times she's come home just about in tears. . . . There's something when a kid decides they aren't going to school when all along she's had no problem with going to school." Not wanting to go to school, Mrs. Goode maintains, is not a constant problem, but happens, "every now and again." Since Anna is not "getting into trouble" at school, Mrs. Goode intimates that the problem is not behaviour, but adds: "I have had more problems with her school year this year than I have since the first time she ever stepped foot in a school. So there's got to be a reason, right?"

Mrs. Goode has not approached the teacher with this problem. She feels that since Miss Halstrom has made little effort to communicate with her throughout the year, she does not feel compelled at this point to communicate with Miss Halstrom. About speaking to the teacher about the problem Mrs. Goode is resigned:

No, why should I have to? If she can't sense something's wrong when I sense it at home shouldn't she be the one that's on the phone, like, this is what I think, or a note coming home or whatever? I mean, that's the way I feel. If I have a problem at home I don't hesitate to pick the phone up . . . so if she's having problems at school for one reason or another, shouldn't she be the one that sends the note home or picks the phone up and says, look, we should get together because, whatever. Maybe I'm coming across as a real bag, but I mean—so I feel she should do it too, if she's having problems. I mean, all this is to do with the school getting closer with parents. Well, if they aren't willing to do it, why should the parents do it?

The Student: Anna Goode

The Classroom/The Teacher

When asked what her classroom is like as a place to learn Anna describes it as "so-so." When asked whether she feels valued in the classroom she replies: "No, not really . . . probably because I am not quite used to the teacher. At the beginning of the year I didn't know her. It didn't get better, not whatsoever."

Anna explains that the teacher decides what they study in class, and when asked how things might be done differently she suggests that "most of the assignments that our teacher gives us she could do some improvement on." She hasn't mentioned this to the teacher, however: "No, that's the only thing I don't do."

Anna notes that parents do come and visit the classroom "talking to the teacher or otherwise watching when Miss Halstrom is not in the class," but that Miss Halstrom does not call parents at home. Anna reports that her parents do not help out in the school or with field trips and that at the beginning of the year they didn't go to the parent/teacher meeting. "My mum called the school and talked to Miss Halstrom," she states. Anna

explains that her mother and father think the school “has gone right down the tube” because of her teacher and the new principal who was appointed the year before.

The Parent/The Home

Anna talks to her parents “sometimes” about her schoolwork. “I tell my mum and dad, like schoolwork,” she says, “sometimes I need help with my math, something like that.” Anna feels “pretty good” about talking to her parents and talks to them quite comfortably “because my mum and dad know what I am going through this year and also next year.”

Anna explains that her parents help her “basically with my math. Most of my trouble is with my math.” She asks for help in math and adds that “sometimes if it is a really hard question in reading and I really can’t understand I go and see my mum.” About help she says: “I would say I work better with my parents than I do with the teacher. I think my mum and dad help me learn more at home than my teacher at school.” She notes, however, that she sometimes stays away from school “in the morning when I have homework to do that I didn’t get done the night before.”

SUMMARY OF TRIAD PROFILES

The partnership practices of Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko are characterized by strong and consistent efforts to reach out to and include parents—at home, and at school if possible. These teachers expect that parents will help and ask them to do so in a variety of ways. Their efforts to reach parents and students at home are wide and all-encompassing: individually, in small groups, and the class as a whole through home reading programs, home learning projects, reading comprehension programs, proofreading and evaluation of work, study and practice. These teachers seek assistance in the classroom, but do not focus narrowly or only on this avenue of participation. They recognize the vital contribution of parents, especially at home, and welcome and invite them in, not only through personal interaction at school, but also through instruction at home with their child. Parents are seen as allies and not adversaries.

These two teachers are aware that parents are busy and work, and that they may sometimes have difficulty helping their children, but they assume that parents want to help and are doing so, and communicate with them as fully, frequently and in as varied a manner as possible, in order to inform them about their child’s progress and provide information that will help them to help their child. For these teachers communication with parents is vital to collaborative instructional partnerships between parents and

teachers. The student planner is particularly important in this regard as it acts as a two-way communication device between parents and teachers, and involves and benefits students at the same time.

The classrooms of Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko are not only centres of academic learning characterized by the three R's—"reading, writing, and arithmetic"—but also by the two R's: respect and responsibility. Both Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko have implemented in their classrooms what might be described as "responsibility programs." They assume that all students can do their work and will do so, with help if needed. Students are given opportunities to develop responsibility, and are guided through this process. They are invited to become members of a collaborative classroom in which they are responsible for their roles as students. Opportunities for student participation include open discussion and negotiation with the teachers, choosing what they will study, managing their own time, and teaching as well as being taught. These classrooms are characterized by an emphasis on respect: teacher for students, students for teacher and students for one another. Both Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko speak of openness and caring in their relationships with students. This means talking and listening to students, and acknowledging their efforts and strengths in the classroom. They try to be positive role models for students, and see themselves as stewards who are sensitive to student needs and rights, and guide students rather than direct them.

The efforts of Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko with respect to both parents and students are clear to these individuals. Mrs. Boden and Mrs. Irving, like most parents, are keen to help and support their children, and have welcomed and responded to the teachers' initiatives for support and participation. In both cases these parents were given information by the teacher about what to do and how to help at home, and did so. They were especially impressed by the use of student planners, both to help their children manage their school lives and become more responsible, and to facilitate bi-directional communication between parent and teacher. Both Mrs. Irving and Mrs. Boden felt welcomed and encouraged, rather than constrained. They felt free to act as advocates and to contact their child's teacher, and did so. These parents recognize the importance of their roles as helpers and advocates, as do most parents, but importantly, they were invited and felt free and unafraid to act in that capacity.

The efforts of Mrs. Kosko and Mrs. Munke to create collaborative classrooms between teacher and students, and between parents and teacher, are also clear to students. Both Alison and Tyler responded positively to the use of the student planner, in helping them to become more organized and to be responsible for their own work. Both of these

students comment on the fairness of their teachers, on their sensitivity to the individual needs of students, and on the fact that they listen to and help students. They also speak of the teachers' efforts to create inclusive, collaborative classrooms, in which students' voices are sought and welcomed—through class meetings and discussions, for example, and three-way conferences—and, importantly, acted upon.

Where the triadic relationships between Mrs. Munke and Mrs. Kosko and the respective parent/student dyads reported here stand out as examples of collaboration, those of Ms. Fraser and Miss Halstrom with their parent/student dyads are remarkable in their lack of collaboration. There is little conviction demonstrated by these teachers about the importance of participation by students and parents. The voices of parents and students are unsolicited and their efforts to reach out to the teacher are blocked. Real teacher effort at building strong, collaborative relationships with students and parents is not apparent.

Ms. Fraser is negative about parents (seeing them as distrustful of her) and their involvement with students. She believes that parents don't help, that they are not concerned about their children's school responsibilities and that they do not respond to her initiatives. She provides little information about her initiatives, however, and makes no mention of how she informs parents, what she expects them to do and how she follows up. She speaks of the difficulty of establishing a reading program at school, but the idea to do this at home does not occur to her, as it does to Mrs. Kosko.

Ms. Fraser is no more positive about students than she is about parents. She does not believe that students can be responsible and does not speak of a program or any activities which might help to develop this in the classroom. In addition, she believes that students lack respect for teachers.

While Miss Halstrom seems to have higher hopes and expresses a greater positivity about collaboration than Ms. Fraser, these hopes do not seem to come to fruition in the classroom. She does not seem to demonstrate, in practice, any greater conviction than Ms. Fraser. She believes that because most parents work during the day, schools must devise different ways of involving parents. She has, however, no suggestions. Her invitations to parents are passive rather than active. She comments that she involves parents through the student planners (and other classroom practices, about which she is not specific), but that she wants to do so more. She refers to cooperative work in the classroom and opportunities for students to choose activities in various units in class, but there is no sense of a comprehensive and ongoing effort with regard to student participation. Miss

Halstrom has vague wishes and hopes for the future. About these future plans nothing is concrete, and, of the present, little corroborating evidence of positive practice exists.

Neither Mrs. Goode nor Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten feel welcome in the classroom or that they have acted in partnership with the teacher. Neither have felt invited to parent/teacher meetings, or that they were issued a general, welcoming invitation of any kind. The involvement practices and strategies to which Miss Halstrom and Ms. Fraser refer are either not apparent to Mrs. Goode and her daughter, and Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten and their daughter, or have had little impact on them. Both parents refer to the work they do and assistance they try to provide to their children at home, but no mention is made by either of them about information from the teacher about how they might help their children at home. Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten feel that little information has been forthcoming about activities in the classroom or their daughter's progress (or difficulties). Mrs. Goode believes that Miss Halstrom has not made any effort to communicate with her beyond the written report cards. On the occasions that Mrs. Goode has called the teacher she has felt rebuffed and that Miss Halstrom has been unresponsive and uncommunicative. Interestingly, both sets of parents refer to difficulties that their daughters have had in mathematics, the lack of information provided to them about these problems, and the lack of assistance, or encouragement, provided by the teacher to them and to their daughters in class. The Van Nettens have tried to make suggestions to the teacher, but feel that she has not been interested in listening. For the same reason Mrs. Goode ended the year neither trying to communicate nor to make suggestions. These parents feel excluded from the classroom, and, while they work with their children at home, have been neutralized as advocates at the classroom level.

Both Mrs. Goode and Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten refer to the negative experiences and discomfort of their daughters in class, and the demoralizing effects of being in classrooms in which they receive neither respect nor sufficient assistance. Both sets of parents speak of daughters who normally like school and are happy there, but who have been unhappy and far less positive about school this year, and sometimes have not even wanted to go.

Neither Anna nor Lisa are voluble in their comments about their teachers. Lisa mentions none of the efforts which Ms. Fraser details about her efforts to reach out to parents, and Anna makes no mention of any efforts made by Miss Halstrom in this regard. Lisa's assessment about her teacher's relationship with students and attitude towards them is summed up in her comment that Ms. Fraser yells, which Anna also reports of Miss Halstrom. Neither student speaks of effort on the part of their teacher to

reach out to, communicate with, or work closely and personally with students in class. They do refer, however, to the help provided to them by their parents. They—and their parents—make no comment that is suggestive of a feeling of connection to the classroom or of collaboration with the teacher.

PART D: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

ANALYSIS ONE

For the first quantitative analysis, a hypothesis was developed based on the themes and categories resulting from analysis of the qualitative data. This hypothesis concerns the roles of both parent and teacher with regard to student commitment to school and learning and was formulated as follows: There is greater commitment to schooling among students when students (a) perceive their teachers to be collaborating with them, (b) perceive communication between school and home to be taking place, and (c) perceive there to be communication in the home about school; and (d) also when parents perceive the teacher to be concerned about parent involvement. The analysis here is intended as a test of the extent to which the quantitative data confirm (or disconfirm) the qualitative findings. A multiple regression was conducted using Student Scale H (Student Perception of School Climate) as the dependent variable, and using Student Scales A (Communication with Parents), C (Student Perception of School/Home Communication), and E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration), and Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) as independent variables. The final scale, as indicated above, is from the parent data set. All scales, scale items, and Cronbach Alpha reliabilities are found in Appendix C.

Scale H, which is entitled "Student Perception of School Climate" is, at the same time, a measure of student commitment to schooling and is employed as such here. Sample items from Scale H (see Appendix C for a full listing) include the following: "Everyone in this school, including teachers, is involved in learning;" "If I had a choice, I would choose to go to this school;" "This school is a better place for students than others I know about;" "I feel proud of my school," and; "I feel safe in this school." As these items suggest, Scale H reflects student commitment to schooling as much as it does student assessment of school climate. In addition, previous analyses have shown that student ratings of the school (Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1993) and students' assessment of school climate (Coleman, Collinge & Tabin, 1995) are shaped, in large part, by attitudes which are derived from the home. Scale A, student perception of parental communication with students about school-related issues, is particularly important in this regard. Since Scale H is predicted by home factors, that is, it is fundamentally about parent/student communication (Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1993;

Coleman, Collinge & Tabin, 1995) it is not uniquely or really about the school insofar as the home prepares the student to be ready for and receptive to schooling.

The multiple regression was conducted using both Time 4 and Time 8 data together. "Time 8" was added as a variable in order to determine whether "Time" (the year or data collection group to which the student belonged) was important. Because Student Scale H was constructed after the first year of the Co-Production of Learning Project and is not available for Time 2 data, this multiple regression analysis was conducted on only Time 4 and Time 8 data and includes two hundred and fifty-nine cases.

The final multiple regression results are shown below in Table 12 (additional graphic data from this analysis—Table G1 and Figures G1 through G3—are attached in Appendix G). Although there may be co-linearity, regression has selected the most important variables; the best predictors are left and the others are ignored (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 606). Scale 5, from the parent data, was not significant and was removed during the first step; the Time 8 variable was also not significant and was removed in the second step. The model of three variables is significant overall as indicated by the significant F value of .0000. Each of Student Scales E, A, and C remained in the equation and were all significant at p values (Sig T) of < .0005, .0008 and .0003 respectively. The three independent variables explain a significant proportion of the variance which means that for the group of Time 4 and Time 8 students combined, communication with parents, student perception of school/home communication and student perception of student/teacher collaboration are all related to, or contribute to, student commitment. The hypothesis stated above, based on findings from the qualitative data, is supported by the multiple regression, with the exception of the link to Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement (Scale 5, parent opinion). Students who communicate with their parents at home, who perceive there to be communication between school and home, and who also feel that the teacher is collaborating with them are more committed to school. That Scale 5 is not significant is not surprising. What is important for students is the extent to which teachers actually involve them, and not their parents' perception of the teacher's concern for parental involvement. Further, as the qualitative data have shown, students are not aware of teacher/parent discussion and hence may well not reflect in their attitudes parent opinion on teacher availability. Scale 5, as noted earlier, taps the parent data set. Within that set, other analyses (e.g., Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1993) have shown it to be a strong predictor of parent assessment of school climate. But this analysis also has shown that the parent and student sets are indeed separate, that the domains of parent and student attitude and opinions are not connected. This reflects the

work of Epstein (1985a), for example, who found that parents judged teachers by quite distinctive criteria, not like those of others.

Table 12: Multiple Regression

Equation Number 1			
Dependent Variable..SCL.H		Percep. of School Climate	
Multiple R	.64117		
R Square	.41110	R Square Change	-.00162
Adjusted R Square	.40418	F Change	.70112
Standard Error	.57197	Signif F Change	.4032

Analysis of Variance			
	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>
Regression	3	58.23708	19.41236
Residual	255	83.42338	.32715
F = 59.33770		Signif F = .0000	

Variables in the Equation					
<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Sig T</u>
SCL.E	.438887	.069942	.388164	6.275	.0000
SCL.A	.237770	.070171	.179122	3.388	.0008
SCL.C	.191086	.052712	.217528	3.625	.0003
(Constant)	.400877	.143255	2.798	.0055	

Variables not in the Equation					
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Beta In</u>	<u>Partial</u>	<u>Min Toler</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Sig T</u>
SCL.5	-.019220	-.023429	.592355	-.374	.7091
TIME8	.042215	.052466	.587028	.837	.4032

Dependent Variable: SCL H Percep. of School Climate

ResidualsStatistics:

	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>StdDev</u>	<u>N</u>
*PRED	1.3323	3.8541	2.2124	.4751	259
*RESID	-1.3454	1.4143	.0000	.5686	259
*ZPRED	-1.8523	3.4556	.0000	1.0000	259
*ZRESID	-2.3523	2.4726	.0000	.9942	259

Total Cases = 285

Durbin-Watson Test = 1.53327

ANALYSIS TWO

For the second analysis, parent and student qualitative data were used to sort classrooms along a satisfaction continuum, ranging from high to moderate to low parent/student satisfaction with teacher. Both code counts (a measure of the ratio of positive to negative codes) and a general assessment of the content of the interview data itself were used to identify either high, moderate or low satisfaction levels within triads, and then summed

for classrooms. This sorting represents an assessment of the extent to which the parents and students in each classroom are satisfied or dissatisfied with the work of that teacher. Teachers nearer the top of the continuum would be those with whom parents and students are most satisfied. They demonstrate to the greatest extent the qualities outlined by both parents and students that contribute to the development of satisfactory relationships between student, teacher and parent(s). Those at or near the bottom would be teachers with whom parents and students are least satisfied, according to the criteria specified in Parts A and B of Chapter Four. Those classrooms identified as being either clearly high or clearly low were then selected and grouped (one “high” group and one “low” group) for further analysis using the quantitative data. The point of this analysis was to ascertain whether the “satisfaction” distinction between teachers, as determined by the parent and student qualitative data, upheld in the combined Time 4 and Time 8 quantitative data sets for these teachers. Once again, the intent of this analysis was to confirm (or not) the qualitative work.

As far as satisfaction with teachers is concerned, there is variance across classrooms. Some student/parent dyads are more satisfied with their teachers than others student/parent dyads in other classrooms. There is also, in a very few cases, within-triad variance. That is, one of the parent/student set may feel more satisfied than the other. Generally, however, the data here suggest that parents and students tend to be both satisfied or both dissatisfied with the work of a particular teacher. Teachers who develop effective, collaborative relationships with one party (students in class, for example) also seem to reach out better to and develop more effective and collaborative relationships with the other party (parents). Occasionally, there are also classrooms where one student/parent dyad is satisfied with the teacher, and another is not. This phenomenon—of variance between triads within classrooms—and the fact that only a few dyads per classroom were interviewed makes assessing parent/student satisfaction with teacher beyond the individual level particularly difficult. In drawing on the entire (larger) quantitative set this analysis addresses parent/student perception of satisfaction with teachers more broadly, rather than just within single classrooms.

The first analyses planned and conducted here include a logistic regression and a MANOVA. The teachers who were identified as “high” for these analyses are the following:

Time 4

- Teacher 21100 (Mr. Sutcliffe)
- Teacher 31100 (Ms. Draper)

- Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin)

Time 8

- Teacher 22100 (Ms. O’Hearn)
- Teacher 24100 (Mr. Griffin)
- Teacher 51100 (Mrs. Kosko)
- Teacher 62100 (Madame Tremblay)
- Teacher 73100 (Mrs. Munke)

The teachers who were identified as “low” include:

Time 4

- Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom)
- Teacher 32100 (Mr. Pulaski)
- Teacher 28100 (Ms. Thompson)

Time 8

- Teacher 25100 (Miss Halstrom)
- Teacher 54100 (Ms. Lurie)
- Teacher 77100 (Mrs. Brewer)

Although Teacher 75100 (Ms. Fraser) was clearly identified as a “low” teacher none of the parents and students who consented to participate in the first round of data collection at the beginning of the school year did so at the end of the school year. Thus, unfortunately, no year-end quantitative data are available for this teacher.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

The final result of the logistic regression, an analysis which included 110 observations is shown below in Table 13 on page 257 (see also Figure G4 in Appendix G). Logistic regression is similar to a multiple regression except that the outcomes are in one of two categories, in this case that of “high” or “low” teachers. Student Scale H (student commitment to schooling), Student Scale E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration), and Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) were originally entered as variables in the logistic regression. Here again, “Time 8” was also entered as a variable in order to determine whether or not “Time”—the year or data collection set to which the students belonged—mattered. Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) was dropped first and then “Time 8.” Neither of these were significant. Scale H (student commitment to schooling) was dropped next, leaving only Scale E (Student Perception of

Student/Teacher Collaboration), the sole scale which is meaningful and contributes to the model.

The first row of the classification table (Table 13, p. 257) shows the numbers of students who were observed to be low, that is, students who belong to the “low” classrooms, those in which satisfaction with the teachers was lowest as determined by analysis of the qualitative data. The second row of the classification table shows the number of students who were observed to be high, that is, students who belong to the “high” classrooms, those in which satisfaction with the teacher was highest as determined by analysis of the qualitative data. The columns of the table show the prediction of group memberships, that is the number of students predicted by the logistic regression equation to actually be in the high or low groups. The percentages to the right of the table indicate the percent correct. The observation of “high” students based on the qualitative data is supported by the quantitative data for 94.20% of that group. Sixty-five of the students who were observed to be high were predicted to be high by the logistic regression equation. Only four students who were observed to be high students were predicted to be low. The percent correct for the observed low is much smaller. Here the observation of low students based on the qualitative data is supported by the quantitative data for only 34.15% of that group. That is, fourteen of the students observed (through qualitative data) to be in low classrooms were predicted to be in “low” classrooms. Of most interest is the fact that based on the quantitative data twenty-seven students (2/3 of the observed low group) actually appear to belong to the high group, that is, students of “high” teachers, those with whom students and parents are more satisfied. This result does not mean that the classification of the teachers (using all of the teacher and parent qualitative data available) is necessarily incorrect, but that these students could be described as those who will be high or “good teacher” students even if they are actually in low or “bad teacher” classrooms. One might also conceive of this as teacher influence (or, rather, lack thereof), that a large percentage of students will think and act independently regardless of the teacher. From this perspective, two-thirds of the observed low students are not influenced by the teacher and one-third are so influenced. Two other points are also important here. First, grouping students by classroom is somewhat confusing because student reactions to teachers in the same classroom vary a great deal. And, student opinion may be even more diverse in the “low” classrooms. Second, student attitudes are strongly influenced by the home. Some students—including some of those in “low” classrooms—are well-prepared to be positive about schooling while others are not.

Table 13: Logistic Regression

Logistic Regression. Time 4 & 8.
 Classification Table for TLEVEL

		PREDICTED		Percent Correct	
		Low	High		
		L	H		
Observed	Low	L	14	27	34.15%
	High	H	4	65	94.20%
Overall				71.82%	

Variables in the Equation							
Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.T	R	Exp(B)
SCL.E	-1.0977	.3332	10.8534	1	.0010	-.2469	.3336
Constant	2.9208	.7607	14.7429	1	.0001		

Variables not in the Equation				
Residual Chi Square .893 with 3 df Sig = .8271				
Variable	Score	df	Sig	R
SCL.H	.5133	1	.4737	.0000
SCL.S	.0217	1	.8828	.0000
TIME8(1)	.4916	1	.4832	.0000

MANOVA

The second procedure conducted here was a MANOVA in order to confirm the findings of the logistic regression. In this analysis, which includes 110 observations, Teacher Level (T LEVEL) is the independent variable. There are two groups: high and low. The three dependent variables include Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement), Student Scale E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration), and Student Scale H (student commitment to schooling), the three main variables from the logistic regression. The problem to be determined is whether scale scores come from one population or two. This could also be phrased as a question: Will the three dependent variables tell the difference between teacher level?

The findings of the MANOVA (Table G2 in Appendix G) confirm the logistic regression analysis. The Wilks' Lambda "probability greater than F" of 0.0030 (in bold in Table G2) indicates that at least one variable is significant. The p values for the individual dependent variables indicate which scales are significant.

Before examining the MANOVA results further, however, it is necessary to make Bonferroni adjustments to these individual p values. Since three separate tests were done in the MANOVA (a MANOVA compares to running three separate ANOVAS)

Bonferroni adjustments are needed to correct for multiple comparisons. The p values are adjusted by multiplying them by 3 (the number of tests done). Thus, the p value for Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) becomes 0.3966 (from 0.1322), the p value for Student Scale E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration) changes to 0.0006 (from 0.0002), and the p value for Student Scale H (student commitment to schooling) adjusts to 0.1488 (from 0.0496). Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) and Student Scale H (student commitment to schooling) are not significant. This means that there is no difference between teacher levels among parent groups for Scale 5, and no difference between teacher levels among student groups for Scale H. That is, parent responses on Scale 5 for the two different teachers groups are not different and student responses on Scale H for the two different teacher groups are not different. Parent reactions to teachers, like those of students to teachers, are also very individualized.

Student Scale E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration), by contrast, is highly significant. That is, there is strong evidence that students in each of the two teacher level groups answer Scale E questions (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration) differently. Between the two teacher groups there is difference in student perception for student/teacher collaboration.

AD HOC MANOVA

Because of the low percent correct for observed low students a secondary ad hoc hypothesis was formulated which is as follows: For students in the classrooms of “low” teachers, that is, those for whom student and parent satisfaction is low, lack of home preparation is critical. Controlling for the Scale A variable (Communication with Parents) to explore the issue of the 34.20 percent correct rate for low students was therefore deemed to be worth investigating. Controlling for Scale A means that one assumes no differences between families; communication at home about school is equalized. Since correlation matrices showed the scales here to be correlated (the variables are not independent) the possibility of another logistic regression was rejected as logistic regression assumes independence of variables, and, in addition, there is no way of controlling for variables in this procedure. To test the above hypothesis a second MANOVA, controlling for Scale A, was then proposed and selected as the appropriate and reasonable procedure since it does not assume the independence of variables, but accounts and adjusts for correlation between them. As in the first MANOVA, Teacher Level is the independent variable, and Student Scales E (Student Perception of

Student/Teacher Collaboration) and H (student commitment to schooling), and Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) are the dependent variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table G3 in Appendix G.

Here again the Wilks' Lambda "probability greater than F" of 0.0030 (in bold in Table G3) means that at least one variable is significant. Examination of the p values for the individual dependent variables is required. Before looking at the individual p values, however, Bonferroni's adjustment is once more necessary. With multiplication by three (for the number of tests) the p value of Parent Scale 5 (Parent Perception of Teacher Concern for Parent Involvement) becomes 0.1731 (from 0.0577); the p value of Student Scale E (Student Perception of Student/Teacher Collaboration) changes to 0.0003 (from 0.0001); and the p value of Student Scale H (student commitment to schooling) adjusts to 0.0009 (from 0.0003). Parent Scale 5 is not significant. This means that parents from the two different groups (high/low) do not respond any differently to the items of Scale 5, even controlling for Scale A. Student Scale E is significant. Here the two components of the model, T Level and controlling for Scale A, are important. As far as Teacher Level is concerned, the two groups of students (high/low) say different things about student/teacher collaboration in their classrooms. And at the same time, the significance of the analysis—while controlling for Scale A—suggests that communication in the home matters. Although the test does not show how these are related, and does not indicate causality, it does demonstrate that both communication in the home and Teacher Level are important in how students respond to the items of Scale E—their perception of student/teacher collaboration. In addition, the significance of Student Scale H has increased. As in the results for Student Scale E, both components of the model—Teacher Level and controlling for Scale A—are important for Student Scale H. The two groups of students (high/low) say different things. Their perception of School Climate differs (their commitment to schooling) and, at the same time, communication in the home matters. Both communication in the home and Teacher Level are important in how students respond to the items of Scale H—their perception of school climate.

Because this final MANOVA represents an ad hoc and exploratory level of investigation (no hypotheses had been advanced before the original analyses) based on the findings from the initial logistic regression and the first MANOVA, findings from this analysis need to be verified. The findings here also suggest other areas for further exploration. For example, the question of the disparate findings between high and low groups of students in the logistic regression suggests a variety of questions. Why, for example, do the Scale E answers of so many of the students predicted to be low resemble

those of students predicted to be in “high” classrooms? While communication in the home seems to play a part, what else may affect these students? Are they particularly resilient over time, do they feel more efficacious, or do recent experiences in the classrooms of “high” teachers carry over into a subsequent year in the classroom of a “low” teacher? Does the extent to which parental assistance is provided in the home affect these students’ perceptions of student/teacher collaboration in the classroom? These questions merit future exploration.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief review of the findings followed by three separate sections which provide commentary on student/teacher, parent/teacher, and student/parent relationships. These are identified by the “locale” for the interaction: At School, Between Home and School, and At Home. The next two sections address the issues of teacher change and teacher development. Then, methodological issues are reconsidered and areas for further research are explored. Following this, the topic of home/school partnerships is addressed within the context of school improvement and school restructuring. Finally, the chapter ends with summarizing commentary and a return to the beginning, with final and current reflections on my experience of home-school partnership as parent, teacher, and researcher.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As outlined in Chapter One, this study attempts to understand: (a) the expectations of parents, students and teacher for self and others with respect to partnership based on instructional concerns, and (b) whether and how these expectations are met within the web of instructional relationships among the three parties.

As far as the former are concerned, teachers expect communication and ease of communication between parents and teachers to be mutual, and that parents will provide academic support to them by helping children at home. They also expect professional respect from parents for their roles as teachers. Respect is also a key expectation teachers hold of students, in addition to the completion of schoolwork. There is little sense among teachers of the interaction of parents and students in the home.

Students, for their part, expect a challenging academic environment, but also help and support from the teacher in order to meet those challenges. They also prefer quiet, controlled classrooms in which they can work. Students have no expectations of the teacher with respect to their homes, and little in the way of predetermined expectations of their parents with respect to their teachers. There is little sense among students of an

instructional relationship between parents and teachers. Students do expect to seek help from both parents and teachers, however, in order to learn and to complete their classroom work.

Parents expect that they will have a role to play with regard to instructional concerns. They expect to seek information from the classroom, and are prepared to defend their child's interests and act as an advocate if necessary. At home they expect to obtain information from their children, and to help and encourage them with schoolwork. Parents hope that teachers will demonstrate respect and care in the classroom, and create a supportive environment, providing help and explanation to students. Parents also look to teachers to communicate openly and extensively with them about their children, to respect parent knowledge about their children, and to be willing to involve them and be proactive about doing so. Parents expect that their children will attend to schoolwork and seek assistance from themselves and teachers if needed.

As far as outcomes are concerned—whether and how expectations are met—findings vary. As the findings in Part B of Chapter Four indicate, in some triads and in some relationships expectations, or at least some of them, are met and in others they are not. Among parents and students there is clear agreement about parent/student interaction in the home. Both parents and students report on help (that students ask for it, and that parents provide it) and conversation about school taking place on a daily or regular basis. These are generally pleasurable encounters, but there are sometimes difficulties, which the work of teachers can help to alleviate. Among teachers, on the other hand, there is doubt about whether parents can and do help. They focus on barriers, and do not perceive the extent to which helping and academic talk occur in the home.

As for teachers and students, some teachers believe that all students are or can be responsible. These teachers implement activities in their classrooms and give students choice and voice in order to facilitate the continued development of responsibility. Other teachers are much less positive about student ability to take responsibility for work and to act independently, and most believe that students do not respect them enough. Students report on some classrooms which are quiet and conducive to learning, but many maintain that this kind of classroom is not the norm in their experience. Students appreciate lively and engaging curriculum, but do not always find this. They also appreciate the opportunity to choose how and what they will learn, and to have a voice in the classroom; while some find this others do not. Students rarely approach their teachers with suggestions about curriculum or classroom affairs and report little individual interaction with teachers. They look to teachers to explain well and help them learn, and especially

appreciate those classrooms in which help from all—peers and teacher—is facilitated. Unfortunately, help is a feature of some classrooms more than others. To parents, evidence of teacher support and encouragement in classrooms is rare. Some teachers, those valued by parents, acknowledge and value all students individually and meet the needs of all students; others do not. There is little sense among parents of choice in classrooms, of the inclusion of students in collaborative ways.

As far as parent and teacher interaction is concerned, parents are often around classrooms, but not usually in them. Although some teachers are more welcoming than others, parents don't often perceive a clear invitation on the part of teachers, and feel the classroom to be closed. Parents believe that they do not receive enough and honest enough communication from teachers about their children's learning. They appreciate practices which facilitate communication between home and school, and at the same time provide information about student learning and classroom activity. All parents are prepared to approach the school on their child's behalf, and when parents do so these encounters, even when they originate from conflict or disagreement, are often fruitful. Teachers, for their part, perceive a lack of parental response to their invitations to come to the school and classroom, and believe that parents could do more at the school and at home with students. Attempts made to involve parents, to communicate and collaborate with them, vary a great deal between classrooms. Some teachers make efforts to build instructional relationships with all parents, and others do not. Student comment about the relationship between parents and teachers is minimal. They do report on teachers and parents meeting occasionally, and on telephone calls home to some parents. Students are impressed by the use of a student planner (when this occurs) as a tool for responsibility for themselves, and as a communicative tool between their teacher and their parents.

When the expectations of parents, students, and teachers are met as fully as possible triad relationships such as those described in the first two profiles—the exemplars of practice—are seen. When expectations are not met at all, or minimally, triad relationships such as those described in the third and fourth profiles—exemplars of malpractice—are evident. In exemplars of practice teachers create centres of academic learning for students in which respect and responsibility are features. In these classrooms students are presumed to be able to act independently, but not yet as adults, and are provided with help and assistance in order to develop even further. They are invited to become part of an inclusive, collaborative classroom effort, which considers and takes into account the opinions and preferences of all. Respect for individuals and relationships is key. Teachers listen to students, and demonstrate openness and caring, and are sensitive to student

needs. These teachers, at the same time, make strong and consistent efforts to reach out to parents whom they also consider to be partners in practice. They expect that parents will help and ask them to do so instructionally, realizing that most parents can do this most often and most effectively in the home. These teachers communicate as fully and comprehensively to parents as possible (about their children's progress, and about how to help) and use a variety of strategies in order to do so. Parents, for their part, feel welcomed, and respond to the teachers' initiatives for support and participation. They help their children at home, consider themselves able to do so, and feel assisted by the teacher. They feel free to act as advocates for their children, and to communicate to the teacher about their concerns or their child's concerns. Students also perceive their teachers' efforts to create inclusive and collaborative classrooms which are calm and industrious centres of learning, but welcoming, supportive and respectful at the same time.

In exemplars of malpractice, there is little conviction demonstrated by teachers of the importance of participation by students and parents. The voices of these individuals are not solicited by the teacher. These teachers do not make efforts to reach out to parents, to collaborate with them, or to seek their opinion and assistance regarding their children. They are typically not positive about either students or parents and often feel that parents do not or are choosing not to help and that they do not respond to teacher initiatives. They either do not implement collaborative practices or recount only failed attempts, blaming parents and students for their lack of success. Parents in these triads do not feel welcome or invited in. They often feel excluded from the classroom, sometimes purposefully and deliberately, and that teachers are not interested in listening to them. These parents refer to work that they do with their children, and assistance they provide, but do not mention receipt of information from the teacher about how they might help or better help. They perceive little information to be forthcoming from the teacher about their children's progress. At the same time, they often make few attempts to communicate with the teacher, or make known their point of view, having felt rebuffed or rejected by the teacher. Students in these triads are typically negative about teachers, often capturing this in comment about the teacher yelling. They speak neither of teacher efforts to reach out to or to work closely with them, nor of teacher efforts to use practices to bring students, teacher and parents closer together. They mention help provided by their parents—instructional activity which takes place without connection to the classroom.

Although the data presented in Part B of Chapter Four were originally referred to as "satisfaction" or "outcome" levels, these terms become, in the final analysis, somewhat

misleading. That expectations are not always met is clear, and to know that in some triads there is more satisfaction with respect to instructional partnerships than in others, or satisfaction about some things and not others, is important, as is the fact that distinctions, as far as the role of teachers is concerned, are apparent to parents and students as a whole. What is most important, ultimately, however, is the nature of the interaction or the dynamics of satisfaction or dissatisfaction within relationships between parents, student and teachers—the “how” and “how not” rather than the “whether.” Knowledge about the characteristics of relationships in which parents, students, and teachers are more satisfied, and those in which they are less satisfied, is critical to practice because only with this kind of knowledge can we learn how to sustain and to develop better (and more collaborative) instructional relationships between parents, students and teachers. That there is dissatisfaction in parent/student/teacher relationships is cause for concern, however minimal the dissatisfaction. That there is satisfaction suggests that there is hope and cause for optimism, that collaboration and greater collaboration between students, teachers and parents is possible.

Comments within this chapter are generally situated within the context outlined above, that of the challenge of sustaining and developing better (and more collaborative) instructional relationships between parents, students, and teachers. In effect, this forms a third research question which arose organically during the study: (c) “How can triad relationships be improved?”—the final question to be asked.

PART I: AT SCHOOL

BUILDING STRONG PERSONAL/PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Relationships between students and teacher can be envisioned as two intertwined branches representing the personal and the pedagogical. Students speak of the satisfaction they feel when teachers are interested in students personally and respect them as individuals, when teachers share detail about their personal lives and interests, and when teachers are humorous in class. Parents, too, are concerned about teacher recognition and valuing of students as individuals, teacher listening to and talking with students, and teacher support and encouragement of students. These are aspects of personal relationship between students and teachers. Pedagogical relationship is exemplified in student data on teacher fairness, teacher attention to the learning needs of individual students, teacher efforts to present interesting and stimulating curricular activities to students in class, and teacher support for student learning and effort. Parents are also concerned about pedagogical issues, such as challenge for students, and the provision of explanation and help.

Insofar as students and teachers interact in the classroom and that learning forms the basis of the relationship, both the personal and what might be seen as the strictly pedagogical aspects of relationship are ultimately both pedagogical. For students and parents the personal is a part of the pedagogical; the pedagogical is or should also be personal. Concern for both personal and pedagogical aspects are reflected in parent data; also, teacher concern for student respect marks a focus on relationship.

POWER

It is clear that students do not see themselves as having a powerful, proactive, assertive role at school with respect to teachers and, in fact, students usually have very little power, or none, in classroom relationships with teachers. They have definite preferences about the classroom, but rarely present these suggestions to teachers. Teachers have power to do, to give, to bestow. Students are not expected to be proactive and assertive in helping to determine the nature and direction of the classroom. Interestingly, the comments from many teachers about the need for respect from students might be said to reflect a concern (and preference) among them for traditional relations of power and control.

For Fine (1993) and Sarason (1995) parent involvement and the political (as power and control) are intertwined. Fine (1993) suggests that parent involvement projects are meaningless unless “the dynamics of power are addressed.” (p. 707). “The classroom,” she states, “and the school and school system generally, are not comprehensible unless you flush out the power relationships that inform and control the behavior of everyone in these settings. Ignore those relationships, leave unexamined their rationale, and the existing ‘system’ will defeat efforts at reform” (p. 706).

That power is an issue between parents and teachers is clear. Power is also an issue between students and teachers, and where collaborative relationships are concerned, it is a crucial issue. A classroom cannot be collaborative between teachers and students where teachers do not share some power with students. For Nieto (1994), encouraging collaborative relations of power between students and teachers is as simple as listening to students, a concern voiced clearly by students here. “Educators,” she claims, “can benefit from hearing students’ critical perspectives, which might cause them to modify how they approach curriculum, pedagogy, and other school practices” (pp. 397-398). She adds that if we believe that schools must provide an equal and quality education for all then students must be involved in the dialogue about how to do that.

The issue of student participation is often referred to within the context of reform efforts and change in schools. Corbett and Wilson (1995), for example, speak of the importance of “reforming with rather than for students in terms of both reform efforts and research on them” (p. 14). They and others (Fullan, 1991; Brown, 1994) maintain that although students are often expected to act in different ways in classrooms as a result of reform efforts, they are rarely involved in discussing the change process in schools or the redefinition of their roles. Ignoring the role of students in change efforts, maintain Corbett and Wilson (1995), is “merely a mirror of students’ everyday life in schools” (p. 14). “Adults,” they say, “dictate to students the conditions of their participation. The natural fallout of this hegemonic relationship is a silencing of students’ thoughts, opinions, and actions in those activities that adults deem important” (p. 15). According to Fullan (1991), participation by students is not “students running the school,” but simply listening to students as if their opinion mattered (p. 170). Although Corbett and Wilson, and Fullan, speak of the participation of students in reform efforts, this participation is equally important in the classroom on an ongoing basis.

VOICE AND CHOICE

As Nieto suggests above, listening to students is not simply a question of inviting their input, and then not acting on it. Listening to students means acting on suggestions, and incorporating their input into classroom pedagogy and practices. Teachers here who use class meetings give students a chance to voice their concerns and express their interests and needs. Teachers like Teacher 23100, who acted on student concern by changing his approach to selecting students for help (from asking only boys to asking both boys and girls), respond to student ideas. In holding class meetings with students, and in responding to, or asking for, student suggestions about procedures and curriculum in the classroom teachers demonstrate collaborative relations of power with students. They seek student input and student response to classroom issues and affairs and invite students to participate with them.

Corbett and Wilson (1995) speak of a “collaborative image” of the relationship between adults and students during reform. This, they say, “entails the creation of reciprocal relationships wherein all parties (including students) have contributions to make to each other and all have needs that others can meet. The hallmarks of such relationship are equality, fairness, and an ‘other’ orientation, which allow for mutual construction of meaning and maximizing the best interests of all (Noddings, 1992)” (Corbett & Wilson, p. 15). The idea of reciprocal relationships applies equally to the participation of students in the classroom with the teacher.

For students here, gaining voice is important, but being given choice is also important, an aspect—perhaps the first step—of power sharing in the classroom. In classrooms in which collaborative relationships exist students are given both voice and choice, which is also voice of a kind. As far as choice is concerned, they may be given the opportunity to respond to (a limited range of) opportunities given to them by teachers or they may be given more open choice, that is, being freed to set direction for their own learning. Among the teachers here, the former is more common than the latter.

Giving students choice and voice in the classroom might be termed a “pedagogy of empowerment.” To empower students is not to deny the fact that unequal relations of power exist or to suggest that these can or need to be eliminated altogether. However, teachers can make efforts to share power with students, to allow for mutual construction of meaning, as Corbett and Wilson (1995) suggest. Cochran and Dean (1991) define parent empowerment as “an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to

and control over those resources” (pp. 266-267). This definition can also be applied to students and teachers in the local community of the classroom. Inequality between teachers and students exists, but greater access to and control over resources can be given to students. Team Teachers 51100 and 56100 who are profiled in Part C of Chapter Four clearly have a sense of a pedagogy of empowerment.

Sharing power does not mean that students are the only ones who gain, and that ultimately teachers lose. Nieto (1994) contends that “by encouraging collaborative relations of power, schools and teachers can begin to recognize other sources of legitimate knowledge that have been overlooked, negated, or minimized because they are not part of the dominant discourse in schools” (p. 395). As students here have clearly shown, they do have legitimate knowledge which is not often sought by teachers. Perhaps teachers do not seek out this knowledge because they feel or fear that students would offer outlandish or impossible suggestions. Certainly students recognize, as do those here, that asking for a curricular diet of only Art or Physical Education activities is not likely to be considered a legitimate suggestion by teachers. By not seeking out student participation and response, however, teachers fail both to access the participative creativity and ingenuity of students, and to learn about what is important to students. This knowledge might well surprise teachers. For example, most teachers, including those here, would likely be unaware of the extent to which students prefer classrooms which are quiet and orderly. By accessing this kind of knowledge, however, teachers gain not only in their understanding of students, but also through the potential to improve the classroom situation to the benefit and satisfaction of students and themselves.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Giving students voice and choice does not mean that teachers abandon students. It does not mean that students are free to follow their own whims and desires entirely, but that they learn to become responsible and independent. In collaborative relationships students, too, have responsibilities, but in these they are guided by teachers. While adolescents must become independent, they need to be helped along the path to independence and responsibility. Ericson and Ellett (1990) argue that it is unjustifiable to say in general that students are ultimately responsible for learning, because even at the college level the instructor must have some responsibility for teaching and learning. They do maintain, however, that “the degree of student responsibility increases as the student acquires more of the related rational capacities and attitudes” (p. 6). It seems logical that both teachers (and parents at home) can and should help students to acquire these related capacities and

attitudes. In the data here, teachers who encourage and work towards the development of student responsibility do so, for example, through the use of student planners, work folders and project outlines. They not only make clear what is expected of students, and their own high expectations for students, but help them to achieve to those levels. They explain to students what is required, and then teach them what they need to know in order to meet these expectations. They give students choices and expect them to make them. They gradually increase the range of student choice and opportunity for independence (voice) as students become more capable and independent, until like the students in Mrs. Munke's class they can plan their own "Time Management Fridays" and successfully complete their work independently without any guidance from her. What is important to note, however, is that in Mrs. Munke's class there are expectations for "Time Management Fridays" and for the work to be completed on those days, and students are not thrown into Time Management Fridays without having learned, and continuing to learn, about how to plan and manage their time. Mrs. Munke emphasizes that she and the students have ongoing discussions about the process, about how and what they have learned, and notes that students have become more successful later in the year. Mrs. Munke provides guidance and, as is apparent from the fact that there is only one of these days a week, does not yet expect students to be completely independent in planning and executing their own learning.

Although one might describe the kinds of classrooms above, in which students are given voice, choice and responsibility (and independence) as democratic classrooms, McCaslin and Good (1992) suggest that "in most classrooms, as in most families, democratic leadership is not really democratic at all; decisions are not made by majority vote" (p. 11). Leadership, they say, is also a misnomer because teachers and parents do have the responsibility of control. In speaking of the differences in the ways in which teachers approach power and control in the classroom McCaslin and Good refer to the work of Baumrind who distinguishes between authoritarian, permissive and authoritative parenting styles. Because children of authoritative parents show the most advanced levels of autonomy and independence for their ages and also have greater confidence and healthier self-concepts than the children of authoritarian or laissez-faire parents (p. 11) they suggest that Baumrind's work provides a convincing argument to support authoritative methods of management in the classroom rather than authoritarian or laissez-faire. They point out that authoritative teachers should help students to "see and internalize the rationales that underlie classroom rules and to operate within the rules on their own initiative" (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 11) and explain that "the concept of

authoritative management requires that rules and structures—the scaffolding—be adjusted so that students progressively assume more responsibility for self-control” (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 13). The idea of scaffolding support provided by teachers, as demonstrated by Mrs. Munke, parallels the Ericson and Ellett notion of increase in student responsibility as students acquire related capacities and attitudes.

Developing responsibility and independence in students by allowing choice and voice is particularly important in the classroom where teachers strive to motivate students. Recent research on student motivation in education suggests that autonomy in the classroom is key to student motivation. In a comprehensive review of the literature on student motivation Wittrock (1986) highlights the importance of locus of control, that school achievement and student motivation correlate with student perception of control over events at school. That students feel they have some control over what they do and that what they do has an effect on their success are important. This notion, that student motivation is influenced by their perception that they have some control over classroom events, is also reported by Bandura (1989, p. 1180; see also Marx & Grieve, 1988). About the issue in general Anderman and Maehr (1994) point out that the “importance of a degree of autonomy as well as a degree of control over the context in which one is acting has been seen as figuring strongly in motivational equations for some time” (p. 293).

In reviewing a career’s work on motivation (much of it with Richard Ryan) Deci (1995) too concludes that motivation is best supported by a sense of autonomy. According to Deci, choice is an important aspect of autonomy. Skinner and Belmont (1993) conclude that in the classroom “teachers foster student autonomy by allowing children latitude in their learning activities” (p. 573). Ames (1990) reports that choice is important because it both fosters belief in personal control and also increases student interest and involvement in learning (p. 417). According to Deci (1995) “the main thing about meaningful choice is that it engenders willingness. It encourages people to fully endorse what they are doing; it pulls them into the activity and allows them to feel a greater sense of volition; it decreases their alienation” (p. 34). Providing choice, he adds, is a central feature in supporting a person’s autonomy and it is especially critical that people in positions of authority consider how they can do so (Deci, 1995, p. 34). Anderman and Maehr (1994; see also Carnegie, 1989, and Eccles & Midgley, 1989) suggest that this is especially important in early adolescence which is a period of “sociocognitive development that is best nurtured by a strong sense of autonomy, independence, self-determination, and social interaction” (p. 294). Interestingly, and

ironically, the independence and motivation in students of which teachers speak here longingly and with admiration, is fostered by student participation (choice and voice) in the classroom, and by involvement, a drawing *in* rather than distancing of students.

Providing choice in the classroom as a way of supporting student autonomy does not mean a wild free-for-all. "By taking a general stance against reliance on rewards, demands, threats, surveillance, competition, and critical evaluations as avenues for motivating people's behavior," states Deci (1995), "I am not being any means advocating permissiveness" (p. 42). The important question, he adds, is how to support autonomy and set limits at the same time. "How can standards and limits be used so the person in the one-down position can live within the limits and still retain a feeling of self-initiation, and thus not lose intrinsic motivation?" (Deci, 1995, p. 42). For Deci, autonomy support is the opposite of control. It means "being able to take the other person's perspective and work from there. It means actively encouraging self-initiation, experimentation, and responsibility, and it may very well require setting limits. But autonomy support functions through encouragement, not pressure" (Deci, 1995, p. 42). Parents here speak to the importance, and often lack, of teacher support and encouragement for students in the classroom. While encouragement may be preferable to disapproval—desirable as a sign of pleasant and harmonious relations in the classroom—and a support to the psychological wellbeing of students, it is also important for the development of responsibility and independence in the classroom.

McCaslin and Good (1992) (by way of Baumrind) suggest that the children of authoritative parents are more autonomous and independent than children of parents using permissive or authoritarian styles of management. Authoritarian parents, they note, "exert and maintain control over decision making and over their child, independent of the child's emerging capacities. . . . They order. The goal is child obedience" (p. 11). In contrast, authoritative parents "provide explanations for their 'firm but flexible' limits on child behavior. They discuss their standards, teach the child how to meet them, and value behavior that is monitored by self-discipline and self-control" (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 11). Authoritative styles of management in the classroom (rather than authoritarian or *laissez-faire*) are consistent with the provision of "autonomy support" as described by Deci above, and with the characteristics of preferred teachers in the student data here, that is, those who neither dictate nor permit absolutely but, rather, work with students to create a participative/collaborative classroom in which students can be and become independent and responsible.

Interestingly, McCaslin and Good (1992) suggest that an authoritative management system in the classroom must be linked with innovative and meaningful curriculum. "We advocate that a curriculum that seeks to promote problem solving and meaningful learning must be aligned with an authoritative management system that increasingly allows students to operate as self-regulated and risk-taking learners" (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 4). One could argue in the other direction as well, that a classroom situation which encourages self-regulation and risk-taking logically requires challenging and meaningful curriculum, or that such situations automatically give students the opportunity to choose or pursue meaningful curriculum. Although this study did not investigate correlation between teacher management characteristics and the provision of innovative curricula, these two are both characteristics of the kinds of satisfying classrooms described and valued by students here. Curricula that encourage risk-taking and problem-solving, that are challenging and not boring for students, require, or are at least facilitated by, an authoritative management style in which student autonomy and responsibility are supported. In these kinds of classrooms students are challenged, or are "permitted" to seek challenge.

In a comprehensive review of the literature on classroom management, Doyle (1986) also suggests that there is a connection between classroom management and classroom programs. "Programs of action in classroom activities," he notes, "are defined by both the rules for social participation and the demands of academic work. For this reason academic work is directly involved in the process of achieving classroom order and can be shaped in basic ways by a teacher's management decisions" (Doyle, 1986, p. 424). Once again, although this study did not investigate the correlation between the provision of challenging academic programs, as determined by students, and order in the classroom, certainly these are the kinds of programs which keep students interested, engaged, and ordered, rather than bored and restless.

In summarizing the literature on student motivation Wittrock (1986) comments on student responsibility: "The idea of student responsibility for learning does not imply a lessened teacher responsibility for teaching, as is often inappropriately inferred from these data. Rather, each participant, teacher and learner, has a distinct responsibility for achievement" (Wittrock, 1986, p. 306). Ericson and Ellett (1990, p. 9) assert that shared responsibility applies not just to student responsibility, but to the education of students overall. That general responsibility should be shared, they claim, not only by parents, students and educators, but also by the state and society at large (Ericson & Ellett, 1990, p. 9). During the adolescent years, students seek and should have responsibility in their

learning. In providing the support and guidance that students continue to require, however, parents and teachers also share in the larger responsibility for the education of the children they share.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the classrooms of Grade 4 to 7 students, social responsibility is as important, according to parents, students and teachers here, as academic responsibility. In a review of the literature on social responsibility and academic achievement Wentzel (1991) concludes that “both theoretical and empirical work suggest that student social responsibility is not only a valued outcome for education in and of itself but that it can be instrumental in the acquisition of knowledge and the development of cognitive abilities” (p. 16). Wentzel (1991) defines social responsibility as “adherence to social rules and role expectations” (p. 2) which include cooperation, respect for others, group participation, working hard, paying attention, participating in classroom activities, doing assignments and studying for lessons. Research suggests, she points out, that socially responsible behavior in the classroom can facilitate academic achievement in two ways. First, behaving irresponsibly in the classroom means that students receive less one-on-one instruction from teachers. Second, “behaving responsibly can promote the development of positive social relationships with peers that . . . can provide students with valuable cognitive and motivational resources important for learning” (Wentzel, 1991, p. 15). Teachers here who focus on the development of student responsibility in the classroom focus not only on responsibility as autonomy and choice, but also at the same time on the development of general social responsibility. This means not just good behavior in the sense of etiquette and manners, but also responsibility for participation and the completion of work. Students in these classrooms are often invited into collaborative discussion about rules and behavioral expectations at the beginning of the year. Through the use of student planners, project outlines and clearly defined expectations for work in general social responsibility is also clarified.

Wentzel (1991) suggests above that socially responsible behaviour can promote the development of positive social relationships with peers that can provide students with resources for learning. Wentzel’s findings are consistent with the findings of this study that students are not only distracted by poor behaviour which hinders their learning, (Student 24302 is happy that she is not sitting next to the “bad people”), but also that working with and getting help from friends is an important source of assistance that students are happy to have and rely on. A few teachers here note some effort at

cooperative learning in their classrooms. Students do not often speak specifically of formal cooperative learning, but do speak favourably of working in groups and with friends.

Doyle (1986) points out that “studies in several subject fields and grade levels generally indicate that cooperative teams have positive effects on achievement, especially when instruction is carefully structured, individuals are accountable for performance, and a well-defined group reward system is used” (p. 405). More recently, others have pointed out the benefits to student achievement of formal cooperative learning strategies (Qin, Johnson, & Johnson, 1995; Stevens & Slavin, 1995; see also Johnson & Johnson, 1989, and Slavin, 1994), and student work in small groups (Cohen, 1994; Oakes & Lipton, 1990). Fullan (1991) refers to group learning as a powerful pedagogical/instructional change for making learning “intrinsically more engaging to students” (p. 184). Stevens and Slavin (1995) note that one advantage of cooperative learning is that “it provides a structure that allows students to help manage the classroom, which evolves from the positive interdependence created with the learning teams” (p. 343). Students, they add, become an instructional and motivational resource in the classrooms so that those who need help can rely on feedback and support from their peers (pp. 343-344), which helps to accommodate students with differing abilities. Stevens and Slavin (1995) emphasize the importance of well-structured cooperative learning which has both group and individual accountability. Cohen (1994) points out that it is important that cooperative learning activities actually be group tasks which require that group members interact, that they be interdependent. For this reason, she adds, “not only is training for cooperation necessary for effective groups, but the recommended behaviors should be specific and directly relevant to desired behaviors if cooperative interaction is desired. One cannot neglect the role of the teacher in fostering interaction within productive small groups” (p. 30).

The importance of interaction with peers in the adolescent years is highlighted by Urdan and Maehr (1995) who point to the significance of social goals in motivation and achievement, particularly for adolescents. They note that most goal theory research has focussed on task (mastery) and ability (performance) goals, but that social goals must also be considered in explaining student behaviour (p. 236). “As children move into early adolescence,” they explain, “they become increasingly concerned about their relationships with peers. While social goals contribute to motivation and learning at all levels of schooling, these factors may make it particularly important to examine social goals during early adolescence to gain an understanding of the motivation and learning of

these students” (Urda & Maehr, 1995, p. 236). Certainly, the data here suggest that interaction with other students is an important part of the schoolday for these adolescents. Social interaction with peers is often cited as one of the major reasons for coming to school. Being able to obtain help from peers, and to work with other students in groups, is not only beneficial academically, and preferable to students as social end in and of itself, but, according to Urda and Maehr, could also be capitalized on to increase student motivation for schooling.

According to Fullan (1991) the interest of students in schools is directly related to social interaction with other students. In their study of school effectiveness Mortimore and colleagues (1988) found that two major factors influencing student involvement and progress were maximum communication between teachers and students, and work-related interaction among students. Ames (1992) contends that sense of belonging for students is both an identification with the purposes of school, and the belief that the student is an important and active participant in all aspects of the learning process (p. 263). Cooperative learning and other informal strategies which enable students to work together and help one another are, without doubt, of benefit to students in facilitating achievement and helping to create a sense of belonging to a group of peers. Both Ames (1992) and Anderman and Maehr (1994) contend that learning environment plays a significant role in determining the goals that students pursue. Attention to groupwork and provisions for support among students, such as seating arrangements and extension of invitation to students to help one another, contribute to a positive learning environment, one which students see as collaborative, among students *and* teacher. The data here suggest, however, that even though the benefit to students of supportive strategies is clear, an ongoing sensitivity to student needs and preferences, individually and as a class, is still key. Students appreciate group work, and the opportunity to seek assistance from peers, but also quiet, orderly classrooms. This indicates a need to balance the social and academic needs for group work and student work together with the need for peaceful classroom conditions conducive to quiet thought and learning. In addition, student choice is still important. Students may not always want to work with others; some may prefer to work on their own some or most of the time.

CARING

In speaking of the characteristics of teachers with whom they are satisfied students' words highlight a difference between the caretaking and the caregiving activities of teachers. Students speak to the importance of innovative and interesting curriculum

which can be seen as a caretaking activity, and an important one, of teachers. But, other kinds of taking care of business for which teachers are responsible—for example, report cards—seem not to be a major concern of students. That business needs to be taken care of seems to be an unstated assumption of students. Teachers must do what they have to do. Much of what students do mention, however, speaks to caregiving rather than caretaking. Students speak favourably of teachers who interact with them personally in the classroom, who get to know them, and share themselves with students. They appreciate teachers who encourage them and take the time to help them. According to students here respect for students is shown by teachers who do not chastise or embarrass them in front of peers, especially when they need help or do not understand. They treat students as individuals and listen to them attentively. Teachers with whom students are satisfied are also fair. They are consistent in expectations for all students, but understanding. They are just, and their attitudes and practices are inclusive of all students. While, strictly speaking, these are all aspects of the business of teachers, they speak more to caring than the transaction of business. And, while teachers must certainly take care of children, not all of them necessarily *give care* to children at the same time, in the ways described above, for example.

Noblit (1993) notes that caring with respect to teachers and students is usually defined as a reciprocal relationship, but that the power of the teacher is not always clear in this definition. His observations of a Grade 2 teacher, whose classroom he describes as “teacher-centered,” lead him to see power, in a caring perspective, as moral authority. He learned that “caring in classrooms is not about democracy—it is about the ethical use of power” (p. 24). Noblit explains that he had assumptions about democracy in education and “the nature of caring as apolitical” (p. 26). However, in the classroom which he observed the teacher was clearly powerful, and exerted that power, but not in an oppressive way. Her moral authority was an expression of caring; her power was used in the moral service of others. Power and oppression, Noblit discovered, are not necessarily one and the same. Of the caring relations in the classroom Noblit (1993) says:

I see [the teacher] as understanding and accepting not with power, but with moral authority—an authority not only legitimated by the usual mechanisms of our society but also by reciprocal negotiation between people, in this case people of unequal power and knowledge. [Her] authority came from her willingness to take responsibility for creating a context for children to participate in, and from the children themselves who, after all, can and often do deny adults the right to control them. (p. 37)

As Sergiovanni (1992) notes, “power can be understood in two ways—as power *over*, and as power *to*. . . . Power *over* emphasizes controlling what people do, when they

do it, and how they do it. Power *to* views power as a source of energy for achieving shared goals and purposes” (p. 133). Noblit saw “power to” in the teacher’s classroom, the same kind of power in evidence in the classrooms and teacher/student relationships described by students here as satisfying and collaborative, those in which teacher and students participate together.

As Noblit points out, caring and power (as moral authority) are not mutually exclusive. While one might assume a natural tension between these two, Noblit (1993) suggests that caring does not necessarily mean the abandonment of authority. Teachers can and do have authority, but that does not mean that they cannot be caring. They can choose to use authority in a caring, moral way. Nor do caring and participation by students automatically imply the absence of discipline or classroom management (Noblit, 1993).

Noddings (1984) ascertains that neither the educator nor the parent is powerless: “on the contrary, her power is awesome. Somehow the child must be led to choose for himself and not against himself” (p. 64). For Noddings using power unoppressively is a question of not “hiding from our natural impulses and pretending that we can achieve goodness through lofty abstractions” but using “what we have already assessed as good to control that which is not-good” (Noddings, 1984, p. 100).

Caring means positive and deep interaction with students. There is, however, no formula according to Noddings. “Caring cannot be achieved by formula,” she states, “It requires address and response; it requires different behaviors from situation to situation and person to person. It sometimes calls for toughness, sometimes tenderness” (Noddings, 1992, p. xi). Caring is individual response to individual students. It means listening to students and not simply paying attention to them but *giving* attention to them: “When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment (or attention) is. In order to respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its own contents. One cannot say, ‘Aha! This fellow needs care. Now, let’s see—here are the seven steps I must follow.’ Caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors” (Noddings, 1992, p. 17). Noddings’ comment that caring is a way of being echoes almost word for word that of Mrs. Weir (56100) who says that her positive interaction and relations with students are “a way of being, not a way of doing.” According to Noddings (1992) an ethic of care is a needs- and response-based ethic (p. 21). Both individuals—student need and teacher response—are involved.

Noddings' comments about caring and curriculum suggest an intertwining of personal and pedagogical in relations, as proposed earlier, between students and teachers. "We cannot separate education from personal experience," she asserts. "Who we are, to whom we are related, how we are situated all matter in what we learn, what we value, and how we approach intellectual and moral life" (1992, p. xiii). She continues that, without caring, intellectual exchange alone is not enough in the classroom, as students here suggest. The pedagogical is built on the personal or relational: "At bottom, subject matter cannot carry itself. Relation, except in very rare cases, precedes any engagement with subject matter. Caring relations can prepare children for an initial receptivity to all sorts of experiences and subject matters" (Noddings, 1992, p. 36). In speaking of teacher/student relations at the high school level Metz too (1993, p. 130) concludes that "if teaching is to go beyond superficial skills—for example, inducing students to think more critically or awakening an active curiosity about a subject—it requires more than a passing involvement between teacher and student" (p. 130). Interestingly, Noddings (1992) uses the word "responsibility" to describe this "commitment in interpersonal relations" (p. 65). Individual attention to students, of the kind described here by parents and students, demonstrated by talking and listening to students, by helping students and answering their questions, represents in action the kind of engrossment, or personal interaction to which Noddings refers. Van Manen (1986) describes this kind of individual attention as "pedagogic thoughtfulness" and "tactfulness." It is, he claims "sustained by a certain kind of seeing, of listening, of responding" (p. 12). Van Manen (1986) explains that

to cultivate pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact one needs to act in such a way that the glance expresses the soul's capacity for pedagogic relationship. In other words, pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact are not simply a set of external skills to be acquired in a workshop. A living knowledge of parenting or teaching is not just head stuff requiring intellectual work. It requires body work. True pedagogy requires an attentive attunement of one's whole being to the child's experience of the world. (p. 50)

Only a few teachers here actually use the word "caring" to describe the ideal student/teacher relationship. Mrs. Munke refers to her relationship with students as one of "stewardship," which suggests that the relationship between students and teachers in the classroom can and should go beyond simple mechanical teaching/learning exchanges and encompasses the kind of pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact described by Van Manen. Although teachers are often described as acting "in loco parentis" one can argue that the teacher/student relationship is not the parent/child relationship. However, according to students here, caring, which is conveyed by stewardship, is and should be a feature of it.

Recent studies point to the importance of caring in schools for the academic achievement of students. In a study of effective schooling from a child's perspective Taylor, Kirby, Teddlie, Pounders and Freeman (1995) conclude that "only when the caring ethic that characterized [the] low-SES schools is combined with the academic ethic evident in [the] middle-SES schools are teaching and learning driven by children's needs (emotional and academic) rather than by external pressure to project the 'right' image to the community" (p. 14). The authors make the point that caring cannot substitute for quality teaching, but that "only when both of these elements were in place . . . were students engaged and challenged" (Taylor et al., p. 13).

In a study comparing the relationships of communitarian climate and academic climate to mathematics achievement in the middle grades Phillips (1997) concludes that the communitarian model of schooling may not be as effective as advocates claim and that improving schools' academic climate "may be a more promising way to enhance students' attachment to school and their academic achievement" (p. 657). She adds that a model of school effectiveness that places academic learning at its center should be "reconsidered" (Phillips, 1997, p. 657). To state that caring in classrooms is important to students, and to suggest that personal, caring interaction with them should be a focus of teachers is not to claim that academic learning is not important or is less important. Community and academics are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As Taylor and colleagues (1995) suggest, they are both important. To be concerned about caring in classrooms and schools does not or should not mean that one abandon one's focus on academic concerns. The comments of students here suggest that these both need attention.

In a recent study Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson and Schaps (1995) examined the impact of the sense of the school as a community on elementary school students. They defined school as community as one in which students' needs for "belonging, autonomy, and competence are met." Students in these communities "feel that they are respected, valued and cared about by the other community members, and that they make meaningful contributions to the group's plans and activities" (Battistich et al., 1995, p. 629). Battistich and colleagues found that sense of community was generally unrelated to academic achievement, but that it had "large effects on academic attitudes and motives, and on social and personal outcomes" (p. 648). "The present findings clearly suggest," they claim, "that students' motivation is enhanced in schools in which they feel cared for, supported, valued, and influential—schools that they experience as communities" (Battistich et al., 1995, p. 652). Attitudinal, behavioural and motivational outcomes all have implications for academic achievement. Interestingly, the authors add that there was

little variance in sense of community between schools in their sample, and suggest that variance may be “a function of differences in the practices and climate experienced by groups of students *within* particular schools” (p. 651), adding that this may be particularly the case in elementary schools where teachers have much autonomy over classroom organization, management and instructional practices. The supposition that variance may be a function of differences in the practices and climate experienced by groups of student within particular schools is supported by this study.

THE MORAL LIFE OF THE CLASSROOM

Ultimately, both power and caring are moral issues. For Noblit (1993) moral authority is power and caring, “power-full” caring in teaching. For Sergiovanni (1992) trusting relationships which are characterized by service-orientation are moral. He refers to morally-based leadership at the school level which, he says, is a form of stewardship. It “touches people differently. It taps their emotions, appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with other people” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 120). Stewardship, he continues, “represents primarily an act of trust, whereby people and institutions entrust a leader with certain obligations and duties to fulfill and perform on their behalf” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 139). These obligations and duties involve caring, a moral act. Crediting Robert Greenleaf, Sergiovanni (1992) points out that “people’s caring for one another is the foundation on which a good society is built. One dimension of professional virtue is the caring ethic. Caring places teachers and administrators in service to others” (p. 115). In these “virtuous” schools action is guided by moral imperative; in caring for students one does what what is good or morally right for students. In virtuous schools, students are shown respect by being giving the same consideration as teachers, parents and other adults. “The result,” Sergiovanni (1992) suggests, “is a pattern of mutual respect, involving teachers with teachers and teachers with students, that increases the likelihood that teachers and students will respect themselves” (p. 112).

Sergiovanni’s comments about moral leadership in the virtuous school can also be applied to teacher leadership at the classroom level. The kind of school stewardship to which Sergiovanni refers represents the kind of caring relationship described positively by students and teachers in this study, although only Mrs. Munke uses the term “stewardship” and few teachers describe their interactions with students as caring. These are examples of virtuous classrooms. In virtuous classrooms here students are also shown respect by being given the same consideration that would be given to other adults and teachers. The respect to which many teachers in this study refer longingly is a function of

the respect students receive from teachers, a fact also pointed out by some teachers in these data. Interestingly, Sergiovanni adds that, “the goal of the virtuous school is to create self-learners and self-managers. Each day, students depend a little less on their teachers and the school” (p. 112). Here as well, responsibility and independence are a feature of the positive classrooms and respectful and caring student/teacher relationships of which students speak. These kinds of virtuous classrooms, Fullan (1993) suggests, begin with the work of teachers. As Fullan (1993) points out, teachers are the strength of schools because, regardless of their technical skills, they begin their careers with moral intentions: “The building block of the school is the moral purpose of the individual teacher. Scratch a good teacher and you will find a moral purpose” (p. 10).

According to Hansen (1993; see also Jackson, Boostroom & Hansen, 1993) there is moral import in the everyday work of teachers and in the everyday interaction of students and teachers. The moral work of teachers is not simply the discussion of right and wrong, or the settling of classroom disputes. The everyday actions of students and teachers are also moral. To see them as such, suggests Hansen (1993), “could enrich one’s conception of what takes place in the classroom. It can make the classroom that much more interesting and valuable an environment in which to work, for it would automatically change that environment by opening the door to greater meaning than one might customarily perceive” (p. 669). Seeing one’s actions and those of students in the classroom as moral not only changes the way one thinks about them, but makes it possible to do something about them, to make improvements: “Taking seriously the idea of moral layeredness in teaching—that some of those ‘busy’ doings might harbor deeper meaning than meets the eye—can convert them into business, for the act of paying attention to them puts one in a position not only to appreciate their meaning but also to change them” (Hansen, 1993, p. 669). To see individual attention to students, listening to students, giving students choices, and permitting them to have voice in the classroom as everyday acts that are moral highlights them as worthy of attention and improvement.

What makes power and caring ultimately moral in the classroom is that in focussing on good for students (or for parents) teacher interactions with students or parents can be transformative. What might otherwise be a transaction or transactional event becomes a transformation or transformative act. This kind of transformation is non-manipulative. It is not simply a case of getting individuals to do what one wants them to do. It is either bringing out the best in others or helping them to bring out the best in themselves. It is a question of helping people to be and do what they think they can and should, and helping them to be and do even more than they think they are capable. Individuals are

transformed into more than what they are or were. Within the data here, for example, Mrs. Irving and her son, Tyler, and their teacher, Mrs. Kosko, stand out, as do the teacher/parent pair of Ms. Thompson and Parent 28201 (Mrs. Nelson: Craig's mother). In the case of Mrs. Irving and Tyler, the teacher helped both of them, one to become a better student, the other to become a better reader and parent-as-helper. This was both education as transformation and collaboration as transformation. Caring and empowering between mother and teacher, and between teacher and student, helped both mother and student to improve. In the case of Ms. Thompson and Mrs. Nelson, working together for the benefit of the child helped him to become a better student and to learn more. These "transformations" are outstanding. However, in the caring work that teachers do from day to day small transformations take place regularly. These teachers create classrooms and work with parents and students in ways in which children can learn enthusiastically and confidently. For these students (and sometimes parents) the process of transformation is ongoing. In the everyday moral act of giving students choice and voice, responsibility and respect, teachers empower students, transforming them.

PART II: BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

ABOUT PRACTICES: PERSONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL; “HARD” AND “SOFT”

That there are teacher practices that are beneficial and helpful to parents is clear from the data here. Planners, newsletters, and work folders are particularly useful to parents in that they not only communicate information regularly to parents about student progress and achievement, but also inform them about curriculum. Optimally, they are at the same time a general means of communication between parent and teachers. Receiving information both about the curriculum of the classroom and about the child's achievement and progress is important to parents. Practices which at the same time facilitate communication between parents and teachers, enabling parent and teacher to get to know one another better and enabling teacher to get to know child better, are even more useful and efficient. While report cards are necessary, they are not an ongoing means of communication about curriculum and, according to parents here, do not always provide enough timely and forthright information about the child's achievement and progress. Planners, newsletters and weekly work folders are, or can be, an ongoing source of both kinds of information.

Not surprisingly, those parents whose children have difficulty at school are more concerned about communication with the teacher. These parents are most often the recipients of bad news, and are especially concerned that teachers contact them immediately when there is a problem, before it's "too late." These parents particularly wish specific, detailed information about their child's performance and progress, and often feel that they are not getting it. Although teachers do not comment on the difficulty of communicating to parents of children who are having trouble, it does seem to be easier for teachers to communicate good news about achievement and growth than bad news.

While teacher practices are important, the data here also suggest that demonstrating a willingness to communicate and work with parents is also critical to parents. Practices without a sincere expression of willingness by teachers to involve parents are to some extent hollow gestures. Examples of "practices" which signal teacher willingness to communicate and work with parents, drawn from the data here, include making available one's home telephone number, listening to and accepting parents' suggestions, being

available after school to speak to parents, or giving parents more than the allotted ten or fifteen minutes at formal interview times.

One might conceive of the expression of teacher willingness to communicate and work with parents as positive “attitude,” and the teacher activities listed above (planner, newsletter, project outlines, etc.) as practices. In communicating positive attitudes to parents, however, teachers do in fact *do* something. Distributing one’s home telephone number to parents, smiling and greeting parents in the hallway, inviting parents to visit anytime after school in order to talk, or offering more than the minimum required time during interviews, are all teacher *activities*. Whether or not these acts lead immediately to communication about student progress or curriculum, or a collaborative exchange, they set the stage for potentially fruitful communication in the future. Because communicating to parents and signalling willingness to communicate and work with parents are both activities, it is useful to consider these as practices, rather than separate categories of attitude and practice, and to distinguish between the two kinds of practices as “hard” and “soft.” In this way, planners, newsletters, work folders, interim reports, three-way conferences and other meetings with parents are seen as hard practices, and the other activities which signal one’s willingness to communicate and work with parents are seen as soft practices. The “hard” practices have concrete outcome, a communicative product (often a physical product such as a document). The “soft” practices do not usually have concrete outcomes or product. They facilitate production (communication), or are process variables, enabling parent and teacher to do something—signalling a willingness to communicate or a collaborative intent, for example.

The unifying theme to both “hard” and “soft” practices is communication leading to collaboration. While it seems important that teachers exhibit at least some “hard” practices, the data here suggest that it does not seem to be imperative, from parents’ perspective, to exhibit a huge number of them. Certainly baseline communication about student achievement and progress is required in all schools in the form of a report card and parents do expect this at least. What is imperative to parents is that some communication take place, that teacher willingness to communicate and collaborate be expressed, and that the possibility for further communication and collaboration exist should parents desire it. In the absence of hard communication practices from teachers beyond report cards, or in cases where information provided through report cards is insufficient or unsatisfactory, demonstration from teachers of willingness to communicate and collaborate (“soft” practice) is critical. To parents, demonstration of willingness to

communicate signals the willingness of teachers to potentially collaborate with them and, indeed, is usually perceived as collaboration.

Parents are also concerned that teachers communicate to them when the teacher himself or herself perceives a need. Hard practices, particularly the use of a student planner which can include back-and-forth communication between teacher and parent, or weekly work folders, are especially useful, as they are instant and regularly available conduits from classroom to home (and home to classroom). Formal report cards are not a tool for casual or spur-of-the-moment communication from school to home. Typically, teachers use telephone calls for concerns-based communication, but telephoning is not usually a regular means of communication between teachers and all parents. And, unlike planners and work folders, telephone calls are usually harbingers of bad news.

The efforts of Mr. Desjarlais (Teacher 23100) provide an example of the distinction between hard and soft practice. Although Mr. Desjarlais made some effort to use hard practices such as student planners and newsletters he did not do so in a committed, consistent or sustained way. However, he demonstrated a willingness to communicate and collaborate with parents and did so both casually throughout the year in after school meetings and in a formal way during required reporting periods (hard practices). At interview time he was open and forthcoming with information. Parent 23204 not only felt that the teacher communicated with her, but in the active discussion which followed his expression of willingness to communicate felt herself to be working in collaboration with him.

There is some evidence to suggest that in the absence of “soft” practices “hard” practices are doomed to failure or are likely to be marginally effective. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten report that Ms. Fraser is the most negative teacher they have ever met. Ms. Fraser maintains, however, that she attempted to implement the use of learning logs which were to be sent home regularly and also student planners. She explains further that she did not experience success with either of these practices, and Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten report on neither of them. Miss Halstrom also reports, quite confidently and positively, on the use of hard practices, but Mrs. Goode and her daughter do not report on these either. For Mr. and Mrs. Van Netten, and for Mrs. Goode the negativity of the teacher appeared to overwhelm everything else. In these cases hard practices did not seem to be enough without a demonstration of openness and willingness to communicate and collaborate with parents.

The purposes of hard practices are, strictly speaking, the communication of information about the curriculum of the classroom and about the child’s achievement and

progress. Teachers can provide this information to parents without a plethora of practices—there is no single recipe or formula—but, like Mr. Desjarlais, they must do so. When they do not employ a variety of hard practices they must make clear to parents that information is available. Parents must sense and see an openness and willingness on the part of teachers to communicate with them.

Demonstrating a willingness to communicate with parents and actually doing so is the base upon which collaboration takes place. That parents see evidence of soft practice on the part of teachers appears to be clear. That parents feel teachers are available to them and will communicate with them when necessary is important, particularly because when this is apparent parents are more likely to feel that they can communicate with teachers when they need to do so and that teachers will be receptive to this and to their ideas and participation. In the case of the profile teachers, Ms. Fraser and Miss Halstrom, parents were not confident about this at all.

Through the use of hard and soft practices the role of the parent as partner is recognized and only after this can parents and teacher potentially collaborate. Collaboration, however, is not limited to face-to-face exchange. While Parent 23204 may have felt herself to be collaborating with the teacher during personal discussion with him, parents whose children's teachers use student planners and work folders regularly feel themselves to be working just as collaboratively with teachers even though they may only meet occasionally with teachers. These practices—planners, student work folders, newsletters and previews—are means of communication which not only inform, but can also be a means of involving parents at home and/or at school. Used in either way parents see themselves as partners.

When teachers and parents work together, through communication face-to-face, or in using student planners or work folders they, like students and teachers, build relationships that are both personal and pedagogical. Mrs. Munke speaks of using the student planner to communicate with a parent about difficulties with the child at school. In so doing she came to know the parent better which helped to address the problems in the classroom. Parents often speak of overcoming the personal barriers, of “getting to know” the teacher and feeling more comfortable with him or her as a result. Collaborative instructional relationships between parents and teachers, like those for students and teachers, are better built on the basis of harmonious and comfortable personal relationships. That is, collaborative instruction combines soft and hard practice.

PLACE

When asked how they are involved with their child's education parents here distinguish between involvement at the school, and involvement at home. Although not all are able to be at or volunteer at the school, all consider themselves to be involved with their child's education because they are involved at home. Those parents whose children's teachers use a student planner or work folders, or who solicit or are open to their suggestions feel that they are collaborating with the teacher even though they are not necessarily in the school frequently, or are not able to be in the school at all because they work fulltime. Place does not seem to be critical to parent/teacher communication or collaboration.

Although parent(s) and teacher may not work together in the presence of one another, they can work together in a "psychic" way. The comments of parents who report that they and the teacher "have the same goals," or that the teacher "wants to achieve the same things for the child," suggest this kind of "psychic" alignment. They are sharing experience, understanding, perspective and expectations and in so doing, collaborating. Parents who are convinced that the teacher, in working with the child at school, and they, in working with the child at home, are focussing on the same goals and priorities, feel that they are collaborating. While parent and teacher are communicating and need to do so in some way, either in written form, through a planner for example, or in meeting together, they are not, or need not be, frequently involved together on a day-to-day basis. In contrast, Parent 72204 who comments that "my concept and hers were totally different" feels that she and the teacher were not collaborating, and would not necessarily feel any more collaborative whether or not she were in the same room with the teacher helping or volunteering.

In speaking of the involvement of Asian American parents Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez and Bloom (1993) comment that

Chinese-American parents, particularly recent immigrants, show great respect for teachers but tend to maintain a distance from the school. The fact that their children still do well at school calls into question many common assumptions about parents' involvement. It seems that parents can care deeply about their children's education and can encourage and monitor their children's progress while not being involved in the school as volunteer or policy maker. (p. 81)

For minority parents, lack of involvement at school is not only or always related to work commitments, but also to cultural appropriateness and ease with language, or both. As Kellaghan and colleagues, suggest, however, parents—whether majority or minority—are involved and can and do do much even if they are not at the school. The hard practices mentioned above—student planners, weekly work folders, project outlines, telephone

calls—are especially critical in “psychically” bringing together parents and teachers who cannot be brought together physically.

Casanova (1996) states that “teachers tend to assume that parents who are less involved and visible in the school are also less interested in their children’s education” (p. 31). These data suggest that parents who are not visible are not necessarily less interested or less involved. Parents here are involved in the home, but this participation at home is itself not visible to teachers. Data about teacher expectations here suggest that teachers have little sense of parents in the home, and little sense of students in the home. They do not often seem to see or sense the instructional relationships between parents and students at home. They are not aware of the extent to which parent and student interact about school in the home, and the extent to which parent and student work together on schoolwork.

While teachers may gain some information from students about their homes, they do not always gain this information on a daily basis and usually not in a systematic way. If they do so through some kind of daily sharing they are not likely to learn much regularly from all of the students in their class if they do not hear from each of them everyday or at least several times a week. This learning is even less likely to occur if teachers do not listen attentively to students. Some parents and teachers here report favourably on the student planner as a means for teacher to get to know the child better, both through written conversation with the parent, and use of the planner by students for keeping track of commitments and engagements outside of school life. But not all teachers use the planner as a means of communication with parents, and none here report encouraging their students to use the planner to record extra-curricular commitments. Reports about students who have done so come from parents and students who have initiated this activity, and not teachers.

At the same time, teachers do not often do anything which would enable them to “see” into the home, such as visiting the child and his or her parent(s) there. Among Grade Four to Seven teachers here and in general, there is no expectation, as there is for Kindergarten teachers, that they will visit the child in the home. Interestingly, one parent (24204) addresses this issue in speaking of the ideal parent/teacher relationship. She says:

I think parents and teachers should be meeting each other before they meet the kids. I think teachers should be into the home so they can see what kind of situation, not to make any value judgments, and—I mean, they need to know where we live, how many kids are in the house, what kind of situation is happening. I think it’s important for them to have an all-over picture of the student, not just that little piece of the pie when they are in the school there.

Visits to the home would provide teachers with much valuable information about students, giving them the opportunity to learn about the child in his or her own home-context. An in-home meeting would also provide an appropriate and conducive opportunity for parents to talk to the teacher about their child from the perspective of the home setting and for parents and teachers to get to know one another. The parent above also suggests that teacher visits to the home would help to make the parent more comfortable with the teacher, and less hesitant about going in to see the teacher later in the year if the need arose. Gaining information and understanding about students' homelife and about parent expectations and needs—whether through home visits or by other means—is especially important in cases where the teacher's cultural or socioeconomic background differs from that of her students. However, as much as the practice of home visits appeals to the parent above, teachers of students at the Grade 4 to 7 levels rarely visit student homes. They seem, ironically, more place-bound, in a self-determined way, than parents.

While the “natural” place of parents might be the home, and while they may not actually be in the classroom, because work or lack of invitation prevent them, they can go to the school and often do have some role or presence there, even if this is only “popping in” after school. Unlike teachers, many parents do cross the “boundary” and learn some things firsthand about the school and classroom. In addition, students provide a conduit. Data here suggest that talk about school is a regular feature of homes and that parents rely on their children to provide them with information about school. Parents seem to gain much more information on a regular basis from their child about the classroom, their child's teacher, and the child's day than do teachers about homelife. Parents seem to see both sides of their child's experience more fully than teachers, and are clear from their own perspective about the extent to which they believe they must help and support their children at home. Even so, parents still comment on the need for more information, and for a fuller communication from the teacher. They often have only a partial picture, and struggle to see the classroom in its entirety and the relationship between their child and the teacher

Even though there are teachers in this sample who are parents, there is still not a strong sense among teachers of either the extent to which conversation about school and schoolwork occurs in the home or the extent to which parents help their children in the home, and the nature of this assistance and support. Surprisingly, teachers who are parents seem to be no more aware of this than than teachers who are not. Teachers generally believe that parents could do more. Although teachers suggest that time is a

barrier which prevents parents from doing more to help their children, there is not a great awareness among them of the tension in the home between the demands of school and the demands of family and extra-curricular life, and consequently on the lives and time of parents and students. The perspective of teachers seems to be that of teachers, rather than that of teachers who are also parents. It seems logical that the prime concern of teachers be that of the classroom. It is possible at the same time that teachers who are parents separate their experience as parents, and as parents with their children's teachers, from their experiences as teachers with their students' parents. Ms. Thompson (Teacher 28100) speaks rather emphatically of parents not wanting to "give a lesson" after they get home from work, suggesting some personal experience with this feeling.

The lack of a solid sense among teachers of school-related relationships in the home may help to explain why teachers are not always explicit about how and what parents can do to help, and why they do not always make consistent efforts in this regard and for all students in the classroom, rather than only for those whom they believe need extra help, or in response to parent request. They often believe that parents are not helping enough at home—and this perception is usually based on their experiences with one or a few students in their classes—and so they do not always ask parents as a group to do things with their children, or ask that students do things with their parents or request help from them. They may believe that as professionals they abdicate their responsibility for instruction, or part of it, if they ask parents to help. However, whether teachers ask parents to help or not, whether they ask students to seek out parent help at home or not, it happens, and appears likely to happen anyway. Parents are teachers too and when classroom teachers fail to ask parents to help, or do not provide information or assistance in this regard, they fail to capitalize on the academic discourse and helping relationship in the home. Unlike Mrs. Kosko and Mrs. Munke, not all teachers harness the energy and assistance of parents, and the energy of parent/student relationships at home. Practices such as student planners, work folders, and project outlines can bring more of the classroom into the home and, optimally, more of the home into the classroom. Used as a means of facilitating work between parents and students (by giving information to parents, or by asking parents to work with students in particular kinds of ways), teachers can help to make instructional relationships at home easier and more harmonious for both parents and students, and aligned with and supportive of work in the classroom.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) point out that the student

occupies a position . . . that might best be conceptualized as a boundary role: He or she is the party primarily responsible on a day-to-day basis for negotiating and moving between the

demands and expectations of two usually separate entities. Parents and teachers may interact directly with each other frequently or intermittently, but it is the child who lives fully in each adult's domain and it is the child who is necessarily the person responsible for absorbing and responding to the full measure of each adult's expectations, demands, and requests. (p. 324)

Even though students occupy this "boundary role" the data here show that often they have little sense of collaboration between the teacher (the school) and their parent(s) (the home), especially when these relationships are neither particularly strong nor particularly weak. In three-way conferences, students, parents and teachers are all together. The collaboration that ensues is obvious to students. Other kinds of practices, however, such as planners, regular newsletters, project outlines, and regular discussion in the classroom about parent/student interaction and about the role of parents at home, help students to perceive connection(s) between the home and the classroom, to see the teacher more positively, and to recognize the appropriateness of home/school connections and the benefit to these links.

ONE CHILD VS. WHOLE CLASSROOM

That the prime concern of parents is their child is apparent in these data. Equally apparent is the fact that teachers are concerned not only about the needs and wellbeing of individuals, but about that of the group as a whole. Smith (1987) highlights the differences between the school world that the child experiences—an impersonal and "generalized system" (p. 199)—and the home world that he or she experiences with parent(s), and also speaks of the boundary role that the child occupies. The child, she explains, "moves back and forth between the home setting in which she is embedded in particularizing relationships and the school setting in which she is being inducted into a standardized curriculum and impersonal procedures" (p. 199). Parent/student relationships at home are particularized; parent concerns about the classroom are specific to one child. The teacher, on the other hand, has generalized concerns (the whole classroom). Ideally, he or she should have particularized concerns as well, individual knowledge of and concern for each student in the classroom, as suggested in the discussion earlier on student/teacher relations.

This one/all difference in focus on students explains, perhaps, the common perception among parents that they do not always receive enough information and enough detailed information about their child and, at the same time, the sometimes weak or inconsistent participation of parents at Meet-the-Teacher nights, interviews and other school events. Parents are concerned about the progress and achievement of their child.

When an event or activity does not concern that child directly, or does not provide parents with specific information about their child, or new information or insight, the event or activity is likely to be of less significance to parents.

Although one can argue that interviews are focussed on one child it is possible that parents may still not receive any new information or be told anything they do not already know, especially if they have already received report cards whose content is simply reiterated at interview time. Data here suggest that interviews are particularly satisfying when parents learn more and new things about their child, and when they are participants and not simply passive recipients. And, in fact, when students are participants, the three-way conference format provides parents with the opportunity to learn in new and different ways, and to learn new and different things about their child (and, importantly, *from* their child) as well. Conferences which are held prior to the writing of report cards or as part of the process of report card writing help to ensure that the information presented to parents is not simply reiterative. Experience in interview with their child gives the parent an opportunity to *feel* and *see* teacher's recognition of their child as an individual. As data suggest, parents are also keen to sense teacher recognition of the student as an individual, through appropriately challenging schoolwork, through personal assistance and sensitive personal interaction in the classroom.

The positive response to three-way conferences highlights an issue that has implications for collaboration between parents and teachers, as it does for that between teachers and students: power imbalance. Meet-the-Teacher nights and typical parent/teachers interviews are often uncomfortable and disempowering experiences for parents depending upon the approach and attitude of the teacher. Three-way conferences may be especially appealing and enjoyable to parents because they are usually given a chance to take part in discussion as parent data here suggest, rather than simply listen to a monologue, and to give input to the teacher about their child. In so doing they are engaged in a process which is potentially empowering for themselves and for their child. Parents can certainly contribute to a three-way conference by contributing home-based knowledge about their child, but in order for parents to participate fully in discussion about their child with respect to school and schoolwork they need information, a base of documentation. Three-way conferences in which parents contribute are facilitated by practices which prepare and enable parents, such as the use of portfolios which students share with their parents before or at the interview, or at both times. The regular use of work folders, regular communication through student planners, and information about curriculum (previews, project outlines) are also helpful in this regard.

Interestingly, the individualized educational or learning plans (IEPs) that are typically drawn up for students who are experiencing difficulty at school are rarely drawn up at parent/teacher meetings for gifted or especially capable students. And, parents of students who are capable often comment on their perception that the child is not sufficiently challenged in school. What is common to all parents, whether their child is a high, low or under-achiever, is a desire for the individual needs of that child to be met. What is also common is a valuation of the collaboration which can take place to meet those needs. Meetings between teacher and parent, or between teacher, parent and student (three-way conferences) are the opportune time to share expectations and perspectives about the child and one another, and to make efforts to meet the individual needs of that child in a collaborative way. Although reported by some parents and students here, this optimal experience does not occur very often, according to these respondents.

Focussing on students both as individuals and as a group means that teachers must think in inclusionary ways. What is done for one might also be good for all. While it is good (essential, in fact) for teachers to offer suggestions individually to parents based on the child's needs (for example, for the development of study skills, for extra practice in reading or other areas) in this way only some homes are reached even though what has been offered to some families may be beneficial to all. At the same time, teachers might also consider whether requests made by individual parents (e.g., an English copy of a French mathematics textbook) would benefit others. Active outreach of the widest possible coverage—even though solutions may have originated from a single parent or in regard to one parent/student pair—means benefit for more students. Mrs. Munke, for example, makes specific suggestions to individual parents. At the same time, she has implemented a roster of home activities for all parents and students in her class. Even so, Parent 73206 (Mrs. Keavney) suggests that the study skills program that the teacher has implemented her daughter and a few others, would also have been useful for all students in the class. A basic starting point for teachers is to ensure that they extend a clear invitation directly to all parents to help their children at home, and indirectly to parents through students.

It is also important for teachers to think of inclusion as the opposite of mutual exclusivity. That is, taking action on a particular issue, or doing some specific thing, does not negate another or mean that it is not or no longer necessary. Partnership practices do not need to be either/or propositions. For example, providing for student self-evaluation and parent evaluation of students does not and should not mean that specific and thorough teacher evaluation is no longer necessary or of less importance, that teachers

should no longer be evaluators of student learning. As significant to parents and students as participation in evaluation may be, parents continue to see teachers as arbiters of quality and performance and judges of effort and growth. Teachers have a wide pedagogical perspective, based on their career experience and experience of the particular class in question that parents and students do not have. Working in collaborative ways means that teachers must acknowledge and involve the expertise of others, and work with them. It does not automatically mean that they no longer have a role or any expertise of their own, or that they abandon what they do have. The same can be said with respect to student/teacher relations in the classroom. Teachers may have authority as far as management of the classroom is concerned. Collaboration means that they devolve authority not divest themselves of it. In collaboration both students and teacher (and teacher and parent) participate.

Collaboration is not a zero-sum game. There are not supposed to be winners and losers, but winners and winners. This means that in working collaboratively individuals must be sensitive to and acknowledge others' preferences. To hold three-way conferences, for example, does not mean that one must deny parents the opportunity to meet privately with teachers, or to meet with their child and the teacher without other parent/student sets in the room. Learning to work collaboratively is a process, not only for teachers, but also for parents and students, one in which individuals must not only learn with one another, but about and from one another.

THREE-WAY RATHER THAN TWO-WAY RELATIONSHIPS

In responding to Fine (1993), Epstein (1993) distinguishes between the way she sees Fine defining power—"parents' voices and participation in school decision making" (p. 710)—and what she calls "partnership" which "recognizes and acts on the responsibilities shared by families and schools for the education and development of the children they share across the school years" (p. 710). Partnerships, she says, can include greater and more equal participation of families in school decision making, but can also include the other five types of involvement (Epstein, 1995) that produce "multiple powers" (p. 713), power gained, for example, through more and better information from classrooms and schools, and more interactions with teachers and administrators. For Epstein, power is not simply a question of political power or of power over something or someone. What is needed, she asserts, is not "contests for power" (p. 715), but "power in partnerships" (p. 715). This kind of power *with* (the power *to* of Sergiovanni) reflects what might also be

described as reciprocal relationships between parents and teachers, those in which both parents and teachers think in terms of action or practice from and for other(s).

Data here suggest that parents have more expectations of teachers with respect to students than with respect to themselves. They may not believe that they can or should expect teachers to act for them as well as for their children, or they may believe that teachers will do less for them (than they expect) and that this is perhaps natural. Parents may think in terms of the primacy of the instructional relationship between student and teacher and that theirs with the teacher, if it exists, is secondary. In terms of expectation for teachers, however, parents do look for open communication and collaboration. That they do think potentially in terms of what might be seen as either a number of two-way relationships (parent/student, parent/teacher and student/teacher) or one large, weblike three-way relationship is clear, and when this does occur, parent satisfaction suggests the potential and benefit of these reciprocal instructional relationships.

In reciprocal relationships teachers and parents must think in both directions, towards and with student and towards and with each other. The issue of reciprocity, not only between parent and teacher, but also between student, parent and teacher, is well exemplified practically by the issue of student responsibility. Student responsibility, from the perspective of the role of teachers is not about burdening students with entire responsibility for learning and development, expecting adult self-control and self-guidance when students are not yet capable or ready. Nor is developing student responsibility a question of placing the entire of burden of student work and development on parents. While the student certainly must do for self, both teacher and parent have roles to play in helping student to become responsible. All should be involved in a reciprocal three-way relationship, helping student and other.

It is easy for teachers to define the parent/teacher relationship in terms of what the parent or family can do for the teacher. It is also easy for parents to define the parent/teacher relationship in terms of what the teacher or school can do for them or for their child. But teachers must also think in the opposite direction: "What can I do for and with parents and students? And, parents can and should also think in the opposite direction, addressing the corollary question: What can I do for and with the teacher and my child? The data here suggest that in working with their children at home, and in conducting an academic discourse, most parents are thinking and acting in ways in which they support the school and teacher. While some teachers do think and work in ways for parents and children, and for parents and children individually, not all do, or as effectively as they might.

Data here also suggest, however, that in the absence of teacher role in this regard, in cases in which reciprocity is not extended to parents from teachers (parents are not invited into collaboration), initiative from parents is crucial. Parent advocacy is important. In many cases in these data parents report on efforts made to approach their child's teacher and speak to him or her about concerns. Often, as for Mrs. Nelson (Parent 28201), this resulted in collaborative activity involving the parent, student, and teacher. Data here indicate that all parents are prepared to make these efforts if a need should arise and at least some do so consistently. Those without the language of the school and those without the kinds of socio-cultural capital that Lareau (1987, 1989) describes are less likely to make advocative efforts. But while language may pose a particular barrier, these data suggest that it is not the case that parents without "capital" will never intervene at the school or make efforts to work more collaboratively with teachers or exert pressure on teachers to have them work more collaboratively with parents. Mrs. Irving, for example, made efforts on her son's behalf while lacking confidence and feeling incompetent because of her own very weak reading skills. In her case, the teacher was receptive and non-judgemental; both mother and son benefited. In the case of Mrs. Nelson the teacher was not receptive originally; as a result of further effort by her a meeting was arranged through the vice-principal at which time parent and teacher negotiated what was to be a successful collaborative relationship for that year. What these examples of parent intervention and advocacy also point out is that where parent/teacher relationships are concerned, conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. Often it fuels the advocative efforts of parents, and is positive if it results in resolution of issues. When collaborative efforts do not result and conflict is not resolved, conflicts such as that experienced by Mrs. Goode and Miss Halstrom often fester, and become even more negative.

That there is power inequity between teachers and parents is clear. This need not be negative, however, and certainly should not be employed negatively by teachers to exclude parents. And, since the school and the classroom are the teacher's professional "domain" teachers have the greater responsibility for reducing power inequity. Just as one would expect parents to be responsible for making teachers and other visitors feel welcome and comfortable in their homes so too should teachers be expected to do so in the classroom. When teachers do not, however, it is not true that parents can or should do nothing. Parents and teachers are both responsible for students' academic growth and development and each needs to recognize the role of the other in the promotion of that goal. "We should . . . aim," claims Casanova (1996), "for relationships where parents and

teachers respect each other's knowledge about children's needs and work together to maximize their potential" (p. 32).

PART III: AT HOME

PARENTS AS EDUCATORS

Although only some students report that their teachers suggest in class that they get help from their parents when they need it, or acknowledge that this is acceptable, and even though a few teachers ask students to come to them for help rather than going to their parents, all students report that they ask their parents for help at home with schoolwork. The fact that the teacher might not ask or suggest to students that they get help at home does not seem to act as a deterrent to students. Helping at home seems to be an inviolate law of parenting: parents provide or try to provide help to their children, and children seek help from their parents.

According to the data here, all parents help students, but difficulties are encountered. Students don't always want to do their homework and sometimes they procrastinate. Parents don't always feel they know what to do or how exactly to help—to make the job easier for students—but they do want to provide assistance. They need information from schools and classrooms about how to do this. The evidence from parents and teachers here about teachers who are active in this regard suggest that teachers can do much to make helping a more profitable and less anxiety-fraught experience for parents and students. These practices include work folders, newsletters, previews, overviews, curriculum or project outlines, parent information or education sessions, and the provision of suggestions in-person on a casual basis. In providing information to parents on both curriculum and methods, on what to help with and how exactly to help, teachers strengthen the pedagogical relationship between student and parent in the home.

According to Lee, Bryk, and Smith (1993) the role of parents in aiding their children's school learning with help at home "leads naturally to a focus on 'parent education'" (p. 189). The fact that the authors put parent education in quotation marks is a reminder that parent education can be both formal and informal. While it may include workshops and other sessions at school for parents, and for teachers and parents together, this is not the only kind of parent education. When teachers here were asked how they helped parents to work with their children, most often they replied that they had not, thinking, perhaps, only of formal teaching opportunities. However, in ongoing efforts to

provide information to parents, in both written and oral forms, and to respond to their concerns, teachers educate parents.

Although help in the home is common, and not seen as an unnatural responsibility by parents, there seems to be some unease among teachers about asking parents to help with schoolwork, or asking students to ask their parents. Teachers, as comments from the private school teachers here indicate especially, seem to be worried about the extent to which parents do the work for the child. They may be concerned as well about their professional responsibility for children's learning. As far as teacher "education" of parents is concerned it would perhaps be helpful for parents if teachers were to make clear to parents what they perceived the appropriate bounds of "help" to be, and what they would prefer parents not to do. Mrs. Wenzel (Teacher 29100), for example, is explicit about her preference that parents help in mathematics any way they can, that a multiplicity of methods is good. Not all teachers feel the same way about the introduction of mathematics methods to students that are not the methods of the classroom, or about different kinds of help that parents provide. To suggest that parents help in certain ways, and not in others is not to suggest that parents not help at all. Parents too are concerned that their children learn independently, and that they learn as effectively as possible. Being specific with parents about help better enables them to carry out their responsibilities within instructional partnership.

These data show that not only is there much help being provided in the home, there is also much conversation occurring there. Parents and students talk with each other, and parents encourage their children to share information with them about their time at school. Although parents are genuinely interested in the lives and happiness of their children, conversation in the home is particularly important for parents as it provides them with a window into the classroom, particularly if teachers do not provide them with information about current curriculum. Conversation informs parents not only about the child's day-to-day progress and happiness in the classroom, but also about what happened in the classroom that day. And conversation does not seem to be linked to the extent to which teachers communicate or collaborate with students, or the extent to which students like their teachers. Children who are dissatisfied may not speak as volubly or with as much delight about what goes on in the classroom as students who are pleased, but they do communicate this information to their parents. Dissatisfaction and unhappiness are as apparent to parents as satisfaction and happiness. Just as teachers can capitalize on and facilitate the help that occurs in the home, so too can they capitalize on and facilitate conversation in the home about school. That reading and conversation in the home

benefit student learning and performance is clear. A number of teachers mention their efforts to encourage home reading programs, but conversation does not seem to be a deliberate focus of the home practice advocated by teachers. Occasionally, students report that teachers will ask them to discuss a particular topic at home with their parents, seek opinion about something they have been studying, or inquire about their parents' experiences when they were young. Often these requests from teachers are casual, and are adjuncts to the course of study. Very occasionally, teachers will deliberately ask students and parents to work together—through home learning projects such as the novel study implemented by Teacher 21100—in ways which require and stimulate academic discussion in the home. Focus on conversation may be especially suitable at the intermediate levels, as more students are able to read on their own, and may be resistant to doing so with their parents, preferring to read on their own. Certainly, teachers could ask students to ask questions of their parents about their studies or ask about the parent's experience or opinion with respect to particular topics, as an integral part of the work they are required to do. Teachers could also suggest topics for debate or discussion, or simply encourage or facilitate discussion about current events as an extension of that which is already an in-class feature of many intermediate classrooms. Teacher 21100's novel study involved both reading and discussion, requiring parents and students to alternate oral reading of chapters, and then to discuss themes and answer questions together. Pipher (1998) speaks to the importance of developing connections between parents and children in the home, and refers to the "civilized discourse [of] the family meal" (p. 9). A number of parents here too refer to stimulating conversations about school and other topics around the dinner table. Teachers can encourage this "civilized discourse" of the family meal, about school-related and other topics.

In reviewing research on parent involvement Finn (1998) points out that parent "*engagement at home* and *engagement at school* are not equally important to children's learning" (p. 20). Wang and colleagues (1993) have found that the home environment is one of the most important "proximal" influences on the academic performance of students. Other studies (Ho & Willms, 1996; Taylor, 1996; see also Clark, 1983) have shown little relationship between grades and parent involvement at the school (visits, volunteer work, attendance at school events). Although this study does not correlate parent involvement at home with student academic achievement, the data indicate the strength of the involvement of parents at home and its importance to both parents and students, that the involvement of parents at home is directly related to the academic work of their children, which parents are keen to support through their involvement, and the

emphasis of parents, particularly among those who work, on this kind of involvement. Finn (1998) points out that there are three kinds of parental engagement at home that are consistently associated with school performance: (a) organization and monitoring of the child's time, (b) help with homework, and (c) discussion of school matters with the child/children (p. 20). In these data all of the above three kinds of involvement are apparent and have been addressed here.

The importance of the involvement of parents at home, and the fact that many if not most parents of intermediate students cannot be involved at the school suggest the need for a reconceptualization of parent involvement from the perspective of educators and schools. Among teachers, whose perspective and base is the classroom, parent involvement is typically conceived of as involvement there or in the school. As pointed out earlier, however, parents who are not involved with the school or in the classroom during the day (in volunteering, for example) do not feel less "involved" in the education of their children. Parent involvement is not just what parents do at school. It is also—or in some cases only—what they do at home.

Acknowledging that parents are involved at home requires that educators also think of parents as contributors to the education of their children. Welker (1991) suggests that we need to rethink the metaphor of teacher as expert. "The typical model of expert relations which places the consumer in a passive and dependent connection to the professional caregiver," he states, "will not work for education. Education is an activity which demands widespread public involvement and cooperation" (p. 28). Widespread public involvement means the involvement of students and parents. The data here suggest that such is already the case at home. While it is perhaps a good thing to cease thinking of teachers as expert providers and parents (and students) as passive receivers, it is perhaps still positive to think of teachers as experts, about curriculum and pedagogy, for example, *and* of parents as experts, about their children. Teachers can help to bring school into the home and at the same time bring home into the classroom. By their advocative efforts parents can also help to bring home into school, and school into home. Sinclair (1994) speaks of her attempts as a teacher to create home in the classroom, in part by being both sensitive to children's experiences outside of the classroom, and listening to and learning from parents about their children. Her efforts at meaningful interaction with parents also created opportunity for them to learn more about and see their children in different ways. In these kinds of exchanges both teacher and parent are expert.

THE PERSONAL AND THE PEDAGOGICAL AT HOME

Just as personal and pedagogical relationships between teacher and student at school are interwoven, or both one and the other, so too are relationships between parent and student at home. Both talk about school and help with schoolwork are personal and pedagogical. Discussions about school are an example of personal interaction in the home, as much personal interaction as any other discussion, but with a pedagogical theme. Helping with schoolwork is a pedagogical relationship, but one of many pedagogical relationships between child and parent and an ongoing one.

Interestingly, however, given the interwoven nature of the personal and pedagogical in student/parent relationships in the home and the age of students at the Grades 4 to 7 levels, there is not an overwhelming focus on difficulty in relations—either in expectations or reflection on practice—among either parents or students. Although parents and students refer to various difficulties experienced in the helping relationship, generally they are positive about working together, about its productive nature, and about their comfort and enjoyment of it. Given the interrelational difficulties one might expect between parents and adolescent students, this is somewhat surprising. It is perhaps understandable if one views school-related interaction in the context of ongoing interaction between parent(s) and student in the home regarding housework, yardwork, sports, leisure-time activities and friends, for example, which might be fraught with even greater difficulty. Problems encountered regarding interaction with respect to schoolwork may be only one of a number of difficulties, some of which may be even more serious or frustrating than the challenges of helping one's child with homework or projects. In addition, from the point of view of home, schoolwork and homework are but one aspect of a child's (and parent's) homelife which is likely to include play, home and yard chores, care of younger siblings, and involvement in sports, church-related and other family leisure activities and obligations. As far as recommending or promoting instructional relationships between parent and student is concerned, it is also important to remember, from the school perspective, that pedagogy between parent and child emerges not just from interaction about schoolwork, but also from the other kinds of activities listed above—play and leisure, for example—and that these too are important for parents and students.

PART IV: TEACHER CHANGE

Teachers participating in the Co-Production of Learning Project were asked to implement a new parent involvement strategy (or several strategies if they chose) that they had not previously used with their students and parents. At least one formal workshop session was provided to teachers each year at which time they were given the opportunity and were encouraged to exchange thoughts and ideas as well as share concerns. Two or three other less formal sessions—after school or dinner meetings—were also planned each year to facilitate the above and some support was provided through casual visits by project members responsible for each of the different sites, although this varied from district site to district site. This implementation, in immediately asking teachers to adopt a practice, was based on the premise that change in teacher beliefs and attitudes occurs only after change in teacher behaviour (Guskey, 1986; Fullan, 1985). According to Guskey (1986) teachers are more likely to believe something to be true if they have seen it work in their own classrooms and benefit their students. Werner (1988) has also found that teacher experiences of change are influenced by student responses to the new program.

Without baseline data from teachers about what their collaborative activities were with students and parents prior to their involvement in the study, it is difficult to make claims about the extent to which they changed over a one-year period of involvement in this study or even over several years. Some teachers, such as Mr. Sutcliffe (Teacher 21100), Mrs. Munke (Teacher 73100) and Mrs. Kosko (Teacher 51100), had already been working in collaborative ways with parents and students. These teachers may have added or modified a practice or two, but their general ways of working did not change. All teachers reported that they implemented new practices, or tried a little, but data from teachers and parents reveal greater or lesser implementation and greater or lesser success in various classrooms. As far as change in teacher practice is concerned, this study demonstrates not only the value of “pretest” data, in determining a baseline of teacher practice, but also the importance of data from others, those who must perceive teacher practice before it can be said to have effect. That teachers can implement home/school partnership practice is clear, however, and that many teachers in this study did make changes by implementing new practices (“hard” or “soft”) and that these practices were perceptible to parents is also clear.

Despite the limitations of this study in examining teacher change, and the weakness of the Project intervention, some further comment can be made about change in teacher practice and about teachers’ perception of their own change over their two or three year

involvement in this study based on the teacher interview data. In general these data suggest that both implementation of practice, and perception and meaning-making regarding practices, ebbed and flowed together over time. Teachers made ongoing efforts over several years to implement practices, often espousing at the same quite negative views about parents and their participation. Teacher efforts varied in intensity, and among some teachers very little change in practice is evident. In others, there is evidence of a very gradual positive shift in attitudes, of a changing perspective on parent/teacher collaboration while at the same time working with new practices.

In concluding a recent Co-Production of Learning report Coleman, Collinge and Tabin (1993) comment that: "We have not demonstrated that teacher practices *can be changed* during the school year. In fact . . . particular practices are rather stable. To modify practices and more importantly the beliefs and attitudes that underlay them will certainly be difficult. However, we now know that even rather subtle differences between teachers' practice are perceptible to parents and students and that some practices are strongly preferred. It is certainly worth the effort to try to change teacher practices" (pp. 20-21). The limited data here from teachers who participated in this study over two or three years also show that teacher practice is quite stable and that implementing new practices, given that this also involves change in teacher belief and attitude, can take more than one year.

As far as this change in teacher belief and attitude is concerned, earlier analyses of qualitative data from the Co-Production of Learning (Collinge & Coleman, 1992; Coleman & Tabin, 1992) have shown that small changes in teacher behaviour have had some effect on modifying parent and teacher attitudes and perceptions (i.e., between some teachers and some parents). However, quantitative analyses have shown that these changes have not had a large-scale impact across either of the two groups as a whole (Coleman, Tabin, & Collinge, 1993). No quantitative analyses regarding the impact of teacher change in practice on parent and teacher attitudes were conducted here. However, these qualitative data are also consistent with earlier Project findings (see also Collinge, 1994) in showing some small, but gradual change in teacher attitudes and perceptions.

According to Richardson, Anders, Tidwell and Lloyd (1991) successful teacher change is a complex blend of both change in attitude and beliefs, and change in practice. Attitudes and beliefs underlie teacher practices and each new practice embodies specific attitudes and values. "Innovations are more than objects to be handed from the developers to the users" states Werner (1988); "as embodiments of beliefs and values, new programs may be interpreted variously over time within different situations, by different people,

and from various interests” (p. 107). Certainly, as Fullan (1982) points out, “individual meaning is the central issue” (p. 295; see also Fullan, 1991, p. 106). Ultimately, some congruence between the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and the beliefs and values which undergird a new program or implementation must be reached. The data here on teacher change, on teachers’ response to the program, and their own perceptions and attitudes, suggest that the kind of interpretation described by Werner was taking place. Clearly, the Co-Production “program” of collaborative practices is an embodiment of beliefs and values which, in implementation, confronted the beliefs and values of participating teachers about their own and parent response to parent involvement, their sense of the nature of the relationship between parents and teachers, and parents and students, and the apparent barriers and difficulties.

For Richardson (1990), too, teacher activity in the classroom is embedded within teachers’ sets of premises (beliefs and attitudes, theoretical understanding). She contends, further, that when changes are dropped because they don’t “work” for a teacher this is actually because they violate the teacher’s beliefs about teaching and learning (p. 14). For this reason, note Richardson and colleagues (1991) genuine change in teaching practice will only occur “when teachers think differently about what is going on in their classrooms, and are provided with the practices to match the different ways of thinking” (p. 579). According to Richardson (1990) the notion of practice as activity embedded within theory (teacher beliefs and attitudes) is important in thinking about changing teaching practice because change, she says, “centers on the degree to which teachers engage in the dialogue concerning warranted practice and take control of their classroom activities *and* theoretical justification” (p. 16). Taking control of one’s justifications (for practice), she continues, involves reflection on practice (activities and their theoretical frameworks) and an ability to articulate them to others in a meaningful way (Richardson, 1990, p. 16). Thus, “the improvement of the teacher-learning process requires acknowledging and building upon teachers’ experiences, and promoting reflection on those experiences” (Richardson, 1990, p. 12). Teachers must have opportunities to discuss alternative conceptions and activities (“that in combination with some of the teachers’ own conceptions form a view of warranted practice,” Richardson, 1990, p. 16), and to interact and have conversations around standards, theory and classroom activities (Richardson, 1990). Opportunities for shared talk are also critical to teacher collegiality and experimentation (Little, 1982).

The quote above from Richardson and colleagues (1991) suggests that change in attitude must occur before change in practice. Although teachers in the Co-Production of

Learning Project were being asked to work with new practices without specific implementation focus on attitudes (see Guskey, 1986), and results here show that this was not without success even among those who were not particularly predisposed to home/school partnerships, Richardson's work also suggests that more opportunity for discussion—shared talk—would have been beneficial to change in teacher practice here. Although teachers in this study were provided with some opportunities for shared talk these were limited. In the one district site in which teachers met five or six times during the Time 8 data collection year they were appreciative of the number of times they were able to share experiences and understanding. Essentially, reflection on the practice change may have allowed teachers to see that their attitudes had in fact changed or begun to change.

According to Hollingsworth (1992) collaborative conversation is a “means of both learning and support for learning” (p. 375). Hollingsworth notes that a number of the structural features of collaborative conversations support teachers' learning. Several of these have implications for the development of commitment to home/school partnerships among teachers. The first is “a commitment to a relational process” (Hollingsworth, 1992, p. 399), a growing and learning in exchange together. The data here show that the relational process is fundamental to student/teacher interactions from the point of view of students, and also fundamental to the interaction between parents and teachers. It can, at the same time, be an important (collaborative) means of development and growth for teachers with respect to home/school partnerships. The second structure is “valuing our experiences and emotions as knowledge” (Hollingsworth, 1992, p. 399). “Because of this feature,” says Hollingsworth, she and the teachers in her study, “were able to work together equitably as knowledge specialists and to share our evolving knowledge” (p. 399). Certainly all teachers are knowledgeable about parent/teacher and student/teacher relations, and can share that knowledge to benefit all, as, indeed, can parents and students. A third structural feature, “reinforcing learning to teach as a process” is also important in this context. For teachers, learning to work with parents and students in collaborative ways is also a process. Teachers here indicated that implementing new practice and coming to think about parents, and students in different ways, takes time.

According to Hunsaker and Johnson (1992) the conversation and negotiation of collaborative process support teacher reflection, and change in working procedures (p. 364). They contend that their study on the influence of reflective thinking and collaboration on changes in the teaching of reading and writing “demonstrates that

understanding change is not a static process; what researchers or teachers understand initially may be partial and will change in the process of conversations that question their different experiences and interpretations” (Hunsaker & Johnson, 1992, p. 364). They conclude, like Hollingsworth, “that substantive change is a long-term process. Change that requires teachers to reconstruct their beliefs and teaching practices is not amenable to quick-fix approaches” (Hunsaker & Johnston, 1992, p. 364).

For Abbey, Bailey, Dubrick, Moore, Nyhof-Young, Pedretti, and Saranchuk (1997) collaborative conversation provides opportunities for

paradigm orientations and multiple voices to intersect, negotiate, and validate each other (to allow for richer possibilities, deeper understanding, and clearer awareness of ourselves as learners. Such interactions require skills and concepts that are rarely utilized, or even valued, in traditional educational systems. Our collaborative experiences have shown us that a focus on relations and connections can serve to enhance meaning in educational conversation. (p. 112)

For both Hunsaker and Johnson (1992) and Abbey and colleagues (1997), the relational aspect of the collaborative process to which Hollingsworth (1992) refers is especially important.

In a recent study of collaboration and collaborative conversation between teachers about ninth grade students at risk for failure in an inner city high school Weinstein, Madison, and Kuklinski (1995) found that collaboration enabled participants to challenge their beliefs about (and expectations of) these individuals. According to the authors collaborative conversation opened the door “for disconfirming evidence” (p. 121) and gave them a chance to challenge “limiting perceptions” (p. 153). “Teachers,” they note, “took increasing responsibility for reframing obstacles so that positive changes were made in practices and policies that increased learning opportunities for students” (Weinstein et al., 1995, p. 121). According to the authors, teachers gradually translated what they had previously perceived as obstacles into opportunities: “Student constraints dropped off in their importance. . . . Instead, teachers confronted obstacles within themselves, their colleagues, and within school organization and policy, where their analysis and their actions could make a difference for students” (p. 153). As a result of collaboration with one another in support of change in practice, teachers began to see themselves differently, and to see and experience their students more positively.

In the context of parent/teacher and teacher/student collaboration there are also deep-seated barriers and limiting perceptions among teachers and parents. Collaborative conversation among teachers has the potential to help teachers confront issues about collaboration, address barriers, and turn obstacles into opportunities. Collaborative

conversation among teachers could also help teachers address the issues of choice, voice and responsibility in the classroom, and consider or expand possibilities for working in new and different ways with students and parents. Here, teachers were not provided with sufficient opportunities for these kinds of exchanges, the opportunity for collaborative conversation which would act as a means of support for change.

If teacher experiences of change are influenced by student responses to the new program (Werner, 1988) it is likely that changes in teacher practice with respect to parent participation and collaboration would also be influenced by parent responses to those changes. Unfortunately, however, as far as parent practices are concerned, teachers cannot usually see the immediate response of parents to changes in their practice since these reactions typically take place at home. Parents do not always offer their responses voluntarily, and teachers, who do appreciate response or appreciation from parents, do not often seek them out. Teachers do not regularly encounter parents and interact with them as they do on a daily basis with students. These encounters depend either on the initiative of the teacher to speak to or contact parents or the initiative of parents to telephone or visit the teacher at the school, all of which are constrained by a number of factors. As a result of little or no exchange between parents and teachers about home/school practices, teachers often assume these practices, or changes in these practices, to have had no impact. Opportunities for shared talk among parents and teachers would be beneficial, giving parents the opportunity to share concerns and opinions, and giving teachers the opportunity to receive some response or feedback from parents about their involvement strategies, better enabling them to judge the success of their efforts. Regularly planned opportunities such as joint workshops for teachers and parents, or joint parent/teacher meetings to exchange thoughts and ideas on the development of instructional partnerships between teachers and parents would also be valuable to both parties, at the same time providing a means of support for change. Joint opportunities would give parents and teachers a chance to confront and perhaps reconcile both belief and action, of self and other, in personal and thoughtful discussion.

PART V: TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Although teacher practices and attitudes are difficult to change, efforts to alter them should not be abandoned because the stakes—increased student achievement and better attitudes—are too important. And if subtle differences are possible it is these we should continue to work towards. Efforts should be made to better address parent/student/teacher collaboration (home/school partnerships), not simply through research studies such as this, but also within training programs at the university level (pre- and in-service) and by approaching home/school partnerships systematically through professional development over the longterm in schools.

AT UNIVERSITIES

Education that focusses on partnership is critical for teachers at the pre-service, in-service and graduate levels. Typically, as Powell (1991) notes, “the professional preparation of teachers includes little or no attention to the processes of working with parents” (p. 316). However, as Epstein (1995) maintains, “the development of partnership programs would be easier if educators came to their schools prepared to work productively with families and communities. Courses or classes are needed in preservice teacher education and in advanced degree programs for teachers and administrators to help them define their professional work in terms of partnerships” (p. 710). In these university courses attention to theory, research, policy, programs, and practical ideas regarding parent partnership are all necessary.

While developing an awareness of parental concerns and preferences might seem to be especially important for teachers at the pre-service levels, Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998) report in a recent review of the literature on learning to teach that many teacher education program interventions have “little effect upon the firmly held beliefs about teaching” (p. 159) that beginning teachers bring with them to these programs. A more productive approach in learning how to teach, they conclude, is to design programs that build upon the beliefs of these teachers, and provide constant, significant and long-term support for personal development (p. 161). They also refer to Hollingsworth (1992) and speak of the need to engage teachers in a process rather than simply providing them with the knowledge they require. The opportunities for dialogue (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991) and collaborative conversation (Hollingsworth, 1992; Hunsaker & Johnson, 1992) suggested earlier as important to teacher change in the school setting,

are likely to be as fruitful as part of formal opportunities to learn in a university setting for pre-service and in-service teachers.

In general, teacher education needs to focus not only on strictly pedagogical concerns, about how to teach students, but also on interaction between students and teachers, and interaction between teachers and parents. Building and sustaining collaborative relationships with students and with parents is the bedrock upon which instruction takes place and, as such, is ultimately pedagogical activity.

IN SCHOOLS: TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Little (1993) maintains that “conventional forms of professional development and support grounded in training are poorly conceived to help people expand the possibilities for learning, teaching, and schooling. Rarely do they contend with fundamental debates and disagreements about the purposes of schooling, the relationships between teachers and students, and the obligations of teachers to a wider larger community” (p. 140). Certainly, professional development in home/school collaboration for teachers needs to go beyond simple training. Teachers should contend with fundamental debates and disagreements about the purposes of home/school collaboration and instructional partnerships, the relations between parents and teachers, and between teachers and students, and their obligations between and amongst one another. Teacher reflection on practice, collaborative conversation and activity among teachers, is vital to this kind of professional development.

McLaughlin (1990) also refers to the same kind of deep professional development called for by Little. For her this definitely means teachers involved with teachers. “If teachers lie at the heart of successful efforts to enhance classroom practices,” argues McLaughlin (1990), “then the professional networks that engage teachers comprise promising vehicles for change” (p. 15). The natural networks of teachers are critical in providing support for “integrating new practices with traditional routines” (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 15). In professional development and in attempting to implement practices of home/school collaboration teachers can and should optimally be involved together. Since practices of partnership involve parents, professional development and implementation activities that include parents with teachers are also sensible additions to the work of teachers together. Parents too need to contend with debates and disagreements about the purposes of home/school collaboration and instructional partnership and the relations and

obligations between parents, students, and teachers. Reflection on practice, and collaborative conversation with teachers and students, is also vital to parents.

Where professional development and practical field-based efforts towards home-school partnerships are concerned, there is need to address the specific requirements of teachers and schools. These opportunities need to be personally meaningful to teachers (and parents; Swap, 1993), and practical. Epstein (1995) assumes that all schools should want to implement some kind of partnership program, but that “even with improved preservice and advanced coursework each school’s action team will have to tailor its menu of practices to the needs and wishes of the teachers, families and students in the school” (p. 710). Just as principals respond differently to parents in socioeconomically-different schools (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993), so too do teachers need to respond appropriately to the needs of parents and students in their school. Schools and teachers must access the views of parents and students about their respective roles as collaborators and about their collaboration needs. No one kind of professional development activity or partnership program will meet the needs of home/school collaboration within all schools, or address the host of constraints that appear variously in the different contexts of individual schools—even if we aim modestly at only subtle differences. As Epstein (1995) suggests, professional development and partnership program activity must be developed by these participants locally. This kind of work is best conducted, and certainly on principle, in collaboration with parents and students.

Both administrative pressure and support are needed to sustain partnership change efforts in schools. These two variables are crucial to successful change efforts of any kind in schools (Huberman & Miles, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Smylie, 1988). If possible, professional development focussing on home/school partnerships should also be supported by school or district allocations of time, money, personnel (see Huberman & Miles, 1984). This signals to individual teachers or school staffs that there is commitment on the part of the school or district, respectively, to the change. Responsiveness to parents and parent involvement concerns should be, but is not always, a focus of school district improvement efforts (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990).

Professional development efforts should be ongoing and cumulative. Change takes time; it is a process not an event (Fullan, 1982, 1991). Time is especially important as teachers (and parents) need to talk with one another about change efforts, talk with others who have experienced success, and share ideas. Collaborative conversation should not be a one time only occurrence. The kind of professional development that goes beyond training (Little, 1993) requires time. There are no instant techniques or one-off solutions

for developing sensitivity and positive attitudes towards home-school partnerships and for implementing practices. Sustained effort is required.

Given that change is both about beliefs and attitudes, and practice (Guskey, 1986) a concurrent emphasis on change in both attitudes and practice is necessary in professional development activities. "It is . . . evident," states Bateson (1951, p. 177) "that perception determines values: as we see things, so we act. But equally the success or failure of our action will determine our later visions." Teachers need to develop the skills and knowledge that enable them to interact differently with parents ("soft" practices, or positive disposition and approach) and also implement the "hard" classroom practices that make a difference to parents. (See Coleman, Collinge, & Tabin, 1995a).

Greenwood and Hickman (1991) contend that "parent involvement does not seem to have fully entered the mainstream of teacher education; it remains on the fringe. This may continue to be the case unless teacher educators, teachers, administrators, parents, and politicians see the need to change the situation" (p. 287). Many individual teachers can and do successfully implement positive collaboration practices on their own and develop partnerships with students and parents. And school programs have been developed that are effective in involving parents (see Comer, 1980, for example). However, this kind of effort may only go beyond the fringe in practice when a focus on home-school partnership is not only part of the mainstream of teacher education in schools and universities, but also, and in particular, part of schoolwide reform or in-service efforts. Teacher development activities within schools, in the form of school reform or committed in-service projects are likely to have the most potential for building and strengthening home-school partnerships, and be the most profitable avenue for change and improvement.

PART VI:

METHODOLOGICAL RECONSIDERATIONS

INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS

The research undertaken here attempted to answer questions that were not considered directly when the the interview schedules for the larger research project were developed. Specific questions about expectations, for example, were not posed to respondents. For this reason, qualitative analysis was particularly challenging. That one does not ask specific questions does not mean that data are not available. Nor does asking specific questions ensure that data will be available. Interview respondents often discuss issues that aren't raised or avoid or sidestep questions that are asked. However, in asking questions directly there is greater likelihood that there will be more data available from more people about the specific topic in question. The use of data here from a larger research project (Co-Production of Learning) for specific related purposes demonstrates both the utility and flexibility of a large data set, that these qualitative data are indeed rich can be deeply "mined."

In this study parents and students reflect in the surveys and in interviews on the specific teacher in question, and parents and students reflect specifically on each other and the teacher. However, the comments and reflection of teachers refer to their current class of students and the parents associated with these students, or even sometimes to their experience in general with parents and students, and not to specific students and parents. Focussing on triads is difficult, and to some extent impossible, when specific data from the teacher about the child and parent(s) in question are not available. Some interviews were carried out in Time 8 in which teachers were specifically asked, and commented briefly on, the children and parents in their class who had already been interviewed. This experimental work suggests that the approach is possible, and would be useful.

From an organizational point of view this approach—interviewing teachers about specific parents and students—requires greater planning and foresight. Parents and students to be interviewed must be identified, agree to participate and, ideally, be interviewed before teacher interviews take place. In some cases, teachers might not be able to provide much indepth data on students and parents, and their relationship and interaction in the home. Teachers know some students and parents better than others. In

itself this is important and differences in the data because of it are likely to be interesting and meaningful. As an alternative to this approach teachers might be asked to envision and speak about examples of parent/student dyads from their class (or from within their experience) which exemplified either the best or the worst of home-school connections, the best and the worst of student/teacher, parent/teacher, student/parent relationships. In this case, the teacher him or herself would be identifying “outliers” which would likely provide for fruitful data collection. As an alternative to soliciting volunteer parents, those parents and students identified by the teacher (in a current class) could then be approached for interview participation.

This study examined attitudes and practices or, rather “hard” and “soft” practices. Although the survey items for teachers, parents, and students focussed on disposition (for example, how teachers feel about a particular issue), and on actual practice (what they did that demonstrated a disposition) these different kinds of items were not separated for purposes of analysis. To do this with the scales may have helped to answer specific questions about “hard” and “soft” practice, about the extent to which individuals actually do something about which they claim to support and about which they are positive. This would also help to address the difficulties posed by self-report data. Although individuals are just as likely to report favourably on their attitudes as their practices, differential analysis could provide some new insights.

The data here, and the data collection process, also suggest the need for studies characterized by more indepth, open-ended and ongoing interviews. Many of the issues relating to collaboration between parents, students and teachers—such as power, responsibility, voice—are those which require and would benefit from time for exploration. These kinds of concerns do not always surface within sixty or ninety minute interviews, or at least are not necessarily consciously addressed by respondents within a single, relatively short interview. When they do arise individuals often need time to step back and think, in order to become comfortable (or, perhaps, less uncomfortable) with new understandings and with new realizations about self or others.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994), for example, interviewed respondents a number of times successively, in extended discussion. This gave the individuals in question the opportunity to think more deeply about issues already raised, to consider their previous responses in more depth, and prepare for the next interview. Although Lawrence-Lightfoot was interested in life-history narratives, the process of extended interview is likely to be equally rich and worthwhile with parents and teachers, given the nature of the topic here and the kind of serious issues it raises and emotions it evokes.

DIFFERENCES WITHIN CLASSROOMS

These data demonstrate that sometimes triads differ within classrooms. Although quantitative data address this concern to some extent, through mean scale scores and variances, survey data obscure the nature and detail of the differences among triads. If, for example, mean survey scores for a particular classroom are quite high, but there are several instances of dissatisfaction, and much lower individual scores in these cases, the perception of dissatisfaction is real and remains constant for those individuals no matter how high the mean classroom scores.

For this reason, qualitative research on instructional partnerships between students, parents and teachers which involved all or as many parent/student dyads as possible from within single classrooms would be useful. This kind of research would address the issue of commonality (or discrepancy) of perception of teacher attitude and practice across students and parents within single classrooms. For example, how common is the perception of parent/student dyads regarding the teacher? Is parent perception similar? Is student perception similar? Does discrepancy between perception appear within referent groups only or among triads or both? Miss Halstrom is an example of one teacher for whom student/parent reports do vary. More reports are negative than positive, but there are some cases in which parents and students are more positive, or at least neutral. Is this so because teacher interaction with parent/student dyads varies from group to group, or do characteristics of the student/parent dyad or these individuals affect interaction more strongly? Research of the kind specified here would help to answer these questions. It would provide not only a fuller picture of the extent to which opinion varies within classrooms but also help to identify variables which contribute to both the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of parents and students within single classrooms. As parents here mention, the academic record and capabilities of the student do affect the nature of parent/teacher interaction, and are likely to affect student/teacher interaction as well. Other factors, such as family socioeconomic status, may be at play as well.

More extensive research within single classrooms would also help to explore undercurrents which appear within one or a few cases, but which require more data in order to explore more fully. In the case of Teacher 74100, for example, neither set of Time 8 parents expresses outright dissatisfaction with the teacher. Neither claim that they feel excluded. However, within Teacher 74100's interview there are undercurrents of dissatisfaction and teacher distrust of parents. Qualitative data from more parents and more students might provide information about whether these teacher tendencies are perceived by other parents or whether all are equally satisfied.

The decision to interview several sets of parents and students per classroom rather than more dyads from fewer classrooms was a deliberate one (for the Co-Production of Learning Project) in order to permit cross-classroom comparisons. However, focussing on a fewer number of classrooms more thoroughly and more intently would provide different kinds of insights that two or three interviews are not as likely to provide.

EXAMINING OUTLIERS

Exploring more fully the classrooms of teachers who are identified as examples of either positive parent/teacher/student collaboration or negative parent/teacher/student interaction would also be worthwhile. Typically “outliers” (general positive and negative instances, or high and low performers) are identified as a result of study, as they are here through surveys and qualitative data. In order to undertake study on outlier classrooms alone, these kinds of classrooms could be identified (within a school or school district, for example) through some brief initial survey research of parents and students. Alternatively, classrooms could be identified (“nominated”) by parents, administrators or teachers. In the case of this study, or the Co-Production Project, followup research, such as the kind of indepth study and analysis suggested earlier, could be undertaken on high and low classrooms. Research across “low” classrooms would facilitate at the very least, address of the issue posed by the findings of the logistic regression here, that some students in classrooms of “low” teachers appear to be more like those in classrooms of “high” teachers.

While studying positive classrooms is straightforward, there are particular ethical questions involved in focussing on negative classrooms, however, including the moral responsibility of the researcher to be considerate of the individual teacher in question, and to help improve practice. In these cases, participatory research focussing on the improvement of practice, and on the empowerment of teachers through participation, learning and growth might be most appropriate. Teachers who felt their collaborative practice to be weak might volunteer for participation in research if its intent was not simply to study “bad teachers” objectively and impersonally but to help any teacher become a better teacher.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH WITH PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

According to Wagner's (1997) framework of direct researcher-practitioner cooperation, the work conducted here is of the "data-extraction agreement" kind. Direct, systematic inquiry was conducted and reported by the researcher who stood outside schools. The role of the researcher was clearly separated from that of the practitioners who were inside schools. According to Wagner the model of change for this kind of partnership is that knowledge is generated which can inform educational policy and contribute to improved instruction. In what Wagner calls "clinical partnership," on the other hand, systematic inquiry is designed cooperatively and reported by both researcher and practitioner. Practitioners and researcher work together to improve both knowledge of schooling and practice in schools. Researcher is still outside the school and practitioner is inside the school, but both are engaged in action and reflection. The model of change is that researchers and practitioners conduct cooperative research on problems of practice to help practitioners improve their own effectiveness.

Cole and Knowles (1993) distinguish between traditional approaches to educational research (and, specifically, teacher development research), and new, collaborative approaches. "In operational modes within traditional research," they state, "teachers or other 'subjects' usually assume a largely passive role, their involvement often limited to their consent to participate and provide essential data. Primary or sole responsibility for decision making about activities at every phase of the research process is assumed by the researcher" (p. 478). New forms of partnership research, in contrast, are "based on fundamental assumptions about the importance of mutuality in purpose, interpretation, and reporting, and about the potency of multiple perspectives" (p. 478). According to Cole and Knowles true collaboration with a teacher is not simply the teacher participating with the university researcher and working to his or her agenda or the other way around. "Collaboration for collaboration's sake seems counter-productive," the authors maintain, "True collaboration is more likely to result when the aim is *not* for *equal* involvement in all aspects of the research; but, rather, for *negotiated and mutually agreed upon* involvement where strengths and available time commitments to process are honored" (p. 486).

There is possibility in the field of research on parent/student/teacher collaboration for the kind of collaborative research that Wagner (1997) and Cole and Knowles (1993) describe, involving either teachers or parents collaboratively with researcher(s), or both, and even including students. Ironically, although this study is about collaboration

between parents, teachers, and students its research methods were not collaborative. There was no collaboration with or among teachers, parents, and students as participants or as researchers. This kind of participative, collaborative research with parents, teachers and students alone or in combinations would be particularly appropriate given the research context. Inviting parents and students to collaborate would be especially meaningful given the traditionally powerless roles of students in the classroom and of parents with respect to teachers. Collaborative research would allow parents, teachers, and students to suggest and explore issues regarding parent/teacher/student collaboration that are salient to them. Collaboration in the interpretation and presentation of research findings, or in the production of a document, is also a possibility.

Collaborative conversation (Hollingsworth, 1992) would also be appropriate and useful here as a research method, a way of learning more about the instructional relationship between students, parents and teachers, by providing a forum in which they could identify and articulate their concerns. Of the benefit to collaborative conversations in helping beginning teachers learn to teach Hollingsworth (1992) says, "More than giving teachers specific guidance for immediate concerns, the conversations seemed to provide the intellectual stimulation and social interaction needed to create and analyze their own broader knowledge about teaching" (pp. 398-399). Collaborative conversations would be equally valuable for both teachers and parents, as a way of creating and analyzing their own knowledge about parent/teacher/student interactions and collaboration.

Experience in this study during the collection of interview data suggests that collaboration with respondents, and collaborative conversation as a research method (Hollingsworth, 1992; Francis, 1996) would be fruitful. Often interviews that I conducted with teachers and parents continued well after the "official" interview session had ended. Frequently, when asked at the end of the interview whether they had anything further to add on the subject parents and teachers would answer affirmatively and then continue only after the tape recorder had been turned off. Often they (parents in particular) asked questions or attempted to solicit my opinion on problems they were experiencing or recounted situations that they did not feel comfortable discussing on tape even though they had been assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Exchange, rather than interview, occurred. In conversation as a research method, or collaborative conversation, these kinds of difficult or sensitive topics and incidents ("the unsaid" of the official interview) likely could be addressed and more fully explored and analyzed. Either of these kinds of collaboration would help to avoid the "monologic representations" against which Moss

(1996) cautions, in which research is driven by researcher interest and perspective, and would be an appropriate approach for the topic of instructional partnerships between parents, students and teachers.

TEACHER AS RESEARCHER; RESEARCHER AS TEACHER

Wong (1995) suggests that intense reflection as both “teacher” and “researcher” yields interesting insights, but also that being teacher and researcher at the same time presents difficulties (especially in doing research on one’s teaching). Speaking of his own experience as teacher/researcher in the classroom, he claims that there is a tension between meeting the needs of both research and teaching, the one for systematic observation and the other for responsiveness and compassion. For Wilson, however, the teacher/researcher “bifurcation” is foreign (1995). For her teaching and research inform one another:

Rather than experiencing a tension between selves, I use the skills of teaching and research intentionally, to look in different ways at everything I do. Furthermore, it was in learning to be a researcher—learning to look, listen, respond, not assume, watch, entertain difference, and suspend belief (or disbelief)—that I developed greater capacity to act on my teacherly commitments to be moral, to hear and respect my students, to understand my own limitations. Moreover, it was in becoming more scholarly that I began to understand that my moral commitments (as a teacher and researcher) stretched far beyond my stance. (p. 21)

Britsch (1996) acknowledges the difficulties of acting as researcher in one’s own classroom, but like Wilson, found that as a researcher she drew on her teacher skills and as a teacher she drew on her researcher skills. As a result she was better able to understand the phenomenon she was studying in the classroom. She refers to her data analysis as “data analysis with double vision.” For Britsch and Wilson teaching (“effecting a change,” Wong, 1995) and researching (“understanding by systematic observation,” Wong, 1995) are possible at the same time.

Over the course of one year during this study I taught part-time in a Grade 7 elementary school classroom and implemented a number of the instructional partnership strategies discussed here in an attempt to experience firsthand these kinds of practices for working with students and parents. Although these students and parents were not involved in the study, my experience as a teacher in the classroom was consistent with that of Britsch and Wilson in that my role of researcher helped me to better understand the phenomenon from a classroom perspective. It also suggested to me that undertaking formal research of this kind as teacher/researcher—involving the teacher in reflection on

her activities, on the role and participation students and parents as collaborators in the class, and on the process of research as it unfolded—would yield interesting insights.

PART VII: FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

ADVOCACY BY PARENTS

The findings here about parent advocacy suggest further questions for exploration. To what extent, for example, is parent advocacy a function of teacher welcome and openness, a willingness in teacher attitude? To what extent does advocacy take place in cases where teachers do not demonstrate a willingness to work with parents? Here Parent 28201 advocated actively on her child's behalf at the beginning of the school year, but suggests that the teacher did not initially demonstrate willingness to work with parents. Parent 25201 (Mrs. Goode) also confronted what she describes as teacher hostility, but she was not an active advocate. Parent 29204 and Parent 23206 suggest that their advocative efforts are ongoing, whether or not their children have difficulties and no matter who the teacher. Are parents who confront inaccessibility in teachers, or have problems, more apt to be advocates? Or, are certain kinds of parents, those with the sociocultural capital to which Lareau (1987, 1989) refers, advocates? Certainly accessibility, of sociocultural or other kinds of capital, is a key issue overall. Language, for example, is a basic point of entry to schools. Parents without the language of the school are not likely, or are far less likely, to approach the school on their child's behalf. Cultural understandings about schools may also inhibit parental advocative efforts. And, the extent to which parents advocate may also depend on their socio-economic status, or their own school experiences. Although one can suggest reasoned hypotheses about these specific questions, further exploration is required, especially to determine why some parents advocate more than other parents in similar settings and with similar backgrounds.

TEACHER-PARENTS AND PARENT-TEACHERS

Although parents were asked to indicate on survey questionnaires whether they were or had been teachers, no separate analysis was conducted here with either the quantitative or qualitative data (or in the Co-Production Project at all). Teachers were not asked whether they were parents, and this was not a line of questioning in teacher interviews either. Comments in the qualitative data from parents who indicate in the interviews that they are teachers suggest that these individuals possess particular insight about the classroom that other parents do not have. This phenomenon—parents who are also teachers—is an

interesting one to explore from both the perspective of the home and the perspective of the school. For example, does the involvement at home of parents-who-are-teachers differ from the involvement at home of parents who are not teachers? Does the interaction of parents-who-are-teachers with their child's teacher differ from that of other parents who are not teachers? As far as teachers themselves are concerned, to what extent do teachers who are or are not parents vary in their understanding of the contribution of parents at home? Does the collaborative work of teachers-who-are-parents with parents and students differ from that of teachers who are not parents? How do teachers-who-are-parents integrate these roles at school? How do parents-who-are-teachers integrate these roles at home? Do they integrate these roles or not? Answers to these questions may help us to learn more about home-school partnerships and collaboration between parents, students, and teachers. Peterson (1998) suggests that researchers need to recognize and integrate multiple identities. The recognition and integration of multiples identities in teachers and parents—as parents and teachers—merits exploration in research, especially in the context of parent/student/teacher instructional partnerships.

METAPHORS

Apparent in the qualitative data here, especially in teacher and parent interviews, are a variety of different metaphors used to describe relations between parents and students and students and teachers. Among teachers the most notable example is that of Teacher 74100 who uses a variety of metaphors (among them, bargain, jail, and warfare metaphors) to describe parent/teacher relationships and student/teacher relationships. Interim reports are his “new secret weapon.” Parents take “the path of least resistance” and give him “flack.” Like parents, students must “buy in” and if they stay in his class for two grades are “repeat offenders.”

Metaphors, Sfard (1998) points out, shape our thinking and guide our work. (See also Lakoff, 1987, and Lakoff and Johnson, 1980.) In critically evaluating two common metaphors for learning (the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor) Sfard explains that “different metaphors may lead to different ways of thinking and to different activities. We may say, therefore, that we live by the metaphors we use” (p. 5). Unfortunately, Sfard adds, metaphors are a double-edged sword because, “on the one hand, as a basic mechanism behind any conceptualization, they are what makes our abstract (and scientific) thinking possible; on the other hand, they keep human imagination within the confines of our former experience and conceptions” (p. 5).

Since metaphors can shape our thinking and activity either positively or negatively, examining the metaphors teachers and parents use to describe interactions between themselves and between self and students may help us to understand these interactions more fully, how they might limit us and how, possibly, different kinds of metaphors may be more useful. For example, in the case of Teacher 74100, how do war and jungle metaphors shape student/teacher interaction and parent/teacher interaction in his classroom? How do these kinds of metaphors shape parent/teacher and student/teacher interaction in general? Can collaborative instructional relationships be developed and maintained when teachers, students, and teachers speak of themselves and others in ways which define them as adversaries or hostile combatants? Are there other kinds of metaphors which teachers, parents, and students use, and how do these affect the way they think about and interact with one another? How might other kinds of metaphors more positively shape and define parent/teacher/student interaction?

CULTURAL/MINORITY ISSUES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The interview data from Mrs. Munke, Ms. Lurie and Mrs. Weir, who teach in Meadow Brook school which has strong representation from several cultural minorities suggest the need for further research in this area in British Columbia. The topic is well-explored in the U.S., but has not been explored deeply in Canada, at least in Western Canada. Rapidly changing demographics in Vancouver and in the surrounding urban and suburban communities over the past twenty years have created schools of increasing cultural heterogeneity. The collaboration/instructional partnership needs and experiences of these parents and students are likely to be different than those of the cultural majority. Delgado-Gaitan (1991, 1992) has conducted much research on parent involvement in Mexican-American communities. Further research on minority communities in B.C., including focus on First Nations peoples, would be appropriate.

INVESTIGATING INCONGRUITY

Typically parents and students tend to see teachers similarly. When one is satisfied (or dissatisfied) with the teacher, the other tends to be satisfied (or dissatisfied) as well. Occasionally, however, student and parent views vary somewhat. Investigating cases of incongruity among parents and students may provide further insight into teacher practice in collaboration and the perceptions of both students and parents with respect to teachers.

CONFLICT

The data about parent advocacy suggest that often parental advocative efforts arise because of conflict between home and school, due to differences in perception and practice between teacher and parent. This conflict is positive when it is resolved and solutions are found as a result of the the advocative efforts of parents. Sometimes, however, conflict remains unresolved. There are a number of interesting questions regarding the relationship between conflict and collaboration to address in further research. For example, are resolution and collaboration more likely to occur with certain kinds of conflicts and not others (those emerging from academic problems as opposed to those emerging from behavioural problems)? Do conflicts and collaborative outcomes differ based on the cultural or socioeconomic background of students and families? What kinds of teacher and parent practices emerge from conflict about issues? To what extent does successful resolution of a problem between teacher and parent during one school year extend into successful interaction, and continuation of the positive relations which emerged from the solution, into the next school year with a different teacher?

NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

The parent data here show that sometimes parents are not able to help their children with homework or answer their questions. Often in these cases parents develop networks of support, or take advantage of other avenues of assistance for their children, such as older siblings, other residents in the home, grandparents, or friends. Students, too, seek out other sources of support, such as older siblings or friends. Support for students in the home is often conceived of uniquely as support or help from parents, but this can and often does come from other individuals as well. These data about networks of support suggest that participation from individuals outside the triad is a part of home-based interaction about school. As an aspect of home-school collaboration, assistance from other quarters deserves fuller investigation. How exactly are these support networks developed? Do these networks develop only in instances where parents lack academic skills and background, or do they develop in other homes as well, those in which parent or parents are employed full-time or often away from home? Do all students—those that are academically strong and those that have difficulties—develop networks of support between themselves and siblings or friends? Is it appropriate for schools to help to develop these kinds of networks? If so, how can schools encourage or help to develop them?

Networks of support also seem to be a feature of classroom life which students rate highly. Students appreciate classrooms in which they can take advantage of networks for help, or classrooms in which help among students is encouraged and facilitated. Further exploration about the role of networks of support in classroom, and of the opportunity for help and support from other students as a characteristic of teacher/student collaboration, is needed. Do all teachers who work collaboratively with students encourage help and support among students? Do teachers in classrooms where networks of support are encouraged also support or facilitate the development of networks of support at home? These data show that for students, collaboration is not simply of question of collaboration with teachers and parents. A more complete knowledge about this may expand our conception of collaboration in the classroom.

LONGITUDINAL STUDY

More indepth longitudinal study is required of both teachers and families. The following are a sample of but a few questions which may provide some starting points: To what extent does successful experience in one particular year with one particular family extend into successive years? Do positive collaborative experiences affect parent practice over years? Do parents become more advocative as their children become older, or more advocative if they experience successful resolution and collaboration with a particular teacher?

PART VIII: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING AND HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Findings from this study suggest that home-school partnerships or teacher/student collaboration and parent/teacher collaboration occur and can begin in individual classrooms. Partnership practices can be established by individual teachers in individual schools outside of restructuring or school improvement efforts. The teachers here who exemplified positive partnership practice with students and with parents were not teaching in schools distinguished in any way by particular restructuring efforts nor were these schools undertaking any specific school improvement efforts in this area. Other non-study teachers in the same schools were not necessarily working in collaborative ways with students and parents, or establishing partnerships with them. These were not “restructured” schools or “professional development” schools, or “democratic” schools.

To say that collaboration can occur outside of school restructuring efforts does not mean that it should not or cannot. According to Peterson, McCarthy and Elmore (1996) restructuring is a key word “to characterize changes needed in the organizational structure of schools” (p. 120). The plausible premise of restructuring, they note, is that by changing the ways in which schools are organized, educators can change how teachers teach and increase the opportunities for student learning (p. 120). In their study on restructuring experiments in the way teachers teach writing in three elementary schools Peterson, McCarthy, and Elmore (1996) found, however, that new practices evolved as teachers learned, (p. 147) but that this did not necessarily follow from new structures established. “School structures can provide opportunities for the learning of new teaching practices and new strategies for student learning,” they summarize, “but structures, by themselves, do not cause the learning to occur” (Peterson, McCarthy, & Elmore, 1996, p. 148; see also Elmore, 1995.) Changing policies or structures does not mean that practice will necessarily change or change in meaningful ways. Neither does removing constraints or obstacles ensure more effective practice, as McLaughlin (1990) points out: “A teacher with reduced class size or new materials, for example, does not necessarily do a better job in the classroom” (p. 15). In the context of home/school partnership, giving teachers several hours a week to plan home-school communication, or plan for and develop other practices for partnership, for example, does not ensure that they will do it.

According to Peterson, McCarthy and Elmore (1996) one of the problems with restructuring is “isolation from any specific purposes” (p. 121). Ultimately, they contend, “school structure follows from good practice not vice versa” (p. 149) and good practice follows from specific purpose. For Newman (1993) purposiveness is key to reform and restructuring. New organizational structures may be necessary to improve education, he maintains, but alone they are not sufficient. The issue is how the structure “can support the building of solid programmatic focus for teachers, administrators, parents and students” (Newman, 1993, p. 6). And particular commitments and competencies, he maintains, are necessary to guide this practice. “Organizational structures alone assure the development of no particular individual commitments or competencies” he asserts. “Unless the structures pursue an agenda of particular commitments and competencies, that is, an agenda of powerful content, there is no way to predict whether education will improve” (Newman, 1993, p. 11).

There are four themes which represent, in Newman’s view, the most important new forms of commitment and competence for teachers. He focusses on teachers “because they have the most direct opportunities to influence students” (p. 7). These commitments and competencies are: (a) depth of understanding and authentic learning, (b) success for all students, (c) new roles for teachers, and (d) schools as caring communities. Newman (1993) maintains that within the restructuring literature there is less recognition of the fourth challenge, that of “building commitment and competence, not according to conventional ways of delivering staff development but, instead, within schools that are simultaneously trying to transform themselves into caring communities” (p. 8). This is particularly important, he maintains, because schools need to be fashioned into caring communities in order to reinforce the first three needed commitments and competence.

Reporting on work at the National Center for Restructuring Education Darling-Hammond (1996) explains that she and colleagues have identified several factors that support powerful teaching and learning in schools which produce “dramatically unexpected outcomes” (p. 13) for low-income, minority and at-risk students. Among these are the development of structures for caring which she defines as “structures that enable teachers to know students well and to work with them intensely” (p. 13), and the development of structures for shared decision-making which she defines as “shared discourse about teaching and learning among teachers, often with students and parents as well” (p. 14). Having a voice is also a key element of restructuring according to Newman (1993), which he defines, for the school’s professional staff and parents, as “enough control over the organization to develop a sense of ownership” (p. 9).

The themes of caring and decision-making speak to the broader concept of collaboration, or partnership, discussed here, in which students, parents, and teachers work together to create the kinds of relationships, and working and learning conditions, in and out classrooms, which most benefit student learning. These foci—caring and decision-making—are, to use Newman’s terms, the “commitments” of collaboration which certainly can be a focus for school restructuring and school improvement efforts.

According to Welker (1991) “the point of reform should not be simply to improve the abilities of the school and the teacher to foster educational excellence. The point should also be to foster those creative forms of collaboration and participation which would in turn promote wider sense of public responsibility regarding education” (p. 32). As such, reforms in education need to be sensitive to the negative implication of the teacher-as-expert metaphor which suggests that the blame for and the answers to all problems lie within the abilities of one group (teachers) or one institutional structure (the school) (Welker, 1991, p. 32). Welker suggests not only that collaboration is important as a reform in and of itself, but that it is also or should be central to any other reform. That is, we can reform for collaboration, but we can also and should reform collaboratively.

For Elmore (1995), like Newman, the actual restructuring or reorganization of schools and classrooms should emerge from commitment to a particular reform. He suggests that restructuring should come out of teacher work, in response to new practice: “reforms might focus first on changing norms, knowledge, and skills at the individual and organizational level *before* the focus on changing structure. That is, teachers might actually learn to teach differently and develop shared expectations and beliefs about what good teaching is, and then invent the organizational structures that go with those shared skills, expectations, and beliefs” (p. 26). As far as the development of partnerships between parents and teachers, and between students and teachers are concerned, the key, then, is to aim to develop partnerships first and then to ask what kind of structural changes might be helpful in order to support these partnerships. Darling-Hammond (1996) notes that “growing research evidence illustrates the success of alternative organizational arrangements—smaller, more communitarian structures fostering more cooperative modes of learning . . . stronger relationships between teachers and students that extend over multiple years, greater use of team teaching, and participation of parents, teachers, and students in making decisions about schooling” (p. 13). Interestingly, all of these connect to collaboration as a restructuring focus, especially to decision-making/participation and caring as specific commitment foci of collaboration. The data here suggest the value of cooperative modes of learning as a facilitative structure for

collaboration between teachers and students. The extension of classroom relationships between students and teachers over several years, and therefore of instructional relationships between parents and teachers, is another possible structural change facilitating collaboration between parents, students and teachers. Although teachers, parents and students in this study were not asked to speak to restructuring ideas specifically, and generally did not do so, they could likely suggest a number of ideas for structural change emerging from partnership development.

To say also that the development of home/school partnerships can occur outside of and need not be part of school improvement efforts does not mean that it cannot or should not, or that teachers should not work together in this endeavour. Certainly, building partnerships with students and parents is a worthwhile, laudable, and indeed needed focus for school improvement efforts. There is likely to be greater success when improvement or implementation are part of a schoolwide focus no matter what the particular goals if collaboration with other teachers, or at least working together with other teachers, is by definition a necessary feature of schoolwide school improvement efforts. Working in collaboration with other teachers serves as both impetus and support. Teachers can help each other to implement or improve practice. Schoolwide efforts ensure, at the very least, that there will be more opportunity for success. The more teachers that are involved the greater the chances for implementation on a wider scale

As noted earlier, Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore (1996) found in their study on restructuring experiments that new practices evolved as teachers learned, but that this learning did not necessarily follow from structural changes such as the provision of opportunities for staff development workshops (p. 147). What mattered ultimately was that teachers learned. "Changing practice," they maintain, "is primarily a problem of learning, not a problem of organization. Teachers who see themselves as learners work continuously to develop new understandings and improve their practices" (p. 148). What was key was developing understanding and "shared understanding," that teachers had a chance to engage in conversation with one another, and to have a supportive community. Teachers can come to new understandings alone, but working with others increases the likelihood of coming to new understanding and of becoming a learner as one learns from and with others. Collaboration itself can be a means of learning about collaboration, helping teachers to learn about partnership and to develop practices of collaboration with parents and students.

Although collaboration between parents, teachers and students is not always (or even often) a focus of school improvement or school restructuring efforts, it is a feature of

“effective schools.” It can make schools and classrooms more effective or “virtuous” (Sergiovanni, 1992) places for children and is a worthy goal for any school improvement or school restructuring plan. Ultimately, however, what matters is what happens in classrooms, what teachers do in classrooms, and that in fact they do something in classrooms. In summarizing research on the school improvement process Huberman (1993) points out that even when programs depend on strong coordination between levels, the various levels—either district, school or classroom—interpret the program individually (p. 24). Where technical issues (such as curriculum, instruction, and evaluation) are concerned, he notes, “activities in one schoolhouse have virtually no bearing on activities in another building and . . . within a given schoolhouse, each classroom is functionally independent” (p. 24). Sometimes even when policies and programs are established, as Wang and colleagues (1993) point out, these “do not always reach down to the classroom level. Effective policies require implementation by teachers at the classroom and student level” (p. 276). For students and parents this is the locus of instructional partnership.

SUMMING UP

Among the factors affecting partnerships between parents and teachers, and between teachers and students much cannot be altered. Teachers cannot change the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the families they serve. They cannot change socioeconomic level; they cannot relieve economic burdens. They cannot change parent intellectual capacity, or that of their students. They cannot create more time in a day for busy parents to help their children, or more time in a day to interact with their students.

Among the constraints inhibiting partnership much is alterable, however. In summarizing a study on students’ perceptions of school and learning Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1992) conclude that “of most importance to practitioners and policy makers is the fact that many of the forces students mention are not objective constraints but factors under the control of teachers and principals” (p. 696). The same can be said here of teachers and students, and of parents and teachers. In the classroom teachers can work more collaboratively with students. They can interact with them positively and take an interest in them personally and in their lives outside of school. They can create a positive classroom environment for learning, and an active and challenging classroom environment, by inviting students to participate with them, by giving them choices, and voice in classroom programs and activities. They can create a supportive classroom

environment in which help is readily available, and help among students is encouraged. They can work differently with students in classrooms, and affect their attitudes and practices.

Teachers' skills in working with parent partners can also be developed and their knowledge of effective practices increased. They can improve the practices they already use, or increase their frequency, and they can introduce new practices to their repertoires. They can be and become teachers who believe that all parents are capable of helping their children. They can learn about and acknowledge the work that parents do at home with their children, and the knowledge parents have about their children. Teachers can reassure parents of their ability to help their child, and they can show parents how to do that more effectively. They can provide information about curriculum and about student achievement and progress, which facilitate help at home, and, thus, effective collaboration. They can be or become comfortable working with parents and unthreatened by the interest and presence of parents in the school or classroom. At the same time, they can encourage parents and help to make them comfortable in schools. Teachers cannot mandate parent activity, but they can activate and sustain the conditions under which it will flourish. By their attitudes and practices—what they do to reach out to and involve parents—they can influence parental attitudes and practices.

When parents talk with their children at home about school, when they help and encourage their child, when they monitor their child's work, and work with and advocate before the teacher in order to support the child's learning, the instructional setting of the classroom is strengthened. When teachers work collaboratively in the classroom with the students, and work collaboratively with the parents to support learning at school and home, the instructional settings of the classroom and home are strengthened. Optimal conditions are created for learning and students are more committed to school.

Some contend that the impetus for activating collaboration with parents and with students rests with teachers. As far as collaboration is concerned Lezotte (1986, in Henderson, Marburger & Ooms) claims that "teachers and administrators at local schools must assume the responsibility for initiating and encouraging parental involvement" (p. vi). Certainly, the education of the child in schools is based in the classroom, the hub of the wheel involving parents, students, and teachers. From a school improvement or school restructuring perspective the responsibility rests, logically, with teachers and schools. From a practical perspective this also seems logical and sensible, as more and more parents work outside the home and are not able to be at the school during the day, but are able to and do help their children at home.

Whether one believes that the impetus lies with teachers or parents, or both, the triads of parents, teachers, and students which are characterized by successful instructional partnerships are models of interactivity and interdependence. They are consistent with the systemic view of schools described by Andrews (1987). "The ecosystem view," he states, "stresses complexity and variability of the individual component parts The system, rather than having only one head (top-down), has many heads ready to receive information, make decisions, and direct performance." (p. 155). In the case of students, parents and teachers, all are involved and everybody counts.

Coleman and Collinge (1991) speak of the "collaborative and responsive mutual influence system" of the integrated school environment, "in which all gain" (p. 281). The triad is also or optimally can be a collaborative and responsive mutual influence system in which all gain. In the triad what individuals do affects the other individuals and how well they do and can do their work. The actions of one in the duality—especially in the case of teacher and parents—facilitates, or does not, the work of the other. The actions of two in the triad (one duality—especially parent and teacher) affects the work of the third.

The individuals of the triad are not only mutually responsive, but are mutually responsible. Collaborative relationships (between teachers and parents, parents and students, and students and teachers) are "based upon mutual respect, shared goals, and agreed-upon operational roles. At various times and for various purposes, each participant is both teacher and learner, initiator and respondent; each shares in . . . collective responsibility" (Coleman & Collinge, 1991). And the collective responsibility of parents and teachers can have benefit for students. Of its potential Berger (1991) says: "Parent-teacher collaboration will help provide avenues for children to find success both in and after school, but both parents and teachers must recognize their responsibilities. Neither can expect the other to accomplish the task alone; it is a collaborative effort" (p. 218).

The terms "participation," "involvement," and "cooperation" do not sufficiently convey the mutuality of responsiveness and responsibility in these collaborative relationships which focus on instructional issues. In a collaborative educational setting students can do more than just "participate;" parents can do more than just "cooperate;" teachers can do more than just "involve." They are and can be partners. Sergiovanni (1992) describes the kind of school in which parents, teachers and students are partners as "virtuous," one in which these individuals have

reciprocal and interdependent rights to participate and benefit and with obligations to support and assist. It is recognized that the school needs the advice and support of parents if its work

in teaching and learning is to be meaningful and effective. By the same token, parents need the advice and support of the school if their work in parenting is to be meaningful and effective. (p. 113)

Partnership is a recognition of the responsiveness and responsibility we share, as parents and teachers, of the need for each other, of the need to reach in (inside ourselves) and to reach out. It is not just a matter of supporting one another, and in so doing, students, but also of working together. As Berger (1991) emphasizes, “schools and parents face a challenge to work together to provide the necessary education and support that children need. To do this, parents must continue to be involved with the school, and schools must continue to reach out to parents” (p. 217).

Comer (1984, 1991) contends that the best results for children are achieved when schools and families work together. Unfortunately, these institutions do not always work together and, as Lightfoot (1979) points out, parents and teachers will not be comfortable with one another until they both recognize that the contributions of each are important and necessary to the development of children. Recognizing one’s responsibilities and the responsibilities of others is important, but just as important is acknowledging the abilities of the others to meet those responsibilities. Casanova (1996) notes that “we should . . . aim for relationships where parents and teachers respect each other’s knowledge about children’s needs and work together to maximize their potential” (p. 32). This does not mean that parent, teacher, or student will always act appropriately and never make mistakes, but is a recognition of the fact that the intentions of parents and teachers are usually honourable, that the efforts of parents and teachers are usually always towards the goal of maximizing student potential. Teachers, Casanova (1996) says, “may not always do the right thing, but they almost always think that what they are doing is in the best interest of children. Parents need to accept that notion as well as the fact that those people have training and experience to prepare them for the task and also a take a huge responsibility daily for the children entrusted to them” (p. 32). She adds, that “likewise, teachers need to understand that parents, even those who are poor and unschooled, also have the best interests of their children in mind” (Casanova, 1996, p. 32).

The evidence here suggests that both parents and teachers, or either teachers or parents (and students too), can take the initiative where home-school collaboration is concerned. There is, however, quantitative difference in the efforts of parents and teachers which speaks to the importance of the initiative of schools and teachers. When parents are advocative and make efforts to initiate collaboration their collaborative efforts are typically, and quite naturally, on behalf of their own child. They stand in relation,

instructionally and personally, to only one student. In instructional and personal interactions teachers, on the other hand, stand in relation to all of the students in their class. Collaborative efforts initiated by teachers have the potential to affect more students than those initiated by parents. To suggest that it is important that teachers and schools take responsibility (or at least some responsibility) to initiate collaboration is not to suggest that parents do not need to or should not do so themselves. Initiative is not necessarily an either/or proposition. But initiative from school and teachers is critical and significant, (and, indeed, required in the case of school improvement or school restructuring efforts focussing on collaboration) because of its potential to reach the many rather than the few and particularly in light of the traditionally hierarchical relations of power between parents and teachers, and between teachers and students.

If teachers and schools are to commit to partnership and to the initiation of collaboration, they must commit to all parents despite any objections they can muster. According to Casanova (1996) the literature on parent involvement, including that of Epstein, ignores “the parents who want to exercise absolute control not only over the school experience of their children but also of children in general” (p. 31). “We cannot romanticize parent involvement and proclaim its virtues,” she continues, “without also acknowledging its excesses” (Casanova, 1996, p. 31). Casanova then cites Ogawa (in Casanova, 1996) who argues that effective organizations

must create both bridges and buffers between themselves and their students' parents. They must create bridges because they are dependent on parents to provide resources that affect the academic performance of their students. But they must also provide buffers to protect the school from interference with the professional discretion of teachers and principals. (Casanova, 1996, p. 31)

Casanova summarizes Ogawa's conclusion that the dominant view of parent/school relations is “conceptually blind to half the picture” (p. 31). While Ogawa and Casanova may consider the parents against whom buffers must be created to be “half the picture,” that they are indeed half the parents is not substantiated by this study. This work suggests that the bridges must certainly be wider than the buffers, as there are more parents who want and need bridges than those who do not. Epstein (in Brandt, 1989) points out that, “about 2 to 5 percent of parents may have severe problems that interfere, at least for a time, with developing partnerships; and . . . about 20 percent of all parents are already successfully involved” (p. 27). She adds that “the other 75 percent would like to become more effective partners with their children's schools” (p. 27). Epstein's figures suggest that ninety-five percent of all parents want bridges. They also suggest that the number of those against whom schools and classrooms need to buffer themselves is also likely to be

small. There will be parents who interfere and want to exercise absolute control. The fact that this is so, however, should not deter us from committing to collaboration with students and parents. That some parents are particularly challenging, or that some parents are not able to or choose not to respond to the collaborative efforts of schools and teachers does not mean that efforts should not be made. Lack of effort because of a few does not justify lack of effort for all, effort which is likely to benefit the majority. Committing to collaboration means doing so for all, in hope for those who will respond in turn. The attitude of Mrs. Munke towards the invitation of parents to school activities and their participation in these events also applies where collaboration with parents at the classroom level is concerned: "Even if only a few of them can come," she states, "at least they know they're welcome."

Casanova (1996) also argues that teachers must be open to all kinds of parents, and not treat some of them (for example, minority and low-SES) differently than others in terms of either expectation or practice. In a review of the quantitative literature on culturally sensitive parent education programs Cheng Gorman and Balter (1997) conclude that "initial efforts to modify programs to be more linguistically acceptable have since evolved into the development of programs designed specifically for target cultural groups. The rationale for encouraging this trend is clear. If parent education is to be effective, it must be made not only available to all populations, but *relevant* and *acceptable* to all populations as well" (p. 366). Casanova (1996) maintains that we must commit to all parents equally, but Cheng Gorman and Balter remind us that in committing to all equally we must sometimes tailor our approach and efforts specifically, in order to reach and meet the needs of all parents equally. Because of diversity, and increasing diversity, among our student and parent communities, committing to all parents equally may mean, on the practical front, having to do things in a number of ways.

Lightfoot (1979) describes teachers and parents as being "worlds apart." Physically, parents and teachers are often worlds apart. Sometimes they are worlds apart psychically—in terms of their expectations and goals for one another and for the student. Although parents and teachers at the Grades 4 to 7 levels are often apart, they can still communicate and work together and with students to help students learn. Doing so is not simply a question of getting together in person. It is a question of getting together in more important ways. It is a matter of being aligned in terms of goals and expectations. It is a matter of doing things—working collaboratively with student in the classroom or working collaboratively with the student at home—and reaching out and responding to one another in these efforts to help the student learn .

Coleman and LaRocque (1990) use the term “integration” to convey their emphasis “on those activities which bring members of the community into direct contact with curricular and instructional issues” (p. 128) Parents at home and teachers at school are already in direct face-to-face contact with instructional issues. What is needed is that these efforts be integrated. Teachers and parents need not only to be in direct contact with curricular and instructional issues; they need to be in contact with these issues together, and together with students. When they aren’t already together in this collaborative sense they need to get it together.

REVELATION(S)

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. (Revelation 1:19)

MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AS RESEARCHER, TEACHER AND PARENT

Since the year that Jason and Werner were students in my class I have taught other students and interacted with other parents. After the experiences of my early years of teaching I did not think in particularly new or different ways about the interactions between parents and teachers or between teachers and students. I did inform parents more fully by newsletters and previews, and invited them to observe and volunteer in the classroom, but did not implement any other of the positive practices employed by many of the teachers here, such as weekly work folders, portfolios of student work for discussion at interview time, interim report cards, or student planners. I tried to be generally more responsive to parents, and the needs of parents and students at home. I felt that I was welcoming and open to parents, but thought little about how collaboration applied to students and teachers in the classroom.

In 1987 I spent a year in Australia during which time my focus on home/school partnership was renewed and revitalized. During my work as a long-service leave replacement teacher I spent time, ranging from four weeks to a full ten-week term, in a number of classrooms. In one Grade 5 classroom where I taught for five weeks I planned and developed curriculum for the class, but otherwise maintained basic classroom programs, schedules and expectations. One of the practices that the teacher had implemented, which most teachers of the upper elementary grades there used, was student

planners for all. In this particular class students entered the room in the morning and placed their planners upside down near my chair in the reading/conversation corner. While they organized themselves for the day and completed a sponge activity, I looked through all the student planners, read and responded to any messages by parents (or students), jotted notes to parents (or students), and signed off on parent signatures. What I had previously thought would be a difficult and time-consuming task, especially for a class of thirty students, was easy and speedy. After I returned the planners, students then kept them on their desks for quick access. Throughout the day I could quickly jot in them a few words of encouragement to student and parent, a request for review at home, or a note about about challenges or successes. At the end of the day students consulted the work and activity schedule on the blackboard and completed their planners. I circulated throughout the room, glancing at planners to ensure that students had completed them, reviewing the reminders on the blackboard, and answering questions or adding any comment or reminders necessary about homework or upcoming assignments and activities. I found, as did many of the teachers in this study, that the planner helped students to be responsible for their own work, and to ensure that they completed the homework and and other longterm assignments that were on the blackboard agenda. Communciation between home and school was also easy and productive. Reminders and notes were sent home efficiently, and any necessary meetings quickly arranged. Problems were made apparent immediately (the fact that homework was not done, that a child was having difficulty with something at home or at school, that gym strip was forgotten, for example) and were remedied quickly. I occasionally saw parents after school at the classroom door, although most of them worked during the day, but even when I did not I felt in touch through the use of the student planner.

Several years after my return from Australia I began my doctoral studies and became involved in the Co-Production of Learning Project. During that research and the beginning stages of this study I became convinced, because of my experiences in Australia, and my growing knowledge of the teachers in this study and their successful practice, that it was possible to work with parents in collaborative ways, and to implement the beneficial practices that I had seen in actual classrooms. I decided that my doctoral program must include some further teaching in an elementary school classroom so that I could implement these practices myself in order to be able to speak convincingly of them from experience, as both a teacher and a scholar, and as an advocate of positive change in practice of this kind. During one school year I spent a day a week teaching in a Grade 7 Late French Immersion class. As part of my “action plan for collaboration” I

signed all student planners each day I was in class and attempted to communicate to parents as much as possible in the planner with encouraging notes about students. I made an introductory phone call to each home in September and then tried to make at least one or two more “good news” calls throughout the year. I also sent home frequent newsletters about curriculum (an average of once a month) including a lengthy introductory newsletter in September with expectations and guidelines. Students completed several projects for which I prepared outlines which were to be shared with parents. I also held two parent meetings throughout the year about specific curricular programs. In addition, each Friday students left with a home learning activity in math which we discussed as a class the following Friday. Parents were invited to observe and volunteer in the classroom, and were invited to special events and activities.

Interestingly, although I realized that these practices—such as project outlines, for example—were beneficial to students I was surprised to see students responding themselves. In particular, they looked forward to receiving their planners on Friday mornings so that they could see if there were any positive comments in them for their parents about their work. Parent response was positive in general to all of these practices. Many parents commented enthusiastically on the home learning activities in math. Often parents responded to my comments in the student planner or asked questions. Some parents attended my curriculum meetings and although none came to observe casually in the classroom, there was attendance at special events. Even though it was a challenge to maintain some of these practices consistently throughout the year because I was only teaching one day a week and because my partner teacher did not use some of the them in the same way—for example, she did not monitor the student planners and sign them daily—I found that by the end of the year I had developed more positive relations with parents, and with more parents, than I had with many parents I had actually seen more often in classes that I had taught fulltime.

My pursuit of doctoral studies has also coincided with the entry of both of my daughters into public school. As they entered school I wondered how I would feel to be parent, the other half of the parent/teacher relationship. I observed their teachers with interest, especially as I progressed through my studies, and as my knowledge of parent/student/teacher interaction and collaboration increased as an academic apart from my own experience as a teacher. I felt that somehow I might be a different parent and that my experience as a parent would be different than many of the negative or indifferent experiences of parents to which I had been privy in project interviews. In part, I suspect I believed that this would be so because I was a teacher and familiar with the world of

schools and classrooms and also because of my deeper knowledge of the concerns and needs of parents, students, and teachers in collaboration. I felt somehow that as a result teachers would be different too.

As my elder daughter progressed through Kindergarten I found that her teacher did a fine and thorough job of informing parents—usually through weekly newsletters—and of keeping us up-to-date with classroom procedures and activities. The teacher was warm and friendly. She invited parents into the classroom to volunteer and I did so approximately once every two weeks.

In Grade 1 my daughter's teacher sent home occasional newsletters, but not regularly, and information about curriculum did arrive, but after the fact. The teacher informed parents at the beginning of the year that helpers were welcome and posted a calendar on the wall on which parents could sign up. I volunteered fairly regularly. I asked for a copy of the weekly timetable.

In Grade 2 I also volunteered in the classroom (about twice a month), but this time offered my services as no general invitation was extended to parents to volunteer. The Grade 2 and (same) Grade 3 teacher sent an introductory newsletter home, and a note organizing food for the important celebrations throughout the year. The occasional note arrived after that, but usually about special events or field trips. One note included some brief information about what was happening in the classroom, but no regular curriculum information was sent home apart from summative overviews in the report cards. I asked for a copy of the weekly timetable.

In Grade 4 my daughter had the same teacher that she had in Grade One, but less information came home than three years before. No curriculum information or newsletters were sent home, except for the summative overviews in report cards and standard notices about field trips—with invitations to accompany the class on the bus or drive a car. I asked for a copy of the weekly timetable. No general invitation was extended to parents to participate in the classroom; I offered my assistance. To her credit, my daughter's Grade 4 teacher was keen to take up my offer.

During Grade 4 (and Grade 3) we involved my daughter in her parent-teacher conferences. Student presence was not unwelcome or banned but the conferences were not formally promoted as three-way conferences. While student work was available, no special advance preparations in terms of student or parent evaluations, or portfolios and student presentation of work, were undertaken. My daughter's Grade 4 teacher made some efforts to keep up us to date with in-class evaluation and daily work. She sent one or two tests home each week in a folder with a form for parent signature and comments.

In addition, the students used planners to record their homework and upcoming assignments and due dates. I communicated to the teacher in the planner and on the test folder—and the teacher responded to my written comments—but she did not initiate any communication in this way herself. For a few major projects the teacher provided a list of required elements and the marks assigned to each element, but did not include any more information about expectations than that. Although I have always felt capable of helping my daughter, I found project assignments to be frustrating, as I was never sure of exactly how much or what was required. I did not feel less capable as a helper, but less able without guidance as the academic work became more demanding and more complex. As a result I often stopped by the classroom in the morning to ask specific questions about various projects and assignments.

As I complete this thesis my elder daughter is now in Grade 5. No information has come from the classroom at all. Students are using planners, but the teacher does not check them unless they contain notes from parents. I have written several notes; she has responded but written nothing on her own initiative. I asked for a class timetable. No invitation has been extended to either visit or observe the classroom. No efforts have been made to inform or involve parents.

My experiences as a parent have been so far rather mundane, not unlike the experiences of most of the other parents of the children in my daughters' classes, I suspect. My experiences have perhaps been a bit more positive because I am known to my daughters' teachers as a teacher in the same school district. So far, my elder daughter's school career seems to have been an example of gradually diminishing efforts on the teacher's part to involve and collaborate with parents. Her teachers have not exemplified outstanding practice, but neither have they exemplified negative practice. Certainly her teachers' collaborative practices, and my experiences as a parents, have been more positive than many of the parents who have taken part in this study. It is possible, I suggest to myself, that my expectations and my standards are too high. I know, however, based on the findings of this study, and my involvement in the Co-Production of Learning Project, that more is possible, and that "the possible" is not just a pipedream, that other parents and students have experienced teachers who work in more fully collaborative ways.

Since my elder daughter entered Grade 2, and now that my younger daughter is in school, I have felt myself struggling to "see" what is going on in the classroom, to get a full picture. Ironically, given my interest in the issue, and the topic of this thesis, I have been involved less in my daughters' classrooms during the school year spent writing this

thesis than in previous years. Previously I volunteered in my daughters' classrooms and in so doing saw what was happening in the classroom. I developed a fairly good sense of the daily routine and tenor of the classrooms, and of the teachers' practices and manner. This past year, I did not volunteer and did not have as strong a sense of the daily routines and atmosphere of their classrooms. Even though I caught brief glimpses of classroom life when I delivered my children to their classroom doors and picked them up, I felt that I was putting together jigsaw puzzles of their classroom life on a daily and weekly basis. Some days and some weeks I saw a full or almost full picture of their classroom life and work. Some days, most weeks, it was partial. Most afternoons I chatted with my daughters about what each of them did at school and about what happened in class. The picture my elder daughter provided was more comprehensive than that provided by my Grade One daughter—at least from my adult perspective and understanding—but neither were what I would wish them to be. To some extent my experience was more like that of a full-time working mother, although I realize that in accompanying my daughters on field trips, attending some school events during the day, and in being in the school before and after hours I participated more fully and saw more than most parents who work fulltime. I realize—especially now that I am working full-time—how much more distant other parents might feel (those who work all day; those who do not speak English; those who are uneducated) and how critical to parents are comprehensive communication from teachers and an invitation to collaborate.

Although I believe that I have been working to support my daughters and their education I have never really felt myself to be working in collaboration with my daughters' teachers, or in a true instructional partnership with them, despite my involvement. And, even though I am a teacher and consider myself an informed and involved parent I have felt "outside." I have found myself entering both the school and my daughter' classrooms tentatively although their teachers have done nothing unwelcoming and would most certainly assure me that I was welcome. I have found myself asking for information—their weekly timetables, for example—and somehow feeling guilty about doing so. Although I am a teacher, and so school is my "territory" too, I feel somehow that the landscape is not mine at all, that it belongs to others. Perhaps because I have been "inside" as a teacher I expected to experience school with my daughters in that same way. I certainly did not expect to find myself being demanding or rude but I have been deferential in a way I thought I would not be. I have asked for assistance and offered my assistance. I have made some few demands, and on a few occasions stood up for my elder daughter's interests by providing the teacher with

information that I felt she needed to know. Like many of the parents in this study, I would be prepared to advocate more seriously for my daughters if need be, but they have required neither extra academic assistance nor attention to behaviour problems. Their school careers, both academically and behaviourally, have been trouble free and without incident. Perhaps my respect and deference originate from my sensitivity to teacher's sensitivities and concerns about parents. Perhaps in a different school I might feel less tentative and outside.

As I reflect on my experience as a parent so far I believe that I am generally doing what I can to help and support my daughters in their schoolwork. However, some nights and some weekends are busy and there have been times when my daughters and I have not done as much as we could, or their father and I have not done what we should to support or help our children. With both our formal education and backgrounds as educators lack of ability as parents has not been a problem, nor has lack of recognition of the importance of this kind of involvement with one's children. Sometimes there simply hasn't been time. I have occasionally felt impatient and angry with teachers for expecting more than we have been able to do, especially at busy times of the year, such as the pre-Christmas rush, or the spring softball season. I am sure, at the same time, however, that the teachers have been impatient and frustrated with us for not doing what they think we could easily do and should do, for being inconsistent about nightly spelling and reading practice during softball season, or doing a science fair project at the last minute. Sometimes, too, whether busy or not, I have simply not wanted to do schoolwork. On occasion I have acceded to my daughters' pleas that they do something else other than homework, yielding to their temptations—the sunshine outside or the fort in the bush of the nearby vacant lot. Sometime I have suggested activities other than schoolwork, knowing that they needed to play more than they needed to study for a dictee. Sometimes we have all played together or done other things. Then on occasion when necessary we have “crammed” the day or two before a project was due or the night or two before the scheduled spelling test.

As I think about this experience as a parent I remember occasions as a teacher when parents would see me in the morning, or send a note, to explain that the child simply had not had time to complete homework, or put the finishing details on a project. In those days before I had children I remember thinking, “How could this be? The child leaves the school at 2:30 and goes to bed at 8:00 PM. There is plenty of time.” I realize now that I simply had little understanding of the fact that within and among the demands of family life sometimes there really is no time, even on weekends, and that even if there is, often

parents, and children and parents together, would rather, and sometimes need to, do other things.

Having come to these understandings as a parent and teacher over the past few years, I also realize that I have never in that time approached any of my daughter's teachers—only one of whom who has been a parent—to voice my thoughts about these kinds of things. While these teachers would not likely forego projects or weekly spelling tests during the softball season, perhaps it would be helpful to share my thoughts anyway. As a parent/teacher team we might possibly come to understand each other better, and to develop collaborative understanding as parent and teacher of “our” child. In thinking about my teaching since I have become a parent, I know that I have responded differently to the parents of my students. While I did not not forego tests or projects during softball seasons either, I did become more understanding of the demands and dynamics of family life, of the environment within which instructional relationships are embedded, and I hope that I demonstrated that understanding. I also realize, however, that at the time I didn't share any of these thoughts with parents, just as I haven't shared them with teachers now. Perhaps if parents and teachers shared their concerns more fully and openly—teacher frustration at homework not being done, parent frustration at the demands of school and homework during busy times—they might both understand each other better, and work together more productively. As a parent over the past five years, I feel that I have been doing a reasonably good job in supporting my daughter's schooling. Their teachers too have been basically friendly and welcoming to me as a parent, and respectful and warm with my daughters as students. They have sent home at least some minimal information about what they are doing or have done in the classroom, and pedagogy has been sound, although perhaps somewhat unimaginative and uninspiring at times. While our efforts have been satisfactory, or “good enough,” to use Coleman and LaRocque's (1990) term, I like to think that all of us—parents, teachers, and students—could “get it together” even more.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL AND SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site A is a relatively large interior British Columbia school district, both in terms of student population and geographic range. It serves a community with a resource-based (forest) economy. Although the administrative office and most of the schools are clustered in and around the district's one main population centre (a small city) there are three communities at a considerable distance from the district's administrative centre, each with its own elementary and high schools. In addition, there are a number of very small outlying schools scattered throughout the district. In its entirety the district consists of five high schools and approximately fifty elementary schools, five of which participated in the study (two large, one medium sized and two small). The socio-economic level within the school district varies from high to low.

Site B is a medium-sized school district located in the suburbs of a large metropolitan area. Most residents commute to jobs in the city, but a number are employed in the town itself, mainly in service and light industry. Surrounding the main population centre in the school district there is agricultural land. Those who live in these areas have chosen a rural lifestyle—often working hobby farms—but are generally employed locally or in the city. Most of the schools in the district are located within the main population centre, with a few scattered throughout the semi-rural areas. The community has grown rapidly over the past few years, resulting in an influx of new residents, mostly those seeking lower-priced housing alternatives to the city. There are five high schools and approximately twenty-five elementary schools in the district which has a fairly small geographic range compared to site A. Three elementary schools from this district participated in the study (one large and two medium-sized). The socio-economic level within the school district varies from high to low.

Site C is a small-sized coastally-located school district. Too far from a large metropolitan area for commuting, residents work almost exclusively in the local area. The district serves a community with a mainly resource-based economy (forestry, fishing, mining) with seasonal tourism, centred around a small town. Most of the schools in the district are located within the main population centre, with a few scattered throughout the more rural areas including several in island communities, and one in a smaller, mainland community somewhat distant from the main townsite. There are three high schools and approximately sixteen elementary schools in the district. Four elementary schools from this district participated in the study (one small, one medium-sized and two large), one of

which, the small school, is French Immersion. The socio-economic level within the school district varies from high to low.

Site D is one of the province's largest school districts in terms of student population and is located in the suburbs of a large metropolitan area. Most residents either work in the local community, in neighbouring suburbs or in the large metropolis. Although some agricultural land remains in this suburban school district most schools are located within residential areas. The district consists of 15 high schools and approximately 90 elementary schools. The socio-economic level within the school district varies from high to low. One school from this district participated in the study.

Site ND represents one large, private non-denominational K-12 school which participated in the study. It is located in an urban community. This school is selective, although does offer some scholarships. The socio-economic level of families whose children attend the school is, for the most part, high.

The schools which participated in this study from the district sites described above are similar, with the one exception of the private, non-denomination school. The schools vary in size, but most are medium-sized with student populations ranging from 200 to 400. Generally, they serve similarly broad populations in terms of socio-economic level and are located in residential areas although a few are more rural and have most students bussed in or, more commonly, have some students bussed in from outlying areas. While some schools are slightly newer than others, they are surprisingly similar physically. For the most part, the schools are either cream or pastel-coloured U or L-shaped single-story buildings, with school offices and staff rooms at the main entrance and individual classrooms and gymnasium opening off several straight corridors. Typically, the school grounds include open play areas and sometimes a patch of treed or forested area, with playground equipment and several portable classrooms located nearer the school.

APPENDIX B: PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SURVEYS—TIME 8

TIME	SITE	CLASS	ID NUMBER		
8					

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: PARENT SURVEY 8

- PLEASE TRY TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION BY CIRCLING THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.
- IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, LEAVE IT BLANK.

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
1. I talk to my child about school events/activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I call/visit my child's teacher(s) to talk about my child's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My child keeps me informed about class-room activities.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I encourage my child always to do his/her best work in school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My child's teacher(s) provides information about programs so that I understand my child's schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My child talks to me about his/her plans for schooling in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I talk to my child's teacher(s) about the instructional program in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My child's teacher(s) gives me useful ideas about how I can help my child learn at home.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is important to me that my child does well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My child lets me know when she/he is having problems in the class.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
13. My child usually discusses homework with me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I set high expectations for my child's school achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about what my child is learning in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My child's teacher(s) makes sure my child understands homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
17. My child keeps me informed about school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I make sure to tell my child's teacher(s) when I think things are going well.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My child's teacher(s) informs me when my child is doing well in class.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My child's teacher(s) usually gives me an overview of what my child will be learning in the year.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's work in class.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel nervous when I meet my child's teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5
23. My child feels comfortable approaching teacher(s) with schoolwork questions or concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Students are excited about learning in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's behaviour in class.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Students in our school have the necessary ability to achieve well in basic skills.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's work in class, if necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The academic emphasis in our school is challenging to students.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's homework, if necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Students are proud of our school.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's behaviour, if necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Our school reflects the values of the community in which it is located.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
33. My interviews with my child's teacher(s) give me good information about my child's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My child's teacher(s) usually lets me know how my child is doing before report card time.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My child's teacher(s) usually sends home a list of projects to be completed in the coming months.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Teachers make schoolwork interesting for students.	1	2	3	4	5
37. My child's teacher(s) makes me feel part of a team.	1	2	3	4	5
38. My own education prepared me well to help my child with school work.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My child's teacher(s) seems interested in hearing my opinions about my child.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Parents find teachers easily approachable at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I expect that my child will go on to post-secondary education after high school.	1	2	3	4	5
42. It is important to me that my child does a good job on his/her homework.	1	2	3	4	5
43. My child feels that her/his learning is important to the teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5
44. My child's teacher(s) makes time to talk to me when it is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
45. My child lets me know when she/he doesn't understand a homework assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
46. My child feels comfortable asking the teacher(s) for help.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Our school makes visitors feel welcome.	1	2	3	4	5
48. My child feels comfortable making suggestions for classroom improvement to the teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5
49. I usually feel able to help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I have enough information from the school about what the children will be learning to help my child.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I understand what my child is learning in school.	1	2	3	4	5
52. I am able to make a strong contribution to how well my child does in school.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5					
53. My child's teacher(s) gives me information which allows me help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5					
54. Our family has strengths that help my child succeed in school.	1	2	3	4	5					
55. My child lets me know when he/she needs help with a homework assignment.	1	2	3	4	5					
56. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will ask me to help my child with schoolwork if it is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5					
57. My child usually shows me the work he/she has done in class.	1	2	3	4	5					
58. My child's teacher(s) usually gives me monthly previews of what my child will be learning.	1	2	3	4	5					
59. I talk to my child about schoolwork quite a lot.	1	2	3	4	5					
60. My child and I find it difficult to work together on schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5					
61. I find my child's teacher(s) easily approachable.	1	2	3	4	5					
62. My child's teacher(s) spends time helping students after class.	1	2	3	4	5					
63. I talk to my child about what s/he will do after high school quite often.	1	2	3	4	5					
64. My child's teacher(s) encourages students to give their own opinions in class.	1	2	3	4	5					
65. My child feels that she/he can get help from the teacher when she/he needs it.	1	2	3	4	5					
66. My child feels comfortable disagreeing with the teacher's opinions in class.	1	2	3	4	5					
67. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) when I think my child is having difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5					
68. I believe that school is important to my child's future.	1	2	3	4	5					
69. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's homework.	1	2	3	4	5					
70. IF YOU WERE GIVING THIS SCHOOL AN OVERALL RATING AS A PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD TO LEARN, ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 9 (1 = VERY POOR, 9 = EXCELLENT) WHAT RATING WOULD YOU ASSIGN?										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	(CIRCLE ONE)

ABOUT YOU, THE RESPONDENT:

71. How many years of formal schooling have you had?

(circle the best answer)

- 1. MORE THAN ONE DEGREE.
- 2. UNIVERSITY DEGREE.
- 3. SOME POST-SECONDARY.
- 4. FINISHED SECONDARY.
- 5. DID NOT FINISH SECONDARY.

72. I AM MALE / FEMALE; (Circle the appropriate description)

73. I AM PARENT / GUARDIAN; (Circle the appropriate description)

74. I am or have been a teacher TRUE / FALSE (circle one).

Please provide some information about your home circumstances by filling in the blanks:

75. How many parents/guardians in the home? _____

76. How many adults in the home? _____

77. How many children? _____

Give ages _____

78. Please circle the age of the child participating in this study.

79. How many parents/guardians are employed outside the home? _____

Fulltime

80. _____

Part-time

WOULD YOU PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION

WE HAVE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS. DID WE FORGET SOMETHING IMPORTANT? PLEASE TELL US ABOUT IT HERE:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE HELP YOU HAVE PROVIDED WITH THIS SURVEY.

TIME	SITE	CLASS	ID NUMBER		
8					

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: STUDENT SURVEY 8**

- PLEASE TRY TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION BY CIRCLING THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.
- IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION CAREFULLY.

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
1. I let my parent(s) know about school events and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would tell my parent(s) if I was having trouble with schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I let my parent(s) know about things that happen in class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about our work in class.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about what I am learning in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about my homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My teacher spends time talking to me individually about my schoolwork when it is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My parent(s) want me to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I would tell my parent(s) if I was in trouble at school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My parent(s) want me to participate actively in all classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I let my parent(s) know what homework I have.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I would tell my parent(s) if I was having a problem with my teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel comfortable asking my parent(s) for help with my homework.	1	2	3	4	5

14. My friends and I talk about our future plans, for school and after.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My teacher gives us opportunities to make suggestions about activities in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
16. My teacher asks me to help other students with work in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel comfortable talking to my parent(s) about school work.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I have to have good grades in school to get anywhere in life.	1	2	3	4	5
19. When I am having trouble with something in class I feel free to ask my friends for help.	1	2	3	4	5
20. It is important to my teacher that I understand my homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
21. It is important to me that I graduate from high school.	1	2	3	4	5
22. School is a waste of time for me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My parent(s) expect me to tell them when I am having problems with my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
24. This school is a better place for students than others I know about.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel comfortable making suggestions to my teacher about activities we could do in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
26. It is important to my friends at school that they have their assignments done on time.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I don't stay home from school unless I have a really good reason.	1	2	3	4	5
28. It's important to me that my teacher knows that I am doing my best in school.	1	2	3	4	5
29. My friends don't stay home from school unless they have a really good reason.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My teacher is interested in hearing my opinions even when I disagree with her/him.	1	2	3	4	5
31. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about class projects that are assigned.	1	2	3	4	5
32. It's important to me that my parent(s) know that I am doing my best in school.	1	2	3	4	5
33. It bothers me if I am late handing in assignments.	1	2	3	4	5

34. My teacher lets my parent(s) about how I am doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My parent(s) expect me to get my homework done.	1	2	3	4	5
	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
36. I feel proud of my school.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I often act up in class.	1	2	3	4	5
38. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about what we will be studying next in class.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My teacher sometimes asks students to take leadership in classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I know I can get help from my teacher when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I stay away from school whenever I can.	1	2	3	4	5
42. When my teacher explains things in class I usually understand the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
43. When one of my friends is having trouble with schoolwork, I help them.	1	2	3	4	5
44. My teacher lets my parent(s) know how they can help me with my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
45. When I do well on a difficult assignment it is usually because I worked hard.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I believe that the teachers in this school really care about how well I do in school.	1	2	3	4	5
47. When I don't do well on an assignment, I usually feel that I can do better next time.	1	2	3	4	5
48. When I make up my mind to do well in school I usually succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I often have difficulty with my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I feel that I have the ability to do well in school if I want to.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I almost never have trouble doing my homework.	1	2	3	4	5
52. My teacher sometimes asks students to explain ideas in class.	1	2	3	4	5
53. My teacher sometimes learns things from students in class.	1	2	3	4	5

54. I get nervous when I am talking to my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I feel safe in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
56. My parent(s) often read books and magazines.	1	2	3	4	5
57. My parent(s) enjoy attending events at the school.	1	2	3	4	5
58. My parent(s) know my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
59. My parent(s) make sure I have a quiet place to do my homework..	1	2	3	4	5
60. My parent(s) expect me to continue my schooling after graduation from high school.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I get nervous when I am learning something new.	1	2	3	4	5
62. My parent(s) believe that school is important to my future.	1	2	3	4	5
63. My friends think that school is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
64. Teachers in this school treat students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
65. Rules in this school are fair.	1	2	3	4	5
66. Teachers treat students fairly in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
67. Everyone in this school, including teachers, is involved in learning.	1	2	3	4	5
68. The principal and the teachers in this school treat each other with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
69. If I had a choice, I would choose to go to this school	1	2	3	4	5
70. My friends often act up in class.	1	2	3	4	5
71. My friends think that school is important to their futures.	1	2	3	4	5
72. My friends participate in a lot of school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
73. School is important to my future.	1	2	3	4	5

74. IF YOU WERE GIVING THIS SCHOOL AN OVERALL RATING AS A PLACE FOR YOU TO LEARN, ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 9 (1 = VERY POOR, 9 = EXCELLENT) WHAT RATING WOULD YOU ASSIGN?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (CIRCLE ONE)

PLEASE CHECK BACK TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION

WE HAVE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL AND SCHOOLWORK. DID WE FORGET SOMETHING IMPORTANT? TELL US ABOUT IT HERE:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE HELP YOU HAVE PROVIDED WITH THIS SURVEY.

TIME SITE CLASS ID NUMBER

8					
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**FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: TEACHER SURVEY 8**

- PLEASE TRY TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION BY CIRCLING THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
1. I make schoolwork interesting for almost all the students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I let the parent(s) of my students know about things that happen in class.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is unusual for other teachers to observe in my classroom while I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I send the parent(s) of my students samples of the work that students do in class.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In this school there is a lot of sharing of teaching ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I inform the parent(s) of my students about how they can help with homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I spend class time talking to students individually about their schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I contact the parent(s) when a student is having trouble with schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The students in my class feel comfortable in giving their own opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In general my students are willing to take responsibility for their own learning.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I visit other classrooms in the school to learn from other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I talk with colleagues in my school about professional topics.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Parents usually follow through on the suggestions that I make regarding their child's school work.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I know quite a bit about what my students do outside of school hours.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I make sure my students understand their homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
16. When parents get involved in instruction it helps me be more effective with more students.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I have lots of opportunities to learn more about teaching in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Parent involvement in instruction is important for student success in learning.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have a positive influence on the learning of almost every child that I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Parents are usually able to help their children with school work.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I contact the parent(s) when a student is misbehaving in class.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Teachers do not have time to involve parents in instruction in useful ways.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Parents can usually help their children to succeed in school.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I discuss classroom rules with students.	1	2	3	4	5
25. This school is a professionally stimulating place to work in.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I encourage students to treat learning with me as a team effort in this classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Some students in my class find school boring.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I expect some students to help others to learn in the classroom and outside.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I get lots of support in this school for things I try to do to improve my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The staff in this school usually solve school problems as a group.	1	2	3	4	5
31. In this school the staff agrees about what we are trying to accomplish for students.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Parents can learn more ways to help their children with school work.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I encourage students to accept responsibility for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I ask most or all students to take turns helping with things in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase students' success in school.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
36. I establish a good working relationship with each of my students.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I make sure that parents feel comfortable when they visit my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Children at this grade level are not yet capable of making good choices about what and how to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Parents generally set high expectations for their children's success in school.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I can establish a good working relationship with almost all the parents of children in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Most students at this grade level have developed a sense of personal responsibility for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Parent involvement in instruction is important to the establishment of good school climate.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Doing well in school is very important to the future of every child I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I feel confident that I can establish a good working relationship with almost any student.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Student-led conferences would work well with the students in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
46. The students in my class are encouraged to make suggestions for classroom improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
47. At this grade level it is almost impossible to make school interesting for students.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Parents of the students in my class call me when they have a concern.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Student behavior is often a problem in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I spend time talking to students to get to know more about them.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I make sure that students in my class learn to accept responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5
52. The students in my classroom don't interfere with the work of others.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I do my best to make parents feel comfortable when they come in to see me.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I welcome other teachers as observers in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I invite parents to visit the classroom during instructional time.	1	2	3	4	5

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Not Sure 3	Disagree 4	Disagree Strongly 5
56. I think of parents as partners in their child's learning.	1	2	3	4	5
57. I encourage each student in my class to ask me for help with schoolwork when they need it.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I try to call the parents of my students from time to time to keep them informed.	1	2	3	4	5
59. My students at this grade level almost always complete their homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Students in my classroom rarely make useful suggestions for classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I know that most of my students do well when they get to high school.	1	2	3	4	5
62. Student-led conferences would work well with the students in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

WHAT OTHER THINGS SHOULD WE HAVE ASKED YOU?

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

APPENDIX C

SCALE RELIABILITIES

CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT

PARENT SCALES

Scale 1. perception of student/teacher relations.

T8—9 ITEMS "Alpha" : .87. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .68 16. My child's teacher(s) makes sure my child understands homework assignments.
- .65 23. My child feels comfortable approaching teacher(s) with schoolwork questions or concerns.
- .62 43. My child feels that her/his learning is important to the teacher(s).
- .70 46. My child feels comfortable asking the teacher(s) for help.
- .55 48. My child feels comfortable making suggestions for classroom improvement to the teacher.
- .46 62. My child's teacher spends time helping students after class.
- .58 64. My child's teacher encourages students to give their own opinions in class.
- .78 65. My child feels that he/she can get help from the teacher when s/he needs it.
- .53 66. My child feels comfortable disagreeing with the teacher's opinions in class.

Scale 2. perception of student/parent communication.

T8 8 ITEMS "Alpha" : .86. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .67 3. My child keeps me informed about class-room activities.
- .47 8. My child talks to me about his/her plans for schooling in the future.
- .63 12. My child lets me know when s/he is having problems in the class.
- .70 13. My child usually discusses homework with me.
- .70 17. My child keeps me informed about school activities.
- .63 45. My child lets me know when he/she doesn't understand a homework assignment.
- .63 55. My child lets me know when he/she needs help with a homework assignment.
- .60 57. My child usually shows me the work he/she has done in class.

Scale 3. perception of teacher/parent communication (instruction).

T8 12 ITEMS "Alpha": .93. Items with "item-total correlations":

- .79 5. My child's teacher(s) provides information about programs so that I understand my child's schoolwork.
- .74 6. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about class-room activities.
- .62 7. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about homework assignments.
- .70 10. My child's teacher(s) gives me useful ideas about how I can help my child learn at home.
- .78 15. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about what my child is learning in the classroom.
- .68 19. My child's teacher(s) informs me when my child is doing well in class.
- .63 20. My child's teacher(s) usually gives me an overview of what my child will be learning in the year.
- .66 33. My interviews with my child's teacher(s) give me good information about my child's progress.

- .64 34. My child's teacher(s) usually lets me know how my child is doing before report card time.
- .68 35. My child's teacher(s) usually sends home a list of projects to be completed in the coming months.
- .71 53. My child's teacher(s) gives me information which allows me to help my child with homework.
- .68 58. My child's teacher(s) usually gives me monthly previews of what my child will be learning.

Scale 4. perception of teacher/parent communication (general).

This scale was dropped for Time 5. Items 6, 10, 19, and 33 went to Scale 3.. Item 56 went to Scale 5. Items 61 and 65 were dropped.

Scale 5. perception of teacher concern about parent involvement

T8—9 ITEMS "Alpha" : .93. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .80 27. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's work in class, if necessary.
- .79 29. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's homework, if necessary.
- .75 31. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's behaviour, if necessary.
- .71 37. My child's teacher(s) makes me feel part of a team.
- .77 39. My child's teacher(s) seems interested in hearing my opinions about my child.
- .68 40. Parents find teachers easily approachable at this school.
- .75 44. My child's teacher(s) makes time to talk to me when it is necessary.
- .65 56. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will ask me to help my child with schoolwork if necessary.
- .80 61. I find my child's teacher(s) easily approachable.

Scale 6. perception of parent/teacher communication

T8 4 ITEMS "Alpha" : .91. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .76 21. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's work in class.
- .79 25. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's behaviour in class.
- .84 67. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) when I think my child is having difficulty.
- .80 69. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's homework.

Scale 7. parent values schooling

T7 9 ITEMS "Alpha" : .73. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .41 1. I talk to my child about school events/activities.
- .39 4. I encourage my child always to do his/her best work in school.
- .33 11. It is important to me that my child does well in school
- .46 14. I set high expectations for my child's school achievement.
- .42 41. I expect that my child will go on to post-secondary education after high school.
- .51 42. It is important to me that my child does a good job on his/her homework.
- .52 59. I talk to my child about schoolwork quite a lot.
- .47 63. I talk to my child about what s/he will do after high school quite often.
- .28 68. I believe that school is important to my child's future.

same for t9

Scale 8. perception of school climate

T8 7 ITEMS "Alpha" : .86. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .66 24. Students are excited about learning in this school.
- .65 26. Students in our school have the necessary ability to achieve well in basic skills.
- .65 28. The academic emphasis in our school is challenging to students.
- .68 30. Students are proud of our school.
- .69 32. Our school reflects the values of the community in which it is located.
- .61 36. Teachers make schoolwork interesting for students.
- .51 47. Our school makes visitors feel welcome.

Scale 9. perception of parent efficacy

T8 7 ITEMS "Alpha" : .74. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .53 38. My own education prepared me well to help my child with school work.
- .56 49. I usually feel able to help my child with homework.
- .36 50. I have enough information from the school about what the children will be learning to help my child.
- .57 51. I understand what my child is learning in school.
- .59 52. I am able to make a strong contribution to how well my child does in school.
- .45 54. Our family has strengths that help my child to succeed in school.
- .22 REVERSED 60. My child and I find it difficult to work together on schoolwork .

STUDENT SCALES

Scale A. communications with parents.

T8 (7 items) "Alpha" : .75. "corrected item-total correlations":

- .45 1. I let my parent(s) know about school events and activities.
- .45 2. I would tell my parents if I was having trouble with schoolwork.
- .53 3. I let my parent(s) know about things that happen in class.
- .47 9. I would tell my parents if I was in trouble at school.
- .41 12. I would tell my parents if I was having a problem with my teacher(s).
- .43 13. I feel comfortable asking my parents for help with my homework.
- .58 17. I feel comfortable talking to my parents about schoolwork.

Scale B. student values school.

T8 7 ITEMS "Alpha" : .77. "corrected item-total correlations":

- .58 22. REVERSED School is a waste of time for me.
- .52 27. I don't stay home from school unless I have a really good reason.
- .59 28. It's important to me that my teacher knows that I am doing my best in school.
- .56 32. It's important to me that my parent(s) know that I am doing my best in school.
- .45 33. It bothers me if I am late handing in assignments.
- .42 REVERSED 41. I stay away from school whenever I can.
- .34 73. School is important to my future.

Scale C. perception of school/home communication.

T8 (6 ITEMS) "Alpha" : .85. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .67 4. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about our work in class.
- .65 5. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about what I am learning in the classroom.
- .60 6. My teacher lets my parent(s) know about my homework assignments.
- .71 31. My teacher lets my parents know about class projects that are assigned.
- .62 38. My teacher lets my parents know about what we will be studying next in class.
- .54 44. My teacher lets my parents know how they can help me with my schoolwork.

Scale D. perception of personal efficacy.

T8 (7 ITEMS) "Alpha" 78: "corrected item-total correlations":

- .56 42. When my teacher explains things in class I usually understand first time.
- .49 45. When I do well on a difficult assignment it is usually because I worked hard.
- .32 47. When I don't do well on an assignment, I usually feel that I can do better next time.
- .56 48. When I make up my mind to do well in school I usually succeed.
- .57 49. REVERSED I often have difficulty with my schoolwork.
- .45 50. I feel that I have the ability to do well in school if I want to.
- .60 51. I almost never have trouble doing my homework.

Scale E. perception of student/teacher collaboration.

T8(10 ITEMS)"Alpha": .83. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .41 7. My teacher spends time talking to me individually about my schoolwork when it is necessary.
- .55 15. My teacher gives us opportunities to make suggestions about activities in the classroom.
- .46 16. My teacher asks me to help other students with work in the classroom.
- .52 20. It is important to my teacher that I understand my homework assignments.
- .66 25. I feel comfortable making suggestions to my teacher about activities we could do in the classroom.
- .63 30. My teacher is interested in hearing my opinions even when I disagree with her/him.
- .53 39. My teacher sometimes asks students to take leadership in classroom activities.
- .52 40. I know I can get help from my teacher when I need it.
- .56 52. My teacher sometimes asks students to explain ideas in class.
- .44 53. My teacher sometimes learns things from students in class.

Scale F. perception of parent valuing school.

T8 (9 ITEMS)"Alpha": .67. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .34 8. My parent(s) want me to do well in school.
- .39 10. My parent(s) want me to participate actively in all classroom activities.
- .31 23. My parent(s) expect me to tell them when I am having problems with my schoolwork.
- .42 35. My parents expect me to get my homework done.
- .40 57. My parents enjoy attending events at the school.
- .40 58. My parents know my teacher.
- .31 59. My parents make sure I have a quiet place to do my homework.
- .34 60. My parents expect me to continue my schooling after graduation from high school.
- .44 62. My parents believe that school is important to my future.

Scale G. perception of peer group values.

T8 (8 ITEMS)"Alpha" :.79. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .48 19. When I am having trouble with something in class I feel free to ask my friends for help.
- .56 26. It is important to my friends at school that they have their assignments done on time.
- .61 29. My friends don't stay home from school unless they have a really good reason.
- .40 43. When one of my friends is having trouble with schoolwork I help them. (old 39)
- .44 63. REVERSED My friends think that school is a waste of time.
- .49 70. REVERSED My friends often act up in class.
- .60 71. My friends think that school is important to their futures.
- .45 72. My friends participate in a lot of school activities.

Scale H. perception of school climate.

T8 (10 ITEMS) Alpha: .90. "corrected item-total correlations":

- .43 24. This school is a better place for students than others I know about.
- .73 36. I feel proud of my school.
- .65 46. I believe that the teachers in this school really care about how well I do in school.

- .63 55. I feel safe in this school.
- .74 64. Teachers in this school treat the students with respect.
- .74 65. Rules in this school are fair.
- .82 66. Teachers treat students fairly in this school.
- .58 67. Everyone in this school, including teachers, is involved in learning.
- .55 68. The principal and the teachers in this school treat each other with respect.
- .66 69. If I had a choice, I would choose to go to this school.

Scale J. student acceptance of responsibility.

T8 (5 ITEMS) "Alpha": .71. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- *.47 27. I don't stay home from school unless I have a really good reason.
- *.55 28. It's important to me that my teacher knows that I am doing my best in school.
- *.58 32. It's important to me that my parent(s) know that I am doing my best in school.
- *.42 33. It bothers me if I am late handing in assignments.
- .38 REVERSED 41. I stay away from school whenever I can.

TEACHER SCALES

Scale TIP. Teacher involvement of parents.

Time 7 (N=20) "Alpha": .72. 7 Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .41 2. I let the parent(s) of my students know about things that happen in class.
- .44 4. I send the parent(s) of my students samples of the work that students do in class.
- .34 8. I contact the parent(s) when a student is having trouble with schoolwork.
- .43 21. I contact the parent(s) when a student is misbehaving in class.
- .72 53. I do my best to make parents feel comfortable when they come in to see me.
- .39 55. I invite parents to visit the classroom during instructional time.
- .59 56. I think of parents as partners in their children's learning.

Scale TC. Teacher collegiality.

Time 7 (N=21) "Alpha": .84. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .45 REVERSED 3. It is unusual for other teachers to observe in my classroom while I am teaching.
- .74 5. In this school there is a lot of sharing of teaching ideas.
- .57 11. I visit other classrooms in the school to learn from other teachers.
- .65 12. I talk with colleagues in my school about professional topics.
- .52 17. I have lots of opportunities to learn more about teaching in this school.
- .59 25. This school is a professionally stimulating place to work in.
- .28 29. I get lots of support in this school for things I try to do to improve my teaching.
- .39 30. The staff in this school usually solve school problems as a group.
- .61 31. In this school the staff agrees about what we are trying to accomplish for students.
- .74 54. I welcome other teachers as observers in my classroom.

Scale CS. Collaboration with students.

T7 (N=21) "Alpha": .80. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .21 7. I spend class time talking to students individually about their schoolwork.
- .30 9. The students in my class feel comfortable in giving their own opinions.
- .46 15. I make sure my students understand their homework assignments.
- .32 24. I discuss classroom rules with students.
- .40 26. I encourage students to treat learning WITH ME as a team effort in this classroom.
- .37 28. I expect some students to help others to learn in the classroom and outside.
- .49 34. I ask most or all students to take turns helping with things in the classroom.
- .64 45. Student-lead conferences would work well with the students in my classroom.
- .80 46. The students in my class are encouraged to make suggestions for classroom improvement.
- .41 50. I spend time talking to students to get to know more about them.
- .42 57. I encourage each student in my class to ask me for help with schoolwork when they need it.

Scale PE. Parent efficacy.

T7 (N=20) "Alpha" : .73. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .30 13. Parents usually follow through on the suggestions that I make regarding their child's school work.
- .37 16. When parents get involved in instruction it helps me to be more effective with students.
- .46 20. Parents are usually able to help their children with homework.
- .68 23. Parents can usually help their children to succeed in school.
- .65 32. Parents can learn more ways to help their children with school work.
- .32 35. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase students' success in school.
- .18 39. Parents generally set high expectations for their children's success in school.
- .16 42. Parent involvement in instruction is important to the establishment of good school climate.
- .45 48. Parents of the students in my class call me when they have a concern.
- .41 56. I think of parents as partners in their children's learning.

Scale PA. Parent Activity.

- .30 13. Parents usually follow through on the suggestions that I make regarding their child's school work.
- .37 16. When parents get involved in instruction it helps me to be more effective with students.
- .46 20. Parents are usually able to help their children with homework.
- .68 23. Parents can usually help their children to succeed in school.
- .65 32. Parents can learn more ways to help their children with school work.
- .32 35. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase students' success in school.
- .45 48. Parents of the students in my class call me when they have a concern.
- .41 56. I think of parents as partners in their children's learning.
- .37 Parents of the students in my class make sure the students come to school ready to learn.
- .49 Parents of the students in my class help the students prepare for tests.

Scale TE. Teacher efficacy.

T7 (N=19) "Alpha" : .73. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .33 1. I make schoolwork interesting for almost all the students in my class.
- .58 19. I have a positive influence on the learning of almost every child that I teach.
- .50 REVERSED 27. Some students in my class find school boring.
- .59 40. I can establish a good working relationship with almost all the parents of children in my class.
- .49 44. I feel confident that I can establish a good working relationship with almost any student.
- .35 61. I know my students do well when they get to high school.

Scale SR. Student responsibility.

Time 7 "Alpha" : .57. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

- .27 10. In general my students are willing to take responsibility for their own learning.
- .37 33. I encourage students to accept responsibility for learning.
- .52 REVERSED 38. Children at this grade level are not yet capable of making good choices about what and how to learn.
- .36 41. Most students at this grade level have developed a sense of personal responsibility for learning.
- .29 45. Student-led conferences would work well with the students in my classroom.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: PARENT INTERVIEW 8

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

- A. Responses tend to be lengthier and more helpful if the respondent feels comfortable. This may require visiting them at home.
- B. Try to elicit full responses—if the response seems terse, use the PROBES. The probes show the areas in which we need data. **Only use the probes if needed to get more information.**

INTRODUCTION: (TO BE READ): Our research group (teachers in the district and graduate students from Simon Fraser University) is engaged in a research project regarding the co-production of learning in children—that is the ways in which teachers and parents can work together to help children learn. We are collecting information from teachers, parents, and children about what happens and how people feel about it. Could you please answer the following questions as completely as possible, **WITH REFERENCE TO THIS SCHOOL YEAR**. If you do not understand a question ask me to repeat it.

THE SCHOOL:

QUESTION 1: How many children do you have in school? What grade level(s)?

QUESTION 2: Please describe the ways in which you are involved with the school your child attends?

PROBES: Do you call the school? Do you visit the school sometimes? Why? Do you feel welcome? Do you work as a volunteer sometimes, when convenient? Why? Do you attend meetings at the school?

QUESTION 3: Have there been times this year when you felt that you had to stand up for your child's interests at school?

PROBES: Have there been times when you felt you needed to, but did not? What stopped you?

THE CLASSROOM:

QUESTION 4: As a parent do you feel that you can call your child's teacher?

PROBES: Have you done so? Why did you call? Did you feel comfortable? Were you satisfied with the outcome?

QUESTION 5: As a parent do you feel that you can visit your child's classroom to talk to the teacher?

PROBES: Have you had that opportunity? Done so? Why did you go? Did you feel welcome? Were you satisfied with your visit? Do you feel that the teacher listens to you and uses the information you provide?

QUESTION 6: Do you have sufficient opportunities to meet your child's teacher?

PROBES: What kind of things are discussed in these meetings? Do you feel comfortable in these meetings?

**QUESTION 7: Have you observed a lesson in your child's classroom?
Would you like to do so? How did (would) your child respond? What would (did) you learn?**

QUESTION 8: Could you describe ways in which you and the teacher work together in your child's education?

PROBES: What could you do to help that you do not now do? Are there things the teacher could do to make it easier for you to help your child learn? Has the teacher done anything to make it easier for you to help your child learn?

QUESTION 9: Were there times this year when you felt that the teacher missed an opportunity to gain your support?

PROBES: Can you recall specific incidents?

QUESTION 10: Has there ever been a time this year when you felt excluded from decisions or learning activities affecting your child's schooling?

PROBES: What were the circumstances?

QUESTION 11: Could you describe the ideal relationship between parents and teachers?

PROBES: How would you describe the relationship between you and your child's teacher this year? What could the teacher do to promote the ideal relationship? What could you do to promote the ideal relationship?

YOUR CHILD:

QUESTION 12: Could you describe things you do to help your child learn?.

PROBES: Do teachers welcome your assistance in classrooms or school? Does your child ask for your help? Do you feel comfortable about helping your child with school work? Are there some things that you feel more comfortable with than others? What kind of help do you provide? Do you enjoy this experience? Does your child enjoy this? Is there anything that prevents you from doing more?

QUESTION 13: Do you have a sense that your child's teacher respects your child?

PROBES: What does s/he do that makes you feel this way?

QUESTION 14: How does your child feel about school this year?

PROBES: What does s/he say or do to make you think that? Has your child's feeling about school changed from previous years? How would your child feel about having to change schools?

QUESTION 15: Does your child talk about what happens in school?

PROBES: About teachers? About schoolwork? About friends?

QUESTION 16: In what ways do you feel your child takes responsibility for his/her own education?

PROBES: How does s/he feel about homework? About studying for tests? Is s/he anxious to improve the grades s/he gets? What would you like to see him/her do differently, if anything?

QUESTION 17: How do you feel about your child's choice of friends this year?

PROBES: Do your child's friends take school seriously? Are they involved in any activities that worry you? Has the group changed this year?

QUESTION 18: Does your child talk about plans for the future—high school and after?

QUESTION 19: Is there anything I haven't asked you on this topic that you would like to mention?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE YOU HAVE PROVIDED.

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: STUDENT INTERVIEW 8**

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

Try to elicit full responses—if the response seems terse, use the **PROBES** listed with the questions.

C. If the respondent begins to repeat himself/herself, try to redirect the response by moving to a probe or to the next question.

GENERAL PROBE: Can you tell me more about that?

INTRODUCTION: (TO BE READ): Our research group (graduate students from Simon Fraser University) is engaged in a research project regarding the co-production of learning in students—that is the ways in which teachers and parents can work together to help students learn. We are collecting information from teachers, parents, and students about what happens and how people feel about it. Could you please answer the following questions as completely as possible, **WITH REFERENCE TO THIS SCHOOL YEAR**. If you do not understand a question please ask me to repeat it.

THE CLASSROOM:

QUESTION 1: Some kids find their classrooms are places where they can work well and learn lots; others have told us about classrooms where it is difficult to work and learn. What is your classroom like?

PROBES: How do your friends feel? Do you like coming to school this year? Why?

QUESTION 2: Do you ever feel that things could be done differently or better in your classroom.

PROBES: In what ways? Have you ever spoken to your teacher about this? What reaction? If you could change one thing what would it be?

QUESTION 3: Tell me about your favourite teacher. Why was s/he your favourite?

QUESTION 4: In what ways is your present teacher like or unlike that teacher?

PROBES: Does your teacher talk to you individually about your school work? About things you do outside of school? Do you have classroom rules? Where did the rules come from?

QUESTION 5: Some teachers pay attention to student opinions and ideas, others don't. What is your classroom like?

PROBES: What does your teacher do that helps you feel this way? Is your teacher fair to you and to other students?

QUESTION 6: Does your teacher have some ways of letting your parents know about what you are learning in class?

PROBES: How does your teacher do this?

QUESTION 7: Does your teacher have ways of letting your parents know about homework?

PROBES: How does your teacher do this? Does your teacher expect you to get help from your parents?

YOUR PARENT(S):

QUESTION 8: Do you talk to your parent(s) about things that happen at school?

PROBES: If YES: What kinds of things? Do you and your parents talk about schoolwork? Are there other things? Homework? Teachers? Things you are learning? If NO: Why is that?

QUESTION 9: Do your parent(s) help you with schoolwork?

PROBES: Do they help you study for tests? How? When you have trouble understanding something, do you ask your parents to help? Are they usually able to help? How do they? Do you do things with your parent(s) that help you learn—library, museums etc?

QUESTION 10: Some kids tell us that they enjoy working with their parent(s) on schoolwork. Others find it difficult to work with their parents. Where do you fit in?

PROBES: Do they understand your schoolwork well enough to help?

QUESTION 11: Do your parents talk to you about education?

PROBES: Do they talk about when they were in school? What kinds of things do they say about education/schooling? What do they think about your education/schooling?

QUESTION 12: What you are going to do after you leave (FINISH) school?

PROBES: How far do you expect to go in school? Do you talk about this with your parents? With your friends? What things are you doing now to prepare for what you want to do later? How can your parent(s) help you to prepare? How can your school/teacher help you to prepare?

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING: TEACHER INTERVIEW 8

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

- A. Responses tend to be lengthier and more helpful if the respondent feels comfortable. This may require visiting them at home. School may be convenient, but perhaps not a relaxing place.
- B. Try to elicit full responses—if the response seems terse, use the PROBES listed with the questions. Your questions **must be short** though, so **only use the probes if needed.**
- C. If the respondent begins to repeat himself/herself, try to redirect the response by moving to a probe or to the next question.

INTRODUCTION: (TO BE READ): Our research group (teachers in the district and graduate students from Simon Fraser University) is engaged in a research project regarding the co-production of learning in children—that is the ways in which teachers and parents can work together to help children learn. We are collecting information from teachers, parents, and children about what happens and how people feel about it. Could you please answer the following questions as completely as possible **WITH REFERENCE TO THIS SCHOOL YEAR.** If you do not understand a question ask me to repeat it.

QUESTION 1: Does this school solicit or encourage parent involvement?

PROBES: Can you give some examples of how to do it? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 2: As a teacher do you feel that parents should always feel welcome in your school?

PROBES: Are there ways of making them feel welcome? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 3: Do you welcome parents in your classroom?

PROBES: Do they interrupt things? Do the children accept their presence without fussing? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 4: Can you describe some ways in which you involve parents in instruction?

PROBES: Do you ask parents to help in the school/classroom sometimes? Do you ask parents to accompany children on field-trips? Do you call parents sometimes for information? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 5: Could parents help in the school more than they do?

PROBES: In what ways?. **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 6: Are there things which prevent parents from doing more to help their child to learn?

PROBES: What kind of help can they provide? Do they feel capable of helping? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 7: How would you describe the relationship between parents/teachers?

PROBES: What could they do to help/support that they do not now do? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 8: Have you helped parents to learn things that make it possible for them assist their child with school work?

PROBES: Could you give some examples? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 9: Do you feel that children can take responsibility for their own education?

PROBES: How? Could you give some examples? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 10: Do children in your class have opportunities to choose what or how they will learn?

PROBES: Could you give some examples? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 11: Many teachers worry about whether they are reaching all their students. How do you feel about that?

PROBES: Affect every child? Feel effective with every child? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 12: What kinds of work do you frequently do with other teachers?

PROBES: Problems of students? Classroom observing? Sharing instructional ideas? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 13: Would you say that teachers on this staff are united in their approaches to teaching?

PROBES: helping each other to improve? Treatment of students? School goals? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 14: What is this school like as a place to teach?

PROBES: Stimulating? Collegial? Supportive? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 15: Would you say that in this school teachers got the support and resources they need to do a good job? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 16: What words immediately come to mind when I mention the following: "the relationship between parents and teachers"?

PROBES: How do you think your parents would respond to this question? **Any changes during the school year?**

QUESTION 17: Is there anything I haven't asked you on this topic that you would like to mention? **Any changes during the school year?**

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORMS AND LETTERS

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6, CANADA

Faculty of Education

Administrative Leadership Program

Peter Coleman
(604) 291-3622

LETTER OF CONSENT (PARENTS)

Dear Parents:

Your school and your school district have given permission for a group of teachers in the district and some graduate students at Simon Fraser University to conduct a research project in your school. We are interested in the extent to which teachers and parents can work together on instructional matters, to the advantage of the children.

The project is entitled *The Co-production of Learning*. Previous research suggests that in schools where parents are involved in helping with instructional activities, either at home or in the school, by such things as helping the child to develop good study skills, children sometimes learn more and develop more positive attitudes to school. Often such previous research has involved workshops for parents and teachers on how they can collaborate to help children learn.

The project will last for two years, covering the transition from grade 6 or 7 to grade 8. During this time the students and parents in the present grade six or seven class will be asked to work collaboratively with the teacher in a variety of ways. The researchers will provide some training for parents and teachers and will monitor the results to give advice and assistance.

There are two possible levels of participation for parents and children:

- **Full participation** would involve attending some training sessions held at the school and agreeing to implement some of the recommended practices in working with your child in the home. In addition, full participation would involve agreeing to a series

of brief telephone interviews and responding to pencil-and-paper opinion surveys during the period of the study.

- **Limited participation** would involve you and your child responding to a pencil-and-paper opinion survey and one or two brief interviews.

You may, of course, choose not to participate at all. should you choose at this time either full or limited participation, you and your child may still withdraw from the project at any time.

All information provided by you and your child during the course of the project will be held in confidence by the research group. Your responses to surveys and interviews will be coded so that your name does not appear in the data files. At no time will anyone at your school have access to the information you personally provide. All reports will use coded data only. Your anonymity is thus assured.

Should you at any time have concerns about the project, you may contact the Director of the research team, Dr. Peter Coleman, by calling, collect, (604) 291-3622, or the Dean of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. You may also communicate with the Principal of the school or the Superintendent of the school district.

If you choose full participation, ongoing progress reports will automatically be provided to you. Should you choose limited or no participation, you may still learn about the results of the project by calling or writing to the Director of the project.

Would you please complete the attached form and return it in the envelope with the survey.

Yours truly

Peter Coleman, Professor

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
GENERAL LETTER OF CONSENT (PARENTS)**

School Name: _____
Print Name (Child): _____
Print Name (Parent): _____
Signature: _____
Telephone No.: _____

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
CONSENT FORM-PARENT INTERVIEW**

I understand that the information I provide by completing this interview will be used exclusively for the research project entitled **CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING**, about which I have received previous communications, and in which I agree to participate.

The terms upon which I provide the information sought here are that the information will be given an identifying code to ensure anonymity. No-one at the school or in the district will ever be able to identify the information provided through this interview by me as an individual.

School Name: _____
Print Name (Child): _____
Print Name (Parent): _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____
Telephone No.: _____

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
CONSENT FORM—PARENT SURVEY**

I understand that the information I provide by completing this survey will be used exclusively for the research project entitled **CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING**, about which I have received communications, and in which I agree to participate.

The terms upon which I provide the information sought here are that the information will be given an identifying code to ensure anonymity. No-one at the school or in the district will ever be able to identify the information provided through this survey by me as an individual.

School Name: _____

Print Name (Child): _____

Print Name (Parent): _____

Signature: _____

Telephone No.: _____

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
INFORMATION FORM—STUDENT SURVEY**

I understand that the information I provide by completing this survey will be used for the research project entitled **CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING**, about which my parents have received information, and in which they have agreed to participate.

School Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Print Name (Student): _____

Print Name (Parent): _____

LETTER OF CONSENT (TEACHERS)

Dear Teachers:

Your school district has given permission for a group of teachers in the district and some graduate students at Simon Fraser University to conduct a research project in your school. We are interested in the extent to which teachers and parents can work together on instructional matters, to the advantage of the children.

The project is entitled *The Co-production of Learning*. Previous research suggests that in schools where parents are involved in helping with instructional activities, either at home or in the school, children sometimes learn more and develop more positive attitudes to school. These attitudes often persist into junior secondary school, and sometimes help to ease the transition between kinds of schools. Often such previous research has involved workshops for parents and teachers on how they can collaborate to help children learn.

The project will last for two or three years, covering the transition from grade 6 or 7 to grade 8. During this time the students and parents in the present grade six or seven class will be asked to work collaboratively with the teacher in a variety of ways. The research group will provide some training for teachers and parents in the co-production of learning and will monitor the results of these training activities.

There are two possible levels of participation for parents and children: Full participation involves attending some training sessions held at the school, agreeing to implementing some of the recommended practices in working with the child in the home, and agreeing to a series of brief telephone interviews and responding to pencil-and-paper opinion surveys during the period of the study. Limited participation involves the parent and child responding to a pencil-and-paper opinion survey and one or two brief interviews. Parents may choose not to participate at all.

For teachers, participation involves participating in some teacher-only training sessions, which will be scheduled at the convenience of the schools involved, with the project bearing the cost of release time. One session will be joint teacher/parent, and will

necessarily be held in the evening. There will be a second parent evening meeting, which teachers may choose to attend.

Teachers will also be asked to complete some pencil-and-paper surveys, and participate in several brief interviews, often by telephone. All information provided by you during the course of the project will be held in confidence by the research group. Your responses will be coded so that your name does not appear in the data files. At no time will anyone at your school have access to the information you personally provide. All reports will use coded data only. Your anonymity is thus assured.

Should you at any time have concerns about the project, you may contact the Director of the research team, Dr. Peter Coleman, by calling, collect, (604) 291-3622, or the Dean of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. You may also communicate with the Principal of the school or the Superintendent of the school district.

Ongoing progress reports will automatically be provided to you; a final report will be available upon request.

Would you kindly indicate your willingness to be involved in this project by signing the second copy of this letter and returning it to your principal.

Yours truly

Peter Coleman, Professor

I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE TERMS DESCRIBED. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CONSENT MAY BE WITHDRAWN AT ANY TIME, AT MY DISCRETION.

School Name: _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

HOME Telephone No.: _____

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
CONSENT FORM—TEACHER INTERVIEW**

I understand that the information I provide by completing this interview will be used exclusively for the research project entitled **CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING**, about which I have received previous communications, and in which I agree to participate.

The terms upon which I provide the information sought here are that the information will be given an identifying code to ensure anonymity. No-one at the school or in the district will ever be able to identify the information provided through this interview by me as an individual.

School Name: _____
Print Name: _____
Signature: _____
Telephone No.: _____

**CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING PROJECT
CONSENT FORM—TEACHER SURVEY**

I understand that the information I provide by completing this survey will be used exclusively for the research project entitled **CO-PRODUCTION OF LEARNING**, about which I have received communications, and in which I agree to participate.

The terms upon which I provide the information sought here are that the information will be given an identifying code to ensure anonymity. No-one at the school or in the district will ever be able to identify the information provided through this survey by me as an individual.

School Name: _____
Print Name: _____
Signature: _____
Telephone No.: _____

APPENDIX F

MASTER CODE LISTS

TIME 2 CODE LIST

REPORT HEADER

This Report is on the following codes:

admin supportive of t	p expects post sec not	p likes acad press
bullying	p feel able to help	p likes calendar of events
friends disc career plans	p feel free to call or go in	p likes clrm newsletter
friends disc career plans not	p happy with s	p likes curric preview
friends like clrm	p helping s comfortable	p likes interim report for s
friends like clrm not	p helping s difficulties	p likes planner
friends like sch	p helping s enjoys	p likes principal
friends like sch not	p helping s works well	p likes principal not
friends like school	p helps s	p likes s work folder
friends like t	p helps s less	p meets with t
friends like t not	p helps s more	p meets with t not
friends want gd educ	p helps s not	p monitors hw
good tchr	p helps s same	p need to be involved
p also a t	p interrupts things	p need to ln how to help
p asks s re sch	p inv clrm	p needs curric know
p asks t to inform p	p inv clrm barrier confidential	p not excluded
p asks to for help	p inv clrm barrier p reluctance	p pref re t prac
p attends activities	p inv clrm barrier t time	p shd be involved
p attends interviews	p inv clrm not	p shd commun with t
p attends interviews not	p inv clrm worthwhile	p shd encourage s resp
p attends mtgs	p inv depends on s	p shd feel welcome
p attends mtgs not	p inv greater in priv sch	p shd follow up re tests
p call t	p inv inst	p shd follow up re work folders
p call t not	p inv inst barrier cost	p shd help more in clrm
p call t re inst	p inv inst barrier curric knowl	p shd help s
p call t re s ach	p inv inst barrier methods	p shd monitor hw
p cd help more	p inv inst barrier no t explan	p shd monitor s work
p cd help more not	p inv inst barrier none	p shd support t
p cd help s if asked by t	p inv inst barrier p ability	p stands up for s
p choose clrm	p inv inst barrier p desire	p stands up for s not
p comfortable in clrm not	p inv inst barrier p work	p supportive of sch
p comfortable with t	p inv inst barrier s discomfort	p supportive of sch not
p comfortable with t not	p inv inst barrier s need	p supportive of t
p commun t	p inv inst barrier s reluctance	p t commun worthwhile
p commun t not	p inv inst barrier t control	p t discuss s ach
p commun t re s progress	p inv inst barrier t need	p t discuss s attitude
p concern re sch	p inv inst barrier time	p t discuss s motivation
p concerns re high sch	p inv inst barrier what to do	p t discuss s progress
p doesnt like sch rules	p inv inst change	p t discuss various
p dont respond t initiatives	p inv inst not	p t rel adequate
p encourages post sec	p inv sch	p t rel all get along
p encourages s re ach	p inv sch not	p t rel businesslike
p encourages s resp	p knows t	p t rel change not
p excluded	p like clrm	p t rel cooperative
p excluded not	p like clrm not	p t rel depends on p inv
p expect best s effort	p like sch	p t rel depends on t
p expects high t expec	p like sch not	p t rel distant
p expects hw	p like t	p t rel dont know
p expects post sec	p like t not	p t rel friendly

p t rel good
p t rel important
p t rel improves
p t rel know each other well
p t rel lacks commun
p t rel need to commun
p t rel not good
p t rel open
p t rel professional
p t rel the ideal
p t rel work together
p talks s re career
p tells s to ask t for help
p think t dont listen
p think t think dont know
p think t think p t rel not gd
p think t think pt rel depends
p think t think pt rel gd
p think t think pt rel improved
p uses s work folder
p visit clrm
p visit sch
p visits clrm not
p visits sch not
p volunteer
p volunteer barrier
p volunteer barrier p work
p volunteer barrier time
p volunteer changes not
p volunteer not
p want to help s
p wants t to inform
p wd like open clrm day
p wd like to see t more
p welcome clrm
p welcome clrm not
p welcome sch
p welcome sch not
p willing to help
p works
parent group
peer pressure
pt rel trust
pts all get along
pts collab needs priority
s acad plans
s approaches t re prob
s approaches t with sugg
s asks p for help
s asks t for help
s asks t for help not
s attitude change
s bored
s career plans
s cd apply self more
s cd be more confident
s cd complain less
s cd do better
s cd read more
s cd study more
s choose activities
s choose activities not
s choose approach

s choose s groupings
s comfortable with t
s competitive
s confidence improves
s counts for smthg
s does hw
s does hw not
s doesnt like pts coop
s doesnt like sch rules
s dont bring info home
s enjoys sch more
s helps s
s inv extra curric at sch
s likes clrm
s likes clrm not
s likes planner
s likes principal
s likes sch
s likes sch less
s likes sch more
s likes sch not
s likes t
s likes t not
s likes talk p not
s likes work folders
s need hw
s need strict t control
s nervous re high sch
s performance improves
s performance worsens
s performing well
s pref re clrm
s pref re sch
s pref re t prac
s resp
s resp can do so
s resp extra curric
s resp for lng
s resp hw
s resp improves
s resp independent
s resp lacks motivation
s resp motivated
s resp not
s resp procrastinates
s resp sets goals
s resp t followup
s respect t not
s response to p in class
s self evaluation
s shd be resp
s stays away not
s talks p
s talks p activities
s talks p changes not
s talks p less
s talks p likes it
s talks p likes it not
s talks p more
s talks p not
s talks p re career
s talks p schwk
s talks p uncomfortable

s wants gd educ
sch cd do more to help s
sch cd give more notice
sch defensive
sch doesnt consider whole s
sch encourages inst inv not
sch encourages inv
sch encourages inv not
sch gd place to learn
sch gd place to teach
sch helps p ln things
sch holds meet the t night
sch invites p in
sch invites p to mtgs
sch not a prob
sch send newsletters
sch shd award s
sch shd discipline more
sch shd do career prep
sch shd involve p
sch supportive of t
siblings help s
t approachable
t asks p to help not
t asks p to help s
t asks p to help s not
t asks p to volunteer
t asks p to volunteer not
t asks p to work with s
t asks s for help
t asks s for ideas
t available to p
t calls p
t calls p for help
t calls p for help not
t calls p not
t calls p re s behav
t calls p re s progress
t calls s names
t challenges s
t challenges s not
t chooses activities
t clrm prac
t collab t buddy rdg
t comfortable with p
t commun p
t commun p not
t controls s well
t doesnt listen to s
t dont have time for s
t dont teach things
t effective with every s
t encourages extra s work
t encourages p expect hw
t encourages p help s
t encourages p help s not
t encourages p inv
t encourages p inv not
t encourages p look s work
t encourages p study with s
t encourages p to call
t encourages p to encourage s
t encourages s help s

t encourages s re ach
t encourages s resp
t expectations for s
t expects hw
t expects hw not
t explains things to p
t explains things to s
t explains things to s not
t fair
t flexible re s needs
t follows up not
t follows up p comments
t follows up p phone call not
t get support resources
t gives p ideas re inv inst
t has high expect re s schwk
t hasnt helped p ln things
t helps p ln things
t helps s
t helps s mornings
t helps s not
t informs p
t informs p re curric and inst
t informs p re curric not
t informs p re projects not
t informs p re s ach too late
t informs p re s progress
t intimidated by s
t invites p in
t invites p in not
t likes s not
t likes share with other t
t listens to p
t listens to p not
t listens to s
t missed opp for p support
t missed opp for p support not
t monitors s work with p
t motivates s

t need more exp of life
t not fair
t observes other t not
t observes t not
t open house
t open with p
t p work together
t p work together not
t praises s
t praises s not
t prepares s for high sch
t reaches all s
t receptive to s sugg
t recognizes s ach
t reject p
t respects s
t respects s not
t responds to s needs
t responds to s needs not
t returns p phone calls
t rewards s
t s get along
t s work well together not
t sees p as partner
t sees p as partner dont know
t sees p as partner not
t sends extra work home
t sends notes home
t share matts ideas
t share t not
t shd commun to p
t shd dress prof
t shd exp more life
t shd give info on how to help
t shd give info re curric
t shd give info re s ach
t shd give proj outlines
t shd help s more
t shd inv p in classrm

t shd invite p in
t shd listen to s
t shd meet p
t support t
t supportive of p
t takes it out on s
t takes time for each s not
t talk t
t talk t re p
t talk t re parents
t talk t re students
t teaches other classes
t teaches p re study skills
t teaches s resp
t thanks p for inst inv
t think p thing rel needs imp
t think p think p t rel gd
t treats s as individuals
t united in approach
t united in approach not
t uses curric newsletter
t uses curric newsletter not
t uses home lng activities
t uses interim reports for s
t uses overviews
t uses p as tchrs
t uses phone calls
t uses planner
t uses s self evaluation
t uses s work folder
t uses videoing of s for p
t welcomes p
t welcomes p not
t work less now
t works with t
t works with t not
t worries re reaching all s
t worryway conference

(End list of codes)

END OF HEADER

TIME 4 CODE LIST

REPORT HEADER

This Report is on the following codes:

admin supportive of t	p helping s comfortable	p meets with t not
bullying	p helping s difficulties	p monitors hw
clrm gd place to learn	p helping s enjoys	p needs info on how to help
friends disc career plans	p helping s works well	p negative
friends disc career plans not	p helps s	p observes clrm not
friends like clrm	p helps s less	p pref re clrm
friends like clrm dont know	p helps s not	p pref re t prac
friends like clrm not	p helps t In things	p respond to t invite
friends like sch	p inv clrm	p seek involvement
friends like sch not	p inv clrm barrier p reluctance	p shd allow sch to discipline
friends like t	p inv clrm barrier t time	p shd ask t for info help
friends like t not	p inv clrm not	p shd be informed
friends take sch seriously	p inv clrm worthwhile	p shd be involved
home schooling	p inv inst	p shd commun with t
p also a sch bd member	p inv inst barrier curric know	p shd encourage s
p also a t	p inv inst barrier methods	p shd feel welcome sch
p as class parent	p inv inst barrier none	p shd have hi expect
p asks s re sch	p inv inst barrier p ability	p shd have p support group
p asks t for help	p inv inst barrier p desire	p shd help s
p asks t how to help	p inv inst barrier p work	p shd stand back
p asks t to help s	p inv inst barrier s ach	p stands up for s
p asks t to inform p	p inv inst barrier s discomfort	p stands up for s not
p attends activities	p inv inst barrier s need	p supportive of s
p attends interviews	p inv inst barrier s reluctance	p supportive of t
p attends mtgs	p inv inst barrier t control	p supportive of t not
p attends mtgs not	p inv inst barrier t need	p t disagree
p calls t	p inv inst barrier time	p t discuss curric
p calls t not	p inv inst barrier transport	p t discuss not these things
p cd help more	p inv inst barrier what to do	p t discuss pedagogy
p cd help more not	p inv inst not	p t discuss s ach
p choose activities	p inv sch	p t discuss s attitude
p comfortable in sch not	p inv sch not	p t discuss s motivation
p comfortable with t	p like coop lng not	p t discuss s needs
p comfortable with t not	p like goalsetting	p t discuss s progress
p commun concern to t not	p likes clrm	p t discuss various
p commun t	p likes clrm dont know	p t rel depends on s
p commun t not	p likes clrm not	p t rel depends on t
p concern re s ach	p likes evaluation	p t rel gd commun
p concern re sch	p likes evaluation not	p t rel good
p concerned re high sch	p likes goalsetting	p t rel good not
p counsels s	p likes other s	p t rel important
p dont like t phone calls	p likes other s not	p t rel improving
p encourages s re ach	p likes phone calls home	p t rel know each other well
p encourages s re hw	p likes planner	p t rel need to commun
p encourages s resp	p likes principal	p t rel open
p evaluation of s work	p likes principal not	p t rel the ideal
p excluded	p likes projects not	p t rel work together
p excluded not	p likes s friends	p t work together
p expectations for s ach	p likes s friends not	p talks s re career
p expects partnership not	p likes sch	p think t thing pt rel gd
p expects post sec	p likes sch dont know	p think t think p t rel not gd
p expects post sec not	p likes sch not	p visits clrm
p expects s satisfaction	p likes t	p visits clrm not
p feel free to call or go in	p likes t not	p visits sch
p feels free to obs clrm not	p likes threeway conf	p visits sch not
p feels free to observe clrm	p likes threeway conf not	p volunteer
p has suff opp to meet t	p listens to t	p volunteer barrier p work
p has suff opp to meet t not	p meets with t	p volunteer barrier time

p volunteer not
 p volunteers to get info
 p welcome clrm
 p welcome clrm not
 p welcome sch
 p welcome sch not
 p welcome staffrm not
 p willing to help
 peer pressure
 principal important in sch
 s acad plans
 s approaches t with prob
 s approaches t with sugg
 s asks p for help
 s asks p for help less
 s asks p for help not
 s asks s for help
 s asks t for help
 s asks t for help not
 s behaviour poor
 s bored
 s bright
 s capable
 s career plans
 s cd apply self more
 s cd be more enthusiastic
 s cd be tidier
 s cd challenge self more
 s cd organize self
 s cd read more
 s cd study more
 s choose activities
 s choose activities not
 s competitive
 s confidence improves
 s counts for smthg
 s does hw
 s does hw not
 s doesnt bring info home
 s give t ideas
 s goalsetting
 s has friends not
 s helps s
 s independent
 s like planner
 s likes clrm
 s likes clrm dont know
 s likes clrm not
 s likes planner
 s likes principal
 s likes principal not
 s likes sch
 s likes sch less
 s likes sch more
 s likes sch not
 s likes t
 s likes t not
 s listen to t
 s lng at sch not
 s looks forward to high sch
 s more confident
 s performance improves
 s performance worsens

s pref re clrm
 s pref re sch
 s pref re t prac
 s resp
 s resp can do so
 s resp can do so not
 s resp depends
 s resp extra curric
 s resp for lng
 s resp hw
 s resp improves
 s resp lacks motivation
 s resp not
 s resp procrastinates
 s respects t
 s respects t not
 s response to p in class
 s sets goals
 s shd be lng more
 s shd be resp
 s shd have extra curric act
 s shd have tests
 s stays away
 s stays away not
 s talks p
 s talks p less
 s talks p likes it
 s talks p likes it not
 s talks p more
 s talks p not
 s talks p re career
 s talks p uncomfortable
 s values sch
 s wants gd educ
 s wants gd grades
 s works hard
 s works hard not
 s works with s
 sch a problem
 sch a problem not
 sch asks for p feedback
 sch asks p to help out
 sch commun to p re prog not
 sch concern re p inv
 sch consults p not
 sch defensive
 sch encourages inst inv
 sch encourages inst inv not
 sch encourages inv
 sch encourages inv not
 sch gd place to learn
 sch gd place to teach
 sch gd place to teach not
 sch has gifted prog not
 sch ignores p request
 sch invites p in
 sch invites p to mtgs
 sch reports to p more
 sch responds to p concern not
 sch sends newsletters
 sch shd discipline better
 sch shd give more PE
 sch shd involve p more

t approachable
 t asks p for info on s
 t asks p not to help s
 t asks p to help not
 t asks p to help s
 t asks p to help s not
 t asks p to volunteer
 t asks p to volunteer not
 t asks p to work with s
 t asks t for help
 t available to p
 t available to p not
 t calls p
 t calls p for help
 t calls p for help not
 t calls p not
 t calls p re s behav
 t calls p re s progress
 t cares about s
 t cd help p by tchg better
 t cd help p by tchg better
 t cd involve p more
 t cd scream less
 t challenges s
 t challenges s not
 t chooses activities
 t comfortable with p
 t comfortable with p not
 t commun p
 t commun p not
 t concerns re sch
 t controls s well
 t encourages p help s
 t encourages s help s
 t encourages s re ach
 t encourages s resp
 t expectations for s
 t expectations for s ach hi not
 t expectations for s schwk hi
 t expectations hi not
 t expects hw
 t expects hw not
 t explains things to p
 t explains things to s
 t explains things to s not
 t fair
 t fair not
 t firm with s
 t follows up not
 t follows up p comments
 t follows up s
 t get support resources
 t hasnt helped p ln things
 t help t
 t helps p help s
 t helps p ln things
 t helps p ln things not
 t helps s
 t helps s mornings
 t helps s not
 t informs p
 t informs p how to help
 t informs p re curric and inst

t informs p re curric inst not
t informs p re s ach too late
t informs p re s progress
t informs p re s progress not
t interested in s interests
t invites p in
t invites p in not
t involves p
t involves p not
t knows s well
t likes p inv in clrm
t likes p inv in clrm not
t likes p observe in clrm not
t likes s
t likes s not
t listens to p
t listens to p not
t listens to s
t listens to s not
t missed opp for p support
t missed opp for p support not
t missed opp p support dont kno
t monitors s hw
t monitors s hw not
t needs control
t not fair
t observes t
t open to p
t open with p
t plan curric collaboratively
t praises s
t reaches all s

t recognizes s ach
t respects s
t respects s not
t responds to s needs
t responds to s needs not
t sees p as partner
t sees p as partner dont know
t sees p as partner not
t sends home gd news notes
t sends notes home
t sends notes home not
t sends work home
t sends work home for sign
t share matls ideas
t shares interests with s
t shd as p for info re s
t shd be clear re expec goals
t shd commun re s progress
t shd commun to p
t shd encourage resp
t shd focus on s
t shd give info on how to help
t shd give info re curric
t shd give proj outlines
t shd inform honestly
t shd invite p in
t shd involve p
t shd send work home for sign
t shd welcome p
t support t
t supportive of p
t takes it out on s

t takes time for each s
t takes time for each s not
t talk t pedagogy
t talks t re students
t teaches s resp
t teaches study resear skills
t tells p how to help
t treats s as individuals
t treats s as individuals not
t united in approach
t united in approach not
t uses class mtgs
t uses class parent
t uses coop lng
t uses curric newsletters
t uses curric newsletters not
t uses eval form for s
t uses home lng activities
t uses interim reports
t uses p as tchrs
t uses p evaluation form
t uses phone calls
t uses planner
t uses proj outlines
t uses s contracts
t wd contact p if necess
t welcomes p
t welcomes p not
t works with t
t works with t not
t worries reaching all s
threeway conference

_____ (End list of codes)

_____ END OF HEADER _____

TIME 8 CODE LIST

REPORT HEADER

This Report is on the following codes:

bullying	p follow up t comments	p likes t
clrm boring	p follows up t comments not	p likes t not
clrm fun	p give t feedback	p likes threeway conf
clrm gd place to learn	p has suff opp to meet t not	p likes threeway conf not
clrm interesting	p has suff opp to meet with t	p listens t not
clrm rules	p help prepare for career	p meets with t
disruptive clrm	p helping s comfortable	p meets with t not
favourite teacher	p helping s difficulties	p monitors hw
friends disc career plans	p helping s enjoys	p monitors hw not
friends disc career plans not	p helping s works well	p monitors proj work
friends like clrm	p helps s	p needs to ln how to help
friends like clrm dont know	p helps s learn	p observes clrm
friends like clrm not	p helps s less	p observes clrm not
friends like sch	p helps s not	p praise t
friends like sch not	p informs t re s needs	p pref re clrm pract
friends like t not	p inv clrm	p requests t again
math	p inv clrm not	p satisfied with sch
p also a t	p inv inst	p satisfied with t disc not
p ask t for s work for home	p inv inst barrier curric know	p satisfied with t discussions
p asks s re sch	p inv inst barrier fam diffic	p shd be informed
p asks s to ask t for help	p inv inst barrier lang	p shd be involved
p asks t for proj outline	p inv inst barrier methods	p shd be supportive of t
p asks t how to help	p inv inst barrier p ability	p shd commun to t
p asks t to inform p	p inv inst barrier p desire	p shd commun with t
p attends activities	p inv inst barrier p discomfort	p shd feel welcome
p attends interviews	p inv inst barrier p ignorance	p shd help s
p attends interviews not	p inv inst barrier p work	p shd monitor hw
p attends mtgs	p inv inst barrier s ability	p shd support s
p attends mtgs not	p inv inst barrier s need	p shd talk to s re sch
p calls sch	p inv inst barrier s reluctance	p shd work toget with t
p calls t	p inv inst barrier s resp	p stands back
p calls t not	p inv inst barrier s time	p stands up for s
p can help	p inv inst barrier t control	p stands up for s not
p cd help more	p inv inst barrier time	p supportive of t
p cd help more not	p inv inst barrier tv	p supportive of t not
p comfortable in sch	p inv inst not	p t commun important
p comfortable with t	p inv inst worthwhile	p t disagree
p comfortable with t not	p inv PAC	p t discuss curric and inst
p commun t	p inv sch	p t discuss curric inst
p commun t not	p inv sch negative	p t discuss s attitude
p complaints	p inv sch not	p t discuss s behav
p concern re high sch	p knows t well	p t discuss s needs
p concern re sch	p learns from clrm observe	p t discuss s progress
p defensive	p likes clrm	p t discuss s work
p encourages post sec	p likes evaluation	p t discuss various
p encourages s re ach	p likes evaluation not	p t monitor s hw
p encourages s re sch	p likes interviews	p t rel easy to talk to
p encourages s resp	p likes phone calls	p t rel gd commun
p evaluation of s work	p likes phone calls not	p t rel good
p excluded	p likes planner	p t rel good not
p excluded not	p likes planner not	p t rel know each other well
p expectations for s	p likes principal not	p t rel none
p expectations for s ach	p likes s friends	p t rel supportive
p expects post sec	p likes s friends not	p t rel the ideal
p feels free to call go in not	p likes s work folder	p t work tog discuss
p feels free to call or go in	p likes sch	p t work toget not
p feels free to observe	p likes sch dont know	p t work together
p feels free to observe not	p likes sch not	p talks to s re career

p talks to s re sch
 p values sch
 p visits clrm
 p visits clrm not
 p visits sch
 p volunteer
 p volunteer barrier p work
 p volunteer barrier students
 p volunteer not
 p wd like interview without s
 p wd like to observe t
 p wd like to observe t not
 p wd meet with t
 p welcome clrm
 p welcome clrm not
 p welcome sch
 p welcome sch not
 peer pressure
 s acad plans
 s approaches t with prob
 s approaches t with sugg
 s approaches t with sugg not
 s asks p for help
 s asks p for help not
 s asks t for help
 s bored
 s bright
 s bring info home not
 s calls t
 s capable
 s career plans
 s cd apply self more
 s cd be more active
 s cd be more organized
 s cd be more resp
 s cd be neater
 s cd have better attitude
 s cd manage time better
 s cd procrastinate less
 s cd read more
 s cd relax a little
 s cd speak up more
 s cd study more
 s changes sch
 s choose activities
 s comfortable with t not
 s commun to t not
 s concern re high sch
 s concerned re high sch
 s confidence improves
 s confidence lacking
 s confident
 s does hw
 s does hw not
 s expectations for self
 s goalsetting
 s happy
 s happy not
 s has friends
 s has friends new
 s has friends not
 s helps s
 s helps t

s independent
 s involved extra curric
 s learning
 s likes clrm
 s likes evaluation not
 s likes planner
 s likes sch
 s likes sch less
 s likes sch more
 s likes sch not
 s likes t
 s likes t not
 s likes threeway conf
 s looks forward to high sch
 s performance improves
 s performance weak
 s performance worsens
 s pref re clrm
 s pref re t pract
 s prepares for career
 s receives grades not
 s resp
 s resp can do so
 s resp can do so not
 s resp for lng
 s resp forgets
 s resp lazy
 s resp motivation not
 s resp not
 s resp procrastinates
 s resp selfdefeatist
 s respects s
 s respects t
 s respects t not
 s response to p in clrm
 s selfevaluation
 s studies
 s t rel good not
 s talks to p career
 s talks to p comfortable
 s talks to p sch
 s talks to p sch not
 s talks to t one on one
 s wants gd educ
 s wants gd grades
 s wants lz grades not
 s works hard
 s worries re career
 s worries re career not
 sch a problem
 sch a problem not
 sch calls p
 sch cares for s
 sch encourages inst inv
 sch encourages inv
 sch encourages s resp not
 sch follows up
 sch follows up p comments not
 sch gd place to teach
 sch ignores p request
 sch invites p in
 sch invites p to mtgs
 sch library not accessible

sch listens to p not
 sch meets s needs
 sch rules too many
 sch security increases
 sch sends newsletters
 sch shd discipline better
 sch shd give more notice
 sch shd invite p in
 spelling
 t approachable
 t asks p for input
 t asks p to help s
 t asks p to help s not
 t asks p to volunteer
 t asks p to work with s
 t asks p to work with s not
 t asks s get help at home not
 t asks s to get help at home
 t assigns hw
 t assigns hw not
 t attends sch events
 t available to p
 t calls p
 t calls p not
 t calls p re s behav
 t calls p re s progress
 t calls s names
 t cares
 t cd help more not
 t challenges s
 t challenges s not
 t chooses activities
 t clrm practice
 t comfortable with p
 t comfortable with p not
 t comments re 24302T8
 t comments re 24306T8
 t comments re 25301T8
 t comments re 25305T8
 t comments re 28301T8
 t comments re 28316T8
 t commun p
 t commun p not
 t commun p re curric inst
 t commun p re s progress
 t concern re high sch
 t consistent
 t controls clrm
 t defensive
 t disciplines s
 t disciplines s not
 t effective with every s
 t encourages p to ask ques
 t encourages s
 t encourages s not
 t encourages s resp
 t expectations for p
 t expectations for s
 t expectations for s high
 t explains things to p
 t explains things to s
 t explains things to t not
 t fair

t fair not
 t fatigue
 t follows up in class
 t follows up p comment
 t follows up p comment not
 t fun
 t fun not
 t get support resources
 t gets to know p
 t gets to know s
 t gives hw not
 t gives info p how to help
 t help t
 t helps p ln things
 t helps p ln things not
 t helps s
 t helps s learn
 t helps s not
 t honest
 t honest with p
 t hw policy
 t informs p re curric
 t informs p re s ach too late
 t informs p re s behav
 t informs p re s progress
 t informs p re s progress not
 t informs s re curric
 t informs s re progress
 t invites p in
 t invites p in not
 t invites p to call
 t involves s
 t likes info from t re curric
 t likes p inv clrm
 t likes p inv clrm not
 t listens to p
 t listens to p not
 t listens to s
 t meets p
 t meets with p
 t meets with p not
 t missed opp for p support
 t missed opp for p support not
 t monitors s hw
 t negative
 t nice
 t observes t not

t open to p
 t open with p
 t organized
 t patient
 t plans special activities
 t praises s
 t prepares s re career
 t prepares s re high sch
 t respects p
 t respects s
 t respects s not
 t responds s needs
 t responds s needs not
 t rewards s
 t s rel the ideal
 t satisfied with p mtgs
 t sends extra work home
 t sends notes home
 t sends s work home
 t sends work home for sign
 t shares interests with s
 t shares matls ideas
 t shd be available to p
 t shd call p
 t shd challenge s
 t shd commun to p
 t shd discipline more
 t shd give proj outlines
 t shd inform p re curric
 t shd inform p re s progress
 t shd insist on correct work
 t shd invite p in
 t shd involve s
 t shd listen to p
 t shd listen to s
 t shd make lng fun interesting
 t shd praise s
 t shd respect s
 t shd talk to s
 t shd tch study skills
 t shd treat s as individuals
 t shd use planners
 t shd work toget with p
 t strict
 t supportive of t
 t takes it out on s
 t talks t

t talks t re students
 t talks to p
 t talks to s
 t talks to s individually
 t talks to s individually not
 t talks to s not
 t teaches s resp not
 t too busy with other duties
 t treats s as individuals
 t unapproachable
 t united in approach
 t united in approach not
 t uses class mtg
 t uses class mtg not
 t uses coop lng not
 t uses gd news calls not
 t uses home lng activ not
 t uses home lng activities
 t uses interim reports
 t uses interviews
 t uses interviews not
 t uses learning logs
 t uses meet the t night
 t uses newsletters
 t uses newsletters not
 t uses open house
 t uses overviews
 t uses p as tchrs
 t uses p workshops
 t uses phone calls
 t uses phone calls not
 t uses planner
 t uses planner not
 t uses previews
 t uses previews not
 t uses proj outlines
 t uses proj outlines not
 t uses reports
 t uses s portfolio
 t uses s work folder
 t welcomes p
 t works with t
 t worries re reaching all s
 t yells
 t yells not
 threeway conference
 violence at sch

_____ (End list of codes)

_____ END OF HEADER _____

APPENDIX G

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: SUPPLEMENTARY GRAPHICS

Table G1: Multiple Regression

Outliers – Standardized Residual	
Case#	*ZRESID
78	2.47263
18	2.46307
129	2.40916
240	-2.35230
106	-2.28587
79	2.27071
241	-2.23461
25	2.23238
192	2.19911
112	-2.19264

Figure G1: Multiple Regression

Histogram—Standardized Residual

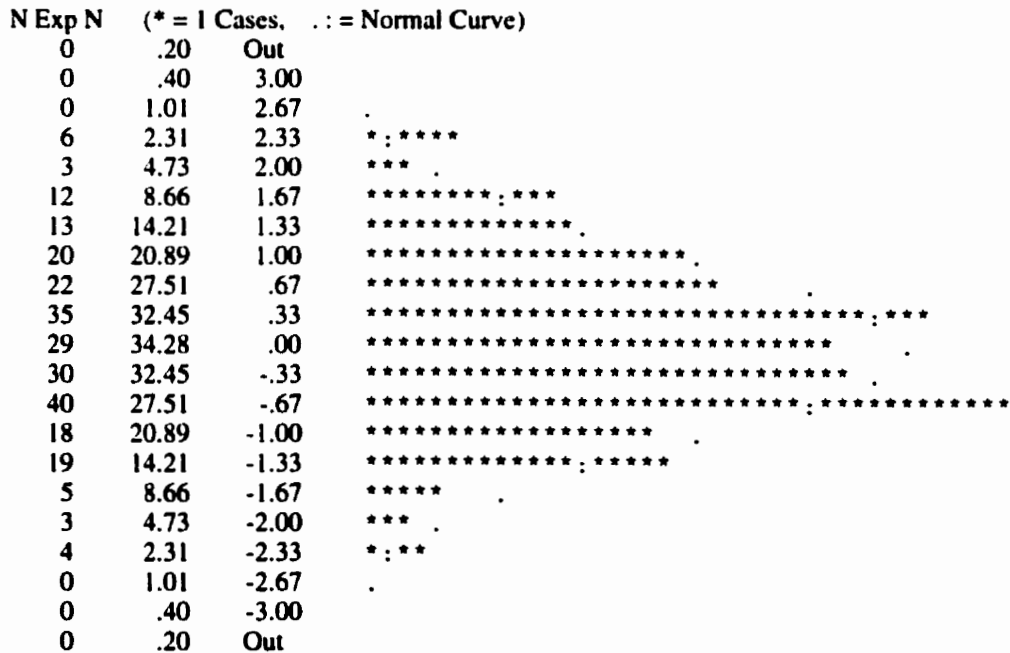


Figure G2: Multiple Regression

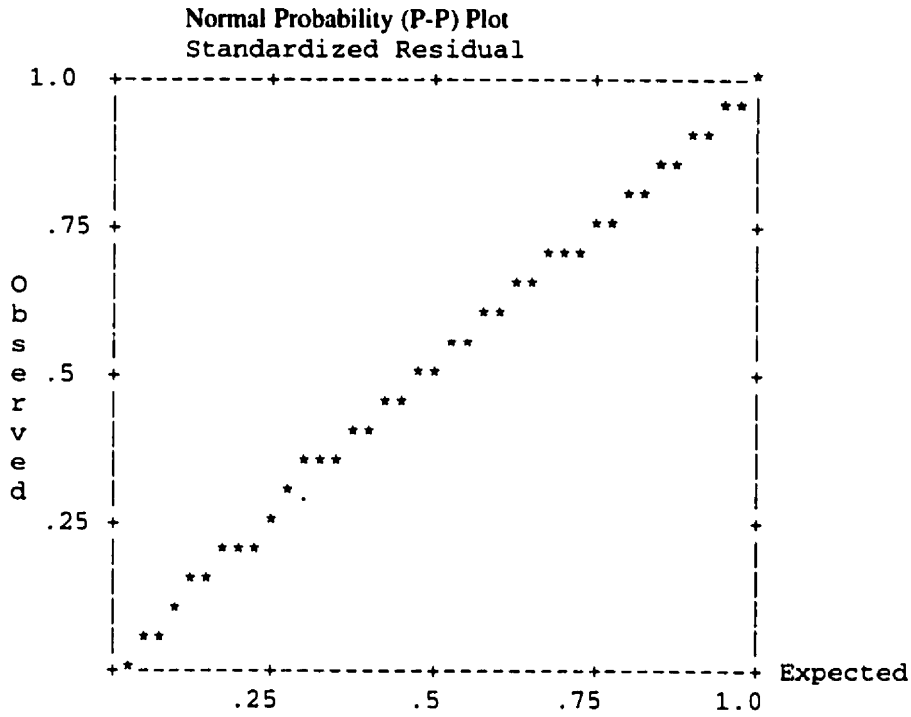


Figure G3: Standardized Scatterplot

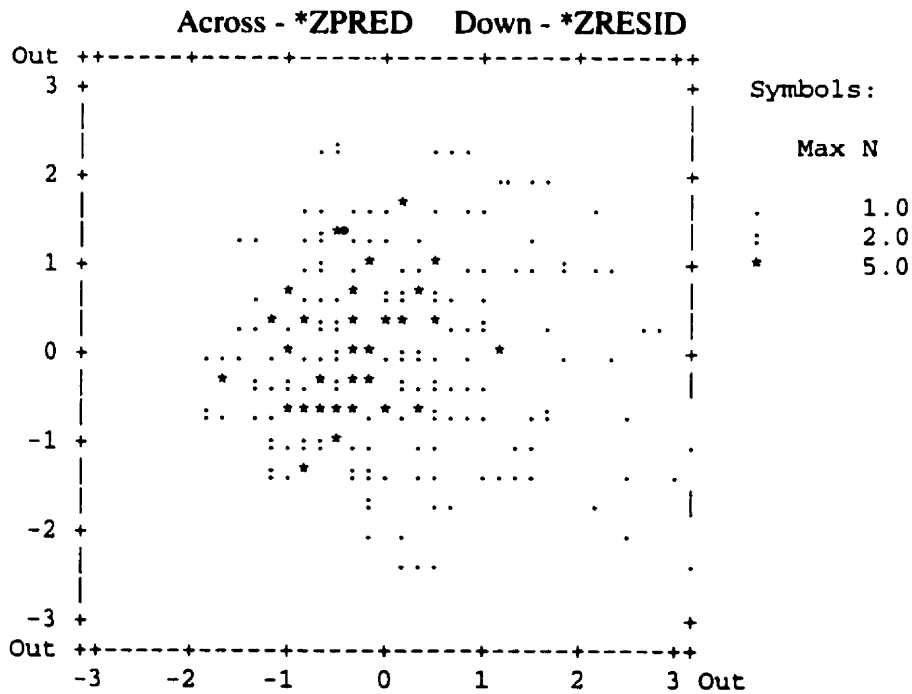


Table G2: MANOVA

General Linear Models Procedure
Class Level Information

<u>Class</u>	<u>Levels</u>	<u>Values</u>	
TLEVEL	2	1.00	2.00

Number of observations in data set = 113

NOTE: Observations with missing values are not included in this analysis; therefore only 110 observations can be used in this analysis.

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_5 Percep. Concern of Parent Involvement

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Model	1	1.34327440	1.34327440	2.30	0.1322
Error	108	63.03743977	0.58368000		
Corrected Total	109	64.38071417			

R-Square	0.020865	C.V.	38.45473	Root MSE	0.7639895	SCL_5 Mean	1.9867244
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<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type I SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	1.34327440	1.34327440	2.30	0.1322

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	1.34327440	1.34327440	2.30	0.1322

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_E Percep. of Student/Teacher Collab.

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Model	1	6.53909910	6.53909910	14.45	0.0002
Error	108	48.88961990	0.45268167		
Corrected Total	109	55.42871901			

R-Square	0.117973	C.V.	31.29378	Root MSE	0.6728162	SCL_E Mean	2.1500000
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<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type I SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	6.53909910	6.53909910	14.45	0.0002

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	6.53909910	6.53909910	14.45	0.0002

(continued)

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_H Percep. of School Climate

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Model	1	2.14653199	2.14653199	3.94	0.0496
Error	108	58.78446801	0.54430063		
Corrected Total	109	60.93100000			

R-Square	C.V.	Root MSE	SCL_H Mean
0.035229	33.99849	0.7377673	2.1700000

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
TLEVEL	1	2.14653199	2.14653199	3.94	0.0496

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
TLEVEL	1	2.14653199	2.14653199	3.94	0.0496

General Linear Models Procedure

Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Characteristic Roots and Vectors of: E Inverse * H, where
H = Type III SS&CP Matrix for TLEVEL E = Error SS&CP Matrix

Characteristic Root	Percent	Characteristic Vector V'EV=i		
		SCL_5	SCL_E	SCL_H
0.13953004	100.00	-0.00451611	0.16837853	-0.03535621
0.00000000	0.00	-0.00388688	-0.09737727	0.17303523
0.00000000	0.00	0.13961278	-0.06327740	0.00000000

Manova Test Criteria and Exact F Statistics for the Hypothesis of no Overall TLEVEL Effect

H = Type III SS&CP Matrix for TLEVEL E = Error SS&CP Matrix

S=1 M=0.5 N=52

Statistic	Value	E	Num DF	Den DF	Pr > F
Wilks' Lambda	0.87755475	4.9301	3	106	0.0030
Pillai's Trace	0.12244525	4.9301	3	106	0.0030
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.13953004	4.9301	3	106	0.0030
Roy's Greatest Root	0.13953004	4.9301	3	106	0.0030

Table G3: AD HOC MANOVA

Controlling for Scale A
General Linear Models Procedure
Class Level Information

<u>Class</u>	<u>Levels</u>	<u>Values</u>	
TLEVEL	2	1.00	2.00

Number of observations in data set = 113

NOTE: Observations with missing values will not be included in this analysis. Thus, only 110 observations can be used in this analysis.

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_5 Percep. Concern of Parent Involvement

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Model	2	3.36894326	1.68447163	2.93	0.0577
Error	106	60.90839418	0.57460749		
Corrected Total	108	64.27733744			
	<u>R-Square</u>	<u>C.V.</u>	<u>Root MSE</u>	<u>SCL_5 Mean</u>	
	0.052413	38.09839	0.7580287	1.9896607	
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type I SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	1.46001962	1.46001962	2.54	0.1139
SCL_A	1	1.90892364	1.90892364	3.32	0.0712
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	1.02572545	1.02572545	1.79	0.1844
SCL_A	1	1.90892364	1.90892364	3.32	0.0712

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_E Percep. of Student/Teacher Collab.

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Model	2	11.87011406	5.93505703	14.90	0.0001
Error	106	42.22397192	0.39833936		
Corrected Total	108	54.09408598			
	<u>R-Square</u>	<u>C.V.</u>	<u>Root MSE</u>	<u>SCL_E Mean</u>	
	0.219435	29.21206	0.6311413	2.1605505	
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type I SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	7.40824399	7.40824399	18.60	0.0001
SCL_A	1	4.46187007	4.46187007	11.20	0.0011
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	5.83233507	5.83233507	14.64	0.0002
SCL_A	1	4.46187007	4.46187007	11.20	0.0011

(continued)

General Linear Models Procedure

Dependent Variable: SCL_H Percep. of School Climate

<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Model	2	8.3903125	4.19516562	8.69	0.0003
Error	106	51.15921004	0.48263406		
Corrected Total	108	59.54954128			
	<u>R-Square</u>	<u>C.V.</u>	<u>Root MSE</u>		<u>SCL_E Mean</u>
	0.140897	31.85710	0.6947187		2.1807339
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type I SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	2.63651230	2.63651230	5.46	0.0213
SCL_A	1	5.75381895	5.75381895	11.92	0.0008
<u>Source</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
TLEVEL	1	1.66028094	1.66028094	3.44	0.0664
SCL_A	1	5.75381895	5.75381895	11.92	0.0008

General Linear Models Procedure
Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Characteristic Roots and Vectors of: E Inverse * H, where
H = Type III SS&CP Matrix for TLEVEL E = Error SS&CP Matrix

<u>Characteristic Root</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Characteristic Vector V'EV=1</u>		
		<u>SCL_5</u>	<u>SCL_E</u>	<u>SCL_H</u>
0.14299961	100.00	-0.00763007	0.17655035	-0.03142573
0.00000000	0.00	-0.00352556	-0.09258787	0.17630509
0.00000000	0.00	0.13973123	-0.05859868	0.00000000

Manova Test Criteria and Exact F Statistics for the Hypothesis of no Overall TLEVEL Effect

H = Type III SS&CP Matrix for TLEVEL E = Error SS&CP Matrix
S=1 M=0.5 N=51

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Num DF</u>	<u>Den DF</u>	<u>Pr > F</u>
Wilks' Lambda	0.87489094	4.9573	3	104	0.0030
Pillai's Trace	0.12510906	4.9573	3	104	0.0030
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.14299961	4.9573	3	104	0.0030
Roy's Greatest Root	0.14299961	4.9573	3	104	0.0030

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