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How Teachers Think about Their Work: The First Step in Defining Quality Teachers

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**How Teachers Think about Their Work: The First Step in Defining Quality
Teachers**

by

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This dissertation is dedicated to ...

*My grandparents: Arthur and Arlye Harrell & Jack and Parthenia Trimble
who set lifelong examples of love.*

My father: Don Harrell who always knew this was possible.

*My stepfather and mother: Eddie and Tewana Caudle who continually
supported my endeavors.*

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Most of all, I thank God for my many blessings:

*“People make plans in their mind, but only the Lord can make them come
true. Depend on the Lord in whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”*

Proverbs 16:1, 3

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How Teachers Think about Their Work: The first Step in Defining Quality Teachers

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This study examines and compares the language and discourse utilized by quality teachers to the language and discourse of teachers who need improvement. This study assumes that quality teachers think about teaching differently than teachers in need of improvement. Language and discourse provides a framework for teachers to conceptualize the characteristics of a quality teacher. This study also seeks to demonstrate the capabilities of Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA), a systems approach to qualitative research developed by Norvell Northcutt and Danny McCoy. Previous teacher studies have been based on pedagogy, management, educational attainments and certification. This researcher suspects that teachers themselves can best identify the characteristics of a quality teacher. Since teachers come to the profession with similar training and credentials, the burning question still remains: what make one teacher a quality teacher and the other needs improvement? The purpose of this study is to investigate how quality teachers and needs improvement teachers perceive teaching differently. The results of this study indicate a significant disparity between the two

groups. The results also provide a structure, which seeks to capture the lived reality of the participants; this study reveals a universal system describing the dynamics and differences of quality teachers and needs improvement teachers. Thus, lending a tool for the diagnosis of problems or predictions pertaining to teacher quality.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Illustrations	xi
Chapter 1: How Teachers think about their work: The first step in defining quality teachers	1
A True Story	3
Introduction	3
The Importance of Defining	3
Past Research Efforts	6
Educational Reform and Teacher Quality	7
Statement of the Problem	9
Research Question	9
Significance of the Study	10
Theoretical Rationale	11
Summary	12
Definitions of Related Terms	13
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	14
Introduction	15
Historical Views of Teacher Quality	15
Education Reform and Reform Efforts	18
Policy Implications	22
The Value-Added Accountability Systems	23
The Dallas Value-Added Accountability System	23
The Tennessee Value-Added Accountability System	25
The Oregon Teacher Work Sample Methodology	26
The Kentucky Instructional Results Information System	28
The link Between the Teacher and Student Outcomes	29
Defining Quality Teachers based on Outcomes	31
Defining Teacher Quality based on Processes	35
Theoretical Framework	39
Summary	44
Chapter 3: Interactive Qualitative Analysis as a Methodology	45
IQA Methodology	46
Overview of the IQA Research Flow	48
IQA Research Design	49

Group Realities: IQA Focus Groups	51
Individual Realities: IQA Interviews	68
Group Realities: IQA Combined Interviews	73
IQA Results	83
Summary	85
Results and Interpretation	91
Chapter 4: The Teachers Speak: Results of the Study	92
Group Reality: System Elements	93
Problem Statement	93
Research Questions	93
The Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) Process	94
Sample Selection Criteria	95
Focus Group	95
Reconciling Affinities	97
Interview Protocol	99
Composite Affinity Descriptions	101
Administrative Procedures	101
Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)	110
Logistics of the Classroom	118
Classroom Climate	130
Emotions	138
Workout (Classroom Interactions)	147
Payoff	154
Group Reality: System Relationships	162
Interview Protocol Part 2	162
Theoretical Code Frequency Table	165
Pareto Protocol	166
The ART	167
The IRD	168
System Influence Diagram (SID)	170
Composite Theoretical Descriptions	171
Administrative Procedures...	171
Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)...	182
Logistics of the Classroom...	186
Classroom Climate...	189
Emotions...	192
Workout (Classroom Interactions)...	193
The Composite Interview Uncluttered SID	194
Pareto Reconciled SID	195
Classroom Climate Effects...	196
Workout (Classroom Interactions) Effects...	197
A Tour through the System	198

Feedback Loops and Zooming	199
Group Reality: System Statistics	200
Significant Differences	200
Chapter 5: The System Speaks: An Interpretation	210
Comparing Affinities	211
Significant Differences	212
Why the Difference?	217
Does Anyone Have a Plan?	218
What's the Temperature?	219
Where Do I Go From Here?	220
Tell Me How You Really Feel!	221
I Went to School for This!	222
Walking Through the Looking Glass	223
Individual Variation	226
Comparing Individual Systems	253
Loops and Lines	255
Predictions and Interventions	257
Limitations of the Study	266
Delimitations of the Study	267
Assumptions	267
Suggestions for Further Study	267
Conclusion	268
Bibliography	272
Vita	285

List of Tables and Illustrations

Typical IQA Research Flow	48
IQA Working Document Flow	90
The Teaching Experience Focus Group SID	98
The Teaching Experience Interview Protocol	100
Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table	165
Pareto Protocol	166
Combined Interview ART	168
Combined Interview Tabular IRD	169
The Teaching Experience SID	198
The Teaching Experience Intermediate View SID	199
The Teaching Experience Telephoto View SID	200
Individual Interview Perceptions	201
Administrative Procedures Perceptions	202
Classroom Climate Perceptions	203
Emotions Perceptions	204
Logistics of the Classroom Perceptions	205
Payoff Perceptions	206
Roller Coaster (The Unexpected) Perceptions	207
Workout (Classroom Interactions) Perceptions	208
Overall Perceptions	209
The Teaching Experience Significant Differences SID	214
The Teaching Experience SID	218
The Teaching Experience Intermediate View SID	224
The Teaching Experience Telephoto View SID	224
High Performing Teacher SID	227
Poor Performing Teacher SID	227
High Performing Teacher Perception SID	254
Poor Performing Teacher Perception SID	255

Chapter 1

How Teachers Think About Their Work: The First Step in Defining Quality Teachers

A True Story

It was typical hectic morning as a principal, a principal of an elementary school: nose bleeds, no lunch money and food on the floor in the cafeteria. Once the bell rang and we finally found all the lost children and got them to class, it was time to look at my schedule for the day. Teacher observations, one of my favorite activities was on the calendar for the morning. I gathered my notepads and pens and strolled along the hallways admiring the students' various art projects and writings; all the while musing to myself, how blessed I was to have chosen such a wonderful profession. I arrived at the first classroom and was met by children's unhappy faces. The teacher was still at her desk trying to find her grade book and attendance roll sheet. All the children, except for a select few, were rummaging in their desks, backpacks or wandering around the classroom looking for something interesting to do. This was not what I had expected to see and certainly not what I wanted to see. How did things go so wrong? As the instructional leader of this building, I had clear expectations of procedures. As a team, we dialogued frequently about instruction and how to better assist children in attaining their educational goals. I smothered the now swirling thoughts of failure with a comforting thought that this was just a bad morning. If I sit down and get comfortable, all will fall into place shortly. Fifteen minutes passed and the floundering professional clamored of attempts to start a reading lesson based on suffixes. This was a lofty attempt at instruction; however, many students already knew the material and some still could not read the root word. Off task and disruptive behavior began to flair. Now the teacher was no longer focused on instruction, but putting out the fires blazing around the classroom. I left the classroom, not alone, but with two as she put it "problem children" that should have never been promoted to the third grade.

Not to be deterred from my original plan, I talked with the students, sent them back to class and plowed forward into the next classroom adventure. I was pensive and almost fearful of what I would find. I did not bother to knock; I wanted to finally see the truth full force. As I entered, I noticed the faint sound of classical music in the

background. All students were working diligently; yet, doing different things. Yes, I recognized it as the mandatory reading time. However, some students were creating stories on the computer, others were in a small reading group with the teacher and pairs of students were huddled quietly around the room with colorful and exciting books held close to their noses. There was a parent at the desk with a bright volunteer badge pinned proudly to her lapel. I sheepishly smiled and waved with a slight twitch. I was in shock. A good shock, but nonetheless, shock.

What happened? I slowly walked back to my office contemplating how all teachers in my building came to me with certifications and university training. We all attended the same district professional development and had the same planning times. How could one teacher be so ineffective and the other so effective? I knew at this moment that I would need to know this if I were to have a positive impact on children's lives. Utilizing the IQA methodology, this study is a journey to begin exploration of why some teachers are quality and other need so much improvement.

Introduction

Chapter one will address the importance of identifying quality teacher characteristics from the historical view of educational reform and student learning. The importance and potential impact of the study will be discussed and areas of future research efforts will be explored. The theoretical contributions of Bakhtin and Gee regarding language and discourse will be endorsed as a means of conceptualizing the mental models of the quality teacher.

The Importance of Defining

Recent examinations of possible ways to restructure the educational system have focused on the teacher. According to Clark and Astuto (1994), "Everyone agrees that the work of teachers is the critical element in effective schooling" (p. 517). When

determining students' educational goals and learning objectives, it becomes apparent that teachers are the individuals who primarily interact with students and help determine their academic progression (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). According to the National Board for Professional Teaching standards (2000), "Teaching is at the heart of education, and the single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching" (p.6). Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading researcher in teacher quality, says that no other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process. She contends that teacher expertise affects all the core tasks of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Even though literature exists concerning diverse factors that affect student learning, "At the heart of this line of inquiry is the core belief that teachers make a difference" (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997, p.57). The empirical evidence supports the assumption that teachers are the key to successful learning (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Evertson, 1986; Goodlad, 1984; Henson, 1988; Hofmeister & Lubke, 1990; Joyce & Weil, 1986; Levine, 1989; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Lightfoot, 1983; Lorie, 1975; Wiggenton, 1985; Zumwalt, 1986).

Since research has supported teachers as the "key to successful learning," the importance of defining quality teachers is paramount in current research and has produced several studies in which the findings further reveal the powerful effect of teacher quality on student success. In the course of a single school year, students who are assigned to a quality teacher can gain a full grade level more than students who are assigned to an ineffective teacher. (Hanushek, 1992; Ferguson, 1991). A study by Darling-Hammons, 1998, shows that when it comes to student achievement, effective teachers are more important than any other school ingredient (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Economists Steven G. Rivkin and Eric A. Hanushek found that the best teachers, compared with their least effective colleagues, can get an additional year's worth of learning out of their students (Olson, 2003a). By studying students in Texas, Olsen, 2003, found the importance of having an effective teacher is so pronounced that having a quality teacher instead of an average teacher for four or five years in a row could

essentially close the gap in student performance between students from low-income and high-income households (Olson, 2003b). In this vein of thinking, research has also provided evidence that teacher quality affects the achievement gap among diverse student groups. David Haselkorn, the dean of National Education Programs and Policies at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts was quoted in the January 9, 2003 edition of Education Week stating “if you want to understand the root of the achievement gap, it’s the teacher gap that exists between the skill levels of teachers” (Olson, 2003b).

Research further advocates that the effects of teacher quality on student learning are long lasting. Sanders and Rivers found that Tennessee students’ scores were strongly correlated with the quality of the teachers to whom they were assigned, and that the residual effects of weak teachers could last for years (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Hanushek proposes that the consequences of weak teaching can be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse. He says that even if one year of instruction from a very ineffective teacher is followed by years of instruction from an average teacher, students may never make up the difference (Hanushek, 1992). Ferguson’s 1991 study illustrates the impact that teacher expertise has on student learning. Teacher expertise (as measured by performance on state teacher assessments, years of teaching experience, and completion of an advanced degree) accounted for roughly 40% of the variance in student achievement on standardized tests in reading and mathematics in Texas (Ferguson, 1991).

Upon realizing the positive effects of quality teachers, researchers began focusing on the act of teaching. By the year 2000, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards issued a statement entitled, “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do” (NBPTS, 2000, p. 2). The five core propositions are:

- 1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- 2) Teacher know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- 3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- 4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- 5) Teachers are members of learning communities

These core propositions represent what the Board considered as fundamental and time-honored concepts in teaching, encompassing both technical and interpersonal aspects of the profession. “Human qualities, expert knowledge and skill, and professional commitment together compose excellence in this craft” (NBPTS, 2000, p.4).

Darling-Hammond (2000) found that quality teaching was fundamental to student learning and critical for the success of educational reform efforts. “Successful twenty-first century schools will be grounded on two very different assumptions: first, that teaching matters, and second that relationships matter” (p. 6). Darling-Hammond noted that teacher learning must support these assumptions with the consideration of the following concepts: (1) high quality teaching must be explored and supported; (2) a professional culture must be established; and (3) learning organizations should be created. Underlying both the fundamental assumptions and supporting concepts was a need for the appropriate time to conduct further research and accomplish reform efforts (Darling-Hammons, 1996). Before further research is pursued, it is relevant to first explore the research efforts of the past.

Past Research Efforts

Despite a general consensus among researchers, policymakers, and the public that teacher quality is important, there is little agreement among these groups regarding its composition or measurement. As a result, the task of defining teacher quality has been difficult. In general, research on teacher quality generally falls into two categories: teacher processes and student outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The pedagogical studies related to teacher quality (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996; INTASC, 1995; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1993) tend to focus on instructional methods and classroom management. Other research focuses on teacher preparation and qualification by examining common indicators such as educational attainment (Betts, Reuben & Danenberg, 2000; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1999; Hertert, 1993; Lavigne, 1992; Summers & Wolfe, 1997; Wenglinsky, 2000), type of certification (Betts, Reuben & Danenberg,

2000; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997; Lavigne, 1992; Ingersoll, 1999), in-field teaching (Ingersoll, 1999, Wenglinsky 2000) and salary (Duncombe, Ruggiero & Yinger, 1996; Hertert, 1993). . Studies that focus on both the pedagogical dimension or teacher preparation and qualifications are the subject of considerable debate and reflect the complexity and definitional challenges associated with notions of teacher quality. While the debate over the definition of teacher quality continues, scholars agree that teachers are a key component to educational reform. A profile of teacher quality is a necessary tool to monitor progress towards school reform goals. However, providing such a profile is not an easy task; teacher quality is a complex phenomenon tightly interwoven in the fabric of educational reform.

Educational Reform and Teacher Quality

Calls for educational reform are not uncommon, beginning with the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957. This simple event catapulted education into a priority position in the United States throughout the 1970's. In response to the concerns about our educational system, reports were generated throughout the 1980's in an attempt to further shed light on the situation. Many times a grim picture was painted. One such report, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, raised many questions about the state of education, including the quality of classroom instruction and teachers (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report declared that the United States is "a Nation at risk...whose educational foundations...are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people" (p.1). One focus of the report was that our students were not learning enough, and that we needed to significantly improve our nation's education results (Buttram & Waters, 1997). Even though much energy has been focused on restructuring efforts in the last three decades, the importance of individual teachers, and their role in educational reform, is still an issue that needs to be addressed (Ehrgott, Henderson-Sparks, & Sparks, 1993).

In hopes of furthering educational reform, President Clinton encouraged all Americans to become involved in the debate over quality teachers. In his 1997 State of the Union Address, President Clinton issued a “Call to Action” that included as a priority the improvement of quality of teachers in every American classroom. President Clinton stated that “good teachers are the hallmark of a good educational system; they are integral to children’s intellectual and social development.” The general societal view was that excellent teacher preparation and qualifications led to exemplary teaching behaviors and practices (*Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*, 1999). President Clinton’s speech reflected a sustained concern over the condition of education and nation’s need for excellent teachers.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 107-110, which is more commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Legislation and Policies Website, 2002). This act requires all states to have a “highly qualified teacher” in every classroom with core subjects being taught by the 2005-2006 school year. Core subjects are identified as: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography According to the federal highly qualified teacher characteristics, all Local Education Agencies (school districts) must have a plan to ensure that teachers are fully certified or licensed according to a state plan. All teachers must also have at least a bachelor’s degree and show competence in subject area and pedagogy skills. This will speculatively be measured by passing a rigorous state test (Cochran-Smith, 2002). The federal definition of highly qualified teachers is synonymous with certified teachers, and the state definition is aligned to the federal and is just as global in nature. With teacher quality driving much of the educational reform efforts, we need to better understand and define, how quality teachers think about their work and what makes them more likely to positively impact student learning.

Statement of the Problem

The major intention of this study is to examine and compare the language and discourse used by quality teachers to the language and discourse of teachers who need improvement. The term discourse encompasses not only the language of an individual, but also the thought process. The analysis of language and discourse specific to the teachers should reveal the mental models of quality teachers and teachers who need improvement; mental models for the basis of this study are defined as how teachers perceive the world. This study assumes that quality teachers think differently about teaching than teachers in need of improvement. Language and discourse provides a framework for teachers to conceptualize the characteristics of a quality teacher. It is this researcher's contention that the language and discourse of the teacher in need of improvement will differ from the quality teacher. If so, it is then not an attitude that makes the difference in teachers, it is the way they perceive the world. This research is then positioned to provide direction to educators on applying these identified qualities through the hiring process, professional development and teacher supervision.

Research Question

Do quality teacher conceptualize teaching differently than teachers who have been identified as needing improvement?

What are the differences between how teachers perceive their experiences in the classroom?

A study involving two teacher constituencies, one, quality teachers and the other teachers who need improvement, yields four research questions as follows:

1. What factors comprise teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, teaching?
2. How do these factors relate to each other in a perceived system of influence or cause and effect?
3. How does the individual's experience compare to that of the group as a whole?
4. How do the two groups' experiences compare to each other?

Significance of the Study

The large body of literature available on the various aspects of teaching has failed to resolve the differences of opinion related to quality teaching. Since there are no universally agreed upon set of characteristics of a quality teacher, one approach to clarify or lessen the ambiguity surrounding the construct is to do a qualitative study- including focus groups and interviews- with identified quality teachers and needs improvement teachers and compare their thoughts on teaching. Thus, allowing teachers themselves to define quality teaching. As Medley's research noted: "at least 98% of the literature published on the subject of quality teachers in the first half of the twentieth century was based predominately on the opinion of researchers"(Medley, 1973). The opportunity for teachers to define quality teaching is pertinent.

This study will identify how teachers think about their work. By comparing quality teacher's thoughts about their work to the needs improvement teacher's thoughts, we can target the conceptual differences that make one teacher impact student learning in a quality manner while the other does not. If it is proven through the use of teacher language and discourse that they do have different ways of thinking about teaching, then it becomes possible to impact education in a positive manner by providing vehicles to change teacher thinking, thus changing teacher behavior. It is this researcher's contention that it is not teacher attitude, but the way they view their world that makes the difference in the quality of the teacher. The practical implications of this study include the potential to impact teacher training, selection and professional development. Furthermore,

implications from this study may be connected to the evaluation of teachers, as well as, the relationship between the teacher and student achievement.

This study has the potential to improve the quality of teacher performance and learning opportunities for students. We have noted that teachers are fundamental to student success; therefore, we want to focus on what makes a teacher a quality instructional leader. Identifying the quality teacher holds much promise in achievement of student goals. If the goal of schools is for all students to achieve mastery, then the identification of a quality teacher is instrumental in the achievement of this goal. Teacher and student behaviors are reciprocal and interaction-based processes. Quality learning requires quality teaching. This research study is then beneficial to the timeliness of the teacher quality issue, as well as, the need for further study.

Research efforts continue to attempt to identify the link in educational reform between the role of the teacher and the impact a teacher has on student outcomes. Using the tools, language and discourse to analyze how teachers think about their work, may provide a valuable first step in defining quality teachers.

Theoretical Rationale

The juxtaposition of the work of Gee on the concept of linguistic discourse with that of Bakhtin on philosophical discourse creates a theoretical framework that explains how the mental models, both shape and are shaped, by the individual and collective thought. This framework lends itself well to categorizing how teachers think about their work and leads to the initial steps of defining quality teachers. Gee's theory expands the conceptual structures investigation by highlighting the need to explore how language is a carrier of ideology or a body of ideas for a particular individual or group. Then, it is Bakhtin who provides compatible research involving the unit of language as study.

Arguing against the Russian formalists of his day, Bakhtin suggested that language was much more than a series of grammatical structures. Bakhtin contended that participation in meaningful conversation depends on an individual's ability to recognize

and interact with others in highly specific spheres of communication. Bakhtin, and other researchers, termed these spheres of shared language- “speech genres” (Bakhtin, 1986; Gomez, 1996; Graue & March, 1996). Speech genres are forms of language that allow like-minded speakers to understand one another and provide them with the common ground on which to create and exchange ideas.

Groups of individuals speaking in specific genres create and recreate meaning as they simultaneously negotiate and struggle over ideology- being the beliefs that guide the individual or the group. As individuals appropriate the language of a specific genre, they absorb the ideology inherent in it. The social and individual commingle and mutual ways of thinking, speaking, acting and living are born.

Summary

Researchers agree that quality teacher’s lead to improved student performance; yet, there is little agreement on what constitutes a quality teacher. Since this is a concept that is difficult to define and measure, researchers have circled around two primary areas: processes and outcomes. Previous studies have been based on pedagogy, management, educational attainments and certification. This researcher suspects that teachers themselves can best identify the characteristics of a quality teacher. Since teachers come to the profession with similar training and credentials, the burning question still remains: what makes one teacher a quality teacher and the other needing improvement? It is this researchers conjecture that by analyzing and synthesizing how quality teachers and in need of improvement teachers think about their work is the first step in identifying quality teachers from their own perspectives.

In Chapter two, the researcher will review the literature of value added studies to reinforce the impact a quality teacher has on student achievement. The researcher will also expand the theoretical discussion on the concepts of language and mental models as they relate to providing a foundation for teachers in this study to conceptualize their thoughts on quality teachers. This couples with chapter three and an in depth discussion

of a unique application of qualitative methodology steeped in analyzing the language and thoughts of teachers. This research is poised to hear the voices of the elementary teacher as they process their work.

Definitions of Related Terms

The following terms and definitions are the result of longstanding efforts by educational researchers to gain clarity:

Mental Models Internal representations of external reality assembled on the basis of our sensory information, language and experiences (Halpern, 2000).

Ideologies The beliefs of a group of individual (Volosinov, 1973).

Speech Genres Forms of language that allows like-minded speakers to understand one another (Bakhtin, 1981).

Teaching The constant stream of professional decisions that affect the probability of learning: decisions that are made and implanted before, during, and after interaction with a student (Lieberman, 1984).

Value-Added Accountability System Analyzes student's tests scores to measure how much an individual has learned (Holloway, 2000).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature as a background for this study, beginning with an historical overview of past studies on educational reform and their impact on the continual quest for quality teaching. Next, the chapter will explore research on the relationship between teaching and learning and extend this consideration with four value-added research studies that enunciate the need for quality teachers in educational reform. Finally, the chapter will examine in more detail the relevant research on quality teachers and the theoretical framework of the study.

If one assumes that teachers are central to the learning process, research should be able to determine exactly what it is that teachers do that make them quality. In simplistic terms, they teach in a quality fashion. Teaching can be viewed from two perspectives, either as a process or as an achievement of a goal. Currently greater importance seems to be placed on educational goals and outcomes rather than process; therefore, it appears in this context that quality teaching has a focus on achievement as well as the process.

In the past, students were held responsible for their own mastery of a given subject; more recently, educators have been held accountable for learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1993). One superintendent's statement encapsulated this paradigm shift: "the reality is that we have not taught until students have learned. And if students are to learn, the performance of teachers and administrators is not satisfactory" (Stronge & Tucker, 2000). The solution then, seems simple- place a quality teacher in every classroom in an effort to help all students achieve optimal learning. Although, the solution may appear straightforward, it has historically proven to be a daunting task in defining what constitutes a quality teacher.

Historical Views of Teacher Quality

Formal, systematic investigations of quality teaching began in the nineteenth century. Researchers selected elementary students and asked them to share their memories of their

best teacher. The researchers then generated a list of competencies of “good teacher” from students’ perspectives (Kratz, 1896). The approach of seeking out student perceptions of the quality teacher was used well into the mid-twentieth century. In 1936, Hart asked a group of high school students to create a list of characteristics of the teachers’ from whom they learned the most followed by a list of characteristics of teachers they liked the most. The characteristics identifying the teachers they liked were:

- 1) Grades fairly
- 2) Understands students
- 3) Does not play favorites
- 4) Possesses teaching skills
- 5) Treats all students equally
- 6) Friendly and good-natured

The characteristics typifying the teachers from whom students learned the most were:

- 1) Higher expectations and demands more from students
- 2) Strong knowledge of the content
- 3) Good classroom control and discipline
- 4) Wide variety of teaching skills

Findings from Hart’s research (1936) indicate that differences emerged in the high school students’ perceptions of a quality teacher. The teachers they “liked” list focuses on the affective domain of the teacher while the teacher that they learned the most from were primarily concerned with the teacher’s actual instructional ability.

As interest on the construct of a quality teacher grew, researchers sought out the perceptions of additional populations such as parents and administrators. For example, Medley (1973) indicated that at least 98% of the literature published on the subject of quality teachers in the first half of the twentieth century was based predominately on the opinion of researchers. Beecher (1949) polled 106 school superintendents regarding the characteristics of those teachers perceived as good and poor. The superintendents alleged

that good teachers possessed a strong knowledge of their content, were able to effectively organize their knowledge, stimulated student interest, accommodated student differences, and provided a wealth of illustrations while teaching. The same superintendents perceived that poor teachers were lazy, did not possess classroom management or discipline, were indifferent to students, did not treat students fairly, and were unable to stimulate students' interest in content. The lists of teacher characteristics generated from this study measured the quality teacher without regard to outside variable such as the teacher's educational background, classroom context, subject matter, and other external forces. By 1930, these types of rating lists had become so popular that more than 200 prototypes were in use (Barr & Emans, 1930).

Between the 1940's and 1950's, teacher effectiveness research assumed many forms, foci and interests. Amid World War II and the Cold War that followed, some researchers changed their research focus to students' and teachers' attitudes, social change, and international issues. Other researchers centered on teacher personality traits and their effect on students' social attitude and academic achievement: teacher quality was measured against the backdrop of students' social attitude or academic performance. Tomlinson's (1955) study involved 14,000 students and sought to use student change to measure teacher quality. The study determined that teacher quality was equated with the following traits: democratic attitude, kindness, side interests, personal appearance and fairness.

In the 1950's and 1960's, researchers attempted to develop teacher proof curriculum. These same researchers also attempted to identify general teaching methods that would be unaffected by an individual teacher's style of instruction. Good (1979) determined that teachers mediated the effects of a particular curriculum. It was becoming clear that teaching was a much more complex than originally hypothesized. The intricacy and number of variables that impact the act of teaching generated many questions regarding what constitutes teacher quality, learning, and other related topics. Biddle and Ellena (1964) postulated that no one knew exactly what constitutes a competent teacher. These researchers reasoned, "research in this area has reached a dead end" (p. 94).

Beginning in the 1970's, researchers began looking at the process of education. The process/process and process/product approaches gained momentum (Good, 1979). As a result, many educators and researchers began exploring strategies to improve the quality of teaching. Their goal was to isolate the type of teaching that would bring about optimum student learning. Some researchers in the 1970's reported modest progress on teacher effectiveness (Gage, 1968). This research focused on the interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom (Brophy & Good, 1986). Subsequent studies have followed by attempting to find a correlation between teacher quality and student achievement. It is these studies that were the impetus to a national educational reform movement.

Education Reform and Reform Efforts

Since the mid-1970's teachers and teacher education have become an important issue for the American public, with the quality of teachers and education at center stage of school reform efforts. The 1983 publication by the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform ignited a new wave of reforms. This report specifically attributed students' poor performance on standardized tests, as well as, the workplace to the quality of the teachers. Reports such as this sparked educational reform in this country.

At the heart of the reform movement in America's public schools is the recognition that quality teachers, who use proven teaching strategies, will help to create effective and successful schools (Cawelti, 1999). Part of the satisfaction of being a teacher is taking part in the decision-making process in any reforms (Corburn, 2001). According to Hofmeister and Lubke (1990), the teacher's input in the reform process is vital because the teacher is on the firing line and must determine which teaching methods will most effectively meet student needs. According to Goodlad (1984), the teacher is viewed as "coach, quarterback, referee, and even rule-maker" (p. 108).

Quality teachers are needed to bring excellence to education and “to gain the respect they deserve, teachers need the freedom to act like professionals in their classrooms and school communities” (Zumwalt, 1986, p. vii). Everston (1986) found that teachers became gatekeepers who decided what was to be taught and how the material was to be presented. Squires, Huitt, and Segars (1984) suggested that even when the school organization itself had no focus and no ability to change, the individual teacher could make a difference. Anderson (1982) reported that a teacher’s decisions regarding classroom activities and structure could influence a student’s self-esteem and attitude toward schoolwork. Because of the teacher’s central role in the classroom, teachers must be a part of the solution if reform is to come to American Public Schools (Brophy, 1986).

The reform movement has had great impact on teacher accountability, quality and student achievement outcomes. Understanding the history of this movement is essential in comprehending the momentum of the reform and accountability groundswell. There are individuals today who support the view that public schools are not good enough and that something must be done to make them better. Setting higher academic standards is seen by many as one way to raise the academic achievement of students. It is the introduction of national standards that begin the change in policy and shift the focus to teachers and how they directly affect student achievement.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act called for the development of national standards for education, for tests to measure the achievement of those standards by students, and for aid to states and local school districts to raise their standards. With congressional and presidential support, and with the support of the nation’s major business and education organizations, the national government moved to provide financial assistance to states attempting to raise the quality of public education. Other programs, however, needed to be realigned (Jennings, 1998). The most significant of the federal aid programs was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The Clinton administration approaches to refashioning the ESEA were influenced by many factions. One education expert, Slavin (1993), a researcher at Johns Hopkins University, wrote for the Chicago Tribune that the greatest potential for improving the

education of poor children did not rest with school choice or vouchers but with the reform of Title 1. Marshall Smith, the undersecretary in the Department of Education, told Congress in 1994, “Operating as a separate supplemental program, Title 1 has gone about as far as it can go in raising the skills of at-risk children” (The Current Status of Title 1, 1997, p. 15). Smith’s views were important because he was the major architect of the Clinton administration’s new approach to federal aid. Secretary Riley’s main concern with ESEA was the same as it had been with schools in general as reflected in the debate on Goals 2000: Too many children were being held to low expectations, and the country would not succeed without changing. In a speech on May 1994, Riley summed up his opinion as follows:

I believe there can be no equality in this nation without a renewed commitment to excellence...that education every child to use his or her God given talent is the precondition for full equality in this great country of ours. In 1894, it would have been unfair to talk about high standards. In 1994, it would be unfair to not talk about high standards (Riley, 1994).

The move toward realignment of the ESEA had begun. Federal programs were being realigned to encourage higher academic standards for all students, thus leading the way for higher standards for all teachers.

President Clinton signed the new ESEA bill into law on October 20, 1994. Clinton espoused that the event represented the most significant accomplishment in education since the administration of Lyndon Johnson (Jennings, 1998). “Clinton has, quite simply, set in motion a revolution in public education,” concluded a National Journal columnist (Stanfield, 1994, p. 2485). Stanfield further asserted that the president had profoundly shifted the pedagogical course of the nation’s education system. As a result of this legislation, the call for national standards had begun. Reform movements that would impact teachers’ lives followed closely behind.

On January 8, 2002 President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Act is far more encompassing than Clinton's initial reforms; it redefines the federal role in K-12 education and is intended to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers (Jennings, 2002a). More importantly, it makes the first direct attempts at addressing the quality teacher issues from a federal level.

Title II, Part A of the new law requires states to raise the qualifications for new teachers and verify the qualifications of current teachers ("No Child Left Behind Reforms Address Teacher Qualifications," 2002). Specifically, the law states that by the fall of 2002, all new teachers paid through the Title I program must be "highly qualified". By definition, this means that these teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree, are fully certified or licensed under state law, and demonstrate competency in all public school classrooms where core academic subjects are taught (Jennings, 2002a). The core academic subjects include: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography (2002b). Current secondary school teachers who do not have an academic major in their area of assignment can prove competency either by passing a written test, or by meeting a uniform, objective, statewide standard of competency.

Within four years (2005-06 school year), all teachers in every classroom must be highly qualified by this definition. If a teacher isn't qualified to teach in his or her subject area, a school would be required to send a letter notifying parents (2002). In order to help teachers meet these new competency requirements, the new law requires districts receiving Title I funds to use at least 5 percent of these funds for professional development activities (2002). In exchange for meeting the new demands, poorer school districts will receive additional federal funding, and all states and school districts will have greater flexibility in how they use federal funds (Jennings, 2002a).

In order to make such a drastic federal reform effort, the values of the American people had to call upon policymakers to initiate change in the requirements for the public teaching profession. The change in political culture, as in the case for most federal reform

efforts, was the path that led to the successful enactment of the NCLB Act of 2001 in the fight for “highly qualified” teachers.

Policy Implications

Moving effectively toward reform requires a shift in perspective and a willingness to view education through a different paradigm. According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), “the vision of practice that underlies the nation’s reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before and probably never experienced as students” (p.10). The policy environment within which teachers work often sends mixed messages regarding how schools are expected to conduct business and about what behaviors and skills are rewarded. Existing policies and practices must be assessed in terms of their compatibility with two cornerstones of the reform agenda: a learner-centered view of teaching and a career long conception of teachers’ learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Additionally, the policies governing ongoing teacher evaluation must also support teaching for understanding and teacher learning.

Additional questions will certainly emerge as the field gains experience. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) have suggested, “the challenge for policymakers and educators is to realign the existing system of signals and incentives that shape school organizations, teachers’ practices, role expectations, and assumptions so that they support student and teacher learning” (p.22). As policies change, states will begin to take note of the research and findings being reported; this has already become a reality in most states. Florida, for example, has made systematic use of the research on teacher effectiveness in its teacher preparation programs and requirements for teacher licensing. By and large, current teacher preparations programs and licensing agencies have focused on what teachers know or able to do, rather than what they are able to accomplish (Schalock, 1987). As noted by Schalock (1987), any conception of teaching that fails to take into

account what is to be learned by the student, the characteristics of the students that are to do the learning, and the conditions under which the learning is to occur, is an underestimation of the complexity of teaching.

In the midst of the reform movement, some are looking at new means of determining the quality of teachers. In the Texas Education Journal (2002), Secretary of Education Rod Paige indicated that in order to have a quality education system, we must know how much each child knows. In an effort to compile a list of teacher characteristics that directly impact student-learning, studies have been conducted that attempt to link teacher behavior to student achievement.

The Value-Added Accountability Systems

In the 1960's, process/product research produced correlation studies and some experimental studies that linked teacher behavior with student achievement (Brophy, 1986; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Good, Biddle, & Brophy, 1975; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Medley, 1982; Squires, Huitt & Segars, 1984). This knowledge base reported quality-teaching practices, validated good practice, and suggested a direction for improvement (Brophy, 1992).

Even though literature exists concerning the factors that affect student learning, "At the heart of this line of inquiry is the core belief that teachers make the difference" (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997, p. 57). An analysis of value-added accountability systems currently in use will supplement existing perceptions regarding what constitutes a quality teacher. This empirical evidence will further support the notion that quality teachers do impact student achievement.

The Dallas Value-Added Accountability System

Value-added assessment measures the gain scores, or how much the individual student has learned (Holloway, 2000). In the late 1960's the Dallas Independent School

District began developing what has evolved into the Dallas Value-Added Accountability System. In 1990, the Board of Education established the Commission for Educational Excellence, which, after extensive study, recommended the development of an accountability system that was fair, based on variables in addition to norm-referenced tests data, and could be extended downward to include measures of teacher quality. The Dallas system is complex, controlling variables such as ethnicity, gender, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and prior achievement levels, as well as, supported by knowledge and cutting-edge research (Mentor, Jordan, Gomez, Anderson, & Bembry, 1998).

An Accountability Task Force composed of parents, teachers, principals, and community and business members selected and weighed the variables, and formulated “the rules of the accountability system and the performance awards associated with it as well as hearing appeals of system decisions” (Webster & Mendro, 1997, p. 83). Regardless of the groups’ definition of quality, the public’s perspective of school or teacher quality is the student’s scores on tests. The teacher Effectiveness Index does not include formal diagnostic information on the teacher or students; therefore, the principal or the teacher determines the teacher characteristics that are necessary to procure effectiveness (Webster & Mendro, 1997).

However, research has been conducted within the Dallas School District to determine school and teacher quality. Identifying students above and below prediction for measurement of school effectiveness had implied the ability to sort information within a school and thereby identify quality teachers in that school. Based on this research and the resulting findings, The Dallas School District constructed a teacher evaluation system based on the Teacher Effectiveness Indexes and that was field tested on the entire district in 1995-1996 school year and implanted there after.

Data from Mendro’s 1998 study “strongly suggests that negative effects of a teacher in the bottom third of the effectiveness index lasts through three years of a teacher in the top third of the index” (p. 262), hence, it is even more imperative that policymakers and educators understand the characteristics of a quality teacher. From

Mendro's (1998) study, three consistent characteristics of quality school emerged, 1) achievement was a primary focus 2) staff expected students to achieve, and 3) principals did not tolerate ineffective teachers. In a study using a classroom index of math teachers, it was "found that quality teachers knew subject matter, taught the entire range of the curriculum with equal emphasis, and assessed students frequently through formal and informal methods" (p. 264).

The Tennessee Value-Added Accountability System

In the mid-1980's, the level of concern for the state of education in the United States rose across the nation in the wake of the publication of A Nation at Risk. In 1984, Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander enacted the Comprehensive Education Reform Act. The CERA included a major increase in spending on education and a Career Ladder system for teachers. The focus now turned to the public schools and accountability issues. In response to demands from the Tennessee business interests for greater accountability in public schools, the Tennessee Value-Added Accountability System (TVAAS), the first statewide accountability system of its kind, was developed (Ceperley & Reel, 1997).

The TVAAS stems from new processes for estimating the effects of teachers and schools on student academic outcomes. TVAAS uses statistical mixed-model methodology to enable a multivariate, longitudinal analysis of student achievement data (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Profiles of academic growth for individual students are developed from value-added testing. Race and the socioeconomic status of students are adjusted by TVAAS "by using achievement data as input in a complex longitudinal analysis" (Holloway, 2000, p. 84).

A study of the cumulative gains throughout the entire state revealed that the racial composition, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and the mean achievement level of the school was unrelated to gain scores (Sanders & River, 1996). The results of Sanders' research showed residual effects of teachers on the academic gains of students. Quality teachers facilitated academic growth in their students the years

assigned to them; however, there were residual effects of prior assignments to poor quality teachers.

Additional research conducted by Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) document that the most important factor to impact student learning is the teacher. In addition, the results show a wide variation in quality among teachers. According to these researchers:

“The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the quality of teachers than by any other single factor. Quality teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels- regardless of the heterogeneity in their classrooms” (p. 63).

Furthermore, it was discovered that ineffective teachers were ineffective with all students despite the students’ previous level of achievement (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

The Oregon Teacher Work Sample Methodology

A team of individuals with a common research interest in teacher quality emerges in Western Oregon prior to the reform movement gathering full momentum. The initial goal of the group was to develop criteria and procedures that might be used to predict quality teacher performance in teacher education candidates in a pre-service program. The Oregon Teacher Work Sample Methodology (TWSM) became a major component of their research effort. TWSM procedures used to assess pupil progress are linked specifically to the learning outcomes a teacher is attempting to accomplish. The measures used are criterion referenced rather than norm referenced. Finally, pre and post instructional gains are calculated in a student-by-student basis, with separate analysis required for initially high and low scoring students. Also, descriptors of classroom, school, and community context variables accompany all measures of learning gains.

TWSM is a contextually based program that is “a complex, authentic and applied” performance approach to assessment that can be tailored to fit the particular learning goals and styles of a teacher (Schalock, Schalock & Girod, 1997, p. 17), regardless of student demographics or the environment of the school. Through TWSM, the teacher determines learning outcomes: develops plans for instruction and assessments; aligns these plans with desired outcomes: collects, interprets, and reflects upon the evidence of student progress toward attaining the outcomes.

Schalock, Schalock, and Girod (1997) also suggest that they have developed a rational argument for the merits of work sample methodology as a vehicle for linking the work of teachers to learning gains by pupils. These researchers also indicate they believe that TWSM holds great promise as means of defensibly linking progress in learning to teacher work. The researchers cite four reasons for their optimism. First, there is the reasonableness of the methodology from a perspective of teachers, parents, school administrators, school board members, and the public at large. They believe it links pupil learning to teacher work and the realities of the context in which teaching and learning occur. It ensures that measures of pupil learning are connected to what is taught and what pupils are expected to learn, and it provided information about the performance and characteristics of teacher assumed to be related to pupil learning. Second, is that TWSM is feasible to implement. It is applicable to any teacher in any teaching situation, it will accommodate any and all pupils being taught, and it requires no more than a logical, straightforward approach to a teacher’s work and its description. Third, it serves multiple purposes. It can be used as a vehicle for training beginning teacher or retraining experienced teachers, and it can be used as a vehicle for evaluation the quality of beginning teachers or the productivity of experienced teachers. Finally, the researchers believed that the kind of empirical evidence that has accrued, specifically the consistency of finding across replications, support the promise of this program.

The Kentucky Instructional Results Information System

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was passed by the General Assembly in 1990 in response to a legal opinion that declared Kentucky's system of public education to be unconstitutional. A major component of the reform act, House Bill 940, Section I, contained specifications for statewide assessments of student performance relative to defined student outcomes (Guskey, 1994). As KERA was taking shape, the Kentucky Council on School Performance Standards recommended that a major effort be launched to assess student performance beyond what could be measured by paper and pencil tests (Council on School Performance Standards, 1989). Specifically, the council recommended the Commonwealth establish a two-pronged assessment initiative. One part would focus on developing a statewide method to ensure local school accountability for student achievement. The second would focus on helping local schools enhance their ability to use ongoing student assessment to improve instruction.

KIRIS is the accountability and assessment system of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Kentucky's assessment system is large, complex, and ambitious. It aims at two things: first, to provide a statewide, school-level accountability system; and second, to produce dramatic changes in curriculum and instruction in the public schools (Guskey, 1994). This system produces annual reports that are provided to students, parents, and teachers based on student performance at selected grades in relation to expected levels of academic performance (Redfield, 1988). With regard to the KIRIS, the school is the basic unit of accountability. The kinds of assessments being used in Kentucky have been tried in varying locations, but never have they been applied under the pressures of high stakes accountability systems. The State Board will review growth expectations for Elementary and Secondary Education after each assessment cycle. The clear expectation is that all students and all schools can be successful. The greatest benefit to students from KIRIS may be its impact on the procedures that teachers use to establish expectations for student learning. The statement of the law supports an outcomes based philosophy and compels

educators at the local level to change their way of thinking about the potential of all students to achieve and to reach high levels of learning (Guskey, 1992).

A great deal can be learned from the research agendas surrounding the value-added systems and the resulting findings. These value-added systems imply that teachers make a difference. If raising the academic achievement of all students is the primary goal of education in today's society, then these value-added accountability systems lend credence to the argument that research needs to be conducted on teachers whose students clearly produce gain scores over time. It is imperative that administrators be familiar with research that portrays the characteristics of quality teacher so that ineffective teachers can become involved in further training and staff development to increase their level of efficiency.

The link Between the Teacher and Student Outcomes

While most of the past research efforts attempting to link teacher behavior to student outcomes have produced ambiguous results, some variable have been correlated consistently with gains in student achievement and /or attitudes (Good, Biddle, & Brophy, 1975). According to these researchers:

“Usually these teaching behaviors do not correlate very strongly with student outcome measures, but the fact that they usually correlate strongly enough to reach statistical significance indifferent studies conducted in various settings by separate investigators suggests that they are in fact related to student outcomes” (Good, Biddle, & Brophy, 1975, p. 58).

Researchers reviewed many of these studies and concluded that students learned best when the following teaching characteristics were present: clarity, variability in teaching methods, curricula, and / or media, enthusiasm, task-oriented and / or business like behavior, questioning rather than lecturing, praise, student interaction, and multiple

levels of questioning. Also, teacher criticism consistently had an adverse effect on student learning (Rosenshine & Furst, 1973, p. 68).

Other variables that appeared to be effective in single studies but which require further substantiation include: teacher redirection of student comments for reaction from other students; high teacher expectations for achievement; thoroughness in teaching; and the extent to which the teacher follows the specified lesson formats (Rosenshine & Furst, 1973). It should be noted that these relationships stem from correlation studies. Therefore, it may be premature to objectively state that the behaviors directly cause the student gains. However, the consistency of the correlation data strongly suggest that the associations are real and that well designed experimental studies involving those teacher behaviors are likely to yield positive results.

The findings of other researchers also support these finding. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) conducted a review of the same research and sustained the conclusions reached by Rosenshine and Furst (1973). Dunkin and Biddle (1974) also noted additional variables that appeared to be related to student learning and / or student attitudes. Most of these were in the area of classroom management. Another variable to high teacher expectations and steering groups was also found to produce higher student outcomes. Steering groups (Lundgren, 1972) are groups of students that the teacher uses as benchmarks for determining levels of instructional delivery, for determining when material has been mastered, and when it is time to move on to new material. According to Lundgren (1972), the higher the ability and achievement level of the steering group, the higher the overall learning of the entire class. Therefore, these researchers stated that teachers who aim high produce better results.

In general, the research review by Rosenshine and Furst (1973) and Dunkin and Biddle (1974) identified numerous teaching behaviors, which consistently correlate with student learning gains and/or positive student attitudes. Their resulting conclusion supports the notion that teachers do, in fact, make a difference. An interesting study was conducted by Brookover, Gigliotti, Henderson, and Schneider (1973), in which these researchers asked students, teachers and principals of 24 schools to complete

questionnaires. Based on the results, they determined that when teacher believed that students could learn and worked hard to see this accomplished, the students learned. When teachers did not think that students would learn and did not work toward this goal, the students did not learn as much. Again, as this data is consistent with the previous research in identifying a relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement, one could conclude that quality teachers make a difference.

While studies discussed thus far have concentrated on class configuration and instruction, several studies illustrate the importance of teacher personality and the affective aspects of quality teaching. For example: St. John (1971) studied 36 urban sixth grade teachers whose classrooms contained both African American and white students. African American students demonstrated the greatest gains in reading when their teacher were rated highly on traits such as kindness, adaptability, and optimism, and when those same teachers did not consider test scores a good overall indicator of student's ability. Teachers demonstrating these traits obtained better gains in reading scores for African American students. In contrast, Anglo students demonstrated the greatest gains in reading when their teachers were rated highly on traits such as task commitment and confidence. This study indicates that teacher warmth and student orientation may be viewed as especially important to the success of minority students.

Defining Quality Teachers based on Outcomes

Despite a general consensus among researchers, policymakers, and the public that teacher quality is important, there is little agreement among these groups regarding its composition or measurement. As a result, the task of defining teacher quality has been difficult. In general, research on teacher quality falls into two categories: Processes and Outcomes. In light of the educational reform movements, outcomes have become an established measure of teacher quality. This section reviews the literature on the four most common outcome indicators of teacher quality: degree level, certification, in-field

teaching and teacher experience. The primary reason for the selection of these measures is that there is empirical evidence that they have a bearing on desirable student outcomes.

Degree Level. Some level of educational attainment is a requirement for all teachers, but increasingly, researchers have grown interested in the relationship between teacher degree level and student achievement. The findings from these studies are mixed. For example, Hanushek (1989) concluded from his review of 187 impact studies that “there is no strong or systematic relationship to student performance” (p. 47). In this analysis, Hanushek found no statistical significance between student achievement and teacher degree in 88% of the studies that examined a teacher’s degree level as an indicator of quality. Of those studies with statistically significant findings, only 6% of the studies revealed that teacher education had a significant and positive effect on student achievement, while 4% of the studies showed that teacher education had a significant negative effect.

In their reanalysis of Hanushek’s data, Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine (1996) applied various statistical measures and drew somewhat different conclusions. They found that around 66% of the impact studies reflected no relationship between student achievement and teacher degree (compared to 88% in Hanushek’s analysis). Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine (1996) also found that in 18% of the studies teacher education showed a significant positive effect on student achievement (compared to the 6% in Hanushek’s review), while 12% revealed a significant but negative effect.

Wenglinsky (2000) reviewed approximately 400 impact studies that examined the relationship between teacher degree and student outcomes. He concluded from the findings that the linkage between teacher degree and student outcomes showed a 10% beneficial effect (p. 11). An additional study conducted by Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) found that math teachers who hold both a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in that subject had a statistically significant positive impact on 10th and 12th grade student test scores. With this being said, a degree cannot be the single measurable identification of a quality teacher. In an attempt to ensure quality, certification standards have been imposed.

Teacher Certification. Most states require teachers to have some type of certification or license. For example, 39 states have developed basic skills or general knowledge tests that teacher-candidates must pass, and 29 states require new high school teachers to pass tests in their proposed subject areas (Jerald & Boser, 2000). In 1999, approximately 92% of teachers nationwide held either standard or advanced professional certification (Viadero, 1999).

In light of the reform movement, researchers have become increasingly interested in the distribution of certified teachers and the likely effect it has on student achievement. Goldhaber and Brewer (1997) conducted an impact study that examined the effect of teacher certification on student achievement. Their research showed that math student whose teaches are certified in their subject areas do better than those whose teachers are not certified. In subsequent research, Goldhaber and Brewer (1999) found that math teachers with standard certification had a more positive impact on the test scores of 12th grade students than uncertified teachers.

Darling-Hammond (2000) used the 1993-94 SASS, Schools and Staffing Surveys, national database to examine the effect of teacher certification on student achievement. After controlling for student poverty, she found a significant and positive relationship between the NAEP, National Assessment of Educational Performance, math scores for 8th grade students and the percentage of fully certified math teachers they had. But, note that these studies are conducted in specific curriculum areas, such as: Math, indicating a difference in student outcomes based on in-field teaching assignments.

In-field Teaching. While many states require secondary teachers to have formal academic preparation in their teaching areas, until recently, researchers paid little attention to examining the match between teacher preparation and teacher assignment. Teacher quality initiatives have stimulated an increasing awareness of the importance of teacher preparation in the subject he/she is teaching, or for the purpose of this research study, in-field teaching. Based on his research findings, Ingersoll (1999) argues that out-of-field teaching, teacher assignments to subjects without formal education or training, is the primary cause for poor teacher quality.

Researchers have examined the impact of in-field teaching on student achievement. In a study of middle school mathematics classes, Hawk, Coble, and Swanson (1985) found greater achievement gains associated with algebra students who were taught by teachers certified in mathematics. Wenglinsky's (2000) examination of math and science eighth-grade students, identified only one measurable teacher quality linked to improved student performance: in-field teaching. His findings revealed that math and science students outperformed their peers by nearly 40% of a grade level when taught by in-field teachers. It is noted that teachers assigned to their specifically trained subject areas are more likely to produce positive student outcomes, thus according to this criterion be defined as quality teachers. However, other factors may also play a role in student and teacher success.

Teaching Experience. Organizations usually acknowledge the value of expertise acquired on the job and education is no different. While some studies have focused on the relationship between teaching experience and student achievement, the findings from the studies are mixed. For example, Hanushek's (1989) study showed no statistically significant relationships between teacher experience and student achievement in the 64% of the studies that examined this relationship. Nevertheless, 29% of the impact studies reflected a positive and significant relationship, while 6% revealed a significantly negative effect of teaching experience on student achievement. Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine's (1996) reanalysis of this data shows fairly similar results: 65% of the studies revealed no statistically significant relationship between teacher experience and student achievement, while 31% showed a positive effect and 3% revealed a negative effect.

More recent impact studies have examined teacher experience data further to try and determine where and how teacher experience matters in relation to student outcomes. For example, Wenglinsky (2000) found that teacher experience had not significant effect of performance of 8th grade students in mathematics and science. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2000) found that teacher experience had a small effect on student achievement, but that the gains slowed after a teacher's first few years of teaching.

Summers and Wolfe (1977) suggested that it is "...unreasonable to expect equal effectiveness of experience for all levels of student abilities" (p. 644). From their disaggregated student data, they found that third grade students performing above grade level benefited more from experienced teachers, while newer teachers had a more positive effect on under-performing students. Their explanation of this finding suggested that new teachers tend to be particularly motivated to teach students who seem to have more difficulty learning.

In an attempt to quantify teacher quality, researchers have endeavored to measure teacher quality based on student outcomes or achievement. But, there is another side to teacher quality, one that is defined by the individual and what takes place in the classroom. This aspect, for the purpose of this study, will be called teacher processes.

Defining Teacher Quality based on Processes

Empirical studies have attempted to measure teacher quality based on student performance outcomes; yet, it sometimes fails to include other factors that aid in defining quality teachers. In this review of the literature, the researcher will address the processes that take place in the classroom, such as: content, pedagogy / instructional strategies, climate and management, planning and assessment.

Content Area. Teaching is a complex act, which if done successfully, involves multiple variables and extensive knowledge and skill (Calderhead, 1983). According to Lieberman and Miller (1984), teachers know the most about teaching and if this knowledge base is recognized as a common understanding of accepted teaching methods, it could lead to improved schools. Lortie, (1975) found that teachers themselves believe that the teacher is key to stimulating intellectual curiosity and interest among students. Demmon-Berger (1986) indicated that the quality teacher possessed a strong content knowledge and is concerned with perceptual meanings rather than facts and events. According to Porter and Brophy (1988), the quality teacher demonstrates expert use of existing resources, a strong content knowledge and the strategies for teaching it. Other

researchers also support competence in a subject area (Mendro, 1998 and Traina, 1999). In examining the autobiographies of 125 prominent Americans from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Traina (1999) determined that there were three characteristics possessed by the quality teacher in their lives: “competence in the content, caring deeply about students and their successes, and character” (p. 34). Coupled with the knowledge of a content subject matter are the instructional delivery strategies or pedagogy.

Pedagogy / Instructional Practices. Demmon-Berger (1986) suggests that the quality teacher adapts content to individual students needs and uses mixed instructional strategies in the classroom. Porter and Brophy (1988) reiterated this concept by noting that the quality teacher adapts instruction to meet student needs. A survey of their research also revealed that quality teachers are clear about instructional goals, provide well communicated expectations and the why behind those expectations, anticipate misconceptions by students, and monitor understand through feedback.

In 1994, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (Viadero, 1999) conducted research that explored what teachers were doing in their classrooms. Researcher surveyed approximately 4, 000 public and private school teachers and compared their responses with the teachers’ logs of what actually transpired within the classroom. Every teacher’s log indicated that the teacher lectured to students or provides some other form of traditional whole group instruction in the surveys. All the teachers responded that they tailored their instruction to the individual student. Viadero (1999) conclude that most teachers used a blend of individual strategies and traditional practice. Peart and Campbell (1999) supported the finding that quality teachers utilize a blend of instructional practices. Porter and Brophy (1998) summarized the research regarding quality teaching and listed their characteristics of quality teachers: clarity of instructional goals, communication regarding expectations, expert use of instructional material, monitor student progress, and reflective practice. Mendro (1998) noted that a quality teacher’s instructional practices should include addressing high and low cognitive objectives and utilizing frequent formal and informal assessment of students.

Slavin (1987) suggested that there must be four factors present for instruction to be effective: (a) the instruction must be high in quality, (b) the instrument must be appropriate to students' levels, (c) students must be motivated to work on tasks, and (d) students must have adequate time to learn. Good and Brophy (2001) suggested that some teachers have difficulty beginning a course with new students because the methods and materials were poorly adapted to students' learning interests and abilities. Ruddell (1997) and Pilgreen (2000) suggested that to improve student comprehension, to increase literacy abilities, and to increase student achievement, teachers should limit lecture time, use technology in the classroom, use cooperative learning, incorporate sustained-silent reading into the daily schedule, and use a variety of instructional methods. By keeping the instructional methods targeted to student interests and needs, the teacher has taken the first step to effective classroom management.

Classroom Management/ Climate. Teachers who approach classroom management as a process of establishing and maintaining quality learning environments tend to be more successful than teachers who concentrate on being authority figures or disciplinarians (Gettinger, 1988; Jones, 1996). Good and Brophy (2001) stated, "Teachers are authority figures and need to require their students to conform to certain rules and procedures. However, these rules and procedures are not one in themselves but are means for organizing the classroom to support teaching and learning. Thus, classroom management should be designed to support instruction and to help students gain in capacity for self-control (p. 123).

In particular, Wong and Wong (1991) offer specific suggestions for effectively managing a classroom. Classroom management "refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time and materials so that instruction and student learning can take place" (p. 84). Wong and Wong (1991) offered the following concrete suggestions for effectively managing a classroom: (a) student must know the procedures for the classroom so things will run smoothly, (b) student must know policies and procedures for proper behavior and the consequences of breaking those procedure, (c) teachers should keep a well-organized grade book and communicate to students how

grades will be determined, and (d) teachers should be prepared to have their classrooms ready for students. In summary, Wong and Wong asserted that there are basically three characteristics of a quality teacher: positive expectations, good classroom management, and how to design the lesson for student success. The process of lesson design can also be referred to as planning.

Planning. As noted by Wong and Wong, effective planning is a component of a quality teacher. According to Porter and Brophy (1988), quality teachers are clear about what they intend to accomplish through instruction. Quality teachers consider national, state, and local curriculum standards when planning to teach a course. They also consider standardized test requirements that their students, at a particular grade level, will be required to know.

According to Good and Brophy (2001), in order to improve teaching and instruction, teachers must know what they want to accomplish and how to determine whether plans are working. Good and Brophy suggested at the planning phase of instruction, teachers should set specific goals. As change is implemented following the setting of certain goals, teachers need to assess whether they have met these goals through student evaluation.

Grading and Assessment. As noted by Good and Brophy (2001), evaluation is the cyclical component of planning. It is the piece that guides any necessary revision in planning, leading to improved instruction. Mendro (1998) noted that various forms of assessments were needed to adequately address student progress. In this vein of thinking, Ruddell (1997) identifies that classroom teachers are responsible for informal types of assessments. Informal assessment refers to teacher-made tests, structured and unstructured observations, grading procedure, interviews, self-reports, and other methods for determining how students are achieving and progressing. Ruddell (1997) referred to this type of informal evaluation as authentic assessment.

Authentic assessment is an effective teaching method because it includes test items or evaluation methods that have a connection to real-life literacy tasks and simulate life experiences. There are four characteristics of authentic assessment: (a) it occurs over

short periods of time, (b) it requires information from a variety of sources beyond the textbook, (c) it occurs while students are using and are engaged in reading and writing tasks that are directly related to the curriculum and being studied in context, and (d) it uses teacher observation as a major source in information about how well students are learning content knowledge. Forms of authentic assessment might include teacher observation, student interviews, portfolios, presentations, journals, and questionnaires (Rief, 1990; Simmons, 1990).

The literature on teacher quality has yielded increasing evidence as to the importance of teacher processes in promoting maximum learning (Brophy, 1986). Joyce and Weil (1986) found that the processes a teacher utilized in the classroom had a significant impact on the student's ability to develop life-long learning habits. In addition, teacher expectations of the student influenced student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1986). It can then be said, that teacher processes impact to student outcomes. Brophy and Good (1986) found that "research linking teacher processes to student achievement has finally begun to establish a relevant knowledge base for the teaching profession to draw upon (p. 175). Stronge and Tucker (2000) sustained the notion that "research strongly supports the contention that teachers and the quality of their instruction affect student outcomes" (p. 13).

Theoretical Framework

According to Halpern (2000), in order to predict what will happen next in the world, the individual is often required to construct mental models, or internal thinking representations of external realities. Mental models are like glass blocks with lights of information filtering through. The light is then captured in the block in which it finds similarities. The light, or information that is filtering through, is our language, or for the purpose of this study- discourse. However, Halpern (2000) notes, "because these mental models are merely representative, in many cases, they turn out to be inaccurate" (p. 164), thus discourse or the way we use language to interpret the world is a more reliable avenue

in which to provide a framework for this study. The framework of discourse also endows the researchers with a source for hearing the voice of the teacher in their definition of a quality teacher. It is this researcher's contention that the discourse of the teacher in need of improvement will differ from the discourse of the quality teacher. If so, it is not an attitude that makes the teachers different, but the way in which they interpret the world.

Discourse is an important aspect of the way individuals, as well as, groups of people interpret the world. The review of the literature will focus on two researchers approaches. Bakhtin, a Russian philosophical anthropologist, brings a social view of language to the theoretical framework; while, Gee, an American linguist brings a linguistic (Science of Language) perspective to his unique theory of Discourse (with a capital "D")

Bakhtin. Bakhtin (1981) subscribes to the view of discourse as "a social phenomenon- social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (p. 259). A discourse according to Bakhtin, facilitates the construction of a worldview, which insures a "maximum of mutual understanding" (p. 271).

As an individual comes in contact with the discourse, or the language, a dialogic relationship ensues. It is through "the process of living interaction: with the discourse that the language becomes "individualized" and takes shape for the individual. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276) "Responsive understanding," Bakhtin (1981) wrote, "is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse, and it is moreover an active understanding" (pp. 280-281).

It is difficult for an individual to passively adopt a discourse and truly understand it. "A passive understanding...is not understanding at all, it is only the abstract aspect of meaning" (p. 281). Bakhtin (1981) explains:

"Every concrete act of understanding is active: it assimilates the work to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and is indissolubly merged with the

response...Primacy belongs to the understanding it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and responding are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other...An active understanding, on that assimilated the work under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex relationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements” (p. 282).

As the individual develops an active understanding, the discourse, for her/him, begins to “knit together with specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristics” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 289). The professional discourse takes on not only a shared vocabulary but assumes “intentional dimensions” that is, the discourses can drive the social practice of the individual (p. 289).

How does one develop an understanding and accommodate a specific discourse? At first, “one’s own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others’ words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). If the individual encounters an “internally persuasive discourse” (p. 342) and enters into a dialogic relationship with it, the discourse becomes “tightly interwoven with one’s own words” (p. 345). The internally persuasive discourse, according to Bakhtin, is “half-ours and half-someone else’s” (p. 345). The individual actively engages in evaluating the discourse and through evaluation develops understanding.

“Understanding is impossible without evaluation. Understanding cannot be separated from evaluation: they are simultaneous and constitute a unified integral act. The person who understands approaches the work with his own already formed worldview, from his own viewpoint, from his own position” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 142).

As the individual engages in a dialogical encounter, through evaluation and the development of understanding, the internally persuasive discourse opens or “awakens new and independent possibilities” (Bahktin, 1981, p. 345). The “structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean”(Bahktin, 1981, p. 346). It is through a “sharpened dialogic relationship” that an individual is able to acquire a professional discourse, which becomes his or her own. Gee broadens the concept of discourse with his own theory of Discourse (capital “D”). He expands the concept of language past the spoken word to include multiple ways of interacting.

Gee. Gee (1989) defines discourse (with a lower case “d”) as connected to stretches of language. Gee (1989, 1992, 1997) developed a theory of Discourse (with a capital “D”) that encompasses a wide range of meaning. According to Gee (1992), “Discourses are composed of people, of objects, and of characteristic ways of talking, acting, interacting, thinking, believing, and valuing, and sometimes characteristic way of writing, reading, and /or interpreting” (p.20). Discourses are a “way of being in the world, they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and cloths (Gee, 1989, pp. 6-7). Gee (1990) maintains that we all have many discourses and observes “A Discourse is a sort of “identity kit” which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, as to take on a particular role that others will recognize” (p. 142).

Discourses are acquired through social practices. The primary Discourse is acquired as a member of a family unit, the primary socializing group. The primary Discourse is the one an individual first uses to “make sense of the world and to interact with others” (Gee, 1989, p. 7). Parts of an individual’s primary Discourse become a “carrier or foundations for Discourses acquired later in life” (p. 8).

As the individual moves beyond the family unit, she/she acquires any number of secondary Discourses from other social communities, institutions, groups, organizations,

etc. Membership in these different types of social entities often demand their own particular Discourses. An individual's primary Discourse could be compatible or incompatible with the secondary discourses. In many cases different Discourses, whether primary or secondary, can interfere with each other. In some cases, aspects of one Discourse can be transferred to another Discourse (Gee, 1989, 1992, 1997).

The exposure to different Discourses does not mean, however, that the individual simply absorbs, accepts, or assimilates the various Discourses. The human mind looks for patterns in the world and the mind is a "flexible and adaptable pattern recognizer" (Gee, 1997, p. 236). The Discourses an individual possesses can act as a guide in both the recognition and selection of patterns. Discourses can become connecting devices between the discourse community and the patterns in the world, "nudging" individuals toward some norm (Gee, 1992, p. 49).

A Discourse is embodied in the individual's social practice and how the Discourse is manifested depends on what the individual brings to the social practice. Individuals in a discourse community may hold similar or "converging theories" (p. 49), but they are not identical for a number of reasons. First, each individual belongs to multiple sociocultural groups and, therefore, different Discourses and the "cultural models and patterns associated with each group can influence the individual in unique ways, depending on the different mix of Discourses" (Gee, 1997, p. 240). Second, "each individual is biologically and in, particular naturally quite different from every other" (p. 24) and these biological and brain differences influence how Discourses are both structured and embodied in an individual's thinking, behaviors, and social practices.

When an individual selects a profession, becomes educated, and socialized into the profession, he/she learns to speak, think, and acts like a member of that profession (Gee, 1992). In becoming a professional, the individual masters the Discourse of that profession. Mastering the professional discourse is based on: (a) how well the individual's primary Discourse lays a foundation for acceptance of the professional, secondary Discourses, (b) how the individual's other secondary Discourses complement the professional discourse, and (c) how the individual's unique biological makeup and

brain structure influence the construction of the discourses (Gee, 1992, p. 109). The individual's own embodied view of the professional discourse is "never completely idiosyncratic" (Clark, 1998, p. 93), because in the testing and the accommodation of the professional discourse, the individual accepts many of the commonalities of that particular discourse or else he/she would not be in that discourse. Therefore, "even idiosyncrasy is socially colored and bounded" (Buchmann, 1989, p. 102) by our professional discourse. Bakhtin's theory of discourse discusses how the individual accommodates the worldview of his/her chosen professional discourse.

Summary

The literature provides a journey through the evolution of educational reform and the impact it had on the quest for quality teachers. Even though defining a quality teacher has caused much dissonance, definitions based on past research efforts were grounded in teacher processes and student outcomes. The theoretical framework of discourse based on Bakhtin and Gee's theories was explored. It is the teacher's own professional discourse that the researcher is seeking to gain knowledge of their conceptions of a quality teacher.

Chapter 3 will provide an overview a unique methodological approach called Interactive Quality Analysis. It lends itself well in focusing on the discourse of teachers in the first steps of defining a quality teacher.

Chapter 3

Interactive Qualitative Analysis as a Methodology

IQA Methodology

Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) is a systems approach to qualitative research developed by Northcutt and McCoy at The University of Texas at Austin. IQA reconciles quantitative TQM rigor to a qualitative design of data collection and analysis. IQA seeks to capture the lived reality of people, actively involving participants in the mapping of their stories. IQA identifies relationships among self-identified components of an issue. IQA integrates the identification of the nature of the problem with solutions, even when you are not sure what the problem is. IQA builds consensus among the focus group participants. IQA builds strategies around the nature of the problem. *Significant portions of this chapter and subsequent descriptions of methodology in later chapters are used with the permission of Northcutt and McCoy. Other portions are products of class materials generated during the author's attendance in the IQA research class.*

The purpose of an IQA study is to allow a group to create its own interpretive “map” then to similarly construct individual “maps” of meaning: together, the two levels of meaning are used by the researcher as the foundation for interpretation. The “map” is represented as a system of states (affinities) held together by roadways (relationships among affinities). In plain language, an IQA study prompts the participants to examine these issues with respect to a phenomenon important to them:

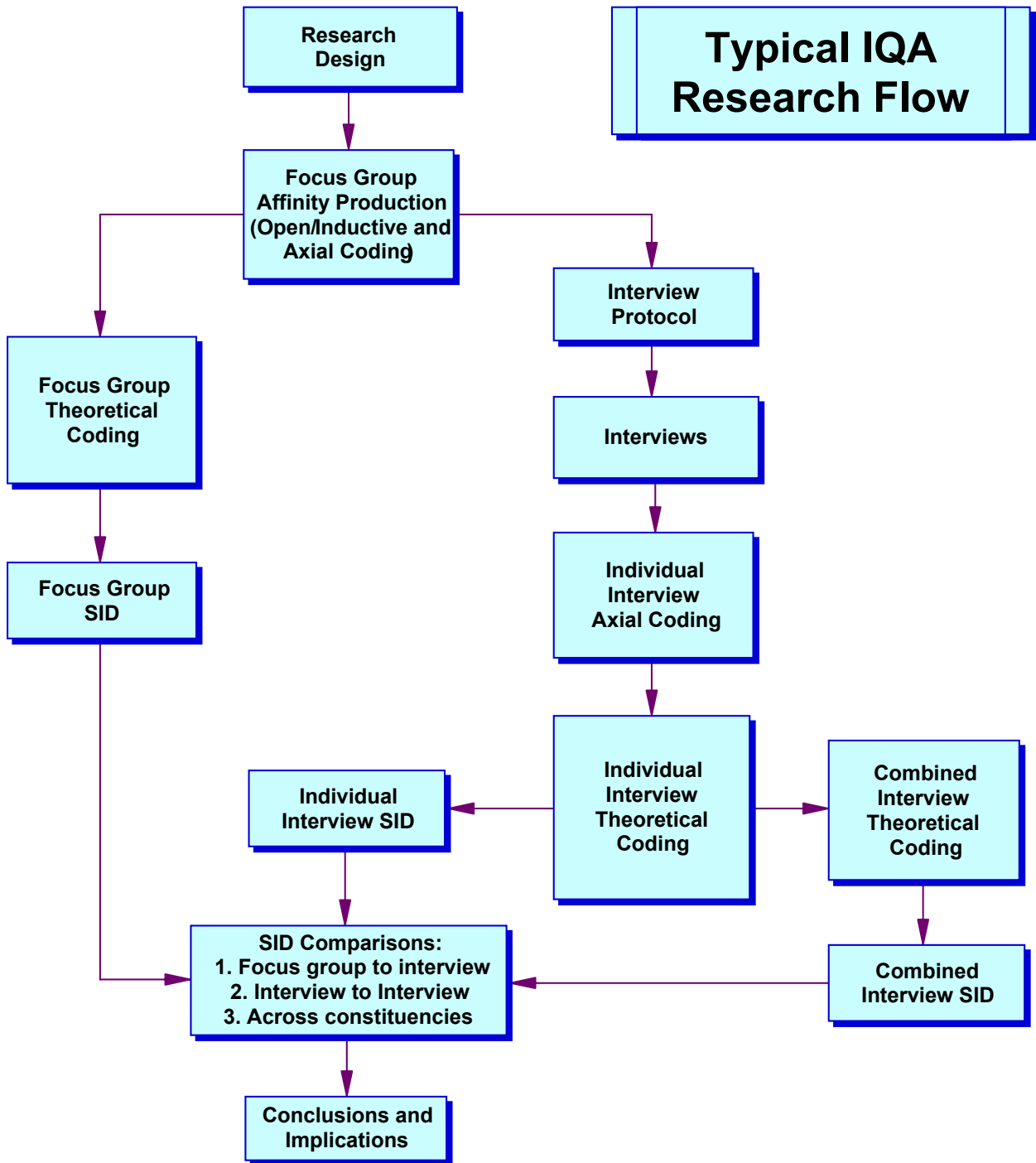
- What does this mean to you?
- What led to this?
- What are the results?

IQA provides a set of data collection and analysis protocols that are designed to minimize researcher involvement. Participants have a remarkable degree of freedom within a framework provided by the researcher (which itself is typically developed in consultation with knowledgeable participants); participants themselves perform the first steps of analysis by organizing their discourse into categories of meaning called *affinities*;

and participants themselves take the analysis even further by articulating their own perceived relationships of influence among the affinities. The first responsibility of the researcher is to create a process that will invite the group members to produce the most data while minimizing the influence of the process on the content. The researcher's role then moves from designer to facilitator, teaching the group members the process and guiding them to generate and analyze their own data with minimal external influence.

Overview of the IQA Research Flow

Below is a diagram of the flow of a typical IQA project:



IQA research flow has four distinct phases: research design, focus group, interview, and report. Research design provides a series of tools to help articulate problems of interest, to identify constituencies that have an interest in the problem, and to state research questions that are implied by the problem statement. IQA then uses focus groups to identify the “map pieces” (affinities) of a system or systems that will ultimately represent the group’s experience with the phenomenon. The group next identifies the “states,” or the relationships between each of the affinities. Using a set of protocols or rules stemming from IQA systems theory, a system is drawn that represents a “mindmap” of the group’s reality. Affinities defined by the group are then used to develop a protocol for interviews, which are invaluable in to further explore the meanings of the affinities and their systemic relationships. A comprehensive system diagram is developed from the interviews to explain the phenomenon. The final report allows the researcher to describe the affinities and their relationships, to make comparisons among systems and individuals, to make inferences (predictions) based on the properties of the system(s). Following is a summary of each of the stages in the research flow.

IQA Research Design

IQA research design starts with what is traditionally called a “problem.” By “problem” we mean nothing more dramatic than an issue someone thinks is either interesting or needs attention. Often at this stage, a solution to some perceived problem is sought, but it is difficult to articulate what the problem really is. By its very nature, the problem is not clearly defined at this point. Rather than simply demanding that the problem be made explicit or simply hoping that a well-defined problem will somehow rise from the chaos of our activity, the IQA research flow presumes that ambiguity is a characteristic of the early thinking about a project and deals with this ambiguity, reducing it with every recursion around the IQA design cycle. IQA research design starts with the vague problem and seeks to identify those who have something to say about the problem.

For each teacher in the study, two questions are asked: How close is this participant to the problem, and how much power does this participant have over the phenomenon? From this analysis, a tentative selection of participant teachers is made.

Once teacher participants are identified, then the question becomes, what issue should this teacher examine? Different teachers are selected because they have different perspectives (either in terms the lived experience with the phenomenon or power over it), and therefore may respond to different facets (issues) of the phenomenon.

Once a tentative issue has been defined for each teacher, research questions may be addressed. Again, IQA systems theory offers a template for the design: Any IQA study answers at most three “generic” (standard inquiries possible of any system) research questions: If the study has only one participant group, the first two are as follows:

1. What are the components of the phenomenon?
2. How do the components relate to each other in a perceptual system?

If more than one participant group comprises the study, a third systemic inquiry is possible:

3. How do the systems compare, both in terms of components, intrasystemic relationships, and intersystemic relationships?

Research questions are then tested for adequacy against two criteria:

1. What problems do these questions, taken as a whole, address (what is the current problem statement)?
2. Is this the problem we should be addressing?

IQA research design is complete when the answer to question 2 is affirmative.

Group Realities: IQA Focus Groups

Focus Groups. IQA studies usually begin with a focus group, which is a group of people who share some common experience, work or live within some common structure, or have a similar background. This definition suggests that the researcher should think first about commonalities rather than differences when designing the composition of the group; IQA focus groups are formed with groups of individuals who may certainly have varied opinions and experiences with the system under study, but who more critically share a common perspective.

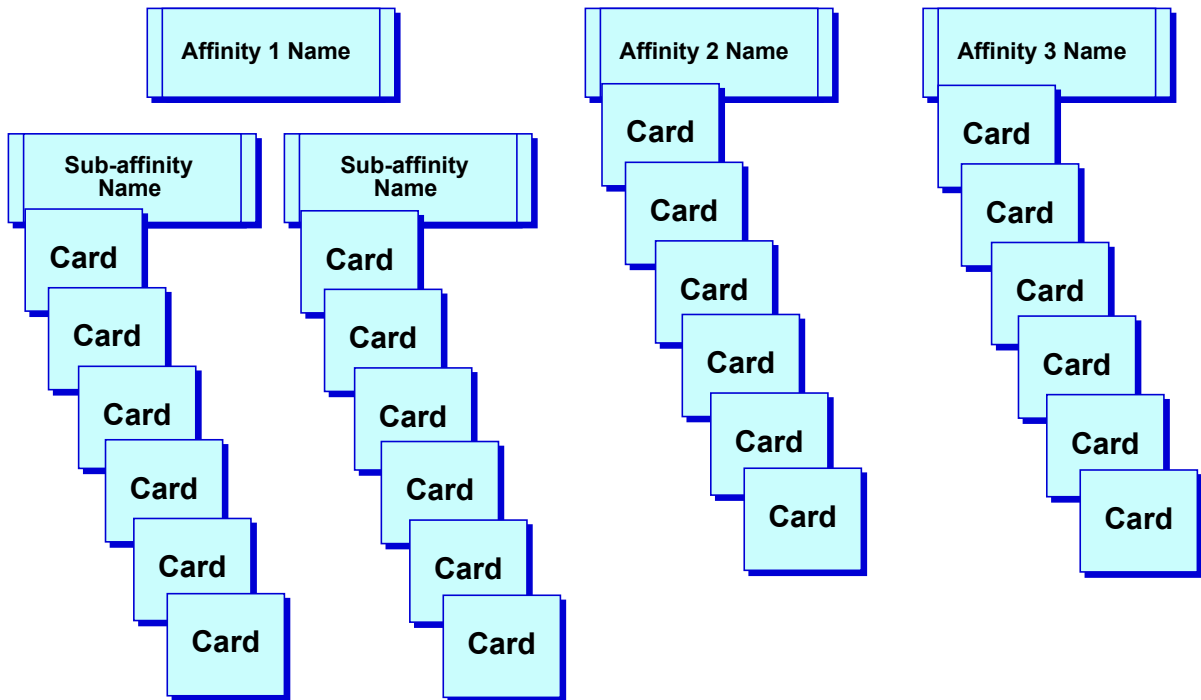
Identification of Factors-Affinities. The first step for an IQA focus group is silent brainstorming. During this phase a focus group is asked to write their experiences about the subject on note cards, one thought per card. After producing as many cards as possible, the focus group is asked to tape the cards along a wall. The researcher reads each card and the group comes to a consensus as to the meaning of the card, thus the foundations are laid for constructing, through discourse, a shared reality among group members. The facilitator then asks the group to silently organize the cards into groups of meaning, an activity referred to as inductive coding. Grouping is followed by the affinity naming and revision phase (axial coding), which consists of giving a name to the group (affinity) and sorting any cards that may have been miscategorized into the proper group.

IQA data collection/analysis techniques originated from Total Quality Management (TQM) processes designed to capture knowledge from organizational members to solve problems and improve processes. A major TQM assumption is that people who are closest to the job best understand what is wrong and how to fix it. Similarly, IQA data collection techniques assist members of a group close to a phenomenon of interest in describing and labeling their experiences, and in articulating perceived relationships among these experiences to produce a theory in perception or a conceptual map, which is a systems representation of how a person or a group understands a particular phenomenon. This system consists of categories of meaning called *affinities* and the perceived causal relationships among the affinities.

The first step in creating a mind map is to assist the focus group members in organizing their thoughts into a manageable number of categories or affinities, sets of textual references that have an underlying common meaning or theme, synonymous to *factors* or *topics*. During affinity production, the constituents are given an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and then express their thoughts and feelings. The thoughts of the group as a whole are combined and organized into common themes or affinities by the group itself with the aid of a facilitator. The group collectively names the affinities and helps the researcher create a detailed written description or definition of each affinity. The goal is to produce the smallest number of affinities with the greatest amount of detail or “richness.”

Axial coding seeks to name, reorganize, clarify, and refine the affinities. While the first kind of coding is, as the name implies, almost exclusively inductive, axial coding cycles back and forth from inductive to deductive. Once the affinities are refined and often reorganized by the group participants, they are encouraged to narrow down the meanings of the affinities and their categories. Major categories of affinities are reviewed and then may be combined or divided into hierarchical systems of sub-affinities.

Once again, this process is achieved through group discussion and consensus. The descriptions are refined and narrowed by the group until each participant agrees that the definition accurately reflects the meaning of the affinity. Affinities are given titles that accurately reflect the meaning of the affinity. Affinities are given titles as determined by participants, which are documented on header notepads and placed at the top of each vertical column. An example is provided below.



Identifying Relationships among Factors. With the affinities clearly defined, the group is asked to analyze the nature of relationships between each of the affinities. They are given some rules: analyzing all possible pairs (only 3 possibilities; either $A \rightarrow B$, or $B \rightarrow A$, or no relationship). They are asked to record their responses in an *Affinity Relationship Table (ART)*, which is a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system. IQA provides a variety of protocols for building the group *Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)*, which contains all the information required to produce the group (or individual) mindmap.

The purpose of IQA is to draw a picture of the system (*Systems Influence Diagram* or *SID*) that represents the perceptual terrain or the *mind map* of a group with respect to a phenomenon represented by the issue statement. The SID is a picture drawn using a set of rules for rationalization on a summary of the theoretical codes called an *Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)* produced by the focus group. *Theoretical coding* refers to ascertaining the perceived cause and effect relationships (influences) among all the affinities in a system. In the focus group setting, this is accomplished by facilitating a

systematic process of building hypothesis linking each possible pair of affinities. The group *Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)* summarizes the results of group theoretical coding.

All possible direct links between the affinities are investigated by developing hypotheses grounded in the data. IQA provides focus group participants with a formal protocol to determine whether or not there is a direct influence between every possible pair of affinities in the system. If so, the focus group then determines the directionality of influence. The goal is to identify the underlying (and generally hidden) structure of the group mind map, which is summarized in a SID.

Constructing the ART. The preferred form of analyzing relationships among affinities is the “If...then...” or hypothetical construction. Hypotheses are recorded on a protocol called the *Affinity Relationship Table (ART)*. The Simple ART is the “quick and dirty” protocol for theoretical coding and is used only if time constraints are severe. Simple ARTs document the direction of relationship, but provide no detail by way of examples for the relationships. Following is an example of a Simple Affinity Relationship Table that represents, for illustrative purposes, a system of only six affinities and is a facsimile of the actual working form that would be used by a focus group doing theoretical coding on a six-affinity system. Provided on all forms is a space reserved for the placement of affinity names. Since no affinity is more important than another is, it is recommended that affinities be placed in alphabetical order. The affinity number does not represent any value placed on the affinity; but is simply a quick reference for each affinity.

Each focus group member is asked to determine the nature of the relationship between all possible pairs of affinities. For any two affinities A and B, there are only three possible relationships: either A directly influences B, or B directly influences A, or there is no direct influence between A and B. These *Rules for Hypothesizing* are summarized as follows:

For any 2 affinities A and B, either

$A \rightarrow B$ (A influences B)

$A \leftarrow B$ (B influences A)

$A \diamond B$ (No relationship)

If, for example, a member determines that affinity 2 influences affinity 1, a left arrow is placed between the pair. The member continues theoretical coding until the form is complete.

Affinity Name
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Possible Relationships
$A \rightarrow B$
$A \leftarrow B$
$A \diamond B$ (No relationship)

Sample Affinity Relationship Table	
Affinity Pair Relationship	
1 ← 2	
1 ← 3	
1 → 4	
1 ← 5	
1 ← 6	
2 → 3	
2 ← 4	
2 → 5	
2 ◊ 6	
3 ◊ 4	
3 ← 5	
3 ◊ 6	
4 ◊ 5	
4 ← 6	
5 ← 6	

Constructing the IRD. The focus group investigates links between the affinities by developing propositions (statements of cause and effect) from their own data. This activity, called theoretical coding, creates an extended reality for the group through further discourse. Again, IQA provides a number of protocol variations for this stage of analysis. Using a forced directional choice in a specific order, focus group participants evaluate if there is a direct cause/effect relationship or if no relationship exists. The goal is to identify the skeleton of a “theory in perception”. Theoretical coding of the affinities results in an Interrelationship Diagram. An Interrelationship Diagram or IRD is a table that represents all the relationships among the affinities.

Creating an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) is the first step in a general process called *rationalizing the system*. Output of the focus group hypothesizing activity is summarized in an IRD: a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system. The IRD displays arrows that show whether each affinity in a pair is a perceived *cause* or an *effect*, or if there is *no relationship* between the affinities in the pair. Placing arrows into the table creates the IRD, thereby showing the direction of the relationships. An arrow pointing from A to B ($A \rightarrow B$) indicates that A is the cause or influencing affinity and that B is the effect or influenced affinity.

Following is an example of an IRD that represents, for the purposes of simplicity, a system of only six affinities. The forms provided here are facsimiles of the actual working forms that would be used by a focus group doing theoretical coding on a six-affinity system. Each participant is given a form identifying the affinities and the rules for relationships.

The blank IRD for a six-affinity system looks like this:

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									

Arrows point only left or up, and each relationship is recorded twice in the IRD in a manner not unlike double entry bookkeeping. For example, if a relationship was determined between 1 and 2, it might be noted as $1 \leftarrow 2$ and read as *2 influences 1*. Two arrows would be placed in the IRD to represent the relationship. Notice how the arrow in both cases points away from 2 and toward 1. All relationships are recorded in the table in this manner. Relationships from the ART are recorded in the table. Each relationship is recorded twice, once with an up arrow and once with a left arrow.

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1		\leftarrow	\leftarrow	\uparrow	\leftarrow	\leftarrow			
2	\uparrow		\uparrow	\leftarrow	\uparrow				
3	\uparrow	\leftarrow			\leftarrow				
4	\leftarrow	\uparrow				\leftarrow			
5	\uparrow	\leftarrow	\uparrow			\leftarrow			
6	\uparrow			\uparrow	\uparrow				

The arrows are then counted to find the value of *delta*, thereby completing the table. The rules for calculating delta are:

- Count the number of up arrows (\uparrow) or *Outs*
- Count the number of left arrows (\leftarrow) or *Ins*
- Subtract the number of *Ins* from the *Outs* to determine the (Δ) *deltas*

$$\Delta = \text{Out} - \text{In}$$

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3
2	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	3
3	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
4	←	↑				←	1	2	-2
5	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
6	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3

The table is then sorted in descending order of delta (see far right column).

Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
6	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3
2	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	2
5	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
3	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
4	←	↑				←	1	2	-1
1		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3

The value of delta is used as a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system. Affinities with a positive delta are *relative drivers* or causes; those with negative deltas are *relative effects* or outcomes. The Tentative SID Assignments Table represents the initial placement of affinities for the SID.

An affinity marked by a high positive delta or number resulting from many *Outs* but no *Ins* is a *Primary Driver*: a significant cause that affects many other affinities, but is not affected by others. *No Ins Rule*: Any affinity with no *Ins* is always a Primary Driver.

The *Secondary Driver* is a relative cause or influence on affinities in the system. It is identified when there are both *Outs* and *Ins*, and there are more *Outs* than *Ins*.

Quite often affinities have equal numbers of *Ins* and *Outs*, indicating a position in the middle of the system, suggesting the metaphors of “circulator” or “pivot” in the final representation of the system. *Circulators / Pivots* occur when there are equal numbers of *Ins* and *Outs*.

The *Secondary Outcome* reveals a *Relative Effect*. It is identified when there are both *Ins* and *Outs*, but there is more *Ins* than *Outs*.

An affinity marked by a high negative number that results from many *Ins* but no *Outs* are a *Primary Outcome*: a significant affect that is caused by many of the affinities, but does not affect others. *No Outs Rule*: Any affinity with no *outs* is always a Primary Outcome.

Tentative SID Assignments	
6	Primary Driver
2	Secondary Driver
5	Circulator / Pivot
3	Secondary Outcome
4	Secondary Outcome
1	Primary Outcome

Constructing the SID. The System Influence Diagram (SID), also called a mindmap, is a visual representation of an entire system of influences and outcomes. The graphic representation of relationships paints a vivid picture of system dynamics for both investigator and participants, and lends itself readily to analyzing how modifications might change the nature of the system.

Recursions or feedback loops are especially worthy of analysis. Feedback requires at least three affinities and has no beginning and no end. Previous affinities (those placed toward the *driver* zones) influence successive ones (those place toward the *outcome* zones), which in turn influence previous affinities. Although there is nothing in systems theory (or in the IQA application of systems theory) that demands that every system must recurse, the IQA protocols allow for the identification of recursion, unlike more traditional or quantitative path analytic approaches. As a visual representation of the

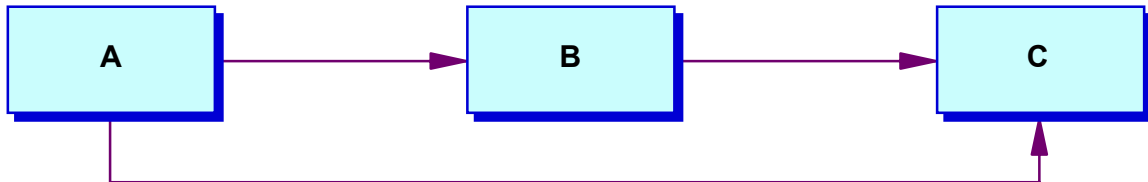
mind map developed from the data, the SID may be considered as a *set of qualitative structural equations* or as a *path diagram*; however, it is distinguished from traditional path diagrams in that recursion or feedback loops are allowed. The SID is a visual representation of the “theory in perception,” grounded in the specific experiences and logic of the participants.

In developing the SID, all of the affinities are arranged according to the Tentative SID Assignment chart, and is efficiently created with flow chart or outlining or “mind mapping” software program, such as *Inspiration*. Begin by placing the affinities on the screen in rough order of topological zones: Primary Drivers to the left of the screen, and the Primary Outcomes to the right. Secondary Drivers and Secondary Outcomes should then be placed between the primaries. Each affinity number or name is placed in a shape (an oval, circle or square). With arrows, draw connections between each affinity in the direction of the relationship as represented in the IRD.

Cluttered SIDs. The first version of the SID contains each link present in the IRD and is referred to as *Cluttered*. The system is *saturated* with links, a term appropriated from organic chemistry. Just as saturated hydrocarbons are composed of carbon atoms linked to as many hydrogen atoms as their structure will allow, the cluttered SID contains all of the links identified by participants in the protocol leading to the IRD.

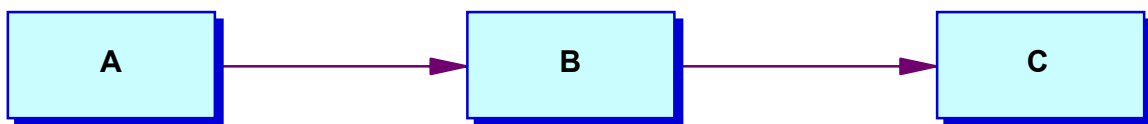
The Problem with Saturation: Uncluttered SIDs. The problem with saturation is that a cluttered SID, while being comprehensive and rich, can be very difficult to interpret, even for a modest number of affinities that are highly interlocked or embedded within the system. In other words, many systems have so many links that the explanatory power of the system becomes bogged down in the details of the relationships. Comprehensiveness and richness are certainly objectives of the SID; on the other hand, so is parsimony. A way to reconcile the richness – parsimony dialectic is to produce a supplementary or secondary SID called the *Uncluttered* SID; one that has redundant links removed. The following graphic demonstrates the concept of a redundant link in its simplest manifestation:

Cluttered or Complex System



The system above represents the perception of an individual or a group as follows: A influences B; B influences C; and A influences C. We can both simplify the model and provide one answer (note: not necessarily **the** answer) to the question, *How does A influence C?* by eliminating the redundant link.

Uncluttered or Simplified System



The link from A to C has been removed because it is redundant; not in the sense that A does not influence C in some meaningful, and possibly even direct manner (it might), but in the sense that one way in which A influences C is through the mediation of B. In other words, one way to explain how A influences C is by pointing to B. It may be true in some absolute universe that A directly influences C, but even so, without B how do we explain the influence? Thus, by eliminating links that skip over mediating

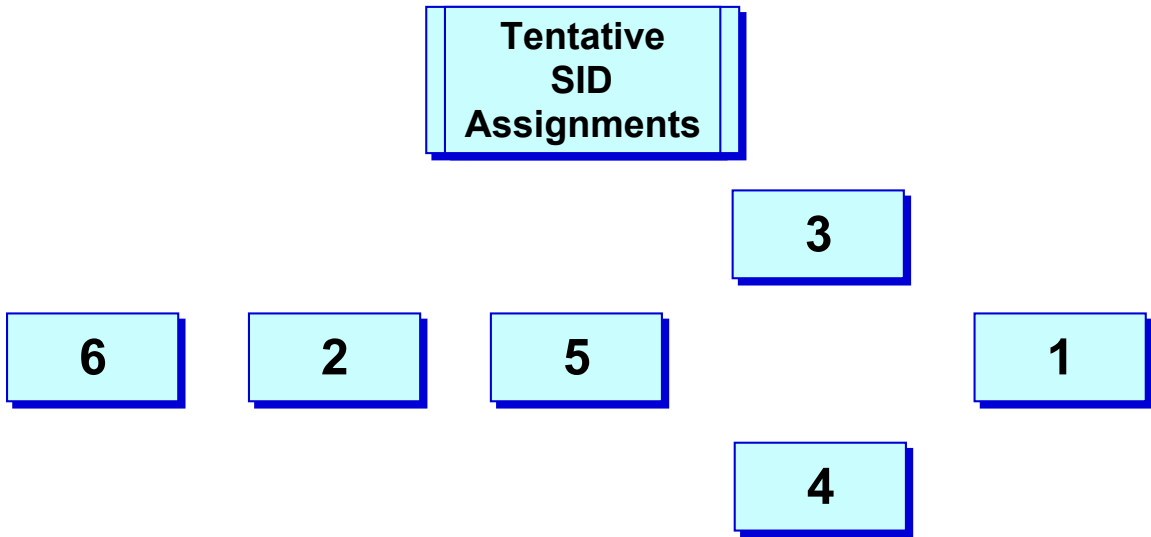
affinities, we achieve both a simpler, more interpretable mental model--one that has optimum explanatory power.

This is not to say that cluttered mental models are not useful; nor is it to say that either the cluttered or the uncluttered version is right while the other is wrong. We make it a practice to use both (as well as a third version, the *Clean* system described later), but rely most heavily on the uncluttered version for interpretation, analysis, and forecasting. Oftentimes the only statement one can make of some highly saturated or cluttered SIDs is that everything is linked to everything else in the participants' minds. This statement, while no doubt true, is of limited utility for many theoretical and practical applications of IQA.

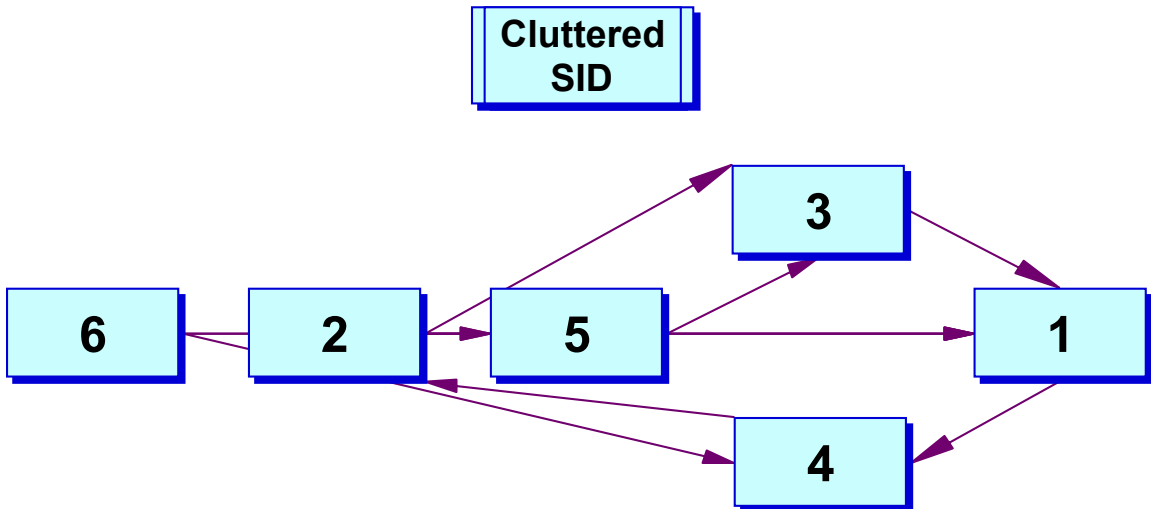
Redundant links are eliminated after the system is first rationalized. If there is an intervening variable, it remains and the direct link that skips over the mediator or intervener is removed as redundant.

In creating the SID, the affinities are laid out horizontally in rough topological zones in their tentative SID order. In zones that contain more than one affinity, the affinities are placed vertically in descending order of delta.

Tentative SID Assignments	
6	Primary Driver
2	Secondary Driver
5	Circulator / Pivot
3	Secondary Outcome
4	Secondary Outcome
1	Primary Outcome

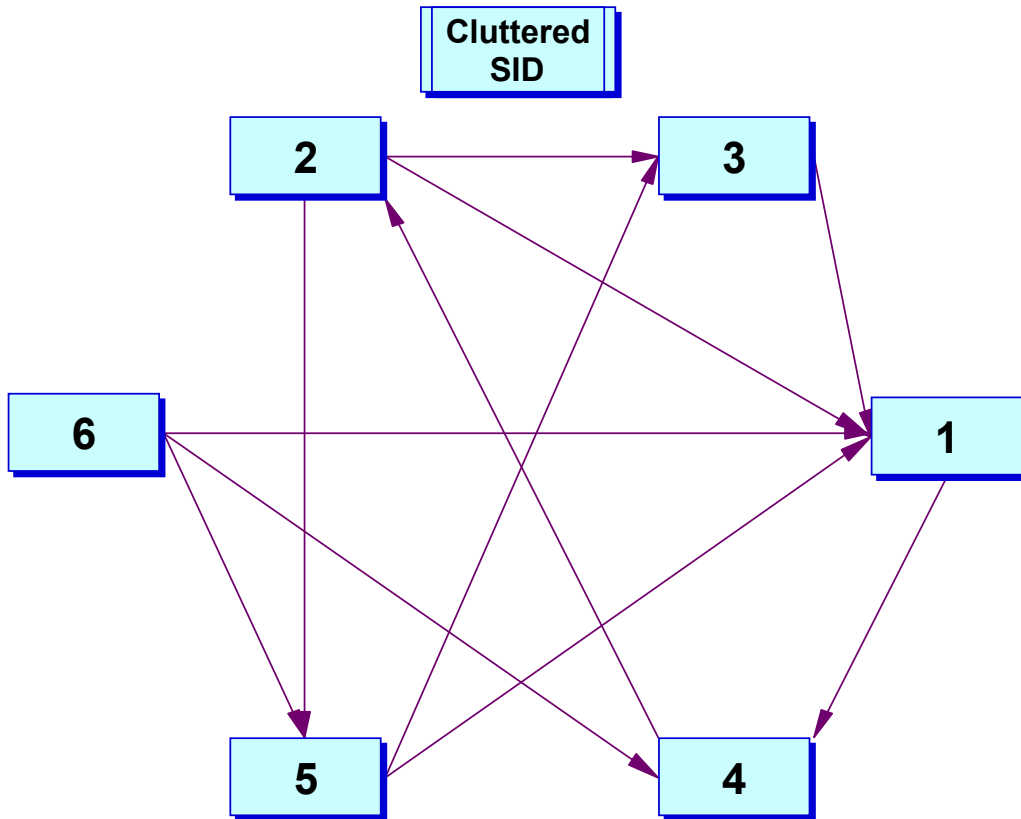


Arrows are drawn according to the Affinity Relationship table to represent the relationships between the affinities. A SID with all links drawn is known as the *Cluttered* SID.



Too often relationships are difficult to identify when the SID is laid out flat in topological zones. By spreading the SID into a circle, relationships can be easily identified. Arranging the arrows so that they have a common output or input point also

makes the SID easier to read. When systems grow to have 10 or more affinities, the necessity for this step is evermore apparent. The Cluttered SID is complete at this point.

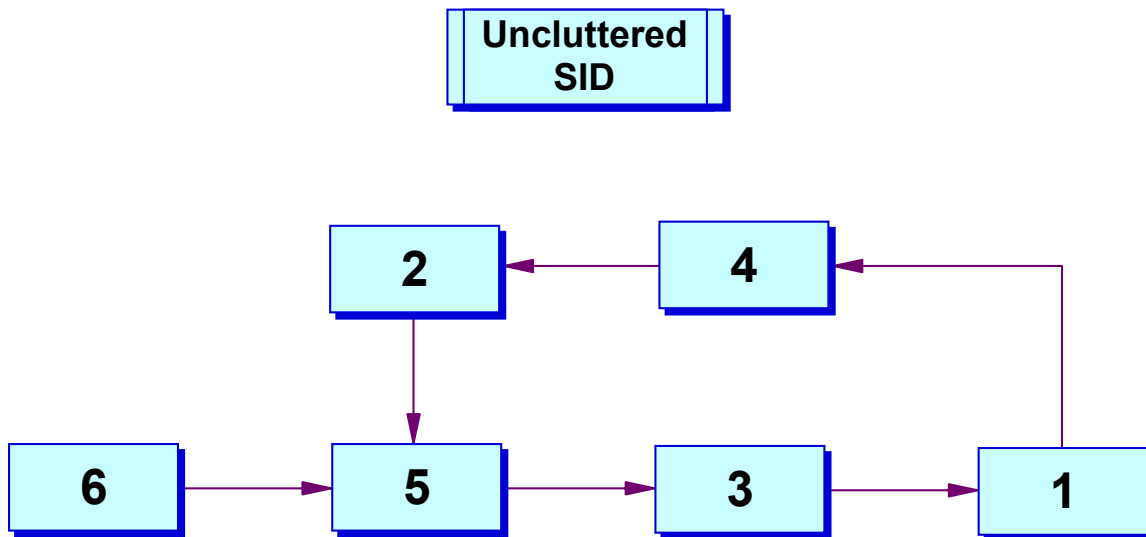


The Cluttered SID is developed and spread out in a circular fashion in order to make it easier to identify and remove redundant links. Redundant links are links between two affinities and, even if removed, a path from the driver to the outcome can be achieved through an intermediary affinity. Redundant links can be thought of as the “paths of least resistance.”

Redundant links are removed according to their delta and SID assignments, which is to say the analysis begins by comparing affinities at the extreme left and the extreme right, then working back to the left. The relationship between the highest positive delta and the highest negative delta is examined. If there is any path between the two deltas other than the direct link, that link can be removed. Next, the relationship between the

highest positive delta and the next highest negative delta is examined. If there is any path between the two deltas other than the direct link, that link can be removed.

The *Uncluttered* SID is the simplest possible representation consistent with all the relationships contained in the IRD. The IRD from which the Uncluttered SID above was derived (a word chosen deliberately, since it is the product of a set of deductive procedures that are independent of the nature of the affinities) is reproduced below to make it more convenient to verify this claim.



Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
6	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3
2	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	2
5	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
3	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
4	←	↑				←	1	2	-1
1		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3

As an example, the group indicated that affinity 6 influences affinities 1, 4, and 5. Examination of the Uncluttered SID reveals that 6 *does* influence 1 (mediated by 5 and

3); 6 influences 4 through the mediation of 5,3, and 1; and 6 influences 5 directly. Each of the relationships in the IRD is represented in the Uncluttered SID in the sense that each of the arrows in the IRD is a route from a point of origin (cause) to a destination (effect).

Here, then, is the central theorem of IQA representation: *Given any set of affinities and a set of binary unidirectional relationships among these there exists one, and only one, Uncluttered SID.* The following are some implications of this theory:

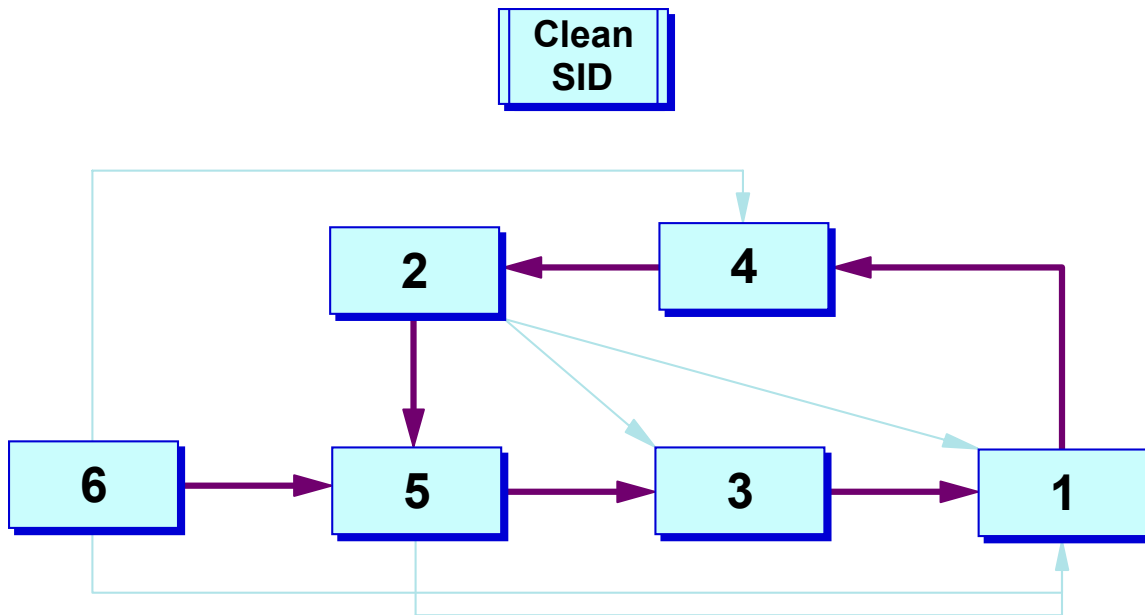
- Every system has a unique, simplest representation, topologically speaking. Two different analysts working from the same protocol on the same IRD will produce the same Uncluttered SID (although they have a different appearance, they will be topologically identical).
- The process of constructing the system (rationalizing the system via IRD and SID) is not dependent on the “meaning content” of the affinities. The focus group’s or the analyst’s understanding, or opinions about, or emotional involvement with, the affinities (what each affinity stands for) have nothing to do with the way in which the Uncluttered SID is constructed. As far as the process of rationalization is concerned, the affinities and the relationships among them are simply abstract concepts that are assembled into a structure according to a set of rules.

Since the same topology may have infinitely many representations, affinities may be arranged so that the SID best communicates the structure of the system (as long as no links are broken). We read from left to right, so arranging the affinities in order of delta from left to right is a good general rule of thumb for representing the system. Complex systems with multiple drivers, outcomes, and recursions may require additional.

A Third Representation: The Clean SID. The final version, the *Clean SID*, shows the Uncluttered SID (the mindmap containing only the minimum number of links required to completely represent the underlying logic of the IRD) in bold, with the redundant links in a diminished color. Interpretation of the final SID depends primarily

upon the Uncluttered SID (because it is the simplest, yet paradoxically has the most explanatory power), but re-insertion of the redundant links produces a representation that captures the mindmap of the participant in both its original (or unrationalized) form and its rationalized form. As an example, note that in the mindmap below, the participant reported a link between affinities 6 and 4. This link was not part of the uncluttered path, but that does not mean there is no “direct” link in the participant’s mind; there very well may be. The important question, however, is, “What could explain the perception that affinity 6 influences affinity 4?” One can look at the uncluttered path on the final SID and see immediately that the logic is as follows: 6 influences 5, which influences 3, which in turn influences 1, which finally influences 4. In other words, the Uncluttered SID elaborates the simple 6-4 relationship as 6-5-3-1-4. In order to describe how 6 and 4 are related in the perception of the participant, the researcher can point to the chain of influences among these affinities.

The important question is not whether 6 influences 4 directly on the one hand, or indirectly on the other. This is a false dilemma that results from a misunderstanding of the dialectical nature of reality and language; after all, it surely is correct to say that a slamming door makes a noise. It is also correct to say that the collision of the door with the doorjamb creates a disturbance in the air at the point of contact that travels in a waveform outward from the door. When this wave strikes the eardrum of the listener, mechanical energy is transformed to electrical impulses that travel to the brain, which interprets the signals as a loud noise. Both explanations are correct, although the first explanation describes the relationship between the door slamming and the noise as a “direct” one, while the second describes a series of “intervening” affinities. The issue is not the correctness of one description over the other, but is one of the desired details of representation.



A simple SID is all that is needed if one is going on to do follow-up interviews. The use of the Simple ART is the fastest method for the creation of the SID because all that is needed is a general idea of what the relationships are without dedicating a great deal of time to the process (the interviews will more than make up for the time). After the focus group has had time to think about and record their codes (in groups or as individuals) a simple majority vote is taken. The results are recorded in an ART by the researcher. The majority vote decides the direction of relationship. With this, the researcher is ready to create an IRD and a SID. If a more rigorous SID is required, individual ARTS should be considered. The researcher collects these ARTs and a Pareto Composite is developed.

Individual Realities: IQA Interviews

IQA Interviews. The IQA interview is a semi-structured interview. It is designed to capitalize on the consistency afforded by highly structured interview and the level of detail offered by open-ended or emergent interviews. The interview questions are designed and based on the affinities and sub-affinities developed by the focus group

members. An IQA interview protocol is designed to achieve specific objectives, each of which relate directly to the research questions of the study. In particular, IQA interviews serve to:

- Add richness and depth description of the meaning of affinities that is not possible with a focus group alone
- Allow for individual mindmaps, which can be used in a debriefing session as an interpretive aid to the investigator

The affinities produced by the focus group are used to create an interview protocol. The interview protocol is used to confirm affinities created by the focus group and to elicit descriptions of relationships among the affinities. The purpose of the interview protocol is to use the affinities identified through focus group data collection and analysis to inform and shape questions for the second round of data gathering: the interview. The focus group serves as the resource for the interview, and also serves as a pilot study to guide further research by providing a tentative (albeit limited) snapshot of the group mindmap.

Structuring the interviews with the same questions around affinities that are discussed in a prescribed order (although follow-up questions or probes in the first phase will naturally vary) allows the researcher to ensure that each affinity is explored thoroughly and consistently. Following this carefully prepared protocol then frees the researcher to focus attention on eliciting and responding to each interviewee's distinct responses. This process enables the researcher to achieve several critical purposes with the IQA interviews:

- To provide data representing the respondent's personal mind map
- To help the researcher code the impact and influences of these affinities in order to create a systems influence diagram
- To provide data representing the group's collective SID (mindmap)

This careful, procedural preparation supports the interviewer's art in engaging and eliciting each person's experience.

The creation of an IQA interview protocol is straightforward. The interview protocol consists of two parts: 1) the open-end *axial interview* designed to provide rich description of affinities by the respondents; and 2) the structured *theoretical interview* designed to identify relationships between affinities. The axial interview section is derived from the affinity write-up, while the theoretical interview is presented through an affinity relationship table.

The affinity write-up is the basis of the open-ended questions of the axial interview. The interviewer need only address the affinity names themselves. The write-up provides the interviewer with a quick reference as to the agreed-upon meaning of the affinity defined by the focus group. The interviewer seeks to address, "What does the affinity mean to you? Tell me about your experience with the affinity?"

The Affinity Relationship Table (ART) is the basis for the theoretical interview. The table provides a quick reference of all of the possible relationships between affinities. Presented with a copy of the table, the respondents are asked if they believe there is a relationship between each affinity and to explain why they believe so. They are probed to provide their experiences with the relationship.

Interview Analysis. Analysis of an IQA interview proceeds exactly parallel to the manner focus group protocol. For each of the affinities, the interview respondent is asked three kinds of questions:

- What does this mean to you?
- What led to this?
- What are the results?

In a manner analogous to the focus group's activities, the interview transcript is coded both axially and theoretically as follows:

Individual Interview Axial Code Table. The ACT is the primary documentation for all utterances that illustrate the range of meaning of each affinity for each respondent. The researcher identifies axial codes by noting key words or phrases that describe or illustrate an affinity. This text is then documented for easy retrieval in a form known as the *Individual Interview Axial Code Table (ACT)*. Quotes relating to a specific affinity can be cut and pasted into the ACT, along with the line(s) of the transcript that were the source of the axial quote. There will usually be multiple axial quotes for any given affinity; each quote represented by another row in the ACT.

Coding an interview is the first step toward creating a mind map. Once the transcript has been prepared, the researcher analyzes the text for *axial codes*, which are *specific examples of discourse that illustrate or allude to an affinity*. The structure of the interview was designed to make this step very easy. The meaning of each affinity is explored with each respondent according to a standard (but flexible) protocol and his or her descriptions are transcribed line-by-line. The researcher reviews each line of the interview transcript and looks for phrases or statements that define and provide examples of a specific affinity. These examples may be symbolic or metaphorical statements concerning the affinity, clearly stated descriptions of how the affinity becomes manifest in the experience of the respondent, or proximate descriptions of other affinities in the context of the one being addressed. Respondents will often describe how one affinity relates to another in the process of discussing the nature of one affinity. The researcher does not discourage such descriptions, even though relationships will be formally coded in the second phase of the interview.

Sample Individual Interview Axial Code Table			
Affinity	Transcript Line	Axial Quotation	Researcher Notes
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Individual Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table. The TCT is the primary documentation for all utterances that illustrate the manner in which the affinities are related for each respondent. The researcher also identifies, through a formal line of questioning in the second phase of the IQA interview: *theoretical codes*, which illustrate a relationship between two or more affinities. The relationship reported by the respondent (using the same rules as the focus group) is recorded by placing the appropriate arrow in the *Individual Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table*, which documents both the direction of the relationship and the example or line of reasoning given by the respondent. Additionally, the interview transcript should be examined for statements that illustrate a link between affinities. Additional relational quotations (offered without prompting) may be found in the axial interview and should be placed in the table. The transcript line should be recorded in the table.

Sample Individual Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table			
Affinity Pair Relationship	Line Number	Theoretical Quotation	Researcher Notes
1 ← 2			
1 ← 3			
1 ← 4			

Group Realities: IQA Combined Interviews

Aggregating Axial Codes. Once all interviews have been coded, the data from the interviews are summarized to create a combined SID that represents a composite of the individuals' experience with the phenomenon. Axial data are transferred from each *Individual Interview Axial Code Table* to a *Combined Interview Axial Code Table*. By combining all interviews into one table, the researcher creates a database for the entire set of respondents containing all axial codes for all affinities, with each code containing a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code. This table is very similar to the one used to record axial codes for an individual interview except that it also contains a link to the transcript that produced the code.

Sample Combined Interview Axial Code Table			
Affinity	Transcript Line	Axial Quotation	Researcher Notes
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Theoretical Coding. The procedure outlined above is also used for combining theoretical data into the *Combined Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table*. Because individual respondents may have defined relationships differently and may, in fact, disagree about the direction of a relationship, this table lists both directions for relationships.

Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table			
Affinity Relationship	Transcript & Line #	Theoretical Quotation	Researcher Notes
1 → 2			
1 ← 2			
1 → 3			
1 ← 3			

Theoretical Code Frequency Table. A model approach is used to prepare an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) for the combined interview group. The *Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table* is analogous to an *Affinity Relationship Table (ART)* used for focus groups. Much like the vote that occurs when the focus group is asked to identify relationships, the frequency of relationships determines the direction. To use the chart, examine each *Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table* and tally the frequency of each relationship in a table, such as the one below.

Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table			
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	3	1 → 5	1
1 ← 2	0	1 ← 5	1
1 → 3	1	1 → 6	2
1 ← 3	0	1 ← 6	1
1 → 4	0	2 → 3	3
1 ← 4	18	2 ← 3	17

Composite SID. Using the same procedure used to develop a focus group SID, an IRD and SID can be created for each respondent. Once all interviews have been coded, the data from the interviews are summarized to create a combined SID that represents a

composite of the individual's experience with the phenomenon. A count of each theoretical code is entered into the Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table. Because individual respondents may have defined relationships differently, and may in fact disagree about the direction of a relationship, IQA provides a protocol (the Pareto Protocol with MinMax Criterion) to constructing a composite SID from individual interview SIDs.

Theoretical Coding – Pareto Protocol. Selecting a protocol for representing the consensus or the “preponderance” of the group's analysis of relationships is similarly independent of level of detail or group organization. A reasonably rigorous and powerful technique for achieving and documenting the degree of consensus in a focus group is the Pareto Principle, named after the 19th century economist Wilfredo Pareto (1843-1913), and popularized among management and systems theorists by Joseph Juran (1988). Pareto wrote of the “trivial many and the significant few” in his analysis of productivity and economics. The principle has been used in quality management to help focus priorities by providing an easy-to-remember rule of thumb. Put in systems terms, the Pareto Principle states that something *like 20% of the variables in a system will account for 80% of the total variation in outcomes* (such as productivity or profit). Other (sometimes tongue-in-cheek) incarnations of the Pareto Principle are:

1. Addressing the most troublesome 20% of your problem will solve 80% of it.
2. In any organization, 20% of the personnel will cause 80% of your headaches.
3. 80 percent of all work that is completed is really the result of 20 percent effort.
4. 20 percent of all potential solutions will solve 80 percent of the problem

Whether the split is 20/80 or 70/30 or some other ratio depends upon the nature of the system, but the essential utility of the Pareto Principle is this: a minority of the relationships in any system will account for a majority of the variation within the system. Depending upon the variation of theoretical coding used, it is quite likely that there will be some disagreement among either individuals or subgroups about the nature of a given relationship. IQA uses the Pareto rule of thumb operationally to achieve consensus and

analytically to create a statistical group composite. The *Pareto Cumulative Frequency Chart* provides an efficient and, to group members who find themselves in an initial stage of disagreement, satisfying method for achieving consensus.

Continuing the six-affinity example discussed previously, assume that each member of the focus group has completed an individual ART. The first step in calculating frequencies is to record the total number of votes for each relationship pair in affinity order.

Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table			
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	3	2 → 6	3
1 ← 2	0	2 ← 6	0
1 → 3	1	3 → 4	1
1 ← 3	0	3 ← 4	0
1 → 4	0	3 → 5	0
1 ← 4	18	3 ← 5	18
1 → 5	1	3 → 6	1
1 ← 5	1	3 ← 6	1
1 → 6	2	4 → 5	2
1 ← 6	1	4 ← 5	1
2 → 3	3	4 → 6	3
2 ← 3	17	4 ← 6	17
2 → 4	2	5 → 6	2
2 ← 4	15	5 ← 6	15
2 → 5	13		
2 ← 5	3		
		Total Frequency	185

A total of 185 votes were cast for a total of 30 (30 permutations of 6 things taken pairwise) possible relationships. Notice that some relationships received no votes at all: every member of the group (20) voted for others; and some relationships attracted a split vote.

The next step is to sort the relationships in descending order of frequency and to calculate cumulative frequencies and percentages in terms of both the total number of relationships (30), as well as the total number of votes (185, which is a proxy for the total variation in the system).

Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency With Pareto and Power Analysis					
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted (Descending)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 2 → 3	20	20	3.3	10.8	7.5
2. 1 ← 2	18	38	6.7	20.5	13.9
3. 3 ← 5	18	56	10.0	30.3	20.3
4. 4 ← 6	17	73	13.3	39.5	26.1
5. 2 ← 4	16	89	16.7	48.1	31.4
6. 1 ← 3	15	104	20.0	56.2	36.2
7. 5 ← 6	15	119	23.3	64.3	41.0
8. 2 → 5	13	132	26.7	71.4	44.7
9. 1 ← 6	12	144	30.0	77.8	47.8
10. 1 ← 5	11	155	33.3	83.8	50.5
11. 1 → 3	3	158	36.7	85.4	48.7
12. 1 → 4	3	161	40.0	87.0	47.0
13. 2 → 4	3	164	43.3	88.6	45.3
14. 2 → 6	3	167	46.7	90.3	43.6
15. 4 → 6	3	170	50.0	91.9	41.9
16. 2 ← 5	3	173	53.3	93.5	40.2
17. 5 → 6	2	175	56.7	94.6	37.9
18. 4 → 5	2	177	60.0	95.7	35.7
19. 1 → 2	1	178	63.3	96.2	32.9

20. 1 ← 4	1	179	66.7	96.8	30.1
21. 1 → 5	1	180	70.0	97.3	27.3
22. 3 → 4	1	181	73.3	97.8	24.5
23. 3 → 6	1	182	76.7	98.4	21.7
24. 3 ← 6	1	183	80.0	98.9	18.9
25. 4 ← 5	1	184	83.3	99.5	16.1
26. 1 → 6	1	185	86.7	100.0	13.3
27. 2 ← 3	0	185	90.0	100.0	10.0
28. 2 ← 6	0	185	93.3	100.0	6.7
29. 3 ← 4	0	185	96.7	100.0	3.3
30. 3 → 5	0	185	100.0	100.0	0.0
Total Frequency	185				

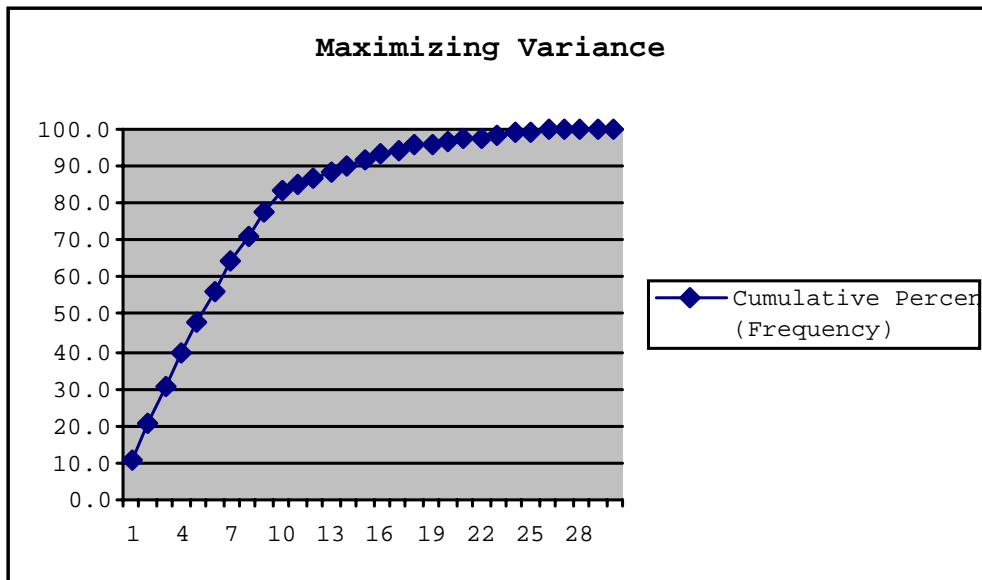
The table above contains the same frequencies as the first, but has been sorted in descending order of frequency. Four columns have been added (again, *Excel* is an excellent tool for this task) as follows:

- Cumulative Frequency. Entries in this column contain the running total or cumulative frequency. Each entry is the frequency of votes cast for an affinity pair added to the previous total.
- Cumulative Percent (Relation). This is a cumulative percent based upon the number of total possible relationships, in this case 30; i.e., each relationship represents 1/30 or approximately 3.3% of the total possible number. This cumulative percentage is one of two factors in the Power index
- Cumulative Percent (Frequency). This is a cumulative percent based upon the number of votes cast (185). Each entry is the percent of votes cast for an affinity pair added to the previous total.
- Power. Power is an index of the degree of optimization of the system and is simply the difference between Cumulative Percent (Frequency) and Cumulative Percent (Relation)

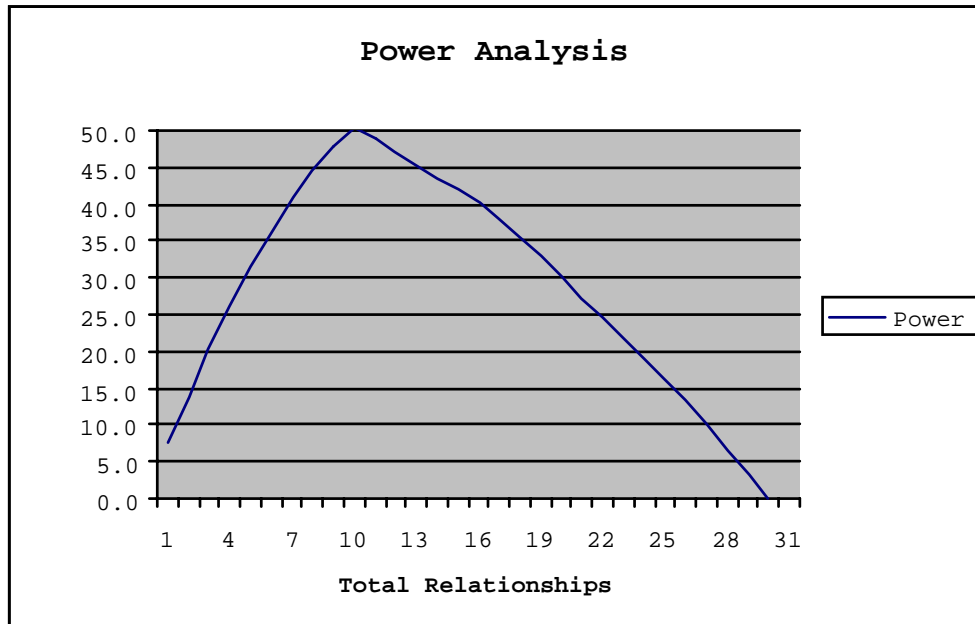
The MinMax Criterion. The last two columns of the Pareto table are the keys to deciding which relationships should be included in the group IRD. Since the relationships are displayed in decreasing order of frequency, the question is one of where to set a cutoff point, or to put the matter another way, how to decide which relationships to exclude from the group IRD. Obviously, relationships such as the ones numbered 27 thru 30 in the above table should be excluded, since they attracted no votes at all. But how should a cutoff point be determined for affinities that attract relatively few votes? The decision involves optimizing a tradeoff between two criteria: the composite should account for maximum variation in the system (cumulative percent based upon frequency) while minimizing the number of relationships in the interest of parsimony (cumulative percent based upon relations).

Accounting for Maximum Variance. True to Pareto's concept, we find that relatively few of the possible 30 relationships account for most of the variance; for example, the first 6 relationships (20% of the total) account for well over half (56%) of the variation in the system, and the first 10 (33% of the total) account for 84% of the total variation.

Maximum Variance: Frequency. The following graph illustrates the variance accounted for by each succeeding relationship.



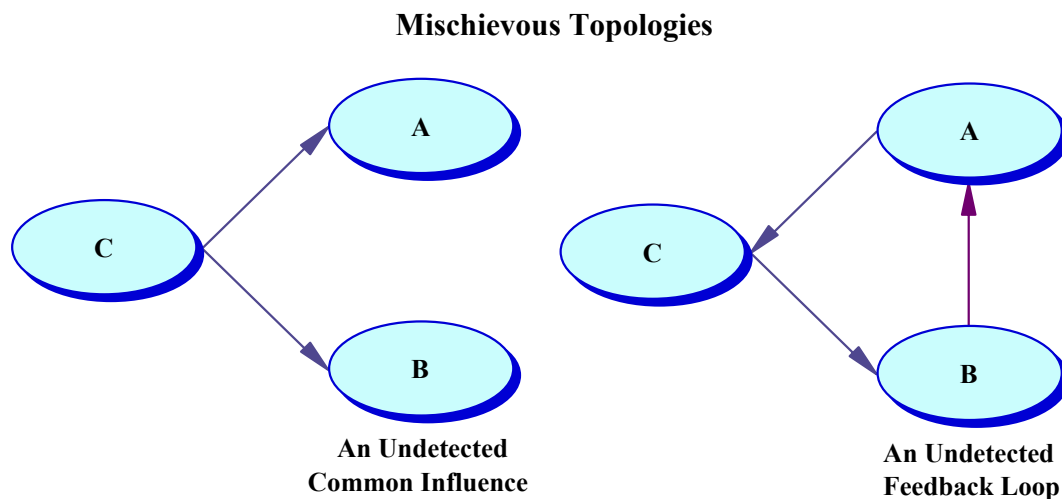
Minimizing the Number of Affinities: Power. The following chart contains the power analysis for the system.



Power reaches a maximum at 10 relationships, which accounts for 84% of the variation in this system; therefore, 10 relationships would be a defensible choice for inclusion in the Group IRD since it is an optimal number in the sense of the MinMax criterion.

Theoretical Sidebar: Ambiguous Relationships. Before returning to the practicalities of doing theoretical coding, it is useful to develop the theory of theoretical coding a bit more at this point, especially in the light of what has been called “ambiguous” relationships above, and their importance to the identification of feedback loops. Assume that a focus group has written a number of hypothesis arguing that affinity A influences affinity B ($A \rightarrow B$). Another set of hypotheses argues the opposite, that $B \rightarrow A$. When submitted to the Pareto Chart, the argument is not resolved: the top 20% contain hypotheses that argue for both directions, and both sets seem equally plausible.

What to do? The key to the puzzle lies in a realization that this kind of argument is surely the result of failure to identify at least one other affinity that somehow intervenes between, or interacts with, both A and B. In other words, the most plausible explanation is that the group has identified a direct relationship between affinities A and B when it is, in fact, indirect. Let us look at the topologies of the simplest system that can produce this ambiguity, one involving only three affinities A, B (the ones that are involved in the ambiguity) and a third, affinity C. Only two topologies are consistent with the ambiguity, as illustrated by the following:



The Undetected Common Influence. If both affinities A and B are the result of a common affinity C, then they will covary in some meaningful way. This configuration (topology on left) is one plausible explanation for the argument about the direction of the arrow between A and B. Since the focus group, at least at this point in the process, is not aware of the common influence of C on both A and B, it is not surprising that there will be ambiguity during the hypothesizing phase of the project about the relationship between A and B.

The Undetected Feedback Loop. Suppose that A, B, and C are related to each other as indicated by the topology on the right. This is the very picture of the simplest kind of feedback loop, in which each affinity has an influence on the other two in the

system. At first glance, one might conclude that the feedback loop topology supports those who argue $B \rightarrow A$, since the arrow obviously emerges from B and terminates at A. But A influences C, which in turn influences B, so A influences B indirectly; therefore, if C is excluded from the argument, we are likely to find equally compelling hypothesis supporting both directions $A \rightarrow B$ and $B \rightarrow A$.

Exploiting Ambiguous Relationships. An ambiguous relationship then, is really not so ambiguous at all. When there are compelling hypothesis pointing in both directions, IQA systems theory suggests that there are only two conditions that reasonably can account for the ambiguity. This is not to say that all ambiguous relationships are simple three-affinity systems. Many more than three may be involved. Nevertheless, we can exploit the knowledge that the ambiguity is probably produced by either some common affinity in a subsystem involving at least three affinities, or by the linking of the two affinities in question in a feedback loop involving, again, at least three affinities.

This goal is accomplished by modifying the rule for hypothesizing by coding the ambiguous relationship with the highest frequency with the appropriate arrow and coding the relationship with the smaller frequency with a question mark (?). In other words, these ambiguous relationships are put into “suspense” until a picture of the system (the SID) is created based upon the unambiguous relationships. If examination of the SID reveals that the ambiguous relationship is part of a subsystem that is one of the two mischievous kinds described above, then the SID accounts for the ambiguity, and nothing else need be done. On the other hand, if the two affinities in question are not related either through a common affinity and are not part of a feedback loop, then the researcher must either re-analyze and re-hypothesize with respect to at least some of the affinities, or the researcher must admit that the relationship is still ambiguous and a special effort must be made to resolve the ambiguity in the interview phase of the study.

Relationship Conflict Summary		
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Use
2 ← 8	10	Use
2 → 8	7	
3 ← 10	9	
3 → 10	13	Use
4 ← 6	9	
4 → 6	14	Use
4 ← 10	8	Use
4 → 10	7	
6 ← 10	17	Use
6 → 10	7	
8 ← 9	7	
8 → 9	13	Use

IQA Results

The IQA systems approach is designed to be of the greatest possible assistance in interpretation. The focus group is used to identify the affinities, each of which is well documented as part of the focus group protocol. Interviews then expand on the descriptions of the affinities. Since the primary result of an IQA study is a picture of a system or systems, it is no accident that the process that produced these systems is designed to aid in the writing process. The typical IQA report accomplishes three goals:

1. Naming and describing the elements of the system
2. Explaining relationships among elements of a system (system dynamics)
3. Comparing systems

Elements. In order to set a base for systems analysis, each affinity is identified and discussed in detail. Included in such a discussion are succinct and relevant quotes

from the interviews that help illustrate the range of meaning for each affinity. Affinities comprising the system are described largely in the participants' own words.

Relationships. The SID is presented and readers are given a tour through the system in which the relative influence of each affinity on others in a systemic context; once again, the words of participants are used to illustrate the behavior of the systemic links, to “ground” the abstract representation that is the SID in the data of the participants’ words and descriptions.

Comparisons. Comparisons can be made at two levels: A qualitative analogue to the statistical concept of variation is possible by comparing individual mindmaps to each other and to the composite; and a qualitative analogue to post hoc group comparisons is possible by comparing the composite mindmaps of different constituencies. These two interpretive protocols are the logical results of the dialectical nature of IQA research, as revealed in the following:

1. Individuals are unique in meaningful ways. Individual perspectives or voices are important and should not get lost in our attempt to find patterns. However ...
2. Patterns or communalities in perceptions do exist within constituencies. These patterns or abstractions are useful for both theoretical and practical purposes. Furthermore...
3. Comparison is the primary method of interpretation, both from the participant’s point of view and from the investigator’s. IQA focus group and interview protocols are designed to encourage constant comparison by the participants; and for the investigator, the following comparisons are provided by following the IQA research design process:
 - Among individuals within and across constituencies (comparing individual mindmaps to each other and to composites)
 - Comparisons among constituencies (comparing composites)

Scenarios Examined. A mindmap or SID, whether it is the map of a group's or an individual's perception, is a system, and systems are made to be "exercised." Systems may be exercised (or scenarios may be cast) in three basic ways:

1. We may ask the model to "predict," based on its internal logic, the ultimate state of the outcome affinities given known states of its antecedent affinities.
2. We may do the opposite, which is to ask what antecedents might, by the logic of the system, lead to a particular state of its outcomes.
3. We may ask what might be the effect of extrasystemic influences or those forces not named or accounted for in the system.

In other words, IQA methodology allows for a representation of both individual and group realities, comparisons of which allow the researcher to ask the two great interpretive questions: "What is ...?" and "What if ...?"

Summary

In both settings (group and individual), the purpose is identical, to represent a particular reality in terms of a mindmap. Consequently, the analytical tools are identical: Axial coding produces examples of the range of meaning of the affinities and theoretical coding produces the relationships among them. The only significant difference between the two sets of protocols is the context in which the observations are made. Because of the conceptual equivalence of the individual and group analytics, many of the interview analytics are essentially identical to those discussed for the focus group.

Interviews. While a focus group produces a single IRD and SID through consensual procedures, individual interviews present a different analytical problem as well as a different set of possibilities. In the focus group setting, individual differences are subordinated to the group reality, a situation that is both predictable and appropriate. Predictable, because the focus group presumes that the members all share some common construction of the reality presented in the issue statement and the primary purpose of an

IQA study at this point is to represent that shared or social construction. Subordinating individual differences to the group is also appropriate, because the focus group is followed by the individual interview stage, which creates two opportunities for analysis and interpretation:

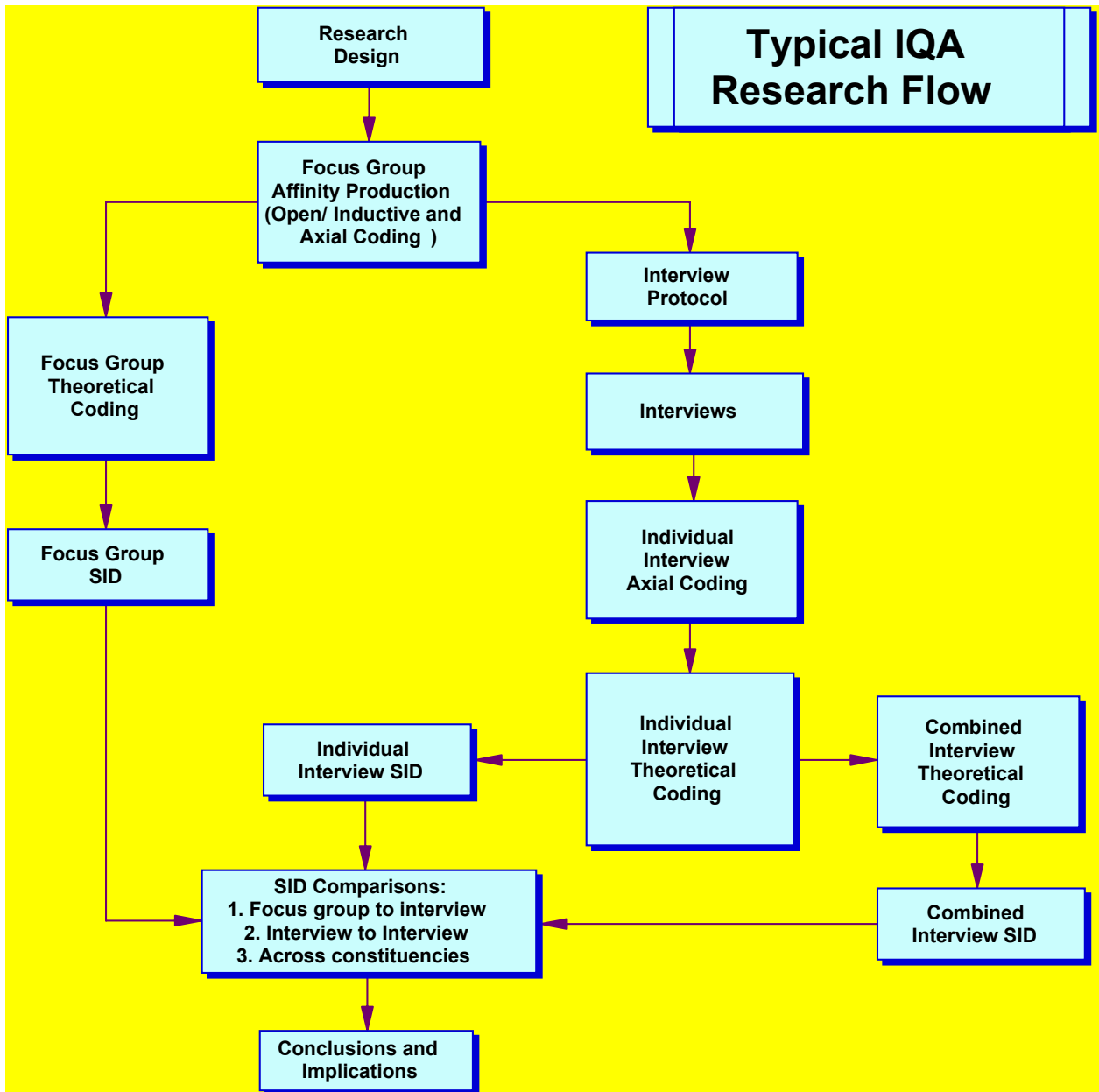
1. Individual differences in meaning vis-à-vis the issue can be explored systematically in the interview phase of the study. Since the interviews for a given number of representatives of a constituency produce exactly as many descriptions of each affinity, and exactly as many mindmaps, these descriptions and mindmaps may be contrasted and compared in terms of their systemic components; i.e., elements (affinities) and relationships among them. The value of being able to describe individual differences is obvious and has a parallel to descriptive research in the quantitative arena.
2. The interview mindmaps, or more precisely the composite of the interview mindmaps, serve to partially “triangulate” the focus group results.
“Triangulation” in this sense is formally stated in the following proposition:

If the person being interviewed is representative of the constituency (ies) from which the group SID was derived, then the composite of all such interviews should be similar to the focus group SID. This proposition clearly indicates that the triangulation is neither *de novo* nor exhaustive. Since the content of the interview, or at least the major topics, are determined by the focus group affinities, there is little chance in the IQA interview for new categories of meaning to arise. The triangulation lies largely in the expectation that the composite mindmap of the interviews will have a similar structure to that of the focus group.

The Difference between the Two Analytics. The primary difference between the analytics for the focus group and the interview, then, is the protocol for creating a composite mindmap from the individual interviews. The composite is produced via a straightforward adaptation of a statistical procedure called the Pareto Protocol combined

with Power Analysis using the MinMax criterion, all of which are intimidating names for uncomplicated procedures requiring only basic arithmetic and sorting.

As a final stage of this quick review, we present once more a system representing the flow of a typical IQA study:

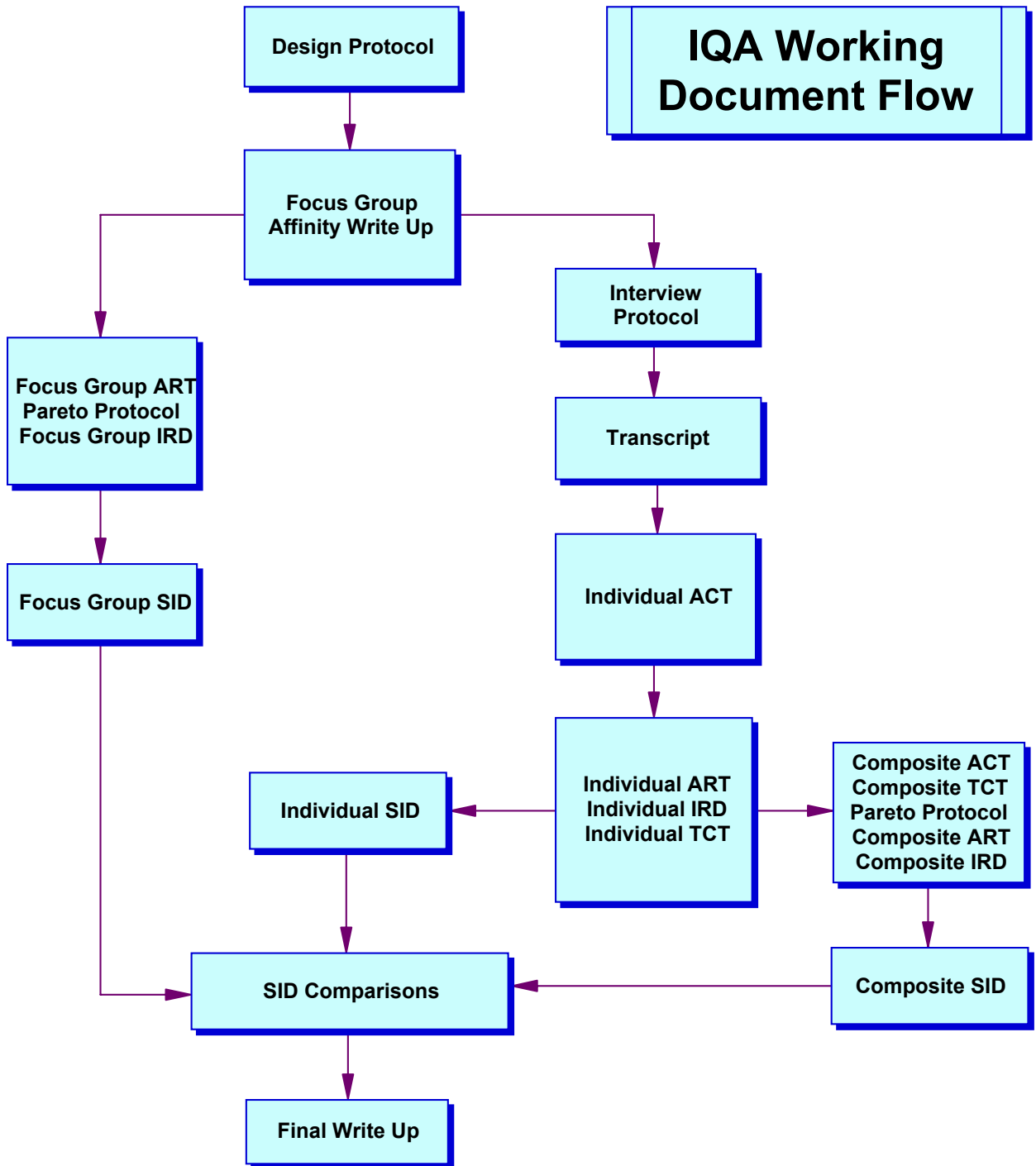


Recall that a typical study is “front-loaded,” which is to say it begins with a focus group, one major purpose of which is to provide the protocol for follow up interviews that provide deeper and wider information. Focus group data are coded both axially and theoretically by group members themselves, and a focus group SID is produced by the researcher based on the rules for rationalizing systems. Subsequently (or, depending on local conditions, in parallel), interview data are coded in an identical manner – again, by the respondents themselves – and the researcher follows a protocol essentially identical to that used to produce the focus group mindmap, resulting in at least a composite interview mindmap. The last phase of an IQA or any study is that of interpretation, which in the case of an IQA study proceeds not only from the descriptions of the affinities produced by the respondents, but from two other sources as well: (1) the respondents’ judgments of the cause-and-effect relationships among the affinities and the system these judgments create; and (2) comparison of mindmaps, both at an aggregate level (focus group SID, composite SIDs from interviews for different constituencies) and at an individual level (examining individual mindmaps or the variability within a constituency). These interpretations are made from three different perspectives:

1. Structural, in which systems or SIDS are compared and contrasted in terms of their systemic properties
2. Theoretical, in which systems are examined vis-à-vis existing theoretical perspectives
3. Inferential, in which systems are “exercised” by asking one or more of these three questions:
4.
 - a. What must be the conditions of the drivers of the system in order to obtain certain outcomes (retrospective inference, or “working forward” through the SID)?
 - b. What outcomes are likely to result from certain conditions of the drivers in a system (prospective inference, or working backwards through the SID)?
 - c. What are the likely effects or implications of extra-systemic influences?

For the purposes of this review, it is important to note *that each of the elements in the IQA research flow is represented by a protocol, and each protocol is supported by a document or set of documents*, resulting in a public data collection and analysis audit trail for the entire study. In other words, issues of credibility and trustworthiness are addressed at least in part not only by a standard analytical protocol that is dependent neither on the subject matter (the nature of the affinities) nor on the inclinations of the researcher, but by the standardization and documentation of each step in the research process.

Compare the following system summarizing the IQA document flow to the:



Note that for each element in the research flow, which represents a particular protocol in the first system diagram, there is a supporting document or a set of documents that serves two purposes: First, an audit trail of both data gathering or generation and analysis is created, that is, open to public inspection; and second, information and analytical results from each step feed to the next.

Results and Interpretation

The last phase of an IQA or any study is that of interpretation, which in the case of an IQA study proceeds not only from the descriptions of the affinities produced by the respondents, but from two other sources as well: (1) the respondents' judgments of the cause-and-effect relationships among the affinities and the system these judgments create; and (2) comparison of mindmaps, both at an aggregate level (composite SIDs from interviews for different constituencies) and at an individual level (examining individual mindmaps or the variability within a constituency). Affinities and relationships are described with the words of the group. Since IQA is designed to describe the perceptions of the phenomenon or the lived reality of the group, it makes sense to describe the affinity purely in the words of the group. Comparison is the fuel for the interpretive machine, and systems as represented by mindmaps or SIDs, provide multiple opportunities for comparison.

Chapter 4

The Teachers Speak: Results of the Study

Group Reality: System Relationships

Problem Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine and compare the language and discourse used by quality teachers to the language and discourse of teachers who need improvement. The analysis of language and discourse specific to the teachers revealed the mental models of quality teachers and teachers who need improvement; mental models for the basis of this study were defined as how teachers perceive the world. It is this researcher's conclusion that quality teachers conceptualize teaching differently than teachers who have been identified as needing improvement. In so doing, the analysis of the research finding of this inquiry contributed to the understanding of quality teachers at all levels. A focus group of twenty-five followed by twenty individual interviews were conducted utilizing the research design from Interactive Qualitative Analysis (Northcutt & McCoy (2002)), which contributed to a robust collection of data, as well as, a rigorous means of data analysis.

The focus group component facilitated the naming and describing process and answered the *what* question, or what factors comprise the phenomenon of quality teaching. The systems influence diagram (SID) component facilitated the interaction of the factors of teacher quality within a system of attributed relationships or influences. The SID answered the *how* and *why* questions.

Research Question

Do quality teachers conceptualize teaching differently than teachers who have been identified as needing improvement?

What are the differences between how teachers perceive their experiences in the classroom?

A study involving two teacher constituencies, one, quality teachers and two, teachers who need improvement, yields four research questions as follows:

1. What factors comprise teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, teaching?
2. How do these factors relate to each other in a perceived system of influence or cause and effect?
3. How does the individual's experience compare to that of the group as a whole?
4. How do the two groups' experiences compare to each other?

The Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) Process

In this study, the IQA focus group component yielded seven affinities of how teachers conceptualize quality teaching. In the sections that follow, the successive indicators of the IQA process confirmed the quality of data and the analysis of that data. As the study progressed from the gathering of focus group data to the gathering of interview data, the IQA model established the framework of language and discourse that explains how mental models both shape, and are shaped by, the individual and collective thought (Bakhtin, 1986; Gee, 1989) necessary for the qualitative grounding of the study. This effort, which required planning and conducting the focus group, featured an intense, interactive collaboration among focus group members, interviewees, and the researcher. The focus group process contributed to the initial identification of affinities or factors of how teachers conceptualize teaching. The interview analysis segment of the IQA framework confirmed relational information regarding the direction or influence of each of the factors. The final product of the effort was confirmed through the Systems Influence Diagram, for which the theoretical potential of the study of conceptualizing teaching was elaborated in chapter five. *Descriptions of methodology in this chapter are used with the permission of Northcutt and McCoy. Other portions are products of class materials generated during the author's attendance in the IQA research class. The data is that of the author's.*

Sample Selection Criteria

The sampling process was purposeful so that a small sample could be studied in an in-depth manner (Patton, 1990). Information rich studies, such as this study, provide thick descriptions that are of central importance to the purpose of the research. The criteria used for selection is set forth in the following section.

The initial focus group was comprised of twenty-five men and women teaching at varying elementary grade levels and subject matters. The actual interviewees of the study were campus principal nominated. Each of the ten elementary principals in this school district was asked to identify his or her most quality teacher and the teacher most in need of improvement. These nominations were further scrutinized by reviewing the teacher's formal appraisals to ensure he or she matched with the criteria the researcher was seeking. Each of these teachers was then contacted and asked if he or she would like to participate in a study about how teachers conceptualize the art of teaching. All formal university and IRB processes were followed.

Focus Group

The twenty-five participants were gathered in a school district library and index cards and magic markers were passed out to each table. The focus group was informed about the nature of the research, told of the interest in their experiences in teaching, and assured that this process would identify a rich detail of common themes to their experiences.

Participants were asked to close their eyes, and relax by taking deep breaths and putting aside thoughts about the day. They were asked to reflect on their experiences in teaching. What thoughts and emotions were involved? What memories did they have? What were their impressions of teaching? They were then given the issue statement; *tell me about teaching.*

The guided imagery process continued for about five minutes. The participants were asked to reflect on their experiences to date. Emphasizing that they would be allowed to brainstorm without the penalty of censorship, the group was asked to think of words, phrases, mental pictures, or memories of experiences from their first day of teaching up to, and including, the present time.

The group was asked to take a dozen or so cards and a pen in order to write their experiences on a card. They were told to place one experience per card, with no right or wrong answers, using words, phrases, or sentences to describe what they had experienced. They were asked to write on their cards in silence. It did not matter what others were writing; information about their own experiences was needed. They were assured that whatever they wrote on the card would stay confidential; that all cards would be lumped together so the author would not be known. There was no limit on how many cards they could use. When they appeared to be done, a few students were asked to collect the stacks of cards, mix them up to ensure anonymity, and tape them to the wall in no particular order.

With the cards taped on the wall, the focus group was then asked to quickly and silently read the cards. When the group was finished, the facilitator went up to the wall and read each card aloud. The group was asked if each card made sense. If a card was unclear, the author or another member was asked if s/he wanted to explain what was meant. Usually the author had no hesitation in coming forward to clarify the meaning.

When they were done, the group was asked to, again silently, begin to move the cards into columns. The cards in the columns were to have a similar theme. If they disagreed with where a card had been moved, they were to feel free to move it to another column. This went on for several minutes until the group felt that each card was in place. They were asked not to talk about where their cards should go. If a card's meaning and placement was ambiguous, it was cleared up in the next step.

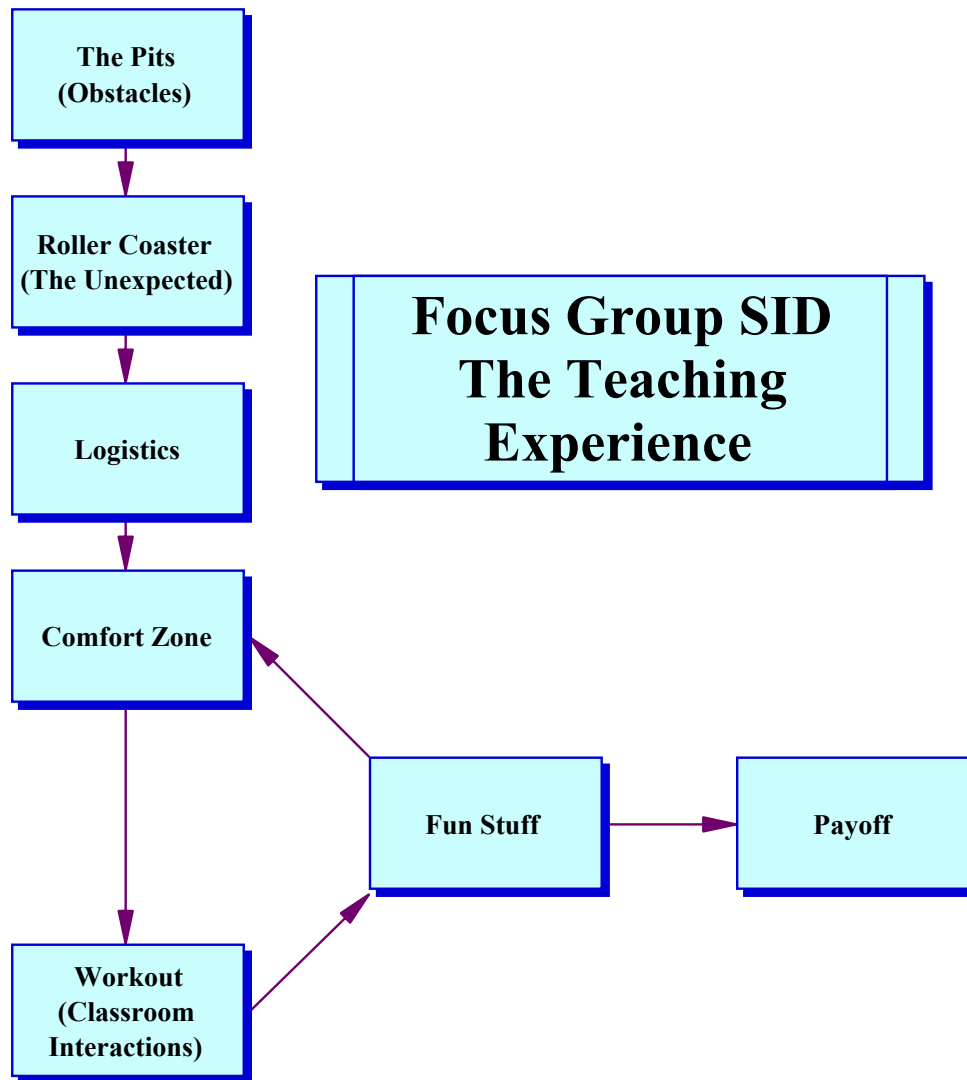
The facilitator began with the column that seemed to be the easiest to name and asked the group to give it a name. A new card reflecting the name was placed above the column. The facilitator progressed through each column until all had been named. The

facilitator then instructed the group to examine the clusters of cards and to see if any might be the dialectic of a higher theme; for example, *love* and *hate* might be opposites, but fall under a higher theme of *emotions*. When several columns were combined under one newly named category, the original columns became *sub-affinities* of the new affinity. Each card was then reexamined to see if it had been ‘miscategorized’ and now belonged in one of the newly named columns. If categories seemed to be overly complex, the group was instructed to see if sub-categories were necessary. Each column was then rearranged to reflect the sub-categories. Each sub-category was also given a name. Once the cards had been arranged and affinities named, the affinity production exercise was complete.

Reconciling Affinities

The purpose of the focus group session was to generate categories of meaning or affinities to later be used in an interview protocol. Through a series of interviews, respondents were asked to discuss what each affinity meant to them. Later, in a more comprehensive write up, the affinities were described based upon the interviews.

Also developed from the focus group was a group *mindmap* or *SID*; the group *SID* was used by the researcher to address any ambiguities that may have occurred in the affinities. Such ambiguities might include two affinities that are dialectic. They may represent a pendulum swing of the same category of meaning and would better be represented under one affinity.



Prior to developing the interview protocol, the affinity names developed by the focus group were altered slightly to allow for clearer meaning to the interviewees. The original focus group affinity names and the interview names are attached for research clarity.

Affinity Name Changes	
Focus Group	Interview
Comfort Zone	Classroom Climate
Fun Stuff	Emotions
Logistics	Logistics of the classroom
Payoff	Payoff
Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)	Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)
The Pits (Obstacles)	Administrative Procedures
Workout (Classroom Interactions)	Workout (Classroom Interactions)

Interview Protocol

The following protocol was derived from the reconciled affinity list. A very brief definition was used to describe the affinity so as not to influence the responses given during the interview. A copy of the protocol was handed to each person being interviewed as a point of reference. The interview protocol consisted of two parts: 1) the open-end *axial interview* designed to provide rich description of affinities by the respondents; and 2) the structured *theoretical interview* designed to identify relationships between affinities. The axial interview is addressed in this section. The theoretical interview will be addressed later.

Since the focus group identified *administrative procedures* as the driver, it was determined that was the place to start the axial interview.

The Teaching Experience Interview Protocol

Axial Coding

Focus Groups have identified several common themes or affinities that describe their experiences in teaching. Let's look at each of these themes one at a time and tell me about your experiences with these.

1. Administrative Procedures

This affinity describes the required administrative tasks of teaching.
Tell me about the Administrative Procedures.

2. Classroom Climate

This affinity describes the interactions taking place between the student and the teacher.
Tell me about Classroom Climate.

3. Emotions

This affinity describes the emotional aspects of teaching.
Tell me about the Emotions

4. Logistics of the Classroom

This affinity describes all the processes (ex. tutoring, conferencing, centers, re-teach, groups and modeling) that a teacher uses to support instruction.
Tell me about the Logistics of the Classroom.

5. Payoff

This affinity reflects the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards or consequences associated with teaching.
Tell me about Payoff.

6. Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)

This affinity describes the ups and downs of teaching; every day is different and unknown.
Tell me about Roller Coaster (The Unexpected).

7. Workout (Classroom Interactions)

This affinity describes the actual art of teaching.
Tell me about Workout (Classroom Interactions).

Transcripts and Axial Code Tables. All interviews were transcribed word for word. Once the transcripts had been prepared, the researcher analyzed the text for *axial codes*, which are *specific examples of discourse that illustrate or allude to an affinity*. The researcher then documented the reference for retrieval by recording the affinity number on the line of transcript that refers to the affinity, and by documenting the line numbers and affinity numbers in the *Individual Interview Axial Code Table (ACT)*. Quotes relating to a specific affinity were cut and pasted into the third column of the ACT, along with the line(s) of the transcript that were the source of the axial quote. Once all interviews had been coded, the data from the interviews was summarized to create a composite of the individuals' experience with the phenomenon. Axial data was transferred from each *Individual Interview Axial Code Table* to a *Combined Interview Axial Code Table*. By combining all interviews into one table, the researcher created a database for the entire set of respondents containing all axial codes for all affinities, with each code containing a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code.

Composite Affinity Descriptions

The researcher next examined all quotes for each separate affinity. Multiple quotes were then woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section is a composite description of the affinities based on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

Administrative Procedures

Teachers are often required to do many things that are out of their control. Legislators, outside experts, and principals require the teacher to perform testing on students and keep detailed documentation. Teachers have many routine administrative duties, which require a great deal of time.

They need to bring themselves in here before they make a law. Teachers have *legislation* and rules administered to them from Federal, State and Local governments. “I saw a list once where in 1950 what they were responsible for teaching and then each decade what they were responsible for teaching. By 1990s there were like a hundred and five things on the list. There were four in the 1950s. I am not happy about them. I am getting to where I do not like anybody like the legislature. I feel they do not know what is going on in the classroom. They need to bring themselves in here before they make a law. They are making nonsense laws. I feel like the ones that are passed down from the government are basically a waste of time. The fact that Texas has a pledge and we say it, I just do not see the point of that. We already do the pledge to the flag, the country flag. The moment of silence, it is hard to make seven year old stand for an entire minute and do nothing. It definitely has gotten worse every year but it has not been from our administrators. It has been more legislation. This year we are doing the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag, plus we have the moment of silence. Our school also had a foundation program that we were doing for discipline. Then we started fight free, plus all the others. It makes me antsy in the morning because I know I have to get started with my subjects, but I have got like lunch count, attendance, a moment of silence and I am just praying I can get through all of this. It is a combination of things that our school needs. We definitely need to do the fight free program. We definitely need to do foundation. I know we need to say Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Whether we need the moment of silence, I do not know. The mandates that come down are generally incorporated into the school as a school-wide thing- like the Texas Pledge. I did not even know Texas had a pledge. We had to memorize the Texas pledge and we temporarily had to make our own flags, but they have already ordered the new ones. Again, I do not see the point. If they need a meditation moment, they can have that at home. There are times during the day that they finish their work that if they need a moment of silence they can have a moment of silence. I just do not like, they are trying to mandate too much from the top.”

Some laws seem intrusive to teachers. “I follow the rules because it is not worth my time to fight. I feel like the ones from the school are important and they are in place to make it function and the ones in place from the Federal government are in place. We have so many rules and regulations that we have to follow. It keeps getting more and more that way. When we came back to school this year they told us we can’t give candy in the classroom. It is a little thing and I can understand if I got a letter from a parent saying that I would prefer you not to give my child candy. I have no problem with that. I think for the legislature or somebody else to put that demand that is just one more little thing. It is those types of things that just end up making things really difficult. There is more stuff that we have to do, for instance, this candy thing. That is a pain to me and it does affect us here because little kids identify with candy. We do a thing here with ‘caught being good tickets.’ That is a reward also but they can spend those for snow cones, time in the gym, or time to play basketball with me. That is a big thing. That is driving me crazy because I can give M&Ms and I can give Hershey Kisses but I cannot give Jolly Ranchers. I have all these kids, 105s on a spelling test and I used to stick a Jolly Rancher on top, I cannot do that anymore, but I can put a Hershey’s Kiss on it. That makes no sense to me at all. The candy law is just but a bummer on some of our incentive things, even though we want them to be intrinsic, the kids still loves that. We can still hand out chocolate. Jolly ranchers and skittles, those are gone. That was real easy. We can continue to be creative and make things intrinsic. When you hear on the radio that this is all our fault, that they start to pay all this attention to redistricting and whether children should be able to get a cupcake in school, and all these issues that are not the important issues. I mean the government. They do these things because they do not know what to do in education. They do not want to give the money. They do know what they should do. They need to give more money and more incentives for smart people to come into teaching and they are not doing it. They do not want to put the money there because that is the taxpayer’s money.”

That is the drudgery, the chore that is behind the teaching. *Standardized testing* places administrative burdens upon teachers. “The administrator came in and said,

'Here is a new test that you are going to give your kindergartners. You are the first grade level that is doing it. Then they are going to be required to get tutoring.' For me, that was a lot when we were starting out. Now it has gotten easier. The TEKs are the biggest part of our curriculum because it structures everything else. It is great to have a guideline to know exactly what you have to teach, what you have to cover. Then there is a hidden curriculum that goes along with that. That is the way you present those TEKs. It takes away from the teaching side and some of that joy too. That is the drudgery, the chore that is behind the teaching. That is how I feel like putting TAKs numbers and stuff in our lesson plans. To me this is a waste of my time. I cannot tell you what TAKs number is reading; I do not know them. I do not have them all memorized. Besides, they change them periodically every two or three years and they call them something different or they change them a little bit. There is no point, and I do not think anybody needs to memorize the numbers. As long as you review them and you know you are covering your bases, but to code them in a lesson plan book, it does not make me learn them any better. I do not think an administrator or anybody coming and looking at it would say, there is 2B, 7C. They are doing writing in journals today. That just drives me crazy. I think accountability to a point is extreme in some cases. I think they push it too. I did third, fourth, and fifth for the past two years and there is a lot of pressure to do TAKs. That was a big issue. Now that I am in first grade, I see that there is not that much pressure but I know that it is still there. We are trying to get them to be at their reading level and be able to understand what they are doing. The first couple of years I felt we were pressured to do a lot of TAKs things to get the kids ready. There are TEKs, but they are very easy to meet. They are very basic ideas that they want us to cover. I do not really have a problem as far as meeting those goals. I do that and the children are learning more than are mentioned in the TEKs. The TEKs are not as much as an issue for me right now."

It is not like medicine-you are much less likely to kill the person. *Outside experts* are always happy to provide advice. "I have had a lot of people come in and offer suggestions and some of them have been wonderful and great and some of them I have to go back and say, this did not work for me. I kind of felt that way back when I graduated

from college and took my first teaching job. I remember thinking, when was the last time any of these professors were in a classroom? Everything they teach in college is not always realistic for a regular classroom. Even student teaching does not totally prepare you for what it is like to be in the classroom. Whenever I have been a mentor or something, I have tried to warn them of that. I think teaching is a hard thing because it is looking at the individual strengths of the teachers. There are theories that become popular and they are in style and then they go out of style. It is hard to uphold teachers to a certain standard but to also allow for their different strengths and weaknesses that play a part. It is not like medicine where there is one right way to do the surgery- you are much less likely to kill the person. I mean it is hard to do that in education. Throw in the behavior problems too. I think people that in admin, before something comes down they need to come over and spend time in a classroom in a primary elementary level, intermediate level, and high school, to see what is going on before they pass something on. They do not know. They just know the numbers; they do not know anything else. If they have taught before, they forgot how it is. It gets harder because of that; in kindergarten we are teaching what it is first grade. What I get more tired of is people that make the suggestions or logistics, the people that are telling us what to do, how to do it, and what should be done. When was the last time they were in the classroom? I do not mean that to be ugly, but when was the last time that they were in a classroom, functioning as a leader or whatever in a classroom? They may have gone in and observed. You can go in and observe and have wonderful ideas. I will try to implement them, but what if they are not working?"

An unusual concept for this position. *Principals* place administrative duties upon teachers. "With our principal he is pretty much hands-off. When he hires us, he hires the people he believes can do the job. Once you are hired, he lets you do your job. I love that. He is hands-off and lets me teach. I know what the expectations are and he is not standing over me all the time. I really, really like that approach, yet he is there to support me in any way. I work great with my administrator and we work very closely together. We brainstorm a lot and we have done things differently here than at other

schools in the district so that we can keep the kids in the classroom more, which is an unusual concept for this position. They would discuss with us about meeting those different goals and help us with our teaching. There was not any set. That is what we were striving to do and I was okay with that because I agree with that program, or that way of thinking. They would just give us feedback on our teaching and how to improve the quality of our program. The more organized it is the better, and that has been an experience where the principal and assistant principal have all those things ready and lined out for us and get it across to us in a very succinct and quick way. That is good and I have experienced that. I have experienced that this year; it is super organized. It makes our life very good. Ours are pretty cohesive and traditional, based on a lot of tradition because our administrator has been in the district for 30 years. There is not a high turnover rate here so everything just runs like clockwork.”

We hear about the paperwork reduction act and then you wonder when is that taking affect. Paperwork and *documentation* are part of the daily lives of teachers. “There is a lot of pressure on documentation. I think it is important, but I also think your principal, supervisor, knows whether you are doing your job or not. It does not have to be documented. I am also not a big paperwork person. Some people can write beautiful paperwork and do nothing. I feel like I am one that does a lot and does not, you have the paperwork to show. I think a teacher has to be prepared or they cannot walk in the classroom. I had to report things like attendance to my administrator. I had certain guidelines by the district to follow like grading and curriculum. It is not that my curriculum is not important now but it is different. Then I had my report cards, my curriculum with the reading initiative that was a huge administrative thing. You have to make sure that you are doing report cards on each student. In order to do report cards you have to have your grades. Make sure that you are testing your students and giving grades for each student. I have heard stories of some teachers not keeping grades in your grade book. It is very important that you have grades on your students, for their performance reasons. Then you have to have a report card and then every three weeks you have to have a progress report. In the beginning, they are hard with having new kids

come in and getting to know whom they are but as it goes on in the year it gets easier, less paperwork. I try to keep it down to a minimum. Sometimes we hear about the paperwork reduction act and then you wonder when is that taking affect. Which paperwork did they reduce as you are filling out three different forms for textbooks this year, for the same book, same book number, and same book? You are thinking, why I am having to put this on three completely different forms? Sometimes it feels that way. It is a necessary evil. You just have all these little administrative things that you have to do. Some of it comes from up there. I guess if I had to go back and I needed to prove that I had taught one of those objectives, then that is important. Go back and say, yes, I covered it here, here, and here. I have done it ten times this week. That would be more valuable to me. If somebody needed that information, but to just do it because it is routine, it takes like an extra hour just to code it. It is not like anybody looks at those codes and knows exactly what I am talking about. They would then in turn have to get out the cheat sheet, look it up; you know what I am saying? It is taking their time as well. I do not see the purpose in that. I think one of the things that I want to say is that I know that over the years teaching is obviously advanced quite a bit from the twenty years when I started. The paperwork is just getting phenomenal. I know that it has to be accountable and you have to document. That is another one of the time elements, the documentation. You cannot just do things anymore; you have to write it down. You have to prove it. You have to have it in your folder. Have it at your grasp in case you need it. Fortunately, I have never had to pull out major documentation, that this is what happened. I am not just talking educational needs; I am talking lawsuit type things. Accountability and the paperwork, everything has a procedure, which is fine. I think that is important and consistent, but it just gets more every year.”

There are always rules. Teachers have a *routine of administrative duties* that must be accomplished. “Faculty meetings, they are important, is it time for us to touch base. Here I feel like there is a good balance when sometimes there is none. At the beginning of the year, we have been seeing them more often. We are working on dismissal procedures. We can have a good flow here within the building and everybody is

brainstorming, saying what he or she is doing, then we are tweaking it. We worked on it for a week and then at yesterday's faculty meeting, we discussed what can we do a little bit different. I think it is trial and error of what works for you. How do you do lunch count smoothly with the least interruption as possible? I think you play with it a little bit. You try something that you think, okay, lets do it this way. I think the biggest focus for me is to just make it as quick and the least interruptive as possible. Those little things of like, where do they turn in their folders in the morning? How do they give me notes? Attending workshops and faculty meetings, team meetings and getting to school on time. Basically there is a whole bunch. They help you understand, keep you organized, and make sure that you are doing what you need to be doing. It is basically a guide that I follow that I make sure that I do to help run things smoothly. I guess teachers who do not do those things are not too organized. They do not follow the rules as good. There are always rules. You have to follow the rules. Lesson plans are required to be turned in on Monday morning. I do my lesson plans well in advance. I know it is important for a teacher to have a plan and I like to have the administration know what is going on. The principal will look at them and say, I saw that you had your math tied in through language arts and social studies was coming this way. She can see how I am integrating and getting my activities across subject areas. We have morning duty for a week, when our team rotates. Every eight days we have lunch duty. When we are working our lunch it is real hard to be eating and squirting ketchup and opening milk cartons. What we have done on our team is we go outside right afterwards, recess is built in right behind our lunch, so then the other three team members will take my kids so I can have thirty minutes in the teacher's lounge without children."

Some duties seem frivolous. "Redundant tasks, a waste of time. If they are asking us to do something here and then we repeat it here, it is not good. Sometimes I feel like there is not enough help to keep that from happening. Attendance is an example. I quit keeping attendance in my classroom for a couple of years because once the strips came out and it is automated, I felt like that is the definitive record, so as far as I was concerned, as long as I could go down there and get a print out of that, why keep it?"

Sometimes it is just needs to have a purpose. I decided to keep it again. I now, after thinking back on the last couple of years, think I need that in front of me. It is not all that easy to go down and pull it up. Anything like that, which you do, needs to have a purpose. If they are going to send out a silly assessment sheet that does not have any meaning but they just want that done to say it is done, then that is not good. We do not have a lot of that left. That is the way it was back ten years ago. The little tasks are what I think overwhelm new teachers. There are so many little things to do that it is hard to keep up with it and remember it all. Getting organized helps more than anything, getting your own routine down, knowing how you want to keep stuff organized and reminders so you do not forget certain things. I think that gets to be the most overwhelming part sometimes. There are administrative procedures, everything from just taking attendance in the morning, to collecting papers and keeping track of all of them, to filling out paperwork for the office, to running off papers. I have taught long enough that those are very routine for me. I think maybe to a new teacher they might kind of be overwhelming sometimes because it is so many little rules, little things to do just this way and turn it in by just this time. I have taught long enough and they are consistently the same every year. I try not to spend very much time out of the kids' day doing administrative procedures. I feel like that is all the time we have. If I am spending it, even though I am talking to a kid I will try to pull them out of PE or something like that. That is why I spent my conference time today pulling a kid out of music for a few minutes that I felt I needed to talk to. You try something and if it works you keep it. If it does not, you think okay, what is wrong with this picture, how do I readjust it to make it go smoothly as possible? I think that is the key factor is just get those little things out of the way as quickly as possible. There is pretty much a smooth routine. It goes pretty quickly. They do not seem to be a problem. I do realize that we had a new teacher last year that she was overwhelmed just with all the little things that you do that I guess we take for granted. It is just kind of like breathing. I do not have a problem with them or anything. They go smoothly and they are just little things that need to be done.”

I try my best to not have the kids' time taken with administrative procedures. Teachers have strict *time schedules*. "I am here early in the morning. I am here at 7:15 just to get my day started because I want to be successful. I do not want to be falling on my face and needing to be picked up. There is give and take. I have my son here after school because he goes to school here. It is juggling 20 kids and busy all the time. I am trying to get kids' files to look at them. I did not have time. I tried to do it during my conference time. I looked through about three or five of them and, or maybe half of them. They did not take my classroom time away but that is because I try not to let them take my time. I try my best to not have my day taken, the kids' time taken with administrative procedures. That is one of the reasons I work hard. I would like to say I work smart. I do not mind staying a little bit later because I live so close. I guess that would be part of that consideration too. When you look at my schedule, I am supposed to be starting math at 8:05. If I have not started math by 8:10 I am just scared to death somebody is going to come in and say, why are you off schedule? I have noticed that if I get hectic or if I see stress coming with me, then the day, the classroom is how I am feeling. If I can just say, it does not matter if you start math at 8:15. If somebody comes in, I tell them I am taking the moment of silence right now. I had to have it later in the morning. I cannot imagine what the younger teachers are feeling like if I am feeling like this. I think this year that has been the worst for me."

Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)

The roller coaster is the unexpected events that can happen in the school. The roller coaster demands flexibility. Roller coaster comes from events such as changing schedules, interruptions, being unprepared, visitors, stress, parents, problem kids, and routine duties.

I have never dug a hole so deep I could not get out of it. Dealing with the unexpected events in teaching requires *flexibility*. "The unexpected really builds character. Teaching comes in where we have all these teachable moments when the

unexpected happens and how you respond to it really makes your day. If you lose it then that is another thing. If you just say, I do not know, let me get back with you on that question or whatever the circumstance is, that is fine too. I see the unexpected as opportunity though, for me to learn and to expand on what they already know too. I guess teachers need to be flexible so they can handle all the unexpected. I am very organized and so come Monday morning, I want to make sure all my lesson plans are completed and turned in at 8, every copy I need, every transparency I need, I have in my possession. Everything is planned and ready Monday morning when I step foot in my office or my classroom. I am ready to go. I am ready to handle those roller coasters like fire drills or assemblies you are not aware of or whatever. That is what I do. I am very organized and I have to be organized. Piles of things drive me crazy. I have a routine established and we stick to that routine. It is not that I am not flexible, because I have to be flexible. The things that interfere with my day, like this morning, we all went out and said the pledge. The things that interfere with my day really are not going to interfere with my schedule because we just come back from wherever we went and we pick up our exact same schedule. You have to be able to handle that. If you cannot, you probably are not happy in teaching. I guess that is part of what draws people to this, people like me. I did not want to go sit in an office where things were very much the same every day, where you go in and sit at your desk, and you do the same task. You are constantly doing different things in here. Teaching presents a new setting every day, things are never the same from year to year, and it changes. You think you have it down and then there is that new challenge the next year. That is the beauty of that. I think that is why people are drawn to teaching because it does have the ups and downs and it is different every day. What I love about teaching is that every day is different. It is not a walk in, sit down, turn out whatever, and your day is over. My neighbor across the street, who works for a big company, I see him work until midnight and I see him work on weekends. CPAs during tax season, I would not want any of those jobs either. With teaching, what I love is that today was extremely successful. My mind is always going, what did I do wrong, or what can I do better, that in itself is like a roller coaster. Today maybe everything we did and

everything that happened was perfect and tomorrow it may be only three things went well. It comes back to every day is a new day. You can start back over; at least I have always found that. I have never dug a hole so deep I could not get out of it. That takes letting go of some things. Some things you cannot change, it is over with, move on. It is the fact that it is a new day. I just think being confident in your expertise and who you are and your teaching philosophies, you just go with it. Whatever comes, you deal with it according to what you know, your knowledge and your experience. I try to focus on the children and keep reminding myself that is the reason why I am here. Look at their smiling faces and try to think that is why I am here. I am here to teach these kids and do the best with them that I can.”

If we have an assembly or an early out, that day is pretty well shot.

Unexpected events and *changing schedules* occur often. “We have a lot of schedule changes. That frustrates me. Last year, almost every other week there was some schedule change either for ARI or for special ed. It is like all these different things that change all the time. It is almost every day, something is happening in your class. There are also times where you are trying to teach a lesson and it goes over. You cannot start another lesson. You might have to shorten a lesson because the previous lesson went too long, or you need to re-teach a lesson. I just try to make up for it the next day, instead of having a long lesson, a mini-lesson. We do try to catch up and sometimes that is not possible. We might have a little bit of homework on their part. I try to do what I schedule to do, which is hard sometimes. If not, there is five or ten minutes here or there, you just kind of squeeze things in. That is all it really takes. Yesterday we had an assembly called, and we were to be there from 8:30 to 9:30 and I was aware of it the day before. You just have to teach what you planned to teach during that time during a different time. This morning we had a fire drill first thing and so it just took a little bit of time out of our schedule but I still have to go back and re-teach, or teach where we were when we were interrupted. We have been practicing fire drills, which is a big procedural thing of the unexpected, school wide. You have to do that in your classroom too, in case of this emergency. I will be the one to do this. If I cannot do it, I put somebody that I know is

dependable in charge. If we have an assembly or an early out, that day is pretty well shot because they cannot even handle it. I have to put the schedule all over the room so that they are sure. If they will see the schedule and know this day is special, it runs a lot better than if I say, oh, goodness, we have to go to PE now. I think after years, I can handle it. I think it has to do with the teacher. If they get frazzled, the kids pick up on that immediately. This morning I had to knock out a little reading activity, but the children did not know it. We went to our 9/11 thing. We came back and did our whole morning routine. Everything was the same. They had no idea that I had something else planned. I cannot see that things interfere with my day. Usually I know about them in advance. I knew about this in advance.”

I do pretty well when there is throw-up in the room. *Interruptions* can occur at unexpected times. “Every day is like an adventure for me. You never know when something is going to happen that is not in your plans, like a student getting sick, or suddenly a parent popping in, or a student that needs a Band-Aid. Some days the phone is ringing in your classroom, the intercom is going off, and people are coming to your door. You are just trying to teach a lesson and there are always interruptions. You have to be prepared for that. Kids come in late. I think you have to roll with the punches. I think teachers are very flexible. Flexibility is a key factor of being a teacher. If you are very rigid person and you cannot handle that, they are going to blow you up. The interruptions, you just do not know what to expect. You just have to take it. I think that goes back to procedural where you have to train your children as well as yourself. The kids are constantly leaving my class and going to speech. Once those kids come back, I have kids that go to ESL. Then those kids come back and I have kids that go to LT. They are constantly leaving my class. I do not know how to deal with that. I cannot stop the whole class just because of those kids. It is what you can get is what you can get. That is frustrating. Just being flexible is real important, and giving them an option of what to do if you cannot do your routine. Read a book; get your library book out. Just giving them one or two options if you do not know what to do. You definitely learn to expect the unexpected and teaching is a job that is never boring. Two days are not the

same. You think things are going along just fine and a child bursts into tears because they have lost a paper and you have to deal with that and you have to handle it in a nurturing but firm way. I enjoy challenges. Each child brings in something different that I may have never seen or experienced and that is good. I do pretty well when there is throw-up in the room or something like that. If we have throw-up, then we all just kind of get up and we walk out of the room. I make a phone call, I need a janitor and then we go somewhere. That kind of thing I do pretty well with, but that is after years. I think emotional needs are now definitely a big part of my day, from where my kids come from. I am a firm believer that kids are kids. I do not care if you have money or you do not. Everybody needs something. I spend a lot of my day doing. Giving snacks, letting them borrow lunch money, talking about how to clean their clothes and emotional needs. They do seem to take care of themselves a lot more around here, my area.”

You are just flying off the cuff a little bit. Being *unprepared* can lead to unanticipated events. “There are many unexpected things. Sometimes you might not be prepared. You are looking for a special transparency to put on the overhead and you do not have that. There is a lot that can affect your teaching day. You do not have the supplies you need or you have ten minutes less time and all the sudden realize, hey, I do not have time to finish that. I think you always have to keep an eye on the clock. Keep an eye and have knowledge of what is happening and what you want to happen. It is not that big a deal. It is what makes teaching fun. You are just flying off the cuff a little bit. I really do not mind, because everyday is a different story. One lesson might go well one day and the next day it will fall apart. I take it as it comes because you never know. Sometimes I find a lesson is not going to be that great, and then the kids enjoy it and it is better than I expected. I guess that is normal. Sometimes a lesson can be a total flop and that can be a real downer, especially with what I am doing now because I think sometimes my expectations, I forget they are with me because they cannot do this. I should not have planned this, but it is a great lesson for the child who can do it. If I was not flexible, I would be down all the time. I have had some years where we never had a planning period. It was meeting, after meeting, after meeting, after meeting. You just do

not get the time you needed to prepare. Not here. They are good about that here. You just need more of the time.”

I had in my plans that she was coming last week. Unexpected *visitors* are a source of unforeseen events. “When you forget that somebody is coming to meet with you, you just go, okay. Every day is different. The unknown, I try to, within the classroom, maintain an order. I used to be, I do not have time right now because this is scheduled here. The flexibility comes with experience. You learn to work in and weed out what you need to, or move it to the next day, or move it later in the day. Parent conferences and those types of things, I prefer to have scheduled with a little bit of advance notice. Our planning time is just a small amount of time in the day. The counselor comes every other week. I had in my plans that she was coming last week. She said, oh, no, I am not. Then right away I think of what tricks do I have that I can fill that thirty minutes. OTPT wanted to come in and work with the children and their pencil grips today. She told me last week and I said sure, so I just moved back math a little bit, scrunched some center time. I like to know in advance when school wide things are going on. So I can plan that and not have that hurried feeling.”

Changes are what drive us the craziest sometimes. The roller coaster can cause *stress*. “The ups and downs of teaching are things like, this year for example, scheduling. Because we have had numerous kids in subdivisions springing up everywhere, enrollment is up. We had, for our special area classes, like four classes in the gym at a time. The classes are only 30 minutes, so the PE teachers were not really able to do much with that many kids in there. So another teacher and myself volunteered to split our conference so that the kids could be in there just two classes at a time. Now, are we regretting that now? Yes, we are. Has that presented a roller coaster ride for us? Yes, it has. Thirty minutes here, and thirty minutes there, is not really long enough to do anything. By the time you walk them down it becomes twenty. If you stop and anybody asks you a question, it is ten. We pretty much have eliminated going to the bathroom or getting a drink. Those are the roller coaster kinds of things. I think I feel like I am always in a sort of tense state, just in the classroom, not that it is necessarily a bad thing. When

you have 20 children in your room, you have to be constantly aware of everything that is going on. Even if your adrenaline is not pumping, even if there is not any situation that comes up where you are feeling upset with a child or something happens, you are still just constantly in a state of awareness. I just think tiredness makes you go down, the down part of the roller coaster. The kids are the up part. It comes in various ways. A big one is when your administrator comes in and says, 'oh, I forgot to tell you there is an assembly today' and you have this great lesson plan. That is a real downer for the day, but the assembly can be great. We feel like we are wrong a lot. You would think after years of teaching you would have it down, but I do not. I do not think any of us feel like we have it down, like we have it figured out. What are they going to change next? It is definitely a roller coaster. Administration, I think, keeps us in a roller coaster of expectations and changes. Changes are what drive us the craziest sometimes because from year to year, it is like it all changes. How you were doing it last year, which is not right anymore. We are not going to do it like that anymore. This year it is this way. Then the next year, they tell you that is wrong. You get used to that, you tell yourself ahead of time. You prepare that it is not going to be the same. People who get into that, drives them around the bend because they cannot take that, because it is going to be different kids, it is going to be something different from administration. Things are done differently; somebody came up with a new law. You go with the flow. You can vent about that and you do learn how to do that in an appropriate way. Then you come back and you realize that is the way it is, so you move on. I know there is a lot of stress but I do not believe in stress. I do not know if that makes sense or not. I mean, I know what is going on and the kids know. They know what to expect. I do not mind that at all. All the little things we have to do, I do not mind."

Some parents do not care what their children are doing. *Dealing with parents* is a roller coaster. "What really blows me away more than anything, you are up here busting your tail and then some parent will call you because you said, 'c'mon you ding-a-lings,' or something like that to the whole group. I think if you make kids laugh, they remember stuff better. You know, to say something like that to them and somebody will

call and say, 'well, you called my kid a ding-a-ling' that, to me is unexpected in my profession. More parents are working outside the home and not spending the quality time with their children. You can spend a good five minutes with your child reading to them, in the car talking to them, seeing how they are as a person. Some single homes and some parents do not care what their children are doing, not teaching them some values or anything. It is a big roller coaster with parents losing jobs; there is a lot more depression in the home, a lot more fighting, probably more abuse going on. The extra baggage that some of these kids are seeing, it kills me to have these kids go through these things. I hope I make my environment here loving and safe for them to come in and feel comfortable. Your kids, depending on what happened at home that morning or last night or two weeks ago; and it is just now something they feel comfortable talking about, your day may get wrecked. You may not be able to do anything you wanted to do but you might have a chance to teach a great life lesson. Some kids, I do not know if it is because of their home-life, need reassurance all during the day. You have to constantly say, 'you will be fine.' Let me worry. Look at my hair, I have worried all my life; do not dare worry about a thing. I try real hard to smile a bunch. We try to do that a bunch. You never know what is going to happen. They are just little things."

You never knew would tick him off. Dealing with *problem students* is a roller coaster. "Every day is a new day; you want to have a good day. I guess, I would say a lot of it depends on behavior. Kids will be kids. Some kids are not happy kids, so, letting some of that take your day up and down, or letting yourself get mad, or letting myself get mad over certain things, I consider that a lot of the roller coaster. The unexpected too, the stuff that comes up. Sometimes you have the unexpected with children's behavior. You do not know how they are going to be. I had a child once who was bi-polar. You did not know from one moment to the next. He would rage. I had to deal with his up and downs, my up and downs with that, and then other children who would see this. You just rely on cohorts, administration, when you need that kind of flexibility. I guess my unexpected would be getting students in you never dreamed you would have problems. Last year I had a boy who was bi-polar. You never knew would tick him off. That was

my roller coaster last year. I have never had that, which was hard. You have the highs and lows of the kids just as much as you do with the administration. You have more ADHD type kids than you used to have. There is not as much on how to deal with those kids, in that respect. That is hard. It is just like, 'here they are, deal with them.' That is tricky. The first couple of times, I did not know, I did not know his background. After that I got to know the little guy and I just let him go. I have some little beanbags that look like little vegetables and he would play with those. If it got too bad, there is another teacher I could go and get, and she could take him and work with him in the classroom one on one, get away from the kids. After I learned how, it was a lot better. Then you have administration that says that they cannot control that one...nobody can control that one. That is something we need help on, help dealing with those types of children.”

My life is much harder when the paper towels are not in that paper towel dispenser. Even *daily routines* are not always routine. “It is hard to ignore all the other things that are going on, just lots of duties. I know it is part of our job to help the school to run smoothly. Those types of things, the way you turn in your attendance, your lunch count, how we handle fire drills are normal, but a typical day is anything but normal and routine in the elementary school. Things like getting to lunch. I am the first one through at lunch and I am looking, going, I think there is another choice on the menu. I am one that will say something. Sometimes they would not have the fries out of the oven and I will say, ‘I think we are supposed to have French fries today.’ There is one working the cash register and the other putting out meals and they are forgetting about the choices, so I will say something. The cafeteria is not doing his or her job and it is making life very hard on everybody. The custodian does not have the paper towels in the paper towel bin and it makes it very hard on everybody. It is like orchestrating all this. My life is much harder when the paper towels are not in that paper towel dispenser. I end up teaching a whole lesson on evaporation. If you just hang them there, they will dry, the water goes back up into the air where it came from. Trust me it will be okay. If it bothers you, do what I do and pat them on your clothes. It is just orchestrating and the learning along with the transitions and it all has an effect.”

Logistics of the Classroom

Logistics of the classroom are all of the requirements that must be met before the actual teaching can take place. Logistics is the planning and preparation that goes into teaching. Teachers identified logistics as consisting of planning, such as collaboration, writing lesson plans, performing assessments, and taking individual students' differentiation into account. Setting up the classroom, preparation, and gathering materials and supplies are also part of logistics. Logistics also consist of late hours and dealing with parents.

Let me borrow it. Teachers *collaborate* and share ideas. "I am a team player. This means a lot to me. I know how it is to be in the shoes where you are new, always looking for new ideas. You will look in somebody else's classroom and ooohhh. I am always looking for new ways. When I am going to workshops, I am looking for ways of how can I bring that into my classroom? How is me sitting here listening to this person talk going to help out the kids and what can I do? Sometimes you wonder when you sit in those workshops and then others you are on overload. I cannot do everything so I am going to pick one or two things and incorporate that. Getting those kids ready for upper grades and how we play a role in the TAKs and incorporating the TEKs. I always try to be on top of things. There is a lot of planning. What helps are other teachers- sometimes they have materials already. You just ask or go and see what they have and feed off from there. I do not have a big classroom library so I see what other teachers have and they let me borrow it. It is a lot of borrowing and sharing ideas. Mostly it is the teachers sitting down and taking the TEKs and dividing them out and figuring out where we need to go from there. It is a team effort. Taking the time to put in the TEKs and the TAKs is lots of time that people do not see. I know administrators know it is there too. It is not as if it is a secret or anything. As a grade level, our team got together this summer. We sat and we planned out our things within that kind of a calendar. We have put those together and we have the year pretty well lined out. It is pretty planned, but then again you go back to

the other question about, what about the ups and downs, things do not always work out. So the fieldtrip gets rained out, and you deal with it, and you move on. Overall, you have a plan and I like that, probably because I am a planner. We have grade level meetings on Tuesday, so that gives us time for the upcoming week to get ideas from each other. We have a new person on grade level now so she is got ideas where she came from. I want to share with her and we want her to share with us. We do that on Tuesday. That allows us on Wednesday to run things, to get any of that material. I had a teacher, a mentor teacher, and the first grade level leader. I go to her. She gave me a layout of what she does for the year. She is super organized. She is the best person for anything. We do not actually plan together, the whole first grade team, but she gave me her schedule of what she does. Another teacher gave me a schedule of what she does and sometimes they correlate and sometimes they do not. I decide which one I feel comfortable teaching, what I would like to do. I do go to different resources and materials. I have a curriculum made up from another school district that I was at. We had to make up a curriculum. That is already set up. I usually go by it and I will go through last year's lesson plan and I will say, 'this did not work' and I will take that out. I have gone back and looked through what I did last year and see what worked and put it in this year. I start during the summer. If I can get workshops during the summer, I will do that. Usually the first week of school I am going through stuff and a lot of depends on the skills of the students, what I will do for the next week. If they are catching on to everything, we will move on. If they are not catching on, we will take another week and work on it."

I cannot wing it. Teachers begin *writing lesson plans* long before classes start. "The actual teaching is the tip of the iceberg. The actual lesson, the actual twenty, thirty minutes or whatever, is just the part you see. The kids see the part a parent would see. Lots of planning goes into it. I spend a lot of time on lesson plans thinking. I do not like to just pick up the book and go through a book. I like to have it more meaningful, more fun, and a little more integrated and a lot of that is not straightforward. Learning is not just straightforward and you cannot just teach them A, B, C out of the book. You get a new textbook, you get a new edition, and we obviously have to study that. If you had one

for a while, it comes obviously a little bit faster, because you are referring, 'oh, yeah, I remember this story and I remember what I did' and you have the previous years to lean back on. If it is a brand new edition, for instance, we have a new social studies book this year, there is a lot more studying. I have to go home and read the textbook, read the ideas, make notes of which ones I want, which ones I do not want to try and make notes that if they do not work this year for future reference. If it did not work, fix it or scratch that one all together. A lot of planning there. And then writing it physically down in the plan book. It is designing it so that your individual personality fits your needs and planning, I think, ahead of time, how you are going to do it. I do not know anybody who does not plan even if it is that they are going to use their same plan. They know what they are going to do that next year or they are working on something to make it better. Before the year starts, I have a list of units and I go back and I adjust those. Sometimes in the summer on my computer, I think it showed a July date from last year. This year I think it was more end of July first of August when I got them finalized. I look at what I want to teach, the whole year, and the four-day week all have an impact on that. My units are all planned out before the year gets here. I am on a campus where our leadership plan includes a calendar that we got for the whole year. It has all of the things that the principal knows are coming up on that ten-month calendar and stapled together in our binder. It takes a lot of planning, a tremendous amount of planning. We sat down two years ago and did a yearly plan. We coordinated everything. When we are reading the plant story in a reading book, we are doing plants in science, and the spelling list comes over whatever we are doing in social studies. It all coordinates, except for math, which is so sequential that we had to stay in order. We could not really coordinate that. This means we skip around a lot in all the books. When we are doing plants, we are doing plants in every area. That works out well. We have a yearly plan. I can turn to my, turn the page in my plan book and here it says, spelling unit, reading story, science lesson.... that really helps. Then I just have to flesh it out. There is always gathering and organizing. I get my stuff organized and then form my plans. I write very detailed plans with an objective. There is usually a delivery of a concept and an activity that goes with

it. The maintaining of that and what do you do with these products when they are done, getting that organized and keeping things for conferences and sending other things home. Then you start all over again. I cannot wing it. I could not come in like a substitute and wing it. I have to know exactly what I am doing the entire week, the week before so I can see what problems I might be having. I can try to get those problems taken care of before we get there. I have always admired teachers that they can walk in right when the bell is ringing. I could never do it.”

Some prepare lesson plans the weekend before. “I do weekly lesson plans and I always know what I am going to do. Whether it gets done, I do not know. Sometimes if I have something planned for outside and the weather does not cooperate, then we change it. I am pretty flexible. Like yesterday, we did pictures all day so we ran it on my schedule. I took every class to have their picture made, 21 classes. I spend Friday nights and Saturday mornings working on lesson plans. Sunday, all afternoon, is generally grading. Every night after I get out of my classroom to go home, I am generally organizing or preparing something for the next day. I work around the clock. That is pretty much how I do it. I get a lot of slack from my husband. It does not pay enough for the number of hours I put into it. My lesson plans usually happen on Sunday night, the physical writing them down. I know some people do them two weeks ahead or a week ahead, but that fits in with that flexibility. I have learned that if I do it too far ahead, too many things change, and then you have to rewrite them or change so much. For me it works better not to actually write them down, or write them in, until almost the last minute, right before they are due just so I do not have to do too many changes. I do not actually write anything down until close to before I am teaching the class and sometimes, not even until I have the idea. I might write a couple of notes and then I try it and then I see how it worked. Usually the first time it is not very good. The idea is there and you say they got this and I need to make a connection to where they are. I need to do a better job of that. I sort of write up a formal lesson plan. You just build on it every year.”

One of those procedural things that we are not happy with. Teachers *perform student assessments* to identify where a student’s skills lay. “I love working on

curriculum and changing that to meet the needs of the kids. Right now I am assessing and ten out of the fourteen that I have done know all their capital letters and they are in kindergarten. What is that telling me? If I am doing letter of the week, I am hurting the kids.... it is silly. I have to look at who I have. I also know that I have someone who does not know but two. Out of the four that do not know all of them, someone only knows two. It is very frustrating and I am pulling my hair out. I am trying to assess them one on one and still you cannot obviously teach and assess at the same time. Teaching and getting them prepared enough to where they can do some independent work while you are trying to individually test, that is one of the biggest frustrations to me. My team and I are trying to figure out ways, we are all basically willing to pay for a sub to come in and do this because it is very frustrating on our parts. Obviously, if we are feeling like that, that is going to come through to the kids a little bit. We try hard not to, but we are juggling with that one. It is one of those procedural things that we are not happy with and have not got it down. Even the ones of us who have taught for 20 years are trying to come up with a plan. We play off each other. ‘How are you doing it? How is that working? Does that work?’ We are trying to bring in parents, just another body in here to help supervise, not teach, but do those administrative things, that helps us. I have to know ahead of time what is available to help get that person caught up, ‘what kinds of things do I need to do for him to get him to where he is successful?’ I know we have mid-year assessments coming up that the state has us do. I know what is on there and I know I need to work on those things or he is not going to feel successful when he has to sit down and it will be a struggle as we both catch up.”

I had kids with four letter names and they could not write them. Some teachers take into account each student’s performance level or *student differentiation*, and often develop individualized lesson plans. “In my classroom, I do a lot of differentiation, which means you do not just have one lesson plan, you have numerous lesson plans that you are working with because it depends on the student and their individual needs. The difficulty comes in planning for all the different levels in the classroom. I know that grouping is out and I know that ability grouping and tracking are like bad words. It is

difficult for one of me to plan for twenty of them. I do the best I can. I have the GT class and so when we do a math worksheet, they get the enrichment page, which means I need five copies in this book. Then I have the little low ones and they give me re-teaching, which means I need four copies of this book. The logistics of that are difficult. Last year, I had kids with four letter names and they could not write them. I had kids who were reading almost on a first grade level, a wide range. I had a child who could not remember the A, B, Cs. Even though we went over them daily, she could not remember what the letter looked like, what the letter sound was. Dealing with a low range to a high range with 20 kids, that is just impossible, without an aide. In order to effectively serve every child in the classroom, you are essentially providing twenty different lesson plans, twenty different behavior plans, 20 different life skill plans. Logistically that could not be completed in two thirty-minute segments of your day. We are also addressing special education needs, which are becoming more and more, what they are talking about now is we are going to give the TAKs to special ed, everybody left behind, nobody left behind, kind of thing. It is dealing with the different ability levels with the kids. You have the ones who can work independently all day long and the ones that cannot put their name on their paper without you coming to show them where and how to spell their own name that they have been writing since kindergarten. You have the ones that would rather be playing with their scissors than reading a book. Logistics, there is just so much to get all arranged to get it just right. I think the overall planning: I can do that. It is the individual planning that is tricky. If I had a group where we were all flowing along generally in the same direction, it would be a lot easier. The logistics of the classroom are that in order to serve everyone's needs and you are in a classroom of 20 with reading ranges from pre-primer to 8.1, this is third grade. I take them all home and just research through it and figure out 'where do I need to go and what do I need to do?' You have got such a wide range of students that you have to cover so many different things. You have to be prepared for everything. After years of teaching, I am getting better at being organized at that. It has taken awhile, but you get better at figuring it out."

It is always fun when the kids come in and they are in awe. Teachers spend a great deal of time *setting up the classroom*. “I enjoy coming in during the summer and working in my room. It is peaceful in here and finding new ways to arrange my room so kids are not getting clobbered trying to get to their cubby, less space for running. We have gotten it down to where there are no running feet in the building. Sometimes they get that urge to go and we talk about too many sharp edges, just walk. It is always fun when the kids come in and they are in awe, like, this is my room. They come in and go into library center and they are happy sitting there reading a book. It is fun in the beginning. It is always fun to have the room fill up with kids. You think you have done enough, but you always find something at the last minute that you have not done. I am a new teacher at this school. I had already set up a classroom this year over at a different school, and they needed to move somebody, so I got the lucky prize. I got to come over here and teach second after teaching fourth the last five years. I have been working all weekend long, from Friday. I was not off on Friday. I had to teach my class. The other teachers were over here getting their classrooms set up, but I was teaching in my classroom and I was to be all packed up by 3 that day. I found out Thursday night that I would be moving. I have just been working around the clock. I worked all Saturday and all Sunday and I am just trying to get it all set and ready so I can be better organized. That is just the way it is. That probably depends on personalities and I am a planner. I love to sit and, even in the summer, not formally, but sit and think, ‘what should I change up this year that might make it better?’ What would fit the needs that I am seeing in some of the kids? What would work better? It is always problem solving. For example, when we moved in here, see there is the coat rack. That thing drove me nuts because little kindergarten kids reaching up there, some of them cannot even reach to hang the hanger. Whoever designed the school does not put a lot of thought into that. They are all crammed into that one little space. This room, because of the windows, it is configured a little bit differently. My husband does woodworking and we made those cubbies. It works like a charm. It disburses them out into the room so they are not all jammed up in one place trying to hang that up. That solved that problem.”

I am not prepared; my day is ruined. Teachers have to be *prepared* before they can begin to teach. “I think you realize that very quickly after becoming a teacher that the percentage of time that you spend actually teaching is so small because all the other duties and the things you are doing in preparation for your class. In order to get to teach, you have to take care of all of the other needs from their breakfast to being sent to school with a high temperature. All of those needs have to be addressed before you can ever get to teach. There is a great amount of preparation and it is daily, yearly. Even when we are off in the summer, we are still thinking about ‘what can I do to make my classroom better and how can I better meet the needs of my students?’ We are constantly thinking about that. Sometimes just the thought in your head, following through the lesson mentally. I think newer teachers in the beginning have to do that a lot more than I have to necessarily do now. With new things, I still have to do it. It is not; you do not have to do it anymore at all, once you have taught five years, you do not do that. It just depends on the new material coming into you. I do a lot of thinking just during the day. I mean during the day after school, when I am off, just thinking, and the weekend, thinking about what I want to teach and what is important. It starts with the planning and having that time to plan. They give us more to do and less time to do it. You have to plan it, then you have to gather the materials, then you have to make sure the kids are arranged in cooperative groups. You have to encourage cooperation no matter who you are, whom they are with. I do not like them to say, ‘I just cannot work with him. Well, then I am going to put you all together.’ We have a big science thing Monday and Tuesday and I am going to look at personalities and see. I have got to plan. There is always something. You might need to run off a copy and the copy machine is down or there are five people ahead of you. Being prepared is one of the most important things that will make your job a lot easier. It will help you be, make things more manageable. Being prepared is very important. If you are teaching and you have everything you need and you need to put little sticky notes on it and say, this is for Monday, this is for Tuesday. It will help you tremendously because you would not waste any time from your teaching and their learning. Does that happen all the time? No. Not even the best-prepared teachers are always prepared. I like

to be prepared because if I am not prepared, my day is ruined. I try and am prepared. This is one of the hardest things teachers have to do that they do not teach in college, is being prepared. It all starts with doing your lesson plans, making sure you know what you are teaching for the week. I guess that is what makes a good teacher. I guess I wish I were better at that than I am. I feel like I am probably better in the classroom than I am preparing for it. Once you get the preparedness down, you want to have some management plan for your kids, making sure they know the rules, and they know how to sit in class and things go smoothly so you can just teach the lesson. For instance, I have signals I use so I do not interrupt the lesson. If you want to use the bathroom, you just hold up two fingers; want to trade your pencil, just hold up your pencil; and want to get water, just hold up three fingers. Instead of calling out and asking me, ‘can I go to the bathroom?’ Those three things, which happen all the time, do not interrupt a lesson. I wish I knew this my first or second year of teaching. This comes with the territory, you learn as you go.”

I have to go out and buy these things for myself. Teachers must *gather materials and supplies* before class. “After you plan your lessons, you have to get your materials and supplies that you need. Do I have to make any copies? Do I have to make sure there are any extra supplies, markers, rulers, and construction paper, whatever? I have got a plethora of files and folders and books and things back in my little closet and I gather information for it. Making sure they have their supplies. Right now, we are short on textbooks. It is the end of the third week of school and some kids still do not have certain textbooks. It is dealing with the children who do not have the books so they will have what they need to do certain assignments. There is the running off of things. We do not have a materials person anymore, so that has fallen onto us. I, smartly thinking, ran my stuff off last year for this year. This year, what I am running is for next year. In language arts I use two different little books that have to be run off, cut, and stapled. Those are done and now I am running and sending them home with parents. That was frustrating at times, too, because you really do not have materials for that. I was off on my own and scrambling to get things. That was probably the most frustrating aspect of

teaching that I had to deal with, not having materials ready. I wanted my class to be hands-on, but I do not get the items that I need to have a hands-on classroom. Science, I have nothing. I do not know where to go to get them, like even weights and measurements and scales. I do not have anything that is hands-on. I do not have any of the visual. Everything is from the textbook, which can get very boring. Just like same old thing over and over again. I cannot do all of it myself because it is a lot, like three, four subjects and everything is hands-on. It gets expensive. I have to go out and buy these things for myself. I do not know where to go to get them. I had to go out and buy everything and I cannot afford everything to be hands-on.”

My goal this year has been to leave before 7. Teachers stay *late* and often come in early to class. “I think once you become a teacher, the only time you have off is those two months, but you make up for it in the hours after school that you cannot stop thinking about it. It takes a lot of work but I really do not mind. I do not know if I am crazy or what. I do not mind staying after school to laminate the papers and cut out the little tags or whatever. I get here earlier and earlier every morning. There are a few teachers that we are here about 6:30 in the morning. I have to have everything, the room does not look organized but I have to be extremely organized. I do not want to take stuff home. I do not think school should go home. I stay late so I can grade papers. I guess the older I get, the slower I get. I do not know. I spend more hours at school than I ever did. My goal this year has been to leave before 7 and to only come up one day on the weekend and not both. Those types of things do not come anymore at 10 at night, to set out or write the procedures or the daily routine on the board because you forgot to do that. A lot of it is the expectation that they want these third graders to be able to perform at the end of the year. As far as I can tell these are the same little kids I started with years ago. They have not changed but the level that they expect them to perform at just continues to get higher and higher. Something has to give and I guess it is me. I just spend more and more time here.”

The ones that would be involved, their kids are great. Teachers must *deal with parents* and are often successful. “I see my parents as my greatest resource. They know

the children best. I communicate a lot with my parents. I have an open door policy. I invite them to come in and see how our classroom is. I have a parent feedback page that I keep in the children's take home folder so they can discuss things with me that way. Then we have voicemail. I think it is really, really important to communicate with the parents and stay on top of things and not just call them when things are bad but also call to brag on their child too. Before September is over, we will have had orientation, first registration. That is the first contact with the school; they have not met the teachers yet. Then we have orientation one night, one evening for about an hour. I will have a Saturday meeting September 6th, on a Saturday. I have done this for years, where they come without their children. No children allowed. In those two hours, they will get to meet other parents in the class. They get to ask me all kinds of questions. I get to present how I do the curriculum, what I expect from the kids, how we set goals, and why they do not have work coming home all the time. I collect it in a portfolio. You will see some things but a lot of it you will need to come up to school and look into their portfolio to get that information. They get all that information, I spend this time assessing the students, and then the third week in September, parent conferences start. I will make it a goal to conference with every single parent. Some of those are thirty minutes long and some are an hour or so. I try to make it convenient for them. By the end of that time there is so much trust built up that things go very smoothly, sometimes so smoothly that I wish they would ask a few more questions about what is going on so they know a little more. It is all about trust. The kids trusting, I love you, I respect you. I expect the same in return. At the beginning of the year, I send home a survey, which can help at home, asking who can help with fieldtrips. I use that as my little database as to who can help me with different things. Things that I need traced go home with a pattern. I give them a good amount of dates. That takes planning on me but in the long run, they are helping me get that stuff done."

Some parents are more difficult to work with. "The parents can either make it or break it. As a result I have gotten to where I shy away from the parents. I just try to handle things on my own and not get them involved. The ones that I need to be involved

are the ones that would not be. The ones that would be involved, their kids are great because they are involved. I do not need to call them because they have already done that side of their job. The parents seem to be, for lack of a better word, I will say guilty. I think parents are guilty and I think guilt makes them react or overreact in different ways. They hear part of the news and they hear this about a teacher or school not doing something. Then it makes them go, oh, I can go up there and tell them. I think it is just a snowball, but I really do not have too many problems with that sort of thing; it just kind of goes on and on. I think this reward thing is a big deal now and I think it is not good. If you have a parent problem, then you have to go back to your administrator and they may not have time. It is not an easy thing. It is not a one-person deal. You are dealing with all the different personalities of children and parents and teams. You cannot go to your little cubicle. I am not saying their jobs are easy. I love what I do. Put me in an office setting would be like hanging me by my toenails. Dealing with parents who wonder why you do what you do, as far as the homework goes, I had that issue. Once I sat with the parent and said, here are what we, as kindergarten teachers, need to do. This is my yearly plan. I do have a yearly plan for each nine weeks through math, social studies, and language arts and science. What I am doing each week through report card assessments that match that. Once I sat with them, and I had administration behind me, for both of those big things. Just knowing that makes me feel better. We are expected to have the kids reading by the time they go on because of all the TAKs stuff. We are teaching to kids who do not understand or do not have a clue because of home life. We are dealing with home life. You cannot teach when they have excess baggage. Outside the building, I am not happy with it.”

Classroom Climate

Teachers try to create a secure, safe, and caring classroom. Students are encouraged to be self-sufficient. Humor is used as a tool for classroom climate. Some teachers use rules, but try not to be authoritative.

They have already judged how it is going to be just based on how the classroom looks. The *classroom* itself sets the environment. “The classroom, I think, makes your day. It sets the stage for everything. When your kids enter the classroom, they have already judged how it is going to be just based on how the classroom looks, how it smells, how it sounds. Is there music playing? Is my teacher there greeting me at the door? Does she have a smile on her face? Does she look presentable? All of that makes a difference in instruction and whether they are going to listen to you or not, whether they are more apt to be excited about the instruction. The climate of the classroom plays a big part in that. Classroom climate, bright and colorful, clearly labeled centers. There is a purpose for what we do here at math. Things are usually pretty organized. The principal was in my doorway today and it was 8:30 and we were just putting up folders. I looked at her, she had her little notebook, and I knew she was thinking just, why are they now putting up their folders. They are not ready for the day and it is been forty minutes later. I said, ‘Oh, we had been learning about pencil position,’ and she just smiled. I was trying to cover myself. I have recently gone to a lot of champ training, which is basically just to me a lot of common sense of room arrangement. Set up your rooms so that your kids do not run. Instead of saying, do not run all the time, set it up to where there are spaces where there are not big huge spaces for them to run. The physical environment is important and it will set guidelines for the children. These first few weeks of school are very important for setting expectations and guidelines of how much talking is necessary at certain times and the level at different times changes.”

We are one big family under the same big sky. Teachers try to establish a *secure* environment. “I try to establish a warm, inviting classroom environment. I think my students quickly find out that I am an okay person and they can, they enjoy working with me and I enjoy working with them. I just like a classroom that has a lot of respect in it, where everybody treats each other like they would like to be treated and we work together. We are one big family under the same big sky and that is the kind of classroom climate that I like. You want it to be an open climate where they feel comfortable where

they feel like they can take risks and answer questions and miss them and that is okay. They need to be able to make mistakes and that is okay, yet then you have to keep the behavior part under control. I like that one on one because they need to know that when they walk in my room they are mine, that they are special. Even if they are not having it at home, I am trying to cover that here at school. They are happy to come to school. You know you want kids to feel comfortable, but yet you want them to feel structured. It is not as relaxed as it is at home, but yet it should not be as formal as you are sitting, maybe, in church or at a wedding or something where you have to be stiff and quiet. Getting that all balanced with all their personalities and all their little unique quirks and then each of our moods each day. I taught kindergarten and I am just a big loving person and I hug. This is also sort of a security thing, but when I did teach kindergarten, I taught in East Austin with more of the minority. The kids knew that they could not leave until they got a hug. They had to hug me as the person who was picking them up, picked them up. They would have to hug me and say, 'there is my brother' or 'there is my sister.' Of course, they liked the hug, but it was my way of not letting somebody take off without me seeing them. I try to come in every day in a good mood, which is hard. There are a lot of things going on in your own personal life. You try to leave it at the door. I try to tell my kids too, I know there are things going on, try and leave that stuff at home at the door. When you come in here, we'll just focus on school and have a good time. Not every day you can do that."

Someone loves them as much as I love my children. Teachers try to establish a *safe* environment. "You cannot save them all so you have to treat them all, I want to say the same, because there are, you cannot treat them the same. They have to think that you are treating everybody the same. While I might go and say something to one child that I would not have said to another; or give this child extra time even though they did not get their homework in; not make them change their tag, while this one has had to change his tag, because I know that one's home life. I do not feel like they can know that I am treating anybody differently. Every child is different, especially with 20 kids and they all have different experiences and different things. It is all different for them. I do not favor

any one more than the other, but it is different with every child. We are all different and that is just how it has to be. It is not this cookie cutter, this is it. Which is hard because sometimes-different rules apply to different students differently. I try to be as fair as I can. Like if the whole class is being bad except for two students, the ones that never, not never, but are quiet and do not do anything. I will be like, that is 30 seconds for everybody except for so and so. The kids will be like, how come? I will say: did you see them do anything, acting silly or whatever? They are like, no. I pick up on kids who are mean or just thrive on little mean things that they say. I am sure all classrooms have it, but I do not think you can force a kid to be nice. Kids maybe do not share as much as you would like them to because they are a little worried about what somebody will say to them. It is part of trying to set up that classroom climate for them to do that. I want the kids in here to have fun. I want them to learn also. I want them to learn their manners. It is part of the social. We work a lot on that. I do not want kids getting hurt either, especially kids getting hit. I try to keep it safe in here. I want the kids to have fun, but I also want them to learn. Having children of my own helped me become more nurturing. I think some people are just naturally nurturing and I do not think I was. Being a mom made a huge difference for me by looking at everyone of these children as someone's baby. Someone loves them as much as I love my children. I hope they all have that. Overall, we have a very happy, positive classroom environment. The children respond well to me. They seem to like me. Overall, I like them, most days. It is very even tempered."

They like to feel important so I do a lot of high fives. Teachers try to build a *caring* environment. "I felt like I was the bad guy all the time. They came to me looking for help. That is when I really felt like I did the grill and drill or drill and grill. It is like I had 30 minutes or 45 minutes or an hour, and it was get in there, do what I had to do, and get out. There was bonding, you always bond with kids, but it was not the bonding that you have when you are with the regular classroom. That is why I wanted back in a classroom with kids. I just like to be like one of the kids. A lot of stuff they like to do I will be interested in. They like to feel important so I do a lot of high fives, talk about

things that they like to hear about, you knows. I have always had a real good climate with my kids. This year they jump to help. They are very, very, very caring, very loving. I did not like going to school and I had teachers that were boring, teachers that were mean, or teachers that were pretty much cold and had no personality. The teachers that I remember their name, all these years later and I remember actual things that we did, are the teachers who actually felt like you were part of their world. They treated you nice and they actually really genuinely cared about you. It is just fun and stressful at times, when someone is having a problem emotionally, behaviorally. For the most part it is a good relationship, one of trust. That from parents trusting, building a lot of that. And that does go, it all jives together. I know it has changed over my years of teaching. I think I relate to the kids so much better now than I used to.”

There are people out there who try to squash you, do not let them. Teachers try to build an environment of *self-sufficiency*. “I think the biggest thing right now is creating a love of learning and making them want to come to school. I think this is their first experience in school and so this is going to decide whether they want to go for higher education. I feel like those attitudes are developed right now. I feel like we do not want it wild and we often talk about the difference between being wild and having fun. I think the most important thing is to get them the information. Especially at the age I am working with, primary school, is to get them to see the importance of learning, to see how it fits into their everyday life, and how it can help with the arts, enhance the quality of their life. I guess what I do sometimes is I talk, talk about what is courage and what, and taking a risk is hard. I talk a little bit about caring. Caring takes courage. A lot of times I am saying that trying to get something into these kids who obviously walk around with an attitude of ‘Hey, I do not care.’ The kids call it cool, and cool a lot of times means you do not care. I probably should focus more on the kids. There are people out there who try to squash you, do not let them. I probably talk too much on the other kids not to be so mean. I am real big on the children are in control and not me. I will say to them, I am so sorry that you chose to, you are going to need to change your tag because you chose to. I put everything that I can goes back on them. Instead of them all coming up to

me, having them ask three before they ask me. I will say, 'Did you ask three friends?' Or I will give them a hint and say, 'You know, Claire just asked me that question and now she is an expert with that answer, go ask her.' You will see me sometimes over at the teacher table with small groups while the other children are self-sufficient here. A researcher came and observed. She was amazed that the kids were so self-sufficient. We do not work a center for 15 minutes, ding, the bell goes off and you move. Children do things differently, different rates. Some need more time. In my classroom when it is center time, they can be working. I will tell a student that you need to go to the restroom and come back. They are really self-sufficient. That starts from day one. I introduce just a few centers. We go there, we practice. This is what it looks like. This is what you do here. This is what you do when you are done. Then I introduce more and then by the end of the week or this, this year we had three days so actually the end of the next week, all the centers are going and there is little apples on blocks. There is nothing here because they did not have to go to this one. There is a little block with an apple on it and it says required center. If it is an apple center, they have to go to it. They can quickly go, okay, I have to go to writing and I do not have to go to math. I better go get the ones I have to do."

They see me laugh and act crazy with them. Teachers use *humor* to create a positive environment. "I try, and am, funny with the kids, joke with the kids, try and make learning fun but at the same time they know that I am serious and I am pretty strict and there is time to have fun and time to be funny and there is a time to get their work done. I joke around with my kids sometimes. Sometimes I think they get my jokes, sometimes they do not. I do not want them to fear me. I do not want them to be afraid of me. If they have questions or do not understand something, I want them to be able to come and ask me for help. I try to make them laugh. I try to make this the best part of their day. I think they see me as a real person, hopefully. I am a big person, but I do not think any of them are intimidated by me. Maybe in the beginning, but they see me laugh and act crazy with them. I use a lot of humor. I do, instead of scolding the kids, I try to take a positive spin, not a positive spin on something they have done bad, but I try to turn

it into something humorous, like, sitting there like a prune face or we have got to be happy. Whatever you come into the room with, leave it out there; we are going to be happy in here. I try to do a lot of humor. I do feel like having fun is a very important part of the classroom. I try to have fun with them and make it interesting. I try to be on so they are paying attention and they are learning and they are also enjoying it. That is what makes teaching fun, talking with kids, teasing kids. Sometimes I probably tease more than I should. Teasing kids and playing with kids and then I guess interactions can also be negative where you run into kids' problems and attitudes that kids have. Sometimes they are having fun and they do not even realize they are learning something. You ask them the questions and they know or they say something, the other day this girl said she did not know. She could not make a sculpture and she found out that she was really good at making sculptures. That is just what I think to make it good, to make it fun. I play music for them on Friday's. I let them bring CDs. I feel that music is the international language. You will see a kid thinking, I do not even like this kid and they will see them bust a move out there and they go, okay. I think it brings everybody together in a positive way. You have to have discipline and you have to have rules and at the same time you want them to feel good and feel safe and, but you want them to have fun. I think my kids have fun in my room."

I do have to be strict and I guess they fear me. *Rules* contribute to the classroom climate. "I run a tight ship. I have a discipline plan. There are rules. There are consequences. There are rewards. If they have an infraction of that plan they get a shape. There is a leaping Froggy and that is when they have their hands on someone else or skipping when they are supposed to be walking. That provides them with a visual. One student, he was sitting down singing and we had other kids hopping. I said I like how you are sitting that is exactly what I need you to do. He earned a star. I am also not a quick tag changer. I am not in control. They are in control. I am not a change your tag, sort of person. I have what I call, private offices. They all have a private office and if they need extra control, I try the private office first. That generally works because that gives them their own little workspace. If that still does not help them, I change their tag.

I feel like I have a pretty good relationship with the students. I am hard on the students. I am not all over them but I expect a lot from them. I guess that is why I spend so much time the first part of the year getting them trained in what I want so I know they know what to expect from me also. They have to know what I want and I have to be able to know what is going to happen to them. Once in a while, I do have to be strict and I guess they fear me, but I do not have that authoritative relationship. That works in some classrooms, but for me I just do not like that, I am the superior. I value them and share what they have. It is not like, this is my classroom, you do what I say, if not, it will not work. I have a few behavior issues that we are working out and it will work out and it will be done.”

My atmosphere is a little bit lax. Some teachers do not want to be *authoritative*. “I am not structured where you cannot talk. I talk and I tell the kids that I talked when I was in elementary school. I spent a lot of years in corners of the room. I cannot expect you to sit there and not talk, that goes against my grain. I cannot sit there and not talk. I have to be talking to you all while you are sitting. My atmosphere is a little bit lax. Not lax, it is enjoyable. Obviously, my personality stays basically the same but the make-up of the class changes dramatically from year to year, of who is in your class and the levels of your class and the needs of your class. If you have really needy children, you just put that tighter reign on things and really draw in the rope. As they mature, even from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, you let out a little bit more and give them a little bit more freedom, but with that comes the responsibility and if they cannot handle it, then you pull it back in. I do not yell, ever. I never have once yelled at a class. I have raised my voice, ‘Boys and girls, why is there so much noise in here?’ But I have never.... like I hear my colleagues. I can honestly say that I have never yelled. That would not be me. That would not be my personality. I will say, ‘I am going to pause here while I wait for table two. Thank you, table two. We are going to continue.’ Things like that. We are quiet when we need to. There is a time we need to be quiet and there is a time you can talk. You cannot expect kids to close their mouth all day long and not say a word. You just have to realize that it is okay to be human. It is okay to talk. It

is okay to be a kid. When it is time to work, it is time to work. That is something we are really working on right now.”

Emotions

Teachers experience the full spectrum of emotions from joy and happiness to heartbreak. They have nurturing feelings and feelings associated with disciplining students. Teaching can be draining and frustrating.

Your emotions are constantly out of whack. Teachers’ emotions run the *spectrum*. “It is a very rewarding job. I mean I think that teachers, if you do not feel like it is rewarding, it is not for you. Those are the burnout teachers and the teachers that do not last because certainly the other benefits are not there. I just feel like it is a calling. I think teaching is a calling. It has to be in your heart. This has to be something that you just love doing to be an effective teacher. It is going to show up in everything if you do not enjoy doing this or you do not love doing it. If you are in it for the wrong reasons, like to get a paycheck that is not going to satisfy you. During the course of a day a teacher can go through many emotions. Yahoo, the day is started. I pat everybody on the back so we all start off with a pat on the back coming in the door. In one hour you can have all the emotions in just one-hour period of time. That is the roller coaster part; your emotions are constantly out of whack, up and down. That comes with the territory, I guess, you have to be prepared for that. Like today is the anniversary of the World Trade Center thing. We read a story and it was hard not to get sentimental. There was a time we were reading a book and I thought: I am going to start crying all the sudden. I did not thank God. I would say you feel overwhelmed sometimes. There are positive emotions. I always feel like I have a pretty good bond; I always like my kids. It is just that celebration of what people do and sometimes the sadness cannot be changed. It is a rewarding job. I think that is why so many people get sucked into it because it is not that we get paid a lot. You start off with just wanting to get everything organized and done, but then these little people come in your room and they each have their own little

personalities. They each have their own needs. There are the ones that you just want to drop kick out the door and then there are those that you want to put in your back pocket and take home and raise them right because they are being raised wrong. And you cannot do that. Some of them make me angry, very angry. Some of them make me want to cry. Some of them make me giggle. Some of them get my jokes. Some of them do not. I tend to say a joke and then not smile. I just, you know, I just like say something funny and move on. Some of them catch it and they will giggle and some of them do not. They are all so different. The kids, too, they are happy one minute, mad the next, maybe they did not get a long enough recess, they do not want to do this assignment. They do not want to write that many sentences or something. So their emotions are going up and down. Your emotions are going up and down. Putting it all together and making it work, that is the magic of it. You need to know when your kids are stressed. You need to know when they are not too happy and when you have been a little bit too hard on them and maybe need to lighten up. You have got to fluctuate and change the way the emotions are going in your class. Hopefully, by the end of the day everyone is happy and goes home happy and ready to come back the next day.”

You are just like, yeah! Teachers express feelings of *joy and happiness*. “It is hard to explain how you feel, when you get the student at the beginning of the year and you know where they started and you see them with each milestone and each benchmark that they meet and overcome, it is just, it is amazing. To me it is just really, really hard to put a word to that. I just think that the exciting moments and the happy moments far outweigh the bad, the stressful. I can give you a first day example of a little boy who said, ‘This has been the best day. I cannot wait to get home to tell my mom that I had the nicest teacher.’ Saying it can bring tears to my eyes now. This morning I balled because they all sang, God Bless the USA and they did these little hand movements and they had their arms around each other, and the firemen were there, and the policemen were there, and the children were singing, and that makes me cry. You can be very happy because your students are all on task and everyone is doing what you are expecting and they actually got the lesson that you wanted to teach. If they see your excitement in learning,

then they are going to be more excited about learning. There are joyous feelings of accomplishment and happiness when that little light bulb clicks. The joys of seeing someone overcome something. You have a student who has not turned in their work and they are just really struggling with that and then all the sudden they start turning it in and you just see that little face light up with, 'I have three days in a row with no late papers.' You are just like, 'Yeah!' It feels so good to you too because you know how good they are feeling about that. Of course, there are a whole bunch of exciting, happy moments and then just a lot of moments where you feel like you've been confirmed because you see the results of what you have taught them in their work and how they grow. They see there is happy times with you, like when you are reading a book with them and when you are interacting with them about various subjects or something, class discussion on something. I think they need to understand you are happy and are positive, and that is the way you need to present yourself and when you have a contrary student in your classroom, you certainly do not let them notice one bit that they have pushed a button. Then you will have a real problem on your hand."

If you take these kids, are you going to take them home every night?

Teachers express *nurturing* feelings. "I fall in love with so many of the kids, all my kids. It is nice to see them in fourth grade and I will see them walk by. Looking back, they were not quite as bad, in hindsight. They look so much sweeter in the hall when you just wave to them. I really do bond with my kids and I love them so much. I feel like I am their mom. By the end of the year, I feel like they are all, like I have 20 more children on top of my own. I care about them and they matter, and where they go in the world matters. They just become, they become more important to you the more you get to know them and invest your time and effort in them. I cannot say it is always draining. I take my job and I take my kids very seriously. My mother was very concerned. I am single. I have been single for 19 years. My mother said, 'If you take these kids, are you going to take them home every night?' I have really tried not to. What I learned in teaching kindergarten was that I could not solve it. I could not go home. There is a lot more than just teaching. I am much attached and I do not think a lot of teachers are that

attached. Maybe that is a downfall. Maybe I am too attached. You get emotionally involved with the kids and you want them to have the best. Like when they leave me and go to another area, like PE, I want to know that they are getting the very best in Art. I love playing with the kids. Running around and laughing. You know they are having a good time and that is what makes you feel good. I will go to the HEB and I will hear kids yelling my name and you will turn around and there are kids waving at you. It is good hearing the little voices yell at you, and walking down the hall they will talk to you. It is all worthwhile. The most rewarding thing for me is when they feel comfortable enough to, and know the appropriate time to, kind of play around and joke or they feel comfortable enough to raise their hand and answer something they are not real sure about and know that I'm not going to make them feel bad if they say the incorrect answer. But I tell them that it is not always about saying the right answer, it is just trying. I am very touchy, feely. I always want to hug them and stuff. Some kids have that; they do not like to be touched. I know immediately, at the beginning of school, as soon as I touch them, some of them will do like this. But it always makes me feel so good they are not, they have not been brought up that way, which is fine. But they want to stand real close to me. I do get real emotional. Maybe that is bad. That is the way I have been always. It also can be sad at times when a kid leaves. I am always heart broken. Nobody can teach them as great as I can. And I know they can, but I have already got this great relationship with them and now, I have to lose it and it could be forever. That is difficult, especially in a mobile school.”

It kills me and it makes me want to cry all the time when he acts up.

Teachers feel *heartbreak* for some of their students. “Some of these kids go home to homes where they are not very cared about. They are not prioritized, they are not as treasured and cherished as children should all be by their parents. Of all people, their parents should put them up on a pedestal all the time. Expect things from them, but if your parents do not love and adore you and treasure you, then that is the sad part. Those are the ones you just want to take home. I would not be a perfect parent, but I would love you at least. That side is hard. I remember thinking that after a couple of years of

teaching, I cannot change their home lives. I cannot fix that. That is that and I just have to make it as secure and stable here, while they are here at least. You have kids come in that have come from difficult backgrounds. You have to be able to understand those kids. I grew up and always had a roof over my head, always had three meals a day. Not that I got everything that I wanted, but I never really wanted for anything. You see these little guys come in and you think, man, how do these little guys do it. I had some kids, one was 11 and one was 9, and they were pretty much raising themselves. How do you know to do it? You cannot really get mad at them for their behavior and stuff. They do not know. That is where the emotions come in. It is hard seeing those little guys come in. Then you have some kids that have a good family and they come in and they are just holy terrors. The feeling there changes. I know that person, that little guy knows how to behave, but he does not, he chooses not to. It is hard to have sympathy for him that it would for someone else. This behavior problem I am having now, a child is stealing. I know his home-life is not very good at all. I had a conference with Mom yesterday and found out a few things that I thought were there, and I hoped they were not there. Them not having a good home life frustrates me, that he is acting this way, being aggressive to others, and stealing things, the not respecting. If he is not getting respect at home, he is not getting it here, or going to give it here. It kills me and it makes me want to cry all the time when he acts up. I do not want to get on him, yet he needs to have that support. At home I can, and nobody cares about me, but when she comes in she cares about me because she tells me no, even though they do not like the word no, I cannot do that. I think they like that. Then you have got the parents that either listen to the kids and do not listen to the teachers and the administration, what is going on in school. Then you have emotional problems there.”

“You see the heartbreak things every day. A little girl told me the other day she did not like people of color. She announced that in her classroom, and then they came down, they had to do something with the group in PE and these girls said, ‘We are not going to be with her, she does not like us; we are not the right color. She already made that clear.’ So we had to talk about that and, then the same little girl tells me, ‘Well, my

dad drinks too much beer.’ I said, ‘Well, but your dad is not here. If he is the one that makes you believe these sorts of things, then, I am not saying it is right or it is wrong, but you cannot express that here.’ She is in third grade. You see heartbreak stories all the time. We had this one child here, he had a big sore on his mouth, and this is the end of the fourth week today. He is already moved. He came to school the first day on the bus with no backpack, no nothing, and slip on shoes. You knew he was fresh meat. Somebody was going to eat him alive being a new kid here with this thing on his face.”

“Today being September 11th, I have heard some pretty amazing stories from this class, you know, fathers that died and separations. The emotions are high today. They are just sharing everything. The counselor does a lunch group and it has children needing something. Right now I have a lot, after today’s conversations. If they need that then we are going to get them what they need. The sadness of somebody who is lost. I have had students lose everyone from a parent to a sibling to pets, and the sadness of dealing with that and trying to help them with their emotions. A lot of times it is just warm meals and a hug and security that they need. That to me is very emotional. When I taught kindergarten, a lot of those kids had slept on the front porch the night before. They only got two hot meals a day and that is when they came to school. Thank goodness I had a principal and an assistant principal that understood that sometimes all they needed was a warm lap to sit in. They learned. These kids, they do not come from anything and most of them dress themselves, and their parents do not work, but they do not get up to see them off. It is a survivorship I think more than anything else with them. Some of the things they do and say that you find out about in their life that is sad, where you really know you can make a difference because if they do not have much in their home life, you realize how much time you have them up here, what an impact you can have. If you really feel that you can make a difference and that every child can learn no matter what their home life, no matter what they are coming in with, and you are excited and you instill that excitement and that, I cannot think of the word, where you are in awe of all there is to learn. I tell them that too, I learned something new.”

It is an exhausting job. Being a teacher can be *draining*. “Someone says that and you have been up the night before until midnight putting out the desk tags and getting ready for that day and you are so tired, it is all worth it. Everything is worth it. Because of all the time that goes into preparation and such, that is not even talking about dealing the parent end of it and conferencing and obviously, if kids are having trouble, you spend more time with that parent, conferencing and talking to them. We try to send out the positive postcards, you know, once a month or whatever as well, but I think emotions that come with teaching to me most are, and they are all over the place, it is an exhausting job. Even though at the end of the day, of course, I am tired and you get drained because it takes a lot of energy out of you if you are really, to me, if you are really doing what you are supposed to do every day. When I leave, I know it is worth it. It is worth it to me because you are able to touch that life and make a difference, and then help instill a foundation in a child. I was thinking back to last year and I had that bi-polar child. I felt like he was sucking everything out of me that I had because I could not keep the class going with a child like that. He was a runner and not only would he throw things in here, when he went out the door he was gone. I stood in front of the door, which I was told to do, and got my shins kicked very, very badly. I mean it literally brought tears to my eyes. It hurt. It hurt my heart that I was not able to work with him and get through to him. It hurt some of my other children seeing that happen. I had to deal with their emotions and letting them know that yes, it was okay.”

I have to play boggle before I go to bed every night because I cannot stop thinking about certain kids. Teachers’ emotions are associated with students’ *discipline* problems. “Unfortunately there is always, not always, but there has been a couple of kids that I have had through the years, that it is been real hard to like and know, they always say those are the kids that need it the most, but sometimes it is hard. You have some students that are defiant, they do not want to do what they are supposed to do, or they do not want to behave. To them it is more fun not to behave than to behave. Basically, as a teacher, I am just supposed to do my disciplinary role as far as my classroom management procedures are concerned. If I follow through and do those

consistently, I have done my part. Outside of that, it comes down to the principal having to deal with the student. I have to play boggle before I go to bed every night because I cannot stop thinking about certain kids. You think: what can I do? You feel like what can I do about them, just an idea for how you can make it better. It is hard to turn it off until the last day of school and then I seem to be able to turn it off for two months and then you can start up again. I think that is your break. It is not the five to ten at night that most people have. I just think it is a very mentally demanding job and it does not stop. You just go through your procedures that you have built for yourself and your classroom. I feel fine about it because I am doing my job. I am not trying to let them fall through the cracks and I am not trying to let them get away with being disrespectful or whatever their problem is. I think it is a great job. I think it is a very happy job. It is just these other things that come in from the side, that are not the students, that are the things that can make you have a really bad day. I think that is magnified by being really tired. You are up until midnight grading or preparing lesson plans. Emotionally, that can get you because you lose a lot of sleep and you worry, that kind of thing. I still, the first night of school, I was not even going to be here and I still could not sleep. Then my first night of school when I really came, I could not sleep. That is how I have always been.”

It always just kind of rolls downhill. Teachers have a lot of *frustration*. “I came into the profession because of emotions. I love kids. It is just something that I enjoy doing and it is frustrating sometimes when they act up and all that. Eventually you bond with them and you know how they work and it works out, the last day of school. You have your feelings of frustration if a child repeatedly is misbehaving, not listening. You have frustration sometimes with the unexpected. But then you have to put all that behind you and move on. You can be upset, you can be angry because they are not listening. They need to work on their listening skills, or you will repeat yourself a few times to one kid who is still not doing what you told him and showed him to do. It is frustrating just because I guess we know more than they do, well, and we are at different levels and you think, oh this will be easy, they know it. They really do not. They are still learning. Sometimes that is hard. Oh man, you have frustrations; you have stress from

pressure of things you have to get done. When the principal walks in and you are in a transition period and you were just quiet and now you are really quiet again, that really is hard. It is the only time she seems to come. Come when we are having class and not when we are closing up our folders to go home. That drives me crazy. Then on top of the pressures that we do get, I was at another campus and I left because they said they were putting the kindergarten in desks. All day. Kindergartners are not ready for desks all day. They do table work, but they are not ready for first grade, walk in and ... all day. It is a conflict in interest in my beliefs and philosophy. The other extreme, you get a call from a parent that just blows up and accuses, says that you have already, that you will not do this, they do not want their child with special services. They do not want this, and their child does not have a problem, and all you are doing is trying to help the child and you have worked countless hours trying to get him in these programs and trying to get him the extra help, already seeing that he is going to have a lot of problems. There is frustration with parents. Sometimes frustration with, because it is all dumped on the teacher. It always just kind of rolls downhill.”

“That frustration, exasperation, so you go from the misty, teary-eyed, how precious they are to help, lots of emotions during the day. I have not cried yet, which is good. Everybody says the first year is tough. It can be frustrating when you have everything laid out and you want it to go according to plan. Feelings of, oh, my, what am I going to do when you have a child reading at second grade level and writing complete sentences with capitalization and punctuation and they do not pass the test to move onto first grade. I say, okay, now do I... she has needs I need to meet them, so I better figure out what to do. Thank goodness I have taught first and second grade before, so I have some of that baggage, those folders I can go to and pull out ideas for her. Sometimes I think I teach over their head, which is bad. Then I simplify it but then it is too easy. They all have different levels too. So as soon as they get the centers going, I am going to have them at their levels because this was really hard for some of the students because some of the kids were done in two minutes. That is something else that’s frustrating. It is just different levels and trying teaching them. I think, again, when they get it, that

elation that you have done a good job and they are getting it and they understand. If they do not and you have students or a student that is not getting it, you try lots of different things. There is a lot of frustration there. Honestly, I really feel like I did make the best decision, even though I am super frustrated.

Workout (Classroom Interactions)

The workout is the actual teaching. Teaching requires some thinking on the fly. Teaching has pressure. Some teachers like to teach hands on. Teaching is entertaining students. Teaching is collaboration and working in groups.

It is like leading the orchestra. *Teaching* is a workout. “The teaching, I feel like we do not have enough time during the day to do anything. I feel like that is just the battle to get to that point. The teaching is the best part. That is when you really get to get into something and show them the parts that you are passionate about and that you are excited about. Teaching is probably the hardest part. It is easy to prepare and plan things. It is tedious to do those things, but it is easy. It is all there for you. You just have to sit down and do it. The teaching part of it that is the hard part. The art of teaching. I am trying to perfect my art. I guess you just really have to be prepared and you really have to know what you are doing. I am still learning that. You have got your opening and your closing. I am real good about, this is what we are learning today, why we are learning it, how we are learning it, what do we learn. I am going to challenge you. You are doing it and you are constantly reflecting on what you are doing. Sometimes you need nonverbal responses, the way they are looking at you, the way they are paying attention or not paying attention, whether they are getting what you are saying. I use higher level thinking skills. I play classical music just to calm us. At the end of centers, we are singing songs that we have learned. It is lively but the noise level is down. We have the responsibility of teaching them all those academic things but we teach by thematic units and we get into topics pretty deep. It is just a fun thing to watch them grow and develop. If I do not enjoy that some day, then it is time to stop.”

“In teaching, you want to try to teach it as clear and concrete as possible so they understand it. You work from there and try taking it to the next level by making it more abstract. The next level, get higher-level thinking and see how far you can take them. I like my kids to learn more than what they should know. Sometimes if I have the time for it, like for instance, we are teaching place value, we only need to go up to the hundred thousand, six digits. I want them to know all the way to the millions and billions. It is like leading the orchestra. Next week there will be 20 something stations to go to in here. We will have our calendar time. We will go through that pretty much like a routine. Then we have our ‘let us find out’ study. That is about 15 to 20 minutes. Then we will do our letter study. These are all whole group. Then we will go into stations. They are going to those 22 places; there is a plan on how to get everybody through those. I teach a small group at the table. When it is all working well, it is like an orchestra. Everybody is doing what he or she is supposed to be doing. Sometimes you will see us all sitting on the floor together reading, laying on our stomachs coloring to help build these muscles. These need to be developed before these down here are fully developed. We sing, we dance, we chant, we play games. I try to have a really good balance and not just lecture, lecture. It is in short spurts so it seems real busy. I do not like it very loud. I turn off the lights for a visual silence signal that I need to hear.... I cannot hear my music but I can hear you over there and that is way too much. Just little things like that. I will tell them, ‘You are learning more than you need to know right now so when you get into fourth grade you are going to be ahead of the game.’ They like to hear stuff like that.”

“A lot of them have not mastered basic skills. So there is a lot of re-teach before the teaching. We spend a lot of time re-teaching and filling in the holes and the gaps from where they have come from. It depends on your class and grade. If it is something very basic, you have to start at the very beginning. Some of these are higher. I have one first grader that is trying to subtract already. She does not need this. We are going to get her past that. I had her brother, so I know that. You know, you just have to know what they need. That is the part I like the most, is trying to get across to a number of kids what you want to get across and kids with different learning abilities. Some kids pick it up

faster than others; some kids do not. It is hard. It means that you have to introduce the long e sound like it is the circus. You have to make things interesting and you have to make them want to learn it. You have to give them a reason for learning it. You have to think on your feet quickly to be able to change mid-plan or mid-statement without anybody knowing that you are changing. I might not get them to where the TAKs test is or the TAAS or the TEAMS or the TABS. I have been through every one of them. I might not get them there, but I am going to get them farther than what they entered the room with. They are going to leave feeling like this was some place they were welcomed.”

The thought did not occur to me until, as I was doing it. Teaching requires *thinking on the fly*. “I am not saying everything I do is perfect. It is a learning process. Sometimes certain things work for a certain class or certain groups but it would not work for another. You have to know your kids and what works with them. This is the third week of school and I am still trying to figure some of that out. Depending on what subject, it is going to affect on what we are doing. Today they saw the overhead for the first time. We had to have a lesson on what an overhead was. I love books; children’s books and I think teaching kindergarten for so many years I have acquired quite a few. Now my second graders can read. I do not read to all of them like I did the kindergartners, but books come to my mind all the time. I may not have them in the plans and I try to go back and write them after the fact because I will just be talking about something and it will remind me of one of my books. I will pick it up and slide it in. I do that a lot. I do not know if that is a good thing or a bad thing, but it ends up working pretty well. It is not choppy to where the kids are going; she is looking for a book. I mean I have my hands right on it. Then that is something that I will turn around and share with my colleagues that I did not necessarily upfront because the thought did not occur to me until, as I was doing it. I am still perfecting things even as I do them.”

You can never have a bad day. Teaching is *pressure*. “It is as if you are on all the time. I feel like I am on 8 hours a day. Even when I am not actively teaching, even when I am not standing at the overhead actually writing things down, I am still on. I am

still responding to the children as they work. I feel like you never get a chance to relax. You are constantly under the pressure to perform. It is an art. Sometimes you feel like you have had a good day and sometimes you do not. It is weird how it happens. There is so much pressure on these kids now to do so much. There is a lot of stuff that some people want kids to be doing, nice creative jobs, creative things, and sometimes that is hard to do. When they have so many other pressures. Teachers have so many pressures to see that the kids get up there. You can never have a bad day. Even if you are not feeling well, you cannot go ‘I am going to sit here at my desk.’ You cannot do that in teaching, like you can in other professions. They are constantly there in teaching, and you never get away. If something happens to one of your students at lunch, they come and get you. There is just never a time where somebody else is in charge of these 20 little babies. It is I all day long. I feel like it is a profession where you are constantly under scrutiny even if they are seven.”

Tubs, that is the next big thing. Some teachers teach with *hands on*. “I try to utilize different methods of teaching and not have students constantly in their chairs. They can move around the room and use all the manipulatives or the materials. Lots of hands on because I am in elementary school, small groups or whole group, or working in pairs to do a lot of different things. There is a lot of interaction among students and a lot of interaction with the students and me. If we are doing writing, we conference. They read their writing to me. We talk about how much sense it makes and what improvements we can make and go from there. The best thing to do with teachers is hands on experience, which is hard to do. It is very hard, social studies, I am very frustrated with because I am not good at teaching social studies because of the hands-on thing. In science, we are doing plants and there are a lot of hands-on things you can do with plants. The kids like that, I like that, and it is fun for them. When you are using the book a lot in social studies and you have to try and come up with creative ways to teach this lesson. I remember when I was in elementary school, when I was doing my student teaching; they have the centers, centers that are so cool. We never had that. Then I talked to my friend in another state, California. Instead of centers, they have tubs now.

Two students get a tub with everything that they need. It is like centers, but it is geared specifically for two children. I need to go see that because that sounds like a lot of fun too. Everything they need is there. A tub, that is the next big thing, I guess. We have a quiet time in kindergarten, some of it with children resting. Some lights are out and music is going. Some will be reading. Some might be stuffing folders. Some might be working out in the hall with letters and sounds. I use my minutes of the day however I can to meet their needs, whatever they need to work on using different mediums, whether it is tactile, visual, and kinesthetic.”

I have been known to dance on tables. Teaching is *entertaining students*. “Sometimes I know I can be boring. I can see on their faces sometimes, they are bored. Other times they are not bored, but you try to make it as fun as you can. You have to be a magician basically. You have to put on a show. It is like you are in the theater. You have to somehow, without being boring, which is very hard to do, make points come across to the children so they understand them, I guess. You try to make it as concrete as possible, not abstract. It is trying to think about what you want them to learn and keep it as interesting as long as you can. Breaking up monotony with fun stuff and just trying to make things interesting is the biggest part. My whole heart is in it. I have been known to dance on tables. I have been known to skip around here. I think if your heart is into it the kids know that. I like to present my materials in a creative way, whether it is a puppet or something suspenseful in a bag. Giving them clues. I just love my job and I am excited about what I do. You see it in the way that I teach. I know when the children see you excited they in turn get excited about what they are doing. It is a lot better than being humdrum, la, la, and la. Then there is just some stuff that none of us are really that excited about but you have to make it as interesting as you can. That is what we are here for but I feel like it is sometimes the thing that we actually get to concentrate on the least because of all the other stuff, all the administrative and logistics seem to get in the way. I love the actual teaching. Once you have done all that planning and thinking and preparing and I did not even talk about the physical preparation of pulling the books that you need or pulling the science materials, that is another time element. Once you get up

there, it is the show. It is the performance. I do not feel like I perform every day but it is the reward behind all that hard work. Of course, if they get the lesson it is even better and then if they do not you back up a little bit, re-teach and figure out, oh, this one was a bomb. I do a lot of different voices. Half of your teaching has to be a little bit of acting. You have to grab their attention. They are so used now to video games and all that. I had a student who was having a seizure. I was yelling help; help, because I did not know that the student was epileptic. I did not know what was going on. She was a special needs kid and I knew those issues, but I did not know the issue. I had a kindergarten teacher across the way and one down the hall. They literally thought I was just reading a story. I get into my stories. I started sending the kids out and when they saw the kids coming out, and me still yelling, they knew I was not reading a story.”

Sometimes you get good ideas from other teachers. Teaching requires *collaboration* among teachers. “I talk amongst my colleagues and it is like, if they have done something ahead of time, if we have all talked about doing something, did you try that? ‘Oh yeah, it was horrible.’ Do not do it this way or I would recommend changing this and we talk a lot amongst my colleagues. If I have problems I will just go to the other teachers and say, this student, and this is what happens, what would you do in that situation? I just go through that. I have taught at a school when I really did not connect much. Me being the new one, I guess I did not feel comfortable going to them. I had a mentor for the first year, if you could call it that. We did not call it that, that long ago, but somebody that oversaw what I was doing and if I had questions. Here we work very closely as a team and I think that is a real important part of the planning as well. Sometimes you get good ideas from other teachers or good ideas from your teacher edition. Other times you have to come up with your own ideas. I have learned that the kids like to work together as partners or in groups. I will have them work together in groups in social studies. Read lesson two, pages this to this and answer these questions together, or something like that. We get together once a week for every minute that we have during this conference time. Usually we are all rushing out to grab our kids because we are still talking. We plan together and bounce ideas off of each other. If somebody

does something ahead of time, heads up to the next guy, change this part around or this went really well, or here is a book that I found that goes with this.”

I just love having all these little kids running around and going wild. Some teachers teach using *groups*. “I have double classes all the time and am much better with a double class. I would much rather have those. I have two classes that are single. The difference in having 40 kids in here and 20 kids is, for me it is so much harder. I would much rather have two classes in here doing things. With 20 kids I am lost. I am like, what do I do with you guys? I have you for 50 minutes, what do I do? I cannot explain it. It is not always whole group. I might have groups over here and groups over there. You see me hopping around monitoring. You will see me working with small groups, with large groups, with one on one. I do not change that much. I should be able to do more with a smaller group. I would much rather have a large group. Do not ask me why, I cannot explain. Ever since I have been teaching, I have always had large groups. With upper grades, we have single classes. I work more with team sports and we can actually play games. We can have some lessons on skills and we can have some games. I can get in there and play with the kids. For the little guys, I just love having all these little kids running around and going wild for some reason. I might have a fifteen-minute whole group, maximum, and then the rest of that two hour block would be through self discovery, through small group where we were working through a problem together. I was not one ever to stand at the front and just talk, preach, preach, preach, because I do not like that as a person. As a student myself, I cannot stand to just listen to someone lecture for six hours. I want to get my hands dirty. I try to allow my students to do that also. I think they like that. I think that they enjoy not being lectured to all day. Now in this setting, my kids are asking, can we stay the next thirty minutes? In here, there is a lot of workout. Even in the classroom, I was a discovery teacher. I would give them something to help them discover whatever I wanted them to discover. For instance, if we were going to talk about the blend, bl, I would give them a poem or a story that has lots of bl words in it. I would say, ‘What was common in that story?’ And get them to discover it. I felt by discovery it was more set in their mind. I looked at myself as more

of a facilitator than a lecturer. One of my workshops, a GT workshop, the instructor said it best when she said, ‘We are no longer the sage on the stage, and we are the guides on the side.’ That is so true. I want to be the guide on the side. I like for my kids to be totally empowered and take ownership of the classroom. When they do, what they can learn, it just explodes because they are a part of it. They have taken ownership. It becomes personal then instead of just the teacher up there teaching, you have to learn this and that is that.”

Payoff

While the pay may not be great to some teachers, the time off is a big benefit. Hugs are very valuable to teachers. Teachers seek recognition and respect from administrators and the public. Seeing students grow up, overcome obstacles, and learn rewards teachers. Making a difference and being a part of the students’ lives reward teachers. Teaching can be happy, fun, and full of pride.

It does pay my house payment that is good. Teachers often joke about the *pay* but consider it a living. “I did not go into teaching for the money, obviously. I have an accounting degree and I could have gone that route. But, I did not like it. I did it for a year and it was not for me so I went this other route and I am much happier now, but so much not richer. We all know we are not in this for the money. It does pay my house payment that is good. The paycheck, it is not a great sum of money and you cannot brag about that. Whenever you say you are a teacher, they know you do not make what some people make, some of those other companies. It has been a good salary to help raise my own children. My husband was a policeman, so for years we made state salaries. At the end of that long road and the big picture, he managed to retire and get a federal job and now he is getting his state retirement and has that nice federal job. I see where I will be able to do something similar. I do not want a job with the pressure he has in his job, but I can retire, turn around and do something else, and have my retirement and that pay. In

the long term, it is steady as you go. You have your retirement and you have that to look forward to. It is a good life for my kids and for us.”

Some feel the pay is not enough. “I would like to be paid more, much more, because I think I put in a whole heck of a lot of time, energy, and my own money. The job does not pay for what you are doing. It does not really pay. The pay is not high enough in comparison to a lot of other things out in the real world. I hear people talking about, I am never going to teach school, and it does not pay enough. Because people need to understand, Friday night, Saturday, every evening of every week, I am not going out and going to the movies. I am at home working on school. I eat, sleep and drink it. I do not think people realize how much we have to spend on our classrooms. The resources are limited and to set up a classroom, that comes out of your pocket. A teacher who is just a single person, I do not know how they make it, your housing and everything else, you cannot just teach school. You would have to have a second job. I have even thought of it one or two times, having a second job. But to do this job in the manner that it needs to be carried out, it requires a lot of time. I do not know of any other profession where to have all the great materials that you are going to need that you are going to spend a lot of money. If I work at Motorola or at Dell and I want the up-to-date computer so that I can get all my work done the fastest, they are going to buy it for me. Here, if I want the most up to date current things, I may not get it bought for me. I may have to weigh what is important to me. I might be in a little bit different situation; this is survival for me. This is what I went to school to do. No there is not enough money. There is not enough salary. I have 200 dollars right now and it is the beginning of the month. That is because I am paying to go to school. Like in Maryland they pay for about half of what you are being asked to pay for school. I think any good business does that. I feel like it is unfortunate that it is not the case here. I feel like this small thing could really make a big difference.”

Weekends and holidays and summers. *Time off* is a benefit for teachers. “What more can I ask for, getting Christmas off and that week of spring break. I do not mind. We have our summers off, but that is just too much for me. I cannot sit still for

two months. I have taught summer school the past two years. After summer school, we have two weeks or three weeks off and that is perfect for me. I just cannot sit still and chill out. Definitely one payoff of teaching is that I have gotten to be with my own kids. I am off when they are off. That is wonderful. I think as a mom the payoff is there personally because when my children were young, and even now, they are still in school, that I had as much time available with them as I could possibly have. I knew when I was very young that I wanted to, and I could still be a full time working parent but I have as much time as I can, weekends and holidays and summers. Do not ask me how I knew this in third grade or whatever, but I really was thinking along those lines. I do not think I even thought about how much money they make or what is the comparative salary to that if I went into a different field. I knew that was one of the pluses and one of the benefits was the time element there.”

I could not work at Dell and get a hug from a computer. Teaching is all about *hugs*. “It is not the summer, not the months off, not the two weeks at Christmas; it is the hugs that you get. That is what it is. Little kids coming back when they are in junior high and saying, ‘I remember you, you were my teacher.’ I have always been very impressed when they will come back from junior high or high school and I will hug them and they will hug me back. Like a guy, he will not think there is a thing the matter with it, where, if their mother hugged them, they would be doing, ‘Oh, Mom.’ It is all right for me and I know that meant that I did have a special place. They do think about me, or, fleeting, as they are egging my house. I do not know of anything else I would do, which is scary. There is nothing else; I have been doing it since I was 19. I started teaching swimming lessons. I could not work at Dell and get a hug from a computer. I would probably want to beat the computer. I can get a hug from the kids. Hugs from them coming up and saying, ‘Have a good weekend. I will miss you over the summer.’ That is the payoff. I do not know if I am crazy but I really like teaching, I do. It is just seeing the kids and getting little hugs and stuff. It just makes it worth it. It is frustrating at times too, but I enjoy coming to work every day.”

I had a mother make me cry more than once. Teachers want to be *recognized and respected* by administrators. “We do not feel appreciated by the administration always. Different principals are better about it than others are. Some you just feel that they understand and they appreciate and they are trying to always keep in touch. Others you feel like they have totally lost touch with what it is like to be in the room and they do not really remember and they do not respect your time and just the effort that you are putting in. This is the only thing I do not feel like I get. Sometimes administrators will come in and they will see my classroom and they will not tell me any thing I can improve. They will not tell me what I did well. I feel like I know what I am doing but sometimes you are you. You cannot always know exactly what you are doing. I do not have a video camera set up in here. I was thinking maybe I should do that. I like to have people coming in and telling me what I could do better and what I am doing well. Sometimes I feel frustrated that I am not getting any payoff.”

Teachers want to be recognized and respected by the parents. “The general population respects teachers. I feel like it is less than it used to be. I do not feel like we are quite as respected as we used to be. I think more of the population still respects teachers than not. I think it is less than a hundred years ago. When I was in school, my parents, they did not question anything they did. You might as well not even come home and whine or complain about anything. You have parents that give you a hard time. My first year of teaching, I had a mother make me cry more than once. I wish I had that child now. I would like to do that one again now that I have some years under my belt. There is the other side of it, the burnout side where you are tired of everyone, calling a parent to say that their child needs some help with a certain thing or you are having a problem with this and they turn it back on you. There is the negative side, just blaming me. You are picking on my child. Why? What would I get out of that? I would like the day just to be calm. I do not look for trouble. I am not trying to pick fights and cause problems. Even little notes from parents and administrators, those are the things that you go, okay. Talking to parents who thank you for all your hard work or they supply things for you classroom or they actually write you a thank you card.”

I remember you as being much smaller. *Making a difference and seeing the kids growing up* is a reward. “The payoff is that there are adult people out there that remember me. I think the payoff is that you are touching so many lives. I taught middle school for 110 kids a year. We are talking possibly thousands of people that are going to have a memory of me. That is a big legacy. The joys of feeling like you are making a difference. Having kids come back years later and tell you how much you meant to them and what a difference you made. You are thinking: I did not do that. I am just an old teacher, I am not anyone special, yet, and they think you were. You try to figure out, what was it that I did right. I want to keep doing that, that feeling of thinking that you made a difference. My payoff is seeing that student grow, seeing all of the different accomplishments that they make, not only academically but socially, emotionally, all of that, watching them grow. That is my big payoff. You see progress. The fact that you go to the grocery store and see someone from ten years ago or you get the graduation invitation and there they are, all grown up and they thought enough to send that back to you. Just all those neat things that, it is the little funny things too. This summer I got a phone call from a kid and he said, ‘We are having our 20th class reunion and your name came up a bunch, could you come to our 20-year, out of high school?’ I was just floored. I went to their reunion. Everybody said I looked just the same. I thought I must have really looked bad 30 years ago. One of the men, I say one of the kids, but one of the men, he said ‘I remember you as being much bigger.’ I was hugging on his waist, and I said, ‘I remember you as being much smaller.’ There is absolutely no job, none that can give you that kind of a payoff. I have a scrapbook from last year and I save all these things. Every now and then, I will look through it. Those are the things in teaching that are great. It is worth coming to school every day and going through the stress that you have to. When they come back to me and I put a lot of pictures on my file cabinet, they will go over there and they will say, ‘You still have my picture.’”

The student who did not say a word, he is speaking now. Seeing students *overcoming obstacles* is rewarding. “The big reward is that those kids were learning to read and that they knew their sounds and they were learning to read. I think it is that I

see a big jump in their reading levels. I do a lot of testing at the beginning and find out where they start from. You have to get that baseline, and then just see how far they have gone. If somebody has just progressed that natural attrition of a year, that is not as much of a payoff but if you have taken them that much farther, or if you have taken somebody that is way below grade level and pulled them up. It is not that you have to wait until the very end of the year for the payoff; it is daily. When I see those light bulbs go off and I tell them, I see your light bulb, I see it. They start understanding what that means, what I am saying when I say that you are getting it. They are excited. I understand! Great, explain it to me. When they can, when they did not have a clue at the beginning of where you were coming from or what you were saying. That has to be the biggest pay off in teaching. You are always going to have a student that is challenging, whether it be behavioral or academically. Sometimes it may be that student that has a behavior problem, or it may be that student that just is not getting the concept or something that you are trying to teach, all of a sudden, one day it works or he behaves himself in class. You do not get that with money. I think the intrinsic rewards are just unbelievable. Like the student who did not say a word, he is speaking now. That is pretty rewarding. Yesterday when he was saying the letters, I was amazed. He said something in class the other day and his teacher was in tears because she was so excited. I think that is where your payoff is. It is just seeing your success through the kids. I have got one little boy in here that is really low. He brought a book back from ESL and he read it to me. He was like: 'I can read it!' They just feel so good and just every day there will be somebody who will get something or when they get that really neat thing and you see it, it makes it all worthwhile. It does not matter, the hassles and the problems and so forth, but when you see that light go on and somebody gets it, sometimes it takes a little longer, sometimes it goes a little faster, but they get it, when you catch that, it is worth everything. It is just such a wonderful feeling when those kids become readers and writers. I always like to look back and reflect. I monitor and keep track as I assess. That growth over time with a child and just knowing that, okay, I have one who cannot write his name, he can now. Progress, here we go! When I first assessed him, he could not

write a name, held the pencil in a full grip, which is a very young grip, primitive grip, knows no letters and sounds, cannot sing the A,B,Cs, cannot do that and does not know some of the nursery rhymes. I have this other child who is way on the opposite end, created lots of feelings and emotions, but just seeing him, now we have the correct pencil grip. We have that going. It took me putting dots on his fingers and dots on the pencil and a line right here where the pencil needs to lay. That is what it took. I will do what it takes. Seeing him get those letters. Now, he is recognizing his name. Just rewards like that.”

That always gives me the goose bumps. Seeing students *learning* is a reward. “The reward is just what you receive back from your students. If that is just a smile, that is just a smile. If they say you are the best teacher I have ever had, you know you have accomplished something with them. Evidently, they are learning or they would not be saying something like that to you. Making a difference in a child’s life is actually the reward or the payoff. The payoff are those moments when you know that whether it is curriculum based or just life in general based, when you know that you have made a difference in a kid’s life and you realize it, even if it was just that one, even if it was just that one but it was all worth it. They payoff is when you see in their faces and eyes that they are actually learning and they are getting what you wanted them to get. Everything you wanted to teach them in your lesson plans, you actually accomplished and you can actually see the light bulbs popping over each kid’s head. That always gives me the goose bumps when I see that or experience that, which does not happen often. It is a great feeling to know that you are helping somebody, especially children. One of my students, she read a little book because we do familiar read. I let her go read to her kindergarten teacher and her teacher came up and she said, ‘I was really impressed with her because it was really hard for her last year, she is getting it.’ It is the kids showing me that they have learned something and that I have made a difference. They looked at the abstract painting and we watched this film the other day about this child prodigy artist and she was talking about how I do not know if I draw. I do not draw what I see in here. It is beyond that. It is how I feel. Then she was saying that kids will come up to her after

they look at her paintings and say, ‘Do you really see things twisted and distorted like that?’ She said ‘No, I see things just like you. This is just how I feel about them and it comes out like this.’ Then this kid raised his hand and said, ‘I think I understand that painting a little bit more.’”

You are my family. Being part of their students’ lives is a reward. “Being that my family is in New York, this is my family. I tell that to my class every year in the beginning. You are my family. You are my little brothers and sisters. We need to all cooperate and get along. We are one big team and everyone treats each other nice and we are friendly to each other. I had a mom cry at open house the other night because she feels like her daughter is in such a good environment for the first time. That is big responsibility. That makes you feel good. The payoff is just touching the lives. The pride of just the position itself, it is something. In the end, it does make a difference that you are mattering to these children. That for nine months, six hours a day, I hope I am giving them that stable, secure place to be. Some of them go home to homes that do not have any of that. I hope that I can be that for them. I am happy being a part of the kids’ lives. I want them to be something. I drill in their heads that they are something special, that when somebody is not talking to them, they are being mean to them, they are still special. There is still somebody out there that is listening to them. It makes me feel good, helping somebody, laying down the foundation that they are special, they can do anything they want to do as long as they are not hurting them or anybody else. Seeing them help each other on their own, being responsible for themselves, not only am I teaching the grade skills, I want to teach lifelong learning skills and being kind to others. I want them to know that we are all in this together and it does not matter that we are not exactly like each other. The feeling you get inside, knowing that you are helping little children learn and grow, not just academically but emotionally and all the other ways you need to grow, that is the payoff.”

They still love you when they leave. Teachers describe teaching as full of *pride, fun and happiness*. “I feel very proud to say I am a teacher. When you tell people you are a teacher they say ‘Wow, you are a teacher.’ It is just that pride that you carry those

kids on. I have been doing this for so long; I do not know what else I would do. You have to do it because you love it. You hear people say that, but it is true. You stay in it just because. It is always good coming back in the fall. You see all these little kids and they say, 'We missed you over the summer.' Even when you have a class sit down for a while, they still love you when they leave. They will still give you a hug. It is not easy and I cannot imagine anybody teaching that does not really have teaching children in their heart. I just do not think very many people would put up with the things they have to put up with in teaching if they did not love it. I think the payoff again, is a day where you really do not know what to expect. You have fun playing with them, talking to them, and trying to get them to share. My biggest payoff is fun. It is the little fun things they say and do that, it is just, the sense of humor of it all. At the end of the day, I do say it was fun or I can say I like it at the end of the day. Sometimes it is, oh man that kid. It is usually a discipline problem, the kid got to me today. Usually I am happy at the end of the day. I can say it was pretty fun. Not very often am I thinking: this is not worth it. Although there probably have been days. I think in teaching you have to accept the intrinsic rewards. I know I work so much harder than a lot of people with an eight to five job and they can leave all of their job at home and they do not come home and cry about so and so's dog died. I feel that when they are sad, I am sad for them. When you get those bad days and you think about it and you get to the point where you tell yourself that I know I am doing a good job."

Group Reality: System Relationships

Interview Protocol Part 2

The second half of the interview protocol was the *theoretical interview*. The structured theoretical interview was designed to identify relationships between affinities. The theoretical interview was presented through an Affinity Relationship Table. Providing the respondents with the Interview Affinity Relationship Table (ART) allowed

them to follow along when asked about each relationship. The table provided a quick reference of all of the possible relationships between affinities. Presented with a copy of the table, the respondents were asked if they believed there was a relationship between each affinity and to explain why they believed so. They were probed to provide their experiences with the relationship.

Each respondent was asked to determine the nature of the relationship between all possible pairs of affinities. For any two affinities A and B, there are only three possible relationships: either A directly influences B, or B directly influences A, or there is no direct influence between A and B. These *Rules for Hypothesizing* are summarized as follows:

For any 2 affinities A and B, either
 $A \rightarrow B$ (A influences B)
 $A \leftarrow B$ (B influences A)
 $A \diamond B$ (No relationship)

If, for example, a member determined that affinity 2 influenced affinity 1, a left arrow was placed between the pair. The member continued the theoretical coding until the form was complete. Below is the Theoretical Interview protocol.

Theoretical Coding

Many of the themes or affinities identified have some kind of relationship; one effects or causes the other. Let’s look at each theme and decide if or how it relates to each other theme. Tell me about your experiences with such relationships. Please give specific examples of how the relationships have affected your experience.

<p>Affinity Name</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative Procedures 2. Classroom Climate 3. Emotions 4. Logistics of the classroom 5. Payoff 6. Roller Coaster (The Unexpected) 7. Workout (Classroom Interactions) 	<p>Possible Relationships</p> $A \rightarrow B$ $A \leftarrow B$ $A \diamond B$ (No Relationship)
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Interview Affinity Relationship Table					
Affinity Pair Relationship			Affinity Pair Relationship		
1	2		4	5	
1	3		4	6	
1	4		4	7	
1	5		5	6	
1	6		5	7	
1	7		6	7	
2	3				
2	4				
2	5				
2	6				
2	7				
3	4				
3	5				
3	6				
3	7				

Transcripts and Axial Code Tables. Once all of the interviews had been transcribed word for word, the researcher analyzed the text for *theoretical codes* which *illustrate a relationship between two or more affinities*. The researcher then documented the reference for retrieval by recording the affinity number on the line of transcript that refers to the affinity, and by documenting the line numbers and affinity numbers in the *Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table (TCT)*. Quotes relating to a specific affinity pair relationship were cut and pasted into the third column of the TCT, along with the line(s) of the transcript that were the source of the theoretical quote. Once all interviews had been coded, the data from the interviews was summarized to create a composite of the individuals' experience with the phenomenon. Theoretical data was transferred from each *Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table* to a *Combined Interview Theoretical Code Table*. By combining all interviews into one table, the researcher created a database

for the entire set of respondents containing all theoretical codes for all affinities pairs, with each code containing a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code.

Theoretical Code Frequency Table

The procedure outlined above is also used for combining theoretical data, with the exception that a count of each theoretical code is entered into the Combined Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table. Because individual respondents may have defined relationships differently, and may, in fact, disagree about the direction of a relationship, this table lists both directions for relationships. The researcher counted the number of respondents who identified the relationship in the same direction and placed the tally in the frequency. The same was done for all respondents who identified the relationship in the opposite direction. A separate Theoretical Code Frequency Table was created for each class. Below is the Theoretical Code Frequency Table.

Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table							
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency		Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency		Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	20		2 → 4	8		3 → 7	13
1 ← 2	0		2 ← 4	12		3 ← 7	7
1 → 3	20		2 → 5	20		4 → 5	20
1 ← 3	0		2 ← 5	0		4 ← 5	0
1 → 4	20		2 → 6	5		4 → 6	8
1 ← 4	0		2 ← 6	15		4 ← 6	12
1 → 5	20		2 → 7	12		4 → 7	19
1 ← 5	0		2 ← 7	8		4 ← 7	1
1 → 6	19		3 → 4	7		5 → 6	0
1 ← 6	1		3 ← 4	13		5 ← 6	20
1 → 7	19		3 → 5	15		5 → 7	1
1 ← 7	1		3 ← 5	5		5 ← 7	19

2 → 3	17	3 → 6	1	6 → 7	18
2 ← 3	3	3 ← 6	19	6 ← 7	2

Pareto Protocol

The results of the frequency tallies were transferred into the Pareto Protocol Tables. The Pareto Protocol determined which affinity pair relationships were to be used in the system. Below is the Pareto Protocol Table.

Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency With Pareto and Power Analysis					
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted (Descending)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 2 > 5	20	20	2.4	4.8	2.4
2. 4 > 5	20	40	4.8	9.5	4.8
3. 5 < 6	20	60	7.1	14.3	7.1
4. 1 > 5	20	80	9.5	19.0	9.5
5. 1 > 2	20	100	11.9	23.8	11.9
6. 1 > 3	20	120	14.3	28.6	14.3
7. 1 > 4	20	140	16.7	33.3	16.7
8. 5 < 7	19	159	19.0	37.9	18.8
9. 4 > 7	19	178	21.4	42.4	21.0
10. 3 < 6	19	197	23.8	46.9	23.1
11. 1 > 7	19	216	26.2	51.4	25.2
12. 1 > 6	19	235	28.6	56.0	27.4
13. 6 > 7	18	253	31.0	60.2	29.3
14. 2 > 3	17	270	33.3	64.3	31.0
15. 3 > 5	15	285	35.7	67.9	32.1
16. 2 < 6	15	300	38.1	71.4	33.3
17. 3 < 4	13	313	40.5	74.5	34.0
18. 3 > 7	13	326	42.9	77.6	34.8
19. 2 < 4	12	338	45.2	80.5	35.2

20. 2 > 7	12	350	47.6	83.3	35.7
21. 4 < 6	12	362	50.0	86.2	36.2
22. 4 > 6	8	370	52.4	88.1	35.7
23. 2 < 7	8	378	54.8	90.0	35.2
24. 2 > 4	8	386	57.1	91.9	34.8
25. 3 < 7	7	393	59.5	93.6	34.0
26. 3 > 4	7	400	61.9	95.2	33.3
27. 3 < 5	5	405	64.3	96.4	32.1
28. 2 > 6	5	410	66.7	97.6	31.0
29. 2 < 3	3	413	69.0	98.3	29.3
30. 6 < 7	2	415	71.4	98.8	27.4
31. 1 < 6	1	416	73.8	99.0	25.2
32. 4 < 7	1	417	76.2	99.3	23.1
33. 1 < 7	1	418	78.6	99.5	21.0
34. 3 > 6	1	419	81.0	99.8	18.8
35. 5 > 7	1	420	83.3	100.0	16.7
36. 1 < 4	0	420	85.7	100.0	14.3
37. 1 < 5	0	420	88.1	100.0	11.9
38. 1 < 2	0	420	90.5	100.0	9.5
39. 1 < 3	0	420	92.9	100.0	7.1
40. 2 < 5	0	420	95.2	100.0	4.8
41. 4 < 5	0	420	97.6	100.0	2.4
42. 5 > 6	0	420	100.0	100.0	0.0
Total	420				
Frequency					

The ART

The Affinity Relationship Table (ART) summarizes the relationships chosen to be used in the systems as indicated by the Pareto Protocol. There were 24 affinity pairs chosen to be included in the system. Of these 24 relationships, 3 were considered ambiguous or in conflict. Assume that a group has written a number of hypotheses arguing that affinity A influences affinity B ($A \rightarrow B$). Another set of hypotheses argues the opposite, that $B \rightarrow A$. When submitted to the Pareto Chart, the argument is not

resolved: the table contains hypotheses that argue for both directions, and both sets seem equally plausible. These conflicting relationships are an indication a feedback loop may be present and need to be addressed later in the system. For now, the researcher ignores the lowest frequency conflict and uses the highest frequency affinity pair to build the system. Below are the ART and the conflicting relationships that will be addressed once the system is built.

Combined Interview Affinity Relationship Table		
Affinity Pair Relationship		Affinity Pair Relationship
1 → 2		4 → 5
1 → 3		4 ← 6
1 → 4		4 → 7
1 → 5		5 ← 6
1 → 6		5 ← 7
1 → 7		6 → 7
2 → 3		
2 ← 4		
2 → 5		
2 ← 6		
2 → 7		
3 ← 4		
3 → 5		
3 ← 6		
3 → 7		
		Conflicting Relationships
		3 ← 10
		4 ← 6
		4 → 9

The IRD

Creating an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) is the first step in a general process called *rationalizing the system*. Output of the Pareto Protocol is summarized in an IRD: a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system. The IRD displays arrows that show whether each affinity in a pair is a perceived *cause* or an *effect*, or if

there is *no relationship* between the affinities in the pair. Placing arrows into the table creates the IRD, thereby showing the direction of the relationships. An arrow pointing from A to B (A→B) indicates that A is the cause or influencing affinity and that B is the effect or influenced affinity. Below are the Composite Interview IRD and IRD sorted in order of delta.

Tabular IRD										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUT	IN	Δ
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6	0	6
2	←		↑	←	↑	←	↑	3	3	0
3	←	←		←	↑	←	↑	2	4	-2
4	←	↑	↑		↑	←	↑	4	2	2
5	←	←	←	←		←	←	0	6	-6
6	←	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	5	1	4
7	←	←	←	←	↑	←		1	5	-4

Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUT	IN	Δ
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6	0	6
6	←	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	5	1	4
4	←	↑	↑		↑	←	↑	4	2	2
2	←		↑	←	↑	←	↑	3	3	0
3	←	←		←	↑	←	↑	2	4	-2
7	←	←	←	←	↑	←		1	5	-4
5	←	←	←	←		←	←	0	6	-6

The value of delta is used as a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system. Affinities with a positive delta are *relative drivers* or causes; those with negative deltas are *relative effects* or outcomes. The Tentative SID Assignments Table represents the initial placement of affinities for the SID.

Tentative SID Assignments	
1	Primary Driver
6	Secondary Driver
4	Secondary Driver
2	Circulator / Pivot / ?
3	Secondary Outcome
7	Secondary Outcome
5	Primary Outcome

System Influence Diagram (SID)

The *System Influence Diagram (SID)* is a visual representation of an entire system of influences and outcomes, and is created by representing the information present in the IRD as a system of affinities and relationships among them. In developing the SID, all of the affinities are arranged according to the Tentative SID Assignment chart, and is efficiently created with flow chart or “mind mapping” software program, such as Inspiration. The researcher began by placing the affinities on the screen in rough order of topological zones: Primary Drivers to the left of the screen, and the Primary Outcomes to the right. Secondary Drivers and Secondary Outcomes were then placed between the primaries. Each affinity number or name is placed in a shape (an oval, circle or square). With arrows, the researcher drew connections between each affinity in the direction of the relationship as represented in the IRD.

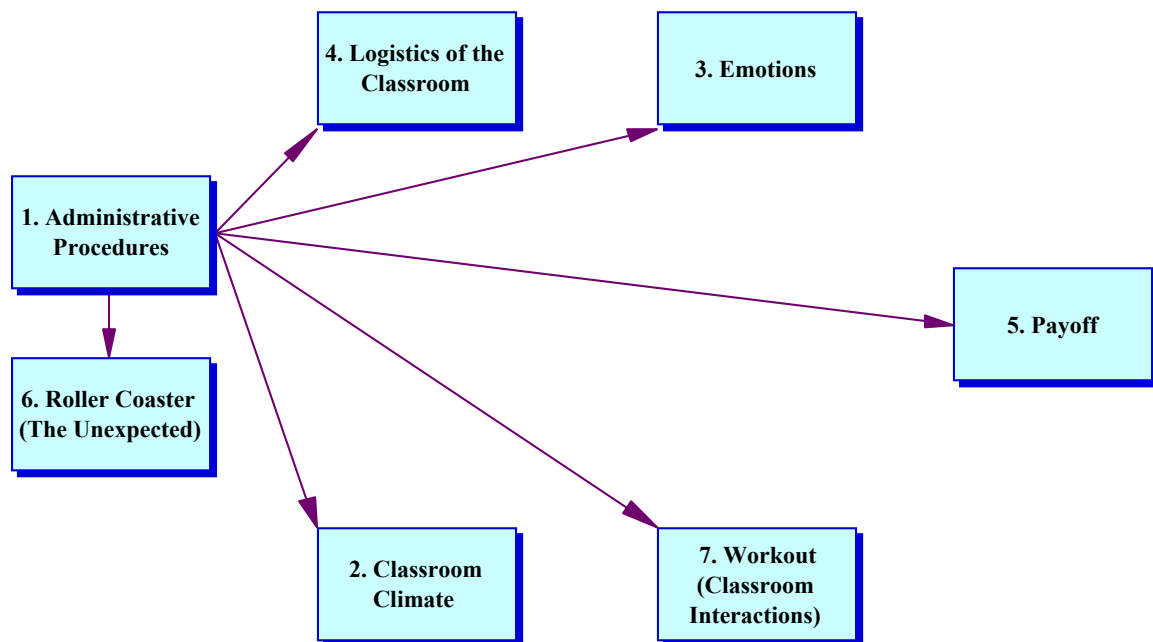
Cluttered SIDs. The first version of the SID contains each link present in the IRD and is referred to as *Cluttered*. The system is *saturated* with links, a term appropriated from organic chemistry. Just as saturated hydrocarbons are composed of carbon atoms linked to as many hydrogen atoms as their structure will allow, the cluttered SID contains all of the links identified by participants in the protocol leading to the IRD. The following discussion will build the cluttered SID link by link.

Composite Theoretical Descriptions

The researcher next examined all quotes for each separate affinity pair relationship. Multiple quotes were then woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section is a composite description of the theoretical codes based on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

Administrative Procedures

Administrative Procedures drive the system. Administrators have a direct impact on all the elements of the system.



Roller Coaster “A lot of times they initiate the roller coaster. This does happen especially as the year goes on when word does not get down, or somebody thinks that they put it on the calendar and it was not on the calendar. It was on somebody’s calendar on his or her desk but it was not announced. So all of the sudden they will say, it is now

time for the program, it is time for you to come down. And you are going, 'What?' If you do not go to the lounge and look on the blackboard, which a lot of times I do not, I just, I eat in the room and use this restroom so I would never see it. It is the unexpected, like the assembly thing, you have to make sure that you are prepared for the unexpected because you have to know the unexpected is going to happen. As far as the administrative procedures affecting the unexpected, if you do what you are supposed to do and you are pretty prepared and organized, you will be expecting the unexpected. Otherwise, it is going to be chaotic again and stressful.

Some principals are better managers than others. Some communicate a little bit better. Like for instance, in the situation that I was involved in recently, this school was expecting me to be here on Friday morning to set up this classroom. That school had me going and teaching at that school. So I called at 8:30 to find out if I could stop by after school or something to pick up a key, to meet the principal, to see my classroom and they are like, we are expecting you over here today. I am like, what? My orders from my principal were, be packed up at 3 to be moved over to this school on that Friday and I was teaching on that Friday and I was to report to duty on Monday. This school was expecting me on Friday. The principal assured me Thursday night, oh, I will call all the parents and everybody and tell them what is happened, and let the parents explain to the children what has happened. Nobody called my children. My children come in the classroom Friday morning, precious class, and they look at the walls and they are bare. Of course, being polite children that they are, they sit down at their seats and they just go right on with what I want them to do. Finally, I asked them, 'Do you wonder why the walls are bare?' One or two of them said, yeah, I guess we do, but we just did not say anything because we did not know, which is really unusual. I have such a sweet, polite class. I did not say anything to them, but I knew that nothing had been done. That presented a dilemma for me. Here I am, a tenured teacher with a good teaching record and everything, and what is this looking like? So yeah, administrative does affect the roller coaster.

I think that they try. I do think that there is a lot that is going on. It is hard to make everything run smoothly whenever we have 400 and something children. They switched teachers from one grade level to another and when I came into school on Tuesday, I did not know who was coming to my room. I think that is hard. Picture day is one day out of the year that was yesterday, that was the most recent example. I do not know if I am having them for ten minutes. I do not know if I am having them for twenty minutes. I do not know if I am having them for 50 minutes.

One very big example, the week before school ended we got a list of what to put in the kids portfolio. It is the week before school ends. Guess what? I do not have three writing examples that show the writing process. I have the kids report on my favorite book and why. It is the last week of school; you cannot ask me to do this. If you gave this to me maybe in December, I will be okay, but you cannot ask the kids to fill out a form about them when all they want to do is, it is summer time, they are done. Really, that really frustrates all of us. We do not have any more time to do anything. They do not want to, so we just end up throwing together their homework into their portfolio because that is the only thing I have on hand now. There we go, that is the portfolio.”

Logistics of the Classroom “We are required to do certain things and that affects how my classroom is going to run, definitely. I am required to be here at this time, and I struggle with time. That I why I have to be here early. I got to make sure I have everything ready to go so that when we get finished with all that I can hit it. I can pass out what we are getting ready to do immediately. I guess I get here earlier and earlier and earlier. I had an assistant principal tell me last year that I had to rearrange the way my tables were. I had the end of the table bumped up against the wall trying to get more space in the room. I was told that I had to pull them out away from the wall so that when she made her visits she could walk all the way around the table.

For some reason, talking about district wide and state wide, I do not know why they keep coming up with all these problems they think they have to fix. What they are doing is creating more problems. Is taking M&Ms out of the classroom going to solve the problem? I am sure the parents do not have M&Ms at home or when they go to their

friends' house, they can get M&Ms. That is one of the things on the list that we cannot do. They are a lot better off eating a handful of M&Ms than going to McDonald's and eating a happy meal.

I feel like having so many students here at one time, it would benefit me if I could have someone come in with the students that need that one to one, especially kids that have a learning disability. You throw them into a room this big with that many kids, it really throws them off. I feel like I have not gotten the backing on that part. If I could have one of the teacher's aids come in and stay with that student. They do not have to do anything. They just have to make sure that student stays on task. It would help me out a lot.

It is my classroom and I go by the TEKS and I do what I do as long as I am following the guidelines. I do not see the administrator coming in and saying, you need to do this, this and this. So far I have not. I have to follow their curriculum- the TEKS and all that. Why do not you just kill the creativity of the classroom? That, along the lines of now making special ed students required to take the TAKs, which definitely throws a kink in the way everything. Occasionally they come and meet with us when we do our planning meeting, once or twice a year maybe. We do get different training on different things, but mostly it is follow the TEKS and we do it as a team. We plan what we are going to be doing. Once there is trouble or something, and then they say, we need to change something. It has been more, you know what is best. You have good training. Do what is best and I am not going to be involved unless you need my help."

Classroom Climate "Administrative procedures can affect the classroom climate. You think you are going to be able to come in and teach the students but then you have all these things coming from admin saying you have to do all this. In the last school that I taught at, they taught to the TAKs and that is what they had to teach. The teachers could not teach the way that they wanted to. They had to teach a certain way. They had to teach those things. In ESL you are just trying to get them to do basic vocabulary and stuff. I will go in the office and she will go, what are you doing for TAKs? Some of them are TAKs exempt. But they will have to take it in two or three

years, what are you doing now? It is just like I am trying to get them to know their alphabet and sounds and stuff. That was frustrating.

There are certain things we cannot discuss or cannot do. This is okay now, now you can do this. This is not okay, you cannot do this. The changes in rules. Example, the state now deciding that we can no longer have, we cannot give kids gum anymore, no candy. You can give chocolate candy. But I just want the chocolate; I do not share that part. You know, telling us, that was one of my biggest rewards. The kids have this little savings account of good behavior points that they can spend and the most favorite thing was gum. Now that is gone. So that is changed one of my biggest rewards that I was using and now I cannot do that. Fish crackers just are not going to have quite the affect that gum was.

The lunchroom is an example. I know that sounds silly maybe, but the morning is not going well and they totally took down the whole pocket system that had been screwed into the wall where the kids could put their card into their own pocket. Breakfast time, they would go to their teacher...pull their card out...breakfast went like that. Now, complaint after complaint. Announcements saying the kids are going to be late from breakfast. They have to take all the cards of a class out of an envelope. These are five year olds. Go through and find their card. Then today, she told us when we were asking about getting the card system back because we have been complaining, she said it does not matter anyway because now they are going to put a machine here and you are supposed to punch in their ID number. It is 6 digits. I cannot remember.... We are getting a late start on the morning, then lunch we repeat the same kind of semi-chaos. Not as bad as breakfast, because teachers are there...but we are missing ten minutes of our lunch sometimes, 12 minutes of a 30-minute lunch.

There is a relationship from the administrative to the classroom climate. There are a few days where we need to change schedule, but I am flexible. I may get frazzled at that moment, but I let it go. These kids, they do not need to see that much stress, or me even, or bad-mouthing somebody in front of them. I would never want to do that because

I know how kids see that at home. Your teacher did this. Do not talk to your kids like that.

Students going off to the other special classes that they have, which is an administrative procedure, does affect how my class runs. It disturbs the flow. The kids get confused about it. I get confused about it. I have to sit down and make a schedule about it. It does make things halt. It does not roll. I go 15 minutes and you have to go to ESL. I guess we will stop a little while. When the ESL kids come back, we will go for 15 minutes and then you have to go. It does not roll.

One thing they did this year is the administrators each took the grade levels and said, this is how we walk in the hallway, this is how we go on the playground, and this is how we do that. I know when we were outside at recess the other day and there were a couple of boys throwing rocks and the assistant principal was like, no, let me handle this. She said, 'What do we say? What are the rules?' It was like, okay. They knew them, whereas in the years, they have not known them. For them to get to know them and realize, we still get that when they come in the room, they always do that, they are here. No, just be quiet and keep going.

If you follow your administrative procedures and you do what you are supposed to be doing that will affect your classroom climate. If you want a good climate, make sure you are doing what you are supposed to be doing. If you are supposed to be giving tests to get grades to put on your report card, make sure that you are teaching stuff to give the test, to grade them to put on their report card. If you are out of whack and you are not following the procedures, I do not know how you could have a good classroom climate. It would be chaotic and I do not want to have a chaotic climate.

My very first administrator wanted to walk into all of the classrooms and see us doing the exact same activity at the exact same time. I was not an overhead worksheet person. I was teaching first grade and I did not feel that math should be done on the overhead. It should be done at the table with a stack of manipulatives. My classroom might be louder than the person who was standing at the overhead with the only set of manipulatives. I was miserable. I was looked at as a bad teacher because my classroom

was louder. But it was really those manipulatives being moved and the classroom discussion of, 'Wow, two plus two really is four.' Now I am in an environment, and I have been in an environment for six years now, where my administrator says you do what is best. It is just so much better. I am happier and that makes my kids a happier group of kids."

Emotions "If I walked into school this morning at 7 and my administrator got upset with me about something, I am not going to be laughing and happy and glad I am here today. I am going to be thinking; I wish I would have stayed at home in bed. I mean it does not happen often. We are talking about how does it. I am talking negative. On the other hand, it can affect positively too. If you walk into a building and your administrators are in the hall and you are hugging the kids and they are happy, and then things are going good. You can walk down the hall and go, good morning and everybody is going to be happy and that is going to carry. All of it can take you either way. If you are in a real positive campus where your administrators are out front and your greeting kids just like you are and everybody is happy, that is going to filter down and the kids are going to come in happy. I feel stable and happy and secure when I follow the administrative procedures because if you do not follow these procedures then your principal is going to have a talk with you and you are not going to be a happy camper, so just make sure that you follow all the administrative procedures. I guess just like the consistency of bus duties and things like that. That can affect your emotions in a positive way. If they are in routine and they are consistent then it makes my job easier in that vein. Obviously, if my job is easier for me, my emotions are going to be on a more positive note.

They are the leaders. If they are stressed out, probably the rest of us are going to be stressed out. If they are feeling pretty confident, we are going to feel pretty confident. It is going to trickle down into staff and on down into the students, parents are in there too. They definitely affect mine. And the same thing, this is okay now, now it is not okay. You have to do this and you have to do it by this deadline. Our deadlines seem to be really short but when you want them to do something, they always get as much time as

they seem to want. Sometimes I am frustrated with the administration that they are not doing more. Maybe it is not necessarily the administration, but it is whoever makes the decision, whether this child gets more help or not. Sometimes I am very frustrated and the frustration comes out with the child because that is who is sitting there. Some of the administrative procedures can make you mad. Maybe not administrative just from the head here but the very top, yes, definitely like candy.

Administrative procedures like putting the codes in the lesson plan book, creates frustration. I know they have explained it to me and I guess I see the importance. I am not going to buck the system, but I do not understand it. I guess if I really wanted to buck the system then I could say it went the other way. I had a kid that last year the only way I could get him to go take his Ritalin in the morning was for me to give him a Jolly Rancher. That was it and that meant that much to him. This year, he is in third grade repeating and he says to me, 'I have been taking my medicine every morning.' 'Ricky, I cannot give you anything but a kiss.' I said until we figure out what I can start giving you to eat. That meant that much to him and it kept him in line. People do not realize how much a stupid little piece of hard candy can do. They do not know. It does not anger me. It frustrates me.

If your administrator says you are a bad teacher, you are going to be depressed. Being told that was depressing, but I knew I was not and I knew I had to keep doing what was best. It is frustrating when you do not know what you are doing. There are a lot of procedures I am not familiar with, like they have all these abbreviations for all these procedures and I have no idea what they stand for. I just go, uh, huh, like I know. I cannot learn all of this at one time so it is on a need to know basis. When I need to know that, I will learn about it.

I have switched schools a lot so I am used to different principals and things. Last year the school got a new principal after they had the same principal forever. It was very hard for a lot of people. Being someone that has changed schools, I just sat back and did my job and kept going. But it can be a very stressful thing when change suddenly. The transfer did have some affects on personal emotions; you never want to leave your

friends, once you have made friends. Then there is a classroom of students all crying and they do not want to see you leave. In fact, some of the students, finally they were told that day, they had to go be with the counselor because they were so upset about it.”

Workout “A moment of silence, requiring the flag, those types of things can affect just classroom interactions. My experience has been different from district to district, but in my first district yeah, because I was told how to teach. When I came here I was told, you know what, you know how to teach. I do not need to tell you. I was allowed to teach the way I wanted to teach.

I have taught this grade forever, and now the principal tells us that we have to teach a certain kind of math that we are not going to learn until November. It seems silly to me to start something brand new after you have been through several months of school. There are emotions involved with that. They tell us sometimes that we have to do something even if it is not something we are that comfortable with. They will encourage us to perhaps use 50% math investigations, which is a program, as opposed to just using the math textbook. In that regard, I think administration does affect the classroom interaction and what is going on in the classroom. For instance, in each of the different subject matters you are teaching every TEK, the objectives of what you are supposed to be teaching, so yeah, it does. It pretty much controls what we are supposed to be doing and then how we are supposed to be doing it. I will make sure that I am teaching science following the TEKs and doing what I need to do that these third graders need to know and learn. I will make sure that I teach it and test it and see how they are doing.

It is not necessarily about content. It is about certain problems with children. I will say that sometimes they will take them out. They will take them out of the room. They will remove the child, but I feel like I would still like them to be learning, not just necessarily taken out and there should be some dialogue about what is going on and how we can better help the kids.

I think that for sure because you have to, when you get observed and all that. I think there are certain things that you have to do and do every day, whether they are in

here or not. You have to talk a little bit faster than when they are not. I was in a district that did not believe what my administrator believed. I found relief through other people in the district. I would go to training presented at other schools and then I would bring that back and I would try to incorporate it the best I could. I always knew, because I would see the success in my children, that I was doing the right thing. On the day when I would have my 45 minute observation, I would do what my principal wanted and be a huge flop and I would know, that is not how to teach.”

Payoff “They took us out to lunch to Spaghetti Warehouse on teacher workday. I missed that. I did not get that payoff this year, but I am sure there will be others. We get \$75 back from PTO. That was gone in two seconds. But they try and do something. They are doing like a thought of the day to try and keep them going every day on our email. Every once in a while we will get a note, that is something I really like is the little note in the box or whatever, that says, wow, you are doing great, or a pen or just a little snicker, whatever, you are doing a great job, keep it up. Those help. That recognition makes you feel good somebody else noticed. There is some affect in how they make you feel appreciated or not like taking the time to do nice things for us, to understand our feelings or to have that give and take, rather than always, this is how you will do it, do not ask questions. Some are better at taking opinions too. They do offer a lot of good rewards. We do get nice incentives. Things that do not really cost a lot but at the end of the day, that was nice. We are getting the passbooks. Well, that does not really cost a lot, but it is a nice thought. Like teacher appreciation week. It is a nice thought, nice gesture. I guess it is pretty much with the others, if you feel like you are following the rules and your principal is happy with you and pleased with you. You know you are getting kudos and compliments, emotionally, you feel good about yourself and that leads to the big payoff.

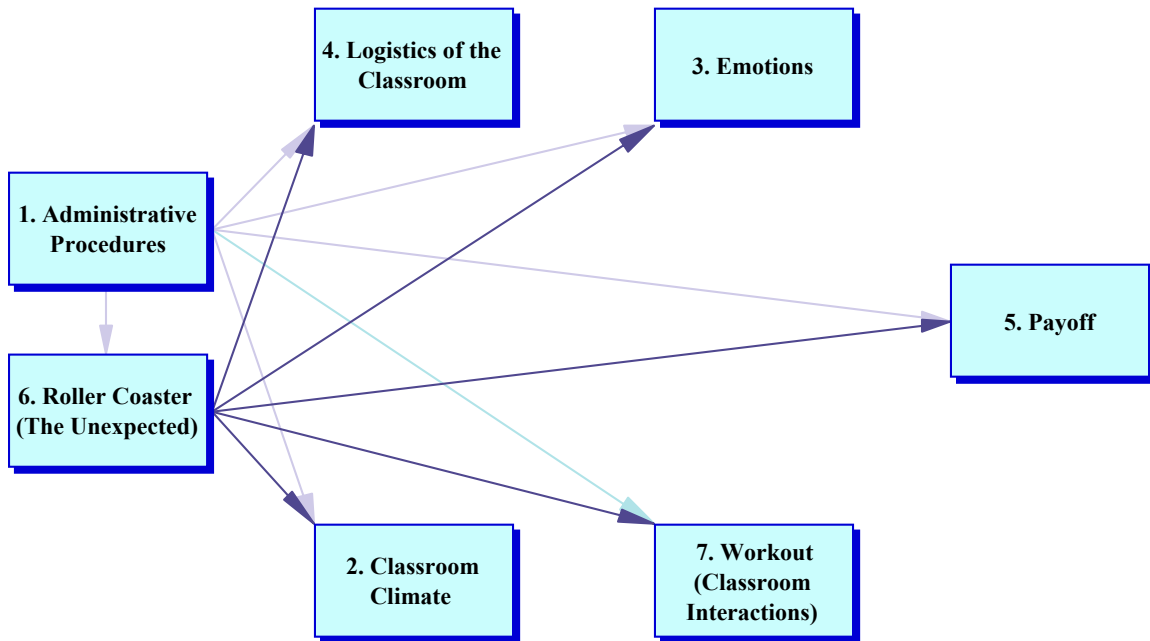
Administrators have helped me find new avenues, like to be a presenter, and have pushed me into doing new leadership roles. I did not ever think of myself as a leader until I came here. What are you doing hiding in the corner? Get out there and do things

and doing a presentation or leading a group. I may not get much money for it but I get a lot of satisfaction from the new avenue.

They certainly control it. They give you it and take it back. Like the insurance just dwindles down. They are just taking more and more away from us. I know some teachers that have families and they teach and they cannot afford to put their family on the medical insurance because it is expensive. Sometimes we are treated like a child instead of a fellow worker. I think they sometimes have forgotten that we are the people that are in here with the kids. We are all trying our hardest. It is just by virtue that they are your evaluators. Some people may sum it all up in that thing. If we got a person in who did not know what they were doing and they gave me a straight down the line and I know I do above and beyond and do a nice job, that would ruin the payoff. I would not put up with it. I would be gone. I have been lucky all these years, but I would not put up with that.”

Roller Coaster

The roller coaster directly influences many of the elements of the system.



Logistics of the Classroom “The unexpected does affect what I am doing in the classroom, getting prepared. If I am running late I cannot be prepared. If you are prepared for the unexpected then you can handle things a lot better and smoother. You still will have to change and alter some things but at least you will be more prepared and you will know. For instance, if a student needs a band-aide, I know where those band-aids are and I know how to go about doing that without interrupting the class lesson or something like that. No matter how prepared you are things will change that you cannot control. You just have to roll with the punches. If I am not flexible to handle the unexpected and figure out how to teach all those things I missed, then there is going to be a problem. I think the unexpected affects my logistics and I have to change what I had planned and figure out, oh, great, I have lost another day; how am I going to get this in? If your class is used to doing things a certain way, hopefully if something changes it you

will be able to deal with it easier and switch to that. You have got to be ready to change them. Like today, we sat down and talked about what we are going to do so we knew what we were doing because it was different going outside. Okay, we are going to change and prepare for it and be ready.”

Classroom Climate “Hopefully, you are prepared for the unexpected. If a student suddenly vomits on their desk, hopefully the other kids are pretty much at task still and going on about their business and not creating more problems for you, so you can quickly call a janitor and get that taken care of. If you are in the middle of a lesson and girl cuts her leg on her pencil point, hopefully you can easily take care of that and either send her to the nurse or bandage her up yourself without ruining the lesson that is going on. If you have five children losing their teeth in the same day, that can affect it. The roller coaster does affect the classroom climate. Behavior, home life, affects the classroom.

I think the unexpected is how I deal with the students. One day we had to leave out the gym and a teacher needed the gym for some reason and she came in and asked me to leave and the kids all went berserk and they could hear it. I just got up and said, ‘Okay, we are leaving.’ Then we went outside and another teacher came outside to do some kind of hunt and she needed that area. All the kids went, well, where can we go? I just stayed calm and I said, ‘We will just do it some place else’ and we kept traveling. That was not a good thing. When things get out of whack and it is not following the right pattern, yes, it throws them to whack. If we do have something unexpected, I think my children might be able to handle it more than other classes because of how I run my day-to-day classroom. The fact that I say, ‘Boys and girls, normally we do math today. Today we are going to do something different. You need to listen because this is what I am going to expect.’

Our schedule changes, it makes everything so choppy. I do not feel like things are getting accomplished. If I am not prepared, we are going to have a down day. If I do not try to keep the whole classroom moving, if I am not consistent or structured, then we are just going to have pure chaos. If I did not keep structure and consistency then it fell apart. I saw that when I went on maternity leave. My sub called me the first day and was

like, how long are you going to be out? I was very structured and she was not and the whole classroom fell apart.”

Emotions “They are one in the same and I am a woman. Our emotions are a roller coaster. We are just made that way. I am a roller coaster. I get mad because of different changes. It can affect your emotions if you let it. Sometimes it is good and sometimes it is bad. You can come in and be very calm and then something happens, something unexpected happens but then a couple of things happen and you just feel like, this is too crazy of a place. Keep smiling. You just have to. I always tell the kids, some days you will see me really dressed. I will dress up and I will say, ‘I got up and I was in a down mood and I thought, if I put on a Sunday dress it will make me feel better.’ So I dressed up for you and you need to be looking at me thinking, ‘God, she looks beautiful.’ I just love coming to work and the kids are great and then there are other days, when is summer coming, when is the next break?”

I think this time the unexpected will affect your emotions because anything can come up and that can affect how you feel. Things could be going great and then all of the sudden a kid could go bonkers and that can affect a lot of things. I think the roller coaster can affect my emotions and how I handle it. If I handle it with enthusiasm when the principal comes in and says we have an assembly and it may be the most boring assembly in the world but we have an assembly and I go, oh man that was so exciting, then my kids will handle it well. But if I go, you have got to be kidding me. My kids are going to be going, great. I think the roller coaster, it really depends on how I handle it.”

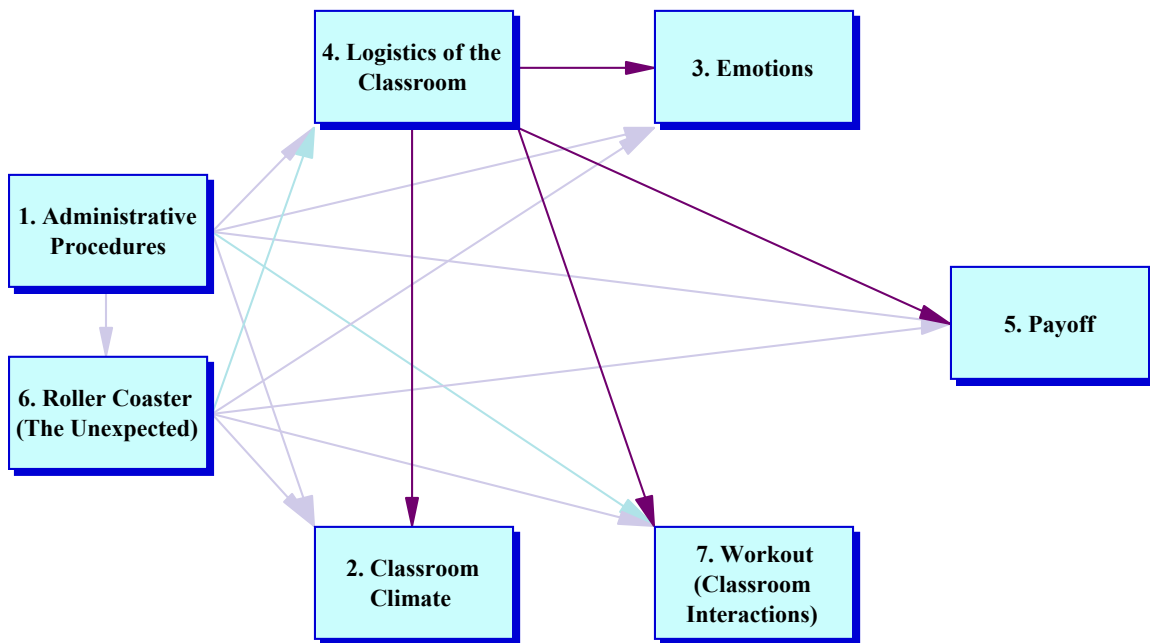
Workout “You never know what to expect. If you are expecting things that are good and you are teaching real good, if something comes up that can be a negative, then it might affect the way you teach. It might shorten your teaching time or just affect the emotions of your teaching. It definitely affects your teaching. Unexpected things can affect what you were going to do that day. The unexpected affects your classroom interaction. That is probably the interruptions or the fire drill this morning. They do not understand until you explain it over and over again, it is a necessity and no, there was not a fire. Those kinds of things. They are necessary but they are unexpected and it can

blow a day. It can ruin part of your teaching for the day. The roller coaster affects my teaching because I have to go with them. I cannot change them so I have to go with them. Flexibility is the name of the game. I have to be prepared for the unexpected every day, even if it is not my principal coming in, even if it is a child coming in and he is having the worst day, I have to think how can I best help this child. It may not be to teach the lesson I planned, it may be a life lesson on what is bothering them.”

Payoff “If you survive the roller coaster, you get the payoff. Those days when things are real live and crazy, you doubt yourself, what am I doing this for? Your payoff, when it is high, or even when it is down low, you may have had kids that you have been ready to ring his or her neck all year and then it just clicks, there is your payoff. Some days you walk out of here and go home pretty gloomy and it could be because of that roller coaster aspect of it. Maybe a parent came up and they wanted to have a conference and they were not happy about something, but it is all because of miscommunication or something the student told the parent that is totally off base. That could affect how you feel which affects the payoff. If things keep changing then the kids do not benefit that much from my teaching. I think the roller coaster affects the payoff because if you have interruptions and unexpected situations too often or too much or that it is going to interrupt the students’ learning, which is to me the payoff. My payoff is that they learn and if you are out of routine enough you do not have that consistency that you need to get them where they need to be. If they have so many interruptions they are not going to get it and that to me is the payoff that they get it.”

Logistics of the Classroom...

Preparation affects the classroom and how the teacher teaches. Lack of preparation leads to frustration.



Classroom Climate “I am going to prepare my lesson to meet the needs of those students. If you are not as prepared, you are not going to do as well on some days. You will suffer if you have not planned. If you are not prepared, obviously your lesson is not going to go as well. If you are not prepared or you do not know how to proceed, the kids come up with something. Preparation is critical there. You are going to be able to tell. Sometimes you can fake it and wing it but it is real obvious. You cannot do it all the time. That is just critical. You have to be prepared or the climate is not going to be what you want it to be. It is not. I guess the more prepared you are the smoother the class is going to go. If you do not know what you are doing, some teachers do not have to spend that much time preparing but I do. Some teachers, they have more experience, twenty years of experience and they know the curriculum. I have to prepare. You have to think

about your kids and how they handle certain situations to plan appropriately. If I am a science teacher, and I am going to do an experiment with a Bunsen burner, and I have kids that are afraid of fire, it is not going to be a good thing. I have to think about my kids and how they react to certain situations to plan my day. If you are not organized, it is going to pot, plain and simple. I am getting much better over the years. Every year you have to change it. That is what, it is like you keep some of the basic things, but every year you have to change it and it does not stay all year long. You have got to keep changing that constantly. It never ends, very flexible. That is our middle name. If you are not ready and you are not organized, that is definitely going to affect your climate because you are going to be scatter-brained and unstructured. I know if I am prepared and my students are prepared, if I am organized and they are organized, they pretty much go hand in hand. I like to have organization not only with me but also with them, making sure there are no loose papers in the desk and we have a folder for every subject and everything has their place. Sometimes I have my folders color-coded so everyone knows that if we are working in science you are taking out the green folder. I want to make it as organized as possible for them. If they are organized and I am organized, everything runs smoothly and there is more learning taking place. If I do not have my room set up or very cheerful, it can be, oh, I do not want to come in here. I want it bright and cheerful so when they come in, I love Winnie the Pooh so I have Winnie the Pooh all over the place; I am on their level. They should be happy to come in.”

Emotions “Logistics can definitely affect emotions. They do not like where you have them. They do not like whom you put them with. They do not like the activity. You have students that do not want to go home. They cannot wait to get back in the morning. That is what I want. They enjoy being with you and learning from you. If you are not prepared, obviously your emotions are going to be different. You are going to be insecure. You are not going to do as good of a job, frustrated. I think definitely that the logistics affect your emotions. I am happy when I am setting up my room; it makes it more cheerful and getting prepared. When I am not completely done and I realize I am

not completely done, it is frustrating. How prepared I am affects my emotions because if I am not prepared I am all frazzled and the kids are frazzled and they are confused.”

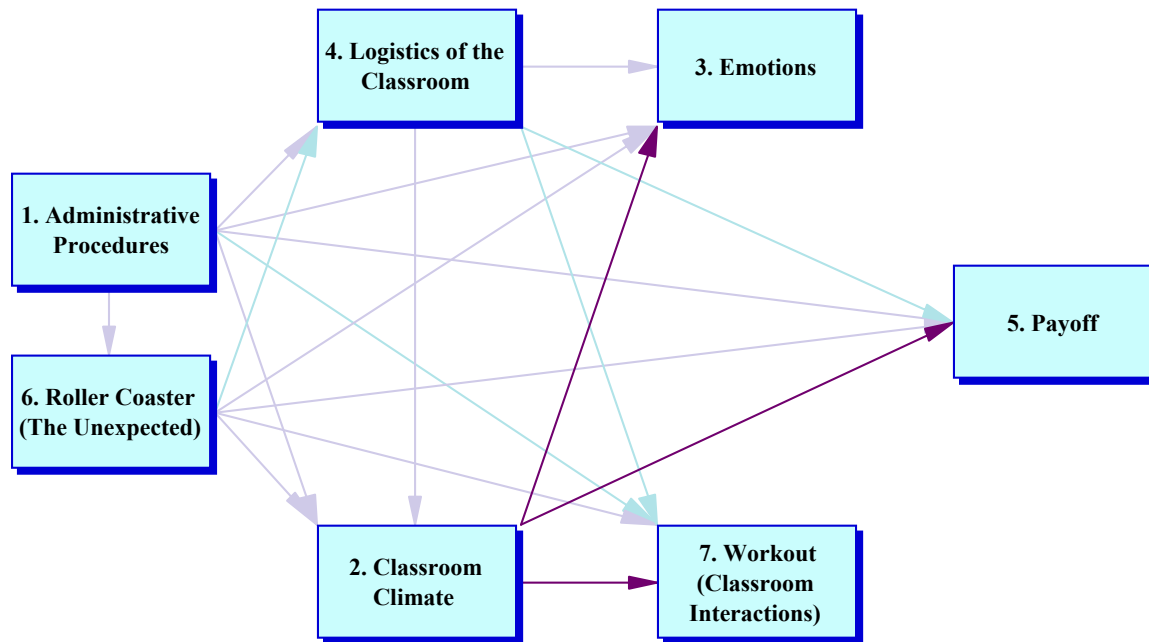
Workout “Knowing what I need to do in the classroom affects everything. You have to plan. If I am not prepared, what am I going to do here? The logistics affect the workout because what I plan is what I am going to teach. Sometimes I have to revamp in the middle. For the most part, if I come in with a plan I know where I am going for the day. You just need to be prepared. You will just feel a little bit better if you are prepared than if you are not. It is going to affect classroom interactions if you do not have what you need in the classroom to use and stuff, it is going to affect your classroom interactions. You are not going to learn as well. If you are not prepared and ready for it you cannot do it. There is too much to know and too much to do to not be ready. As a good teacher, I can think really well on my feet. If we are finished and we are doing something, okay let us do something different. The other day we were lining up and we were working on odd and even, we talked about our lines. You just bring in what you are doing to different things and you come up with something different all the time. It is not from a book. It is not from that. You do think on your feet. If you are prepared and organized, you will be a better teacher. You will teach more and you will feel good about yourself. Students see teachers, they know who is not prepared and who is prepared. They know who is a good teacher and who is not a good teacher. I think definitely logistics affects your teaching capabilities.”

Payoff “If you are getting all these things done correctly, then you are going to be rewarded for that, you are going to see the accomplishments and for me that is the payoff. If you do everything you want to do you get a good payoff. If you are not prepared, the payoff is not going to be the same and if you are highly prepared and if you really studied something, it is going to go off without a hitch and that payoff is going to really be there. You have those good days where everything clicks and, but you have to have that preparation behind it. If you do not it is not going to work. It can snowball too, if we have a bad morning, try to do those transitions and move on. Sometimes you cannot let go of that. If I know exactly what I am doing and I do not feel rushed or

hurried or any of that kind of stuff, you have a better payoff. For me it moves very, very smoothly. The transitions are good. The kids know exactly what is expected of them. We know exactly what is next. If I were not there, they would know when the timer went off or whatever, what the next step is. Here at the beginning, they have to learn me and I have to learn them. It takes longer to get your logistics and the flow going, but once you get it, it just works. The preparation is worth it. Once you get it all together and they are doing their assignments and they get it, it is a good feeling or it is cute to finally see all those put together into whatever you are doing.”

Classroom Climate...

Student behavior and the feeling of students affect how the teacher teaches and how they feel.



Emotions “If the climate in your room is very negative then you are going to not be a very happy person. If it is real happy, then you are going to be happy. It is just like

the climate anywhere. If we left school right now and walked into a restaurant or went somewhere to get a drink after work and you walked in and it is just like this deadbeat place, are you going to really go in there and feel like kicking back and relaxing? No, I want out of here. Or you walk in a restaurant and nobody is there to greet you or to seat you and it is just dead. You are like; this place must not be real good. You are going to want to go some place else. That effects your emotions. The same with the classroom. You walk into a classroom and it is real regimented and real negative, you are not going to want to be in there. If you walk in a classroom, there is a lot going on, the kids are actively learning and the kids are happy, then you are going to be happy too.

I like this one because if your classroom climate is a certain way, I think that is how you are going to be emotionally and the kids. If you have a great classroom climate and there is a lot of learning and fun, you and your students and maybe their parents, everyone is going to be having fun and being happy. But if the opposite, you know, you are strict and too mean and you do not show any caring and you are just there to cut a paycheck and go home, then the climate is going to be negative and your emotions and your students' emotions are going to be negative and so will their parents.

If one child is really disruptive that day or disruptive every single day, it affects all of our emotions. We have some very, I call them street kids, and they are very street smart. They can affect the whole class. There is one I have to stay on him constantly. I have to stay by them constantly and it affects everyone else. Because I am dealing so much with him instead of everyone else. I guess that changes my emotions because I really do not want to be messing with him. I want to be working with everybody else and I want him or her to do what they are supposed to do.

It depends on how the children are that day. A lot of times when they are frazzled, it frazzles me. We all feed off of each other. If something comes up that they do, it may make me upset, make me take a deep breath and pray or show some tears, really hurt my feelings, how they would react to situations. I am human too. Of course, you have a group of kids who will cooperate and will work with you then you have a very

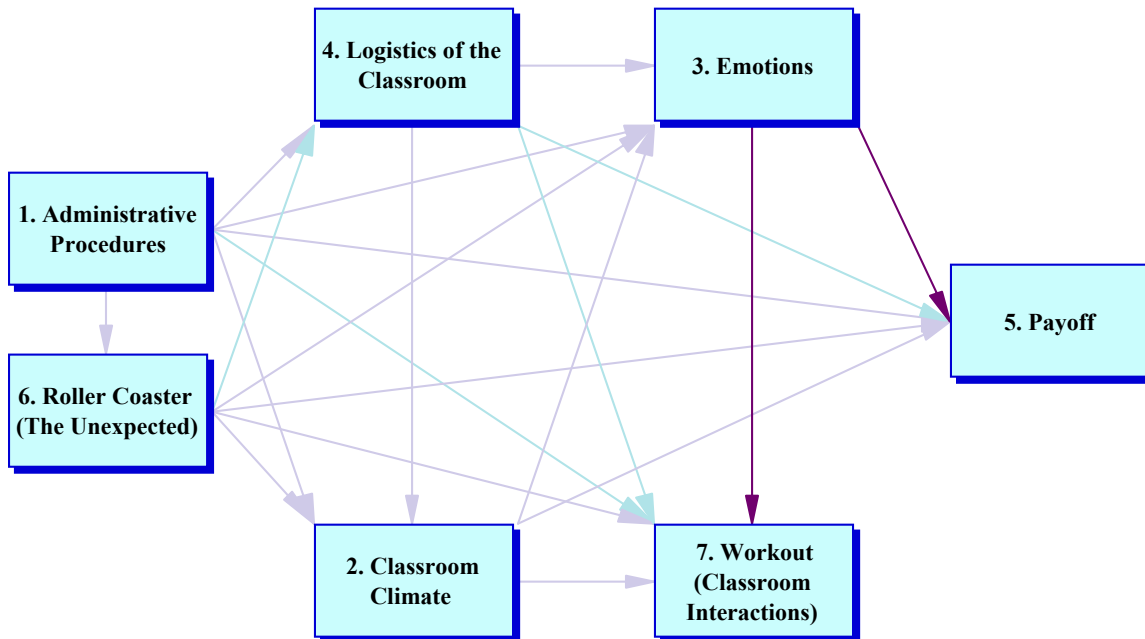
smooth climate than if you have a bunch of kids who are rebellious and do not want to work. That ups the frustration level.”

Workout “You have to, once you get the kids trained, where they know what you want from them then that is going to affect how you interact with the whole class. Good climate and you do not hardly have to teach all that much. You have got kids that are getting it and you will say, ‘Tell me how you did it’ and they will teach the lesson to the other kids. You have got a good climate, which means a lot. It just makes your teaching a lot easier if you have a good classroom climate, makes it funnier, makes it easier to prepare, makes it easier to do. If you do not have the right behaviors going on you cannot teach. You have got to have everybody on task to do what you need to get done.”

Payoff “That is why I am here. The kids, you want to look forward to coming to work. It is a very important thing. If you have a hostile environment, you do not want to go to work. That would not be fun. If you have a positive climate, you are probably going to have a positive payoff. When you have a really bad day then your climate is not real good. If you have a good classroom climate, the payoff is outstanding. The room, it moves and every day is a joy to come. You just feel it. It is a good payoff. If you can get the climate just where you want it, the kids feeling very good and working and everything. You have got it made in the shade. That was my problem last year; I just kept backpedaling because I had so many kids that had so many problems that did not have anything to do with school, nothing to do with school. I never knew how they, when they come in morning, no matter how well I planned; I never knew what was... I back peddled the entire year. I absolutely, I mean, some days would go real well and I would go, what did I do? How did this day go so good? Then the next day, you know, but like I said, I think you have classes like that come in cycles. If I do not keep a good climate in my classroom, they are not going to be successful. I am not going to feel those intrinsic rewards that I value so much.”

Emotions...

Emotions can affect day –to- day teaching and are directly tied to the reward.



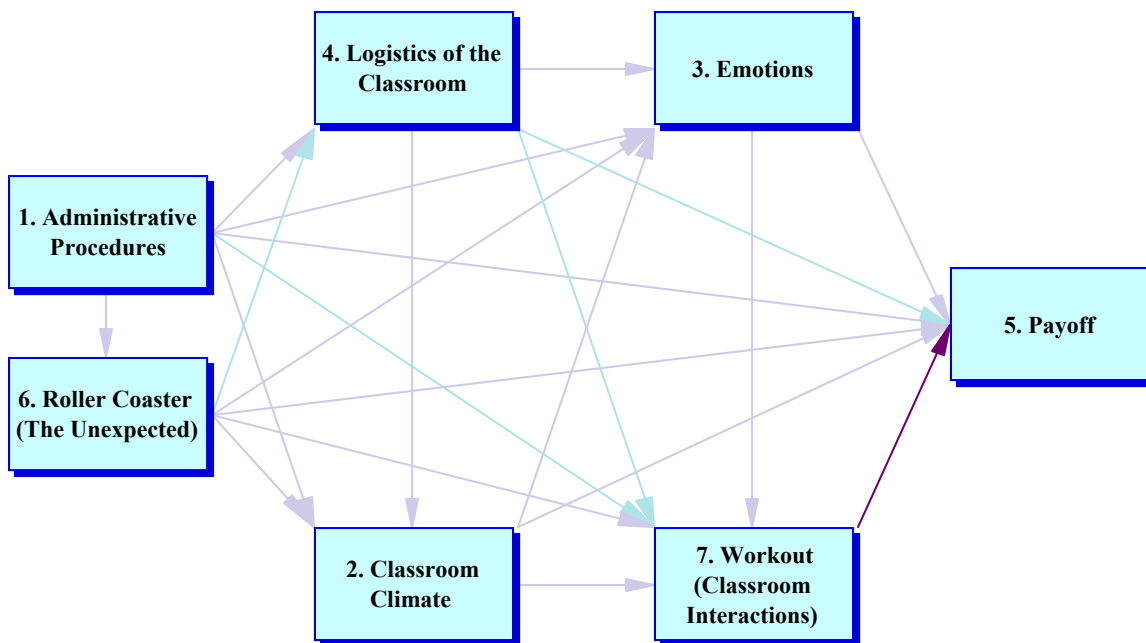
Workout “There are days you are more into it than others. How your emotions are that day affect your teaching. I wish it was not so. If I were having a bad day my heart would be less in teaching, just like, that giving up feeling. I know that first day back after maternity leave I was devastated. I left my child at this church and I was, everything I did at school that day went horribly. I think it was because I had a horrible attitude. I was fat and depressed and angry, why did I choose to go back to work? I think my emotions affect my teaching. I lead with my heart. If I am pretty glum or there has been a death in the family, I am not going to be as good a teacher, as effective a teacher as I could be. The emotions, they drive everything.”

Payoff “I think the emotions you have, the feelings you get for teaching is the payoff. You have got to want to be here. The kids have to think you want them here. The payoff is wonderful. That is the name of the game; you want to come to this place.

You want to come and enjoy your kids. How I react to the children pays off in how they react to me. If I respect them they are going to respect me. The payoff is a child that has deposits in the bank from me and so they are willing to give out some, when I ask for it, even if I get fussy at them, there is enough deposits there that it is okay. If you are feeling good your payoff is great. That is the payoff right there. You want to feel good about that. Your emotions definitely affect the payoff. I get excited when my kids learn. I get excited, not when I get my paycheck but when I see a kid able to do something they were not able to do. I had a kid that was a total non-reader last year and at the end of the year he was totally on level. I could not have been more proud or happy, or you know. I was sobbing because I was so ecstatic that we would come from letters in our name to being on grade level at the end of first grade. I think it is really rewarding.”

Workout...

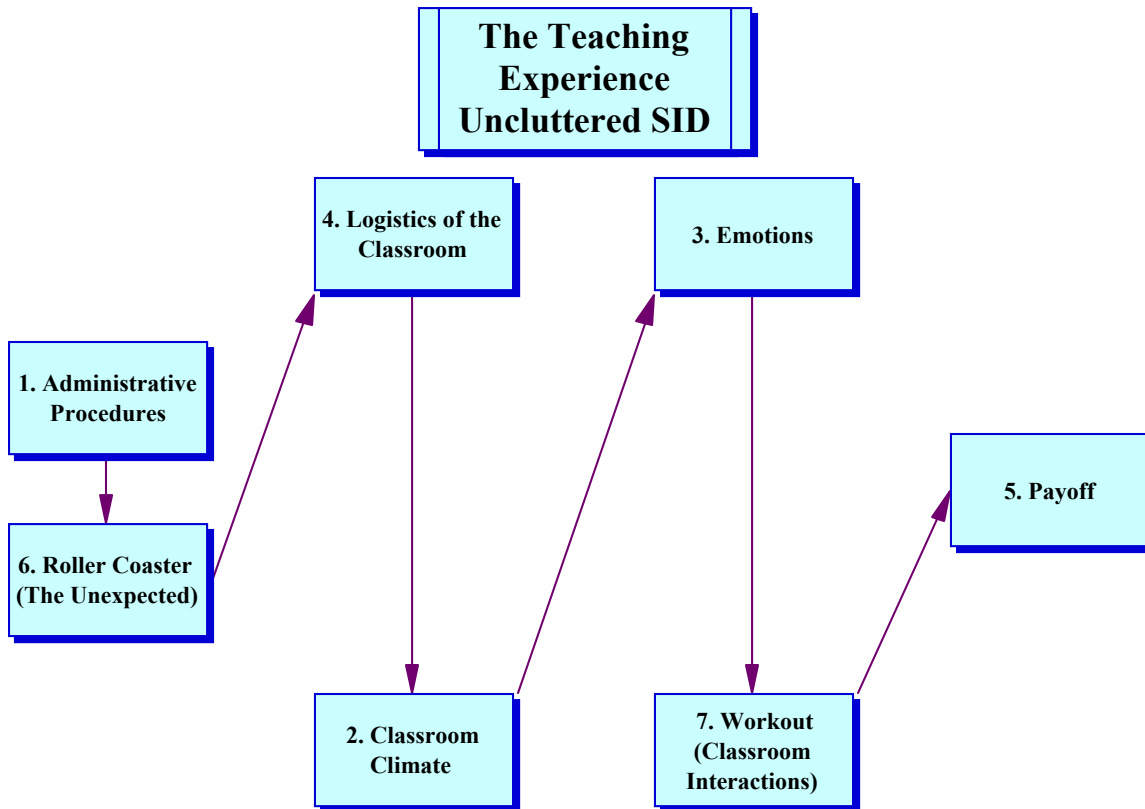
Teaching is rewarding.



Payoff “When I am helping students, it makes me happy. I think the payoff comes from those successes in teaching and how successful I am in teaching will affect how I feel about the job and the intrinsic rewards that I receive. If the kids succeed, you will succeed. If you see them doing a good job then you know you did a good job. With all this change we went through, I came in before I came back and tested all the kids. Then I called the parents. Hi, it is I. I noticed that so and so is really doing well...it was like, cool, you know my child already. There was a payoff there. It was like, okay, we are scared that we are switching classes but she already knows my child so maybe it is not so bad after all. Teaching affects the payoff. If you really like the job the payoff is going to be great. I would say 90% of the time I wake up and I want to go to work. I cannot wait to go to work. I cannot wait to see these kids and do the job that I always wanted to do. There is 10% of the time that you do not want to wake up, you are tired, and you went to bed late the night before. I think if you are doing a good teaching job the reward as far as those warm and cozies, or whatever from, to parents to the students, they will be recommending you to other people, students and stuff, which is what is happened to me a lot of times.”

The Composite Interview Uncluttered SID

The cluttered SID contains all of the relationships described by the group. It is saturated with relationship. The problem with saturation is that a cluttered SID, while being comprehensive and rich, can be very difficult to interpret, even for a modest number of affinities that are highly interlocked or embedded within the system. In other words, many systems have so many links that the explanatory power of the system becomes bogged down in the details of the relationships. Comprehensiveness and richness are certainly objectives of the SID; on the other hand, so is parsimony. A way to reconcile the richness – parsimony dialectic is to produce a supplementary or secondary SID called the *Uncluttered SID*; one that has redundant links removed. Below is the Uncluttered Composite SID.

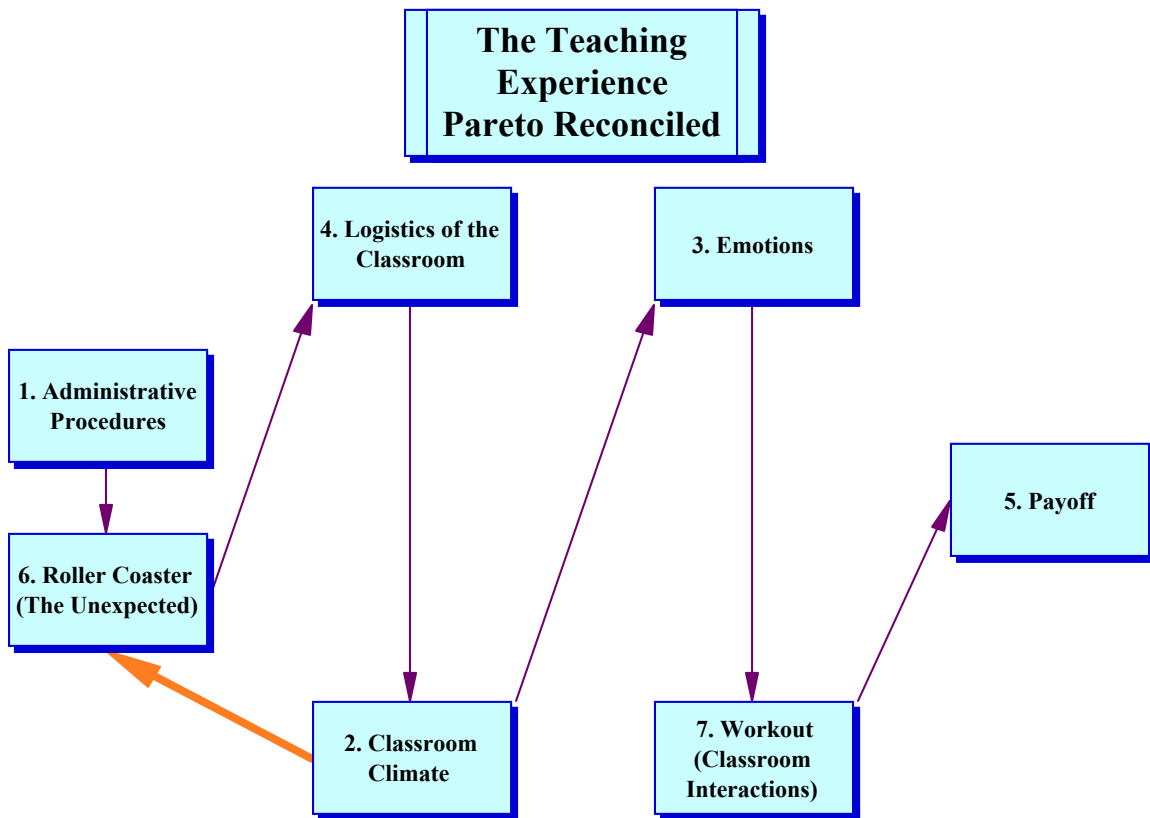


Pareto Reconciled SID

A pair of links not directly described in the composite theoretical descriptions was added to the SID. Once the researcher had removed all redundant links The Pareto Protocol was examined for conflicting relationships. Conflicts occur when the same affinity pair has relationships in both directions and a significant frequency to include both in the system. The lesser frequency is temporally ignored in the IRD but is reconciled in the uncluttered SID. To account for the relationships, the system was examined to see if the conflicting relationship was indicated in the system possibly as part of a feedback loop. If such was the case, nothing needed to be done. An arrow was placed from Classroom Climate to Roller Coaster as well as an arrow placed from Workout to Classroom Climate to reconcile these conflicts.

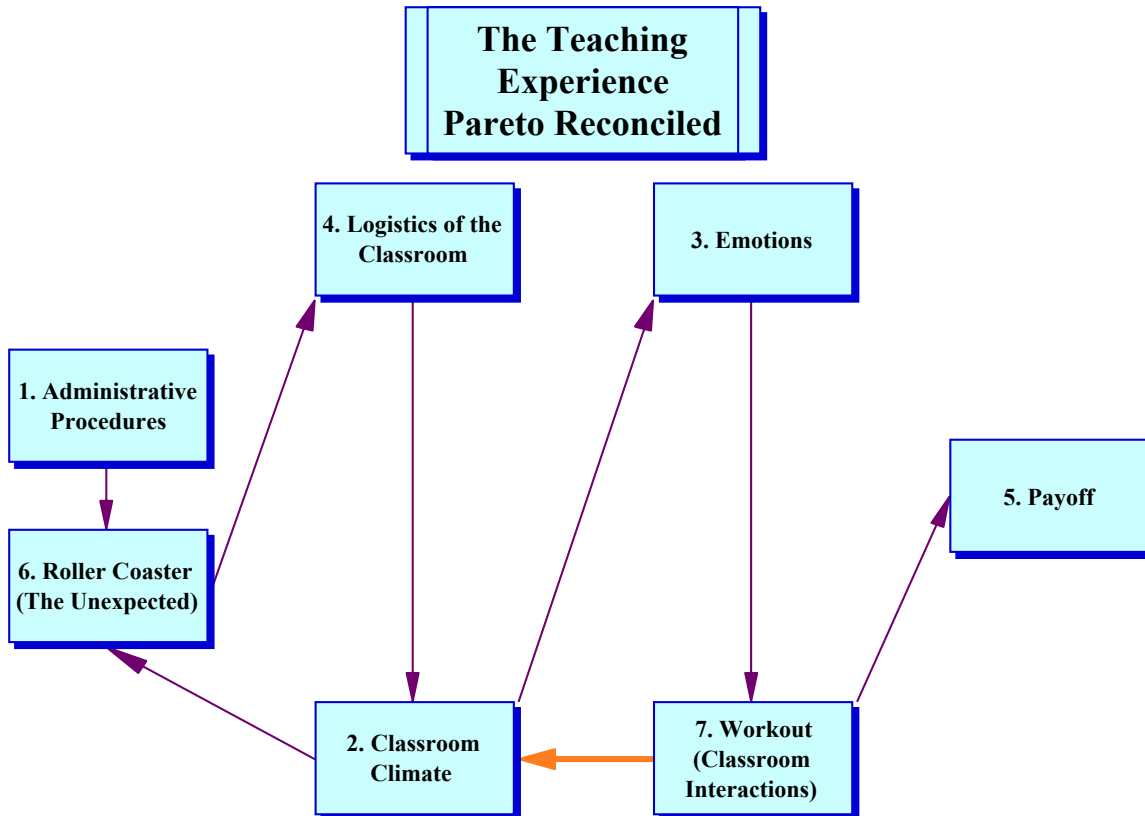
Classroom Climate Effects...

Many teachers struggled with the relationship between the classroom climate and the roller coaster. Some had good explanations why the classroom climate could affect the roller coaster. A positive classroom climate could eliminate some of the possible unexpected situations. The result of adding the relationship is a feedback loop, which means the two actually affect each other but require that the logistics of the classroom be taken into consideration.

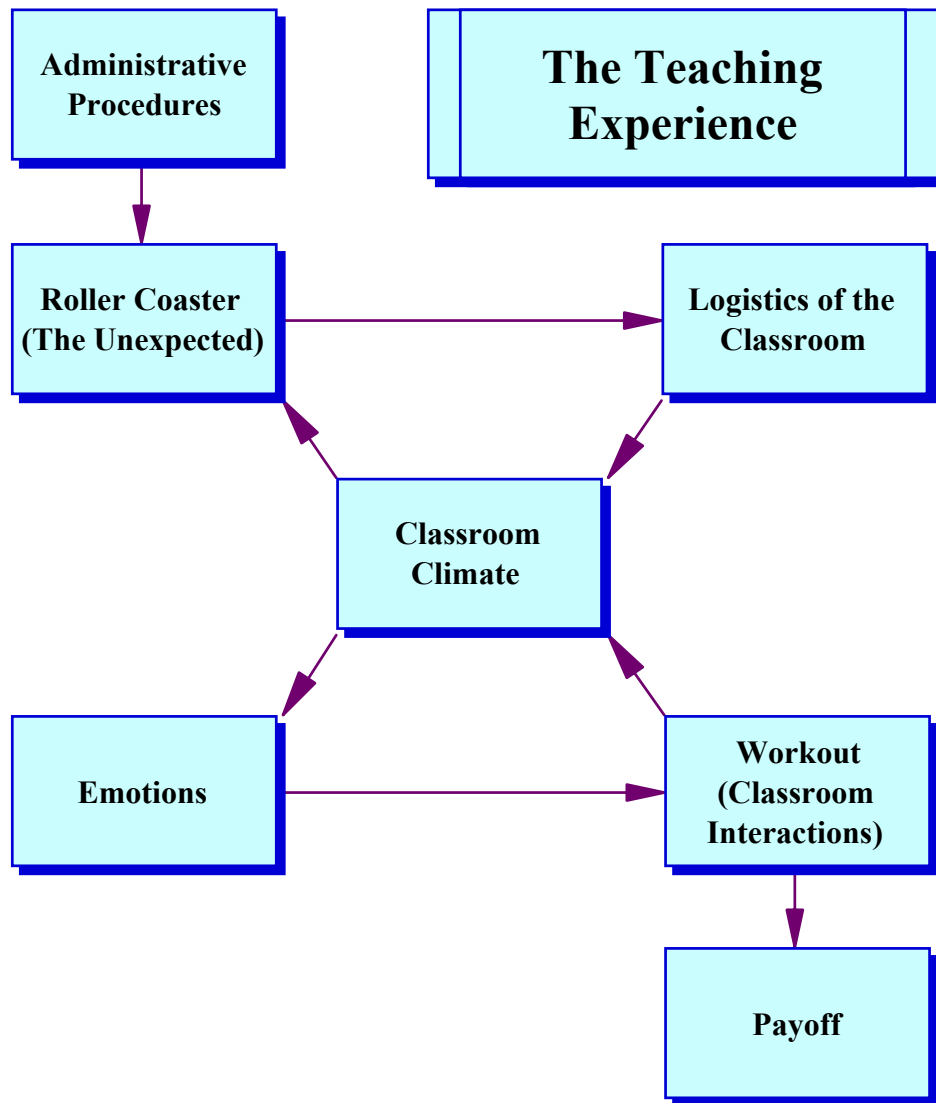


Workout (Classroom Interactions) Effects...

Many teachers said that the classroom climate effected how they taught. Others believed that how they taught affected the classroom climate. Again, this confusion as to the direction is explained by the feedback loop. The two do effect each other but we must factor emotions into the loop.



Below is the Composite Interview Uncluttered SID that will be used throughout the study.



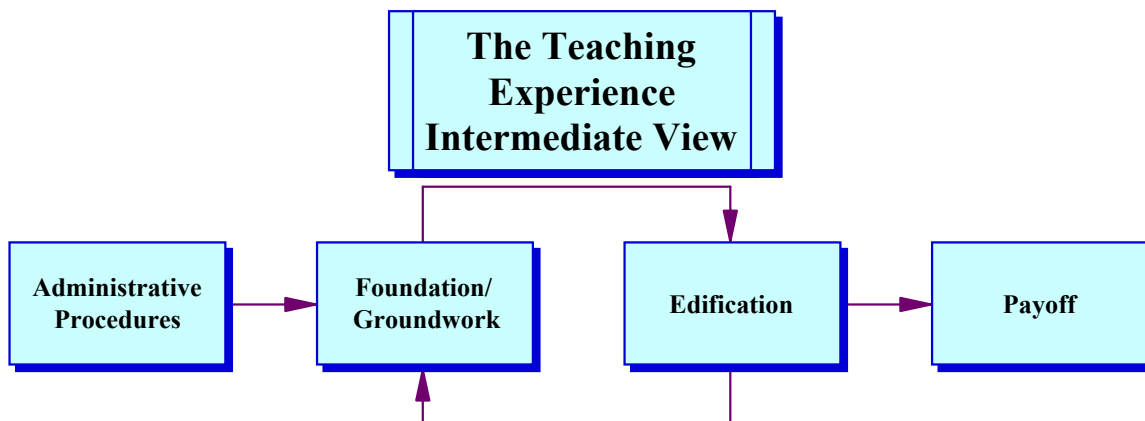
A Tour through the System

The teaching experience is driven by administrative procedures. The actions of the principal or legislature can cause unexpected events for teachers. These events effect how a teacher plans for the classroom. How well a teacher is prepared can effect how the students feel and act in the classroom. The students' actions can also lead to unexpected situations. The classroom climate can produce a roller coaster of events. These three elements form a feedback loop. The classroom climate can effect the teacher's emotions.

These emotions effect how a teacher teaches. How the teacher teaches can effect the students' emotions and behavior in the classroom. Again, these three elements form a feedback loop upon where each element affects the others. The outcome of the system is the payoff.

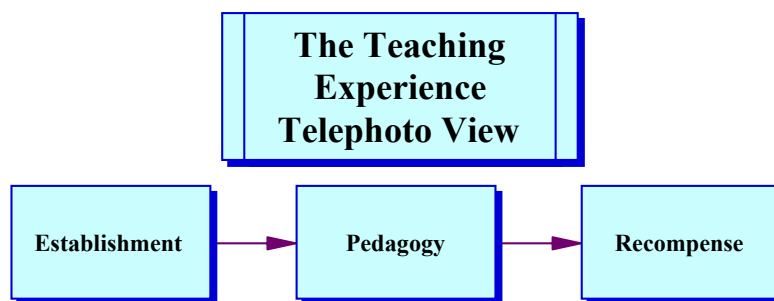
Feedback Loops and Zooming

Inspection of the system quickly reveals a feedback loop consisting of Roller Coaster, Logistics of the Classroom, and Classroom Climate. Since the SID suggests these 3 affinities operate together and interact with each other, there may indeed be a name for such an interaction. A review of the axial codes and descriptions, together with the placement of the loop in the overall system, suggests that we have defined the components of a subsystem called *Foundation/Groundwork*. An additional look at the systems suggests another subsystem. Classroom Climate, Emotions, and Workout operate together and interact with each other. A review of the axial codes and descriptions, together with the placement of the loop in the overall system, suggests that we have defined the components of a subsystem called *Edification*. Therefore, these new “superaffinities” can replace the feedback loop via simple substitution in a new view that is zoomed out – as if viewed from farther away – one level:



Note that this new system is identical to the first except that the 3 affinities comprised by each of the feedback loops have been collapsed or zoomed out into a more general term, Foundation/Groundwork and Edification. The Intermediate View produces a “higher level” perspective of the phenomenon than the original.

Zooming out can continue as long as there are feedback loops or sequences of affinities and relationships that have some underlying semantic dimension. In this example, Foundation/Groundwork and Edification resides inside yet another loop. Examination of this loop suggests the name Pedagogy. Again, we make a simple algebraic substitution of Student/Class Interaction for the loop Foundation/Groundwork and Edification and obtain the Telephoto View below:



Group Reality: System Statistics

Significant Differences

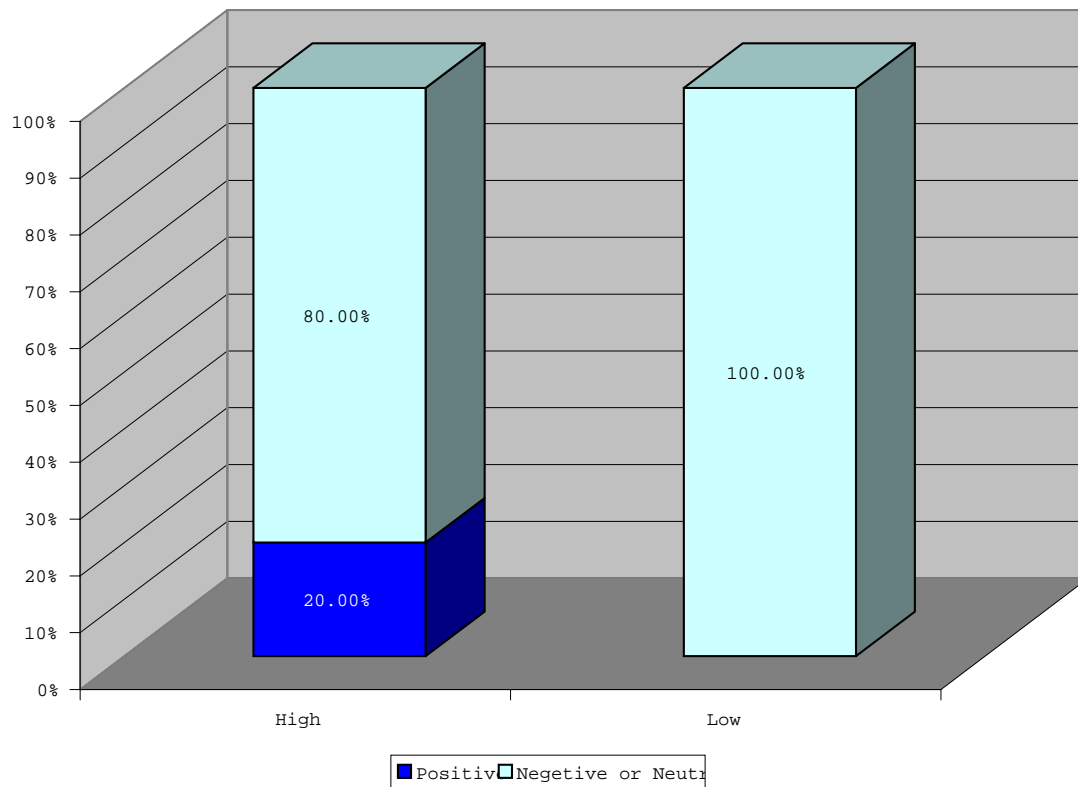
The researcher examined each interview after the interviews had been transcribed. The researcher closely examined each affinity to identify the perceptions of the respondent. Based on suggestive comments or tone or if the respondent directly indicated a perception, a code was recorded for that affinity. A negative perception of an affinity received a 1, a neutral experience received a 2, and a positive experience received a 3. The overall experience was also coded. Respondents were not directly asked to quantify their experience and for this reason, the coding by the researcher is somewhat subjective.

The data for all interviews was compiled and a statistical chi square analysis was run to identify if there was a significant difference between affinities for each class and the overall perceptions of each group. A significance level of less than .05 indicates a significant difference in the experiences of the classes. There were 2 affinities that were significantly different, Emotions and Logistics of the Classroom. Additionally, Classroom Climate, Workout (Classroom Interactions) and the overall experience were close to significant at the .06 level.

Individual Interview Perceptions										
Interview Number	Performance	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	Overall	
4	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
7	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
8	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
13	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	
16	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
18	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
19	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
20	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
11	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	
15	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	
5	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
6	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	
12	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	
17	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	
1	2	1	3	1	1	3	3	2	2	
2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	
9	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	2	
10	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	
3	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	
14	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	
		1 HIGH Performing				2 LOW Performing				
		1 Negative		2 Neutral			3 Positive			

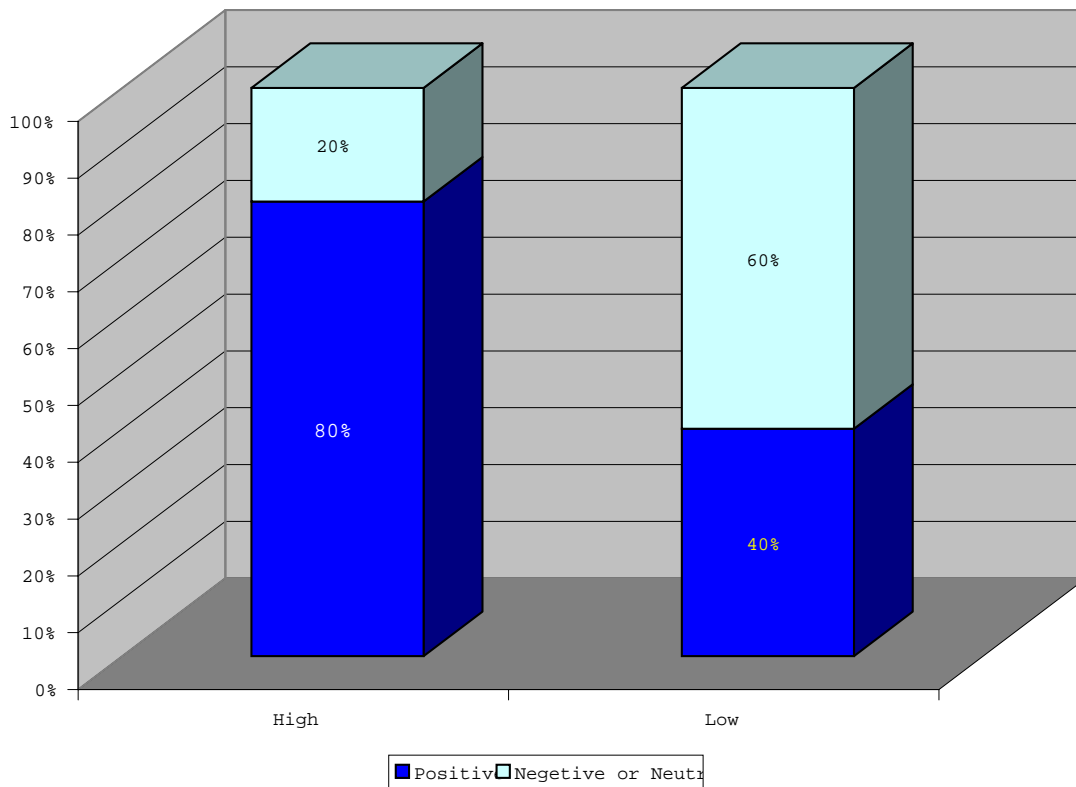
Administrative Procedures Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	80%	100%	90%
Positive	20%	0%	10%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
2.222		0.136	

Administrative Procedures



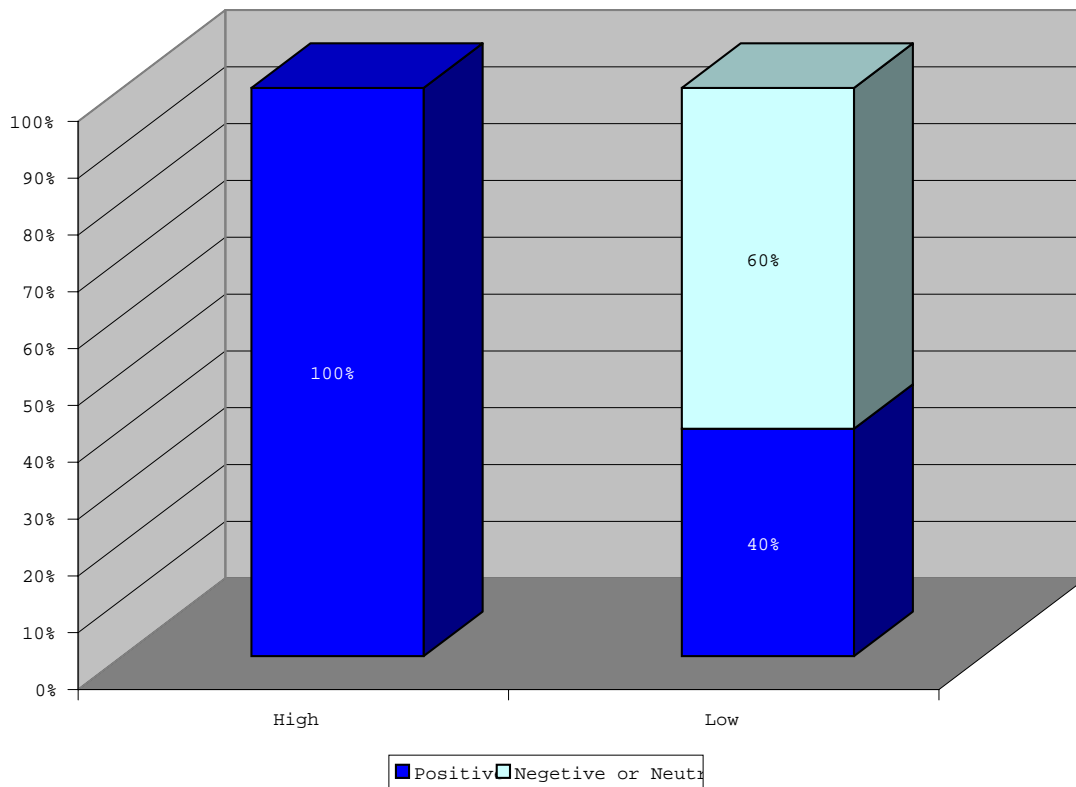
Classroom Climate Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	20%	60%	40%
Positive	80%	40%	60%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
3.333		0.068	

Classroom Climate



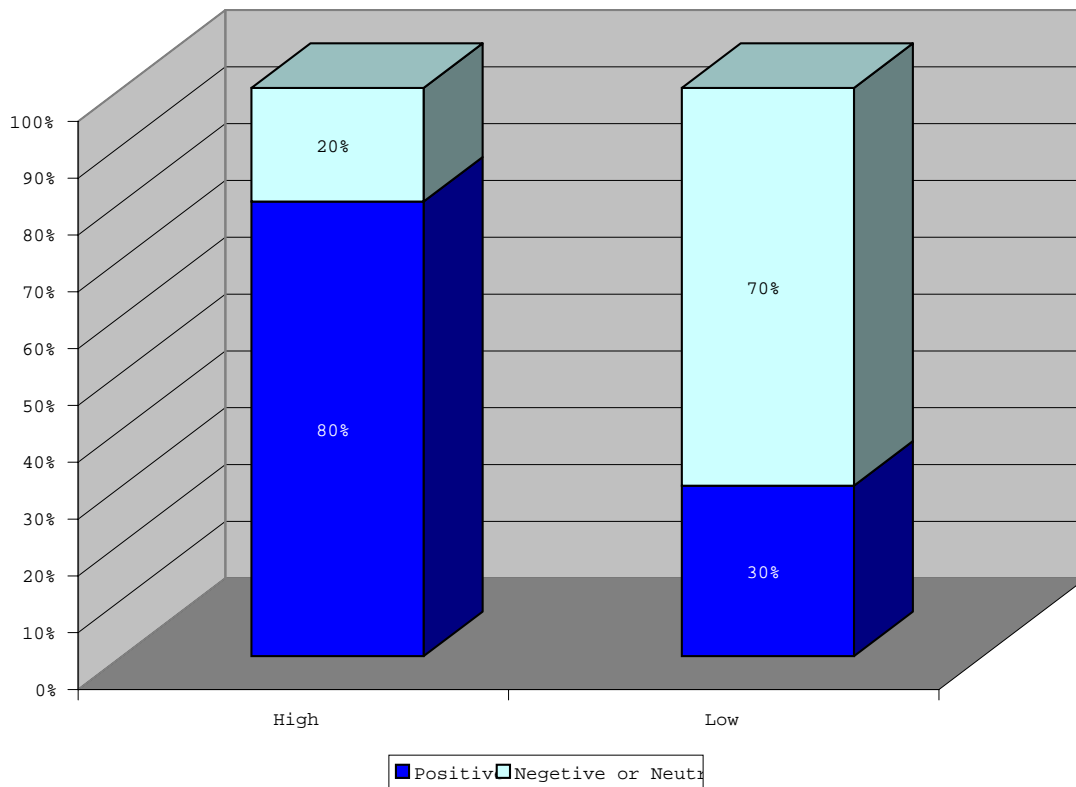
Emotions Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	0%	60%	30%
Positive	100%	40%	70%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
8.571		0.003	

Emotions



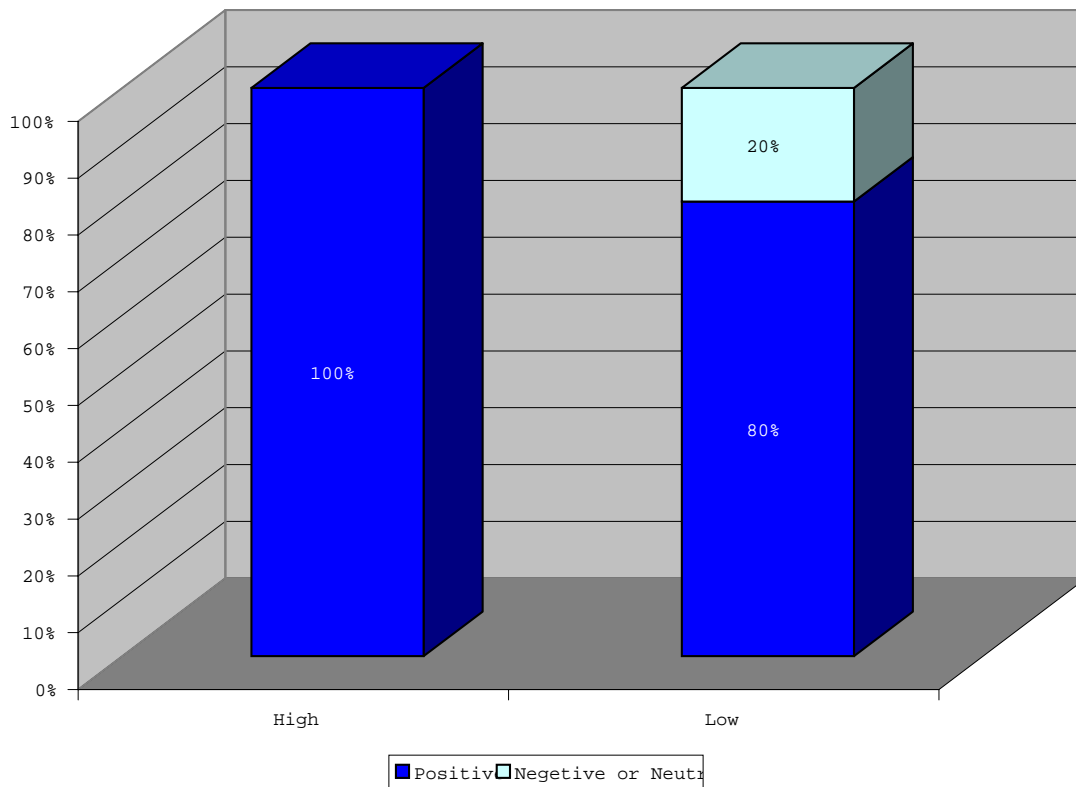
Logistics of the Classroom Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	20%	70%	45%
Positive	80%	30%	55%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
5.051		0.025	

Logistics of the Classroom



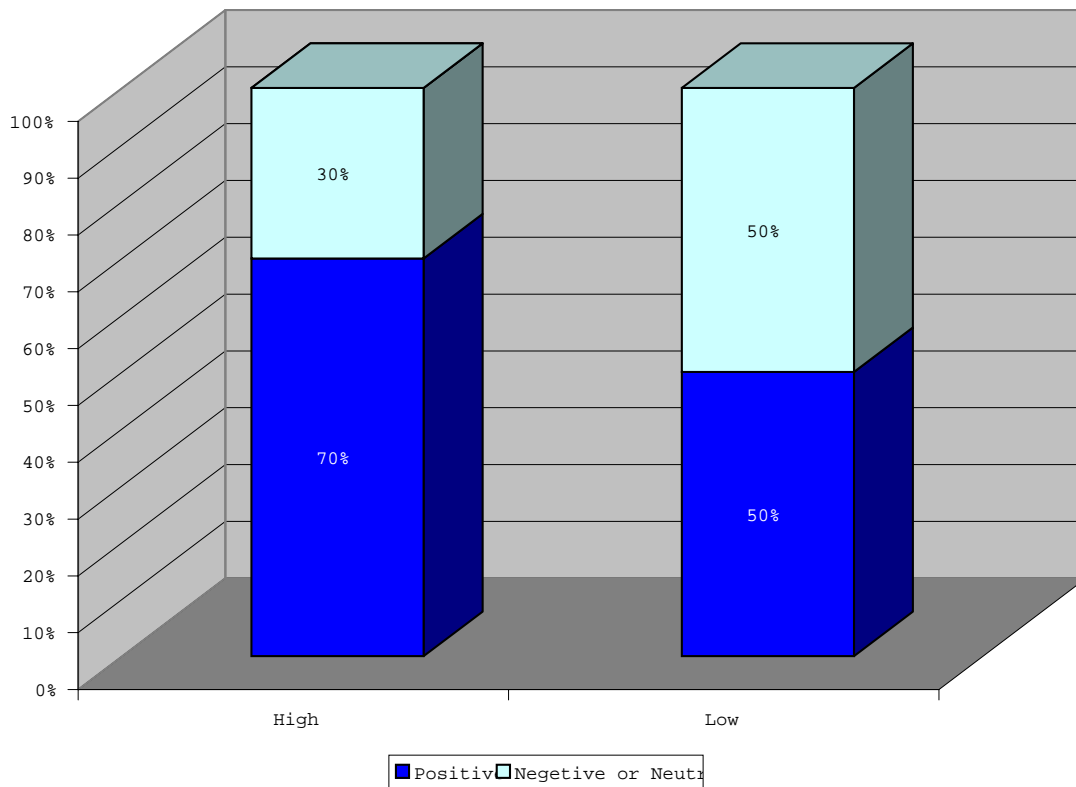
Payoff Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	0%	20%	10%
Positive	100%	80%	90%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
2.222		0.136	

Payoff



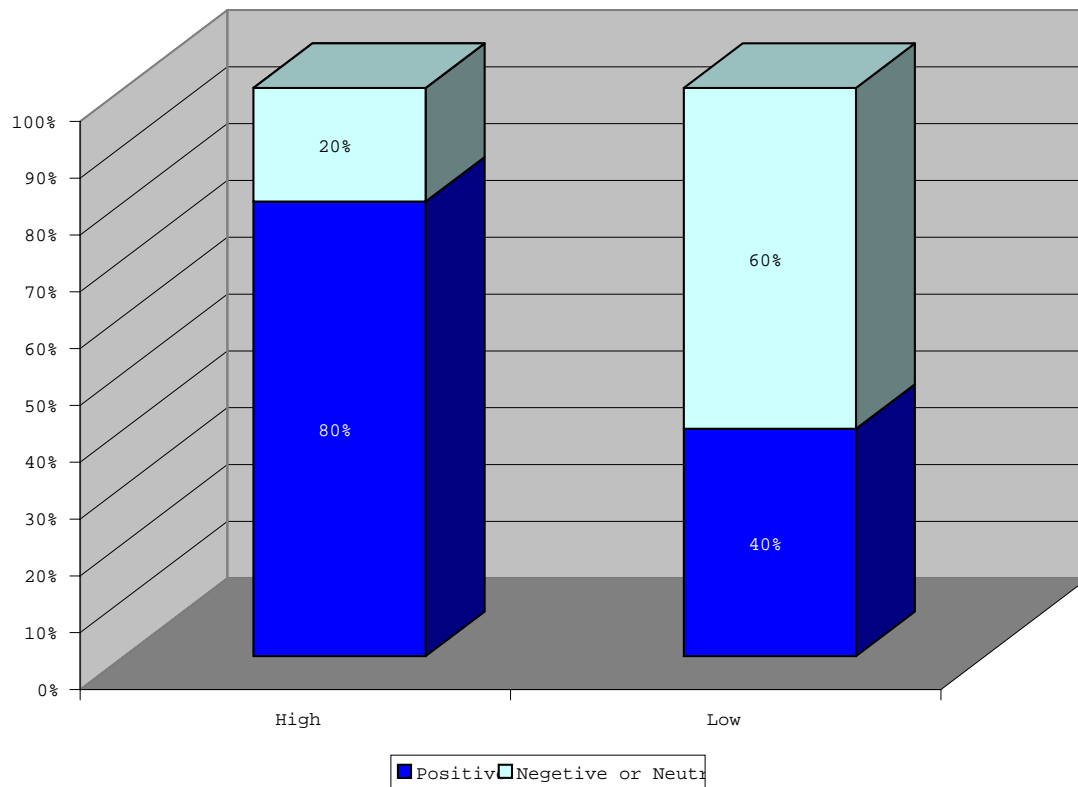
Roller Coaster (The Unexpected) Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	30%	50%	40%
Positive	70%	50%	60%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
.833		0.361	

Roller Coaster (The Unexpected)



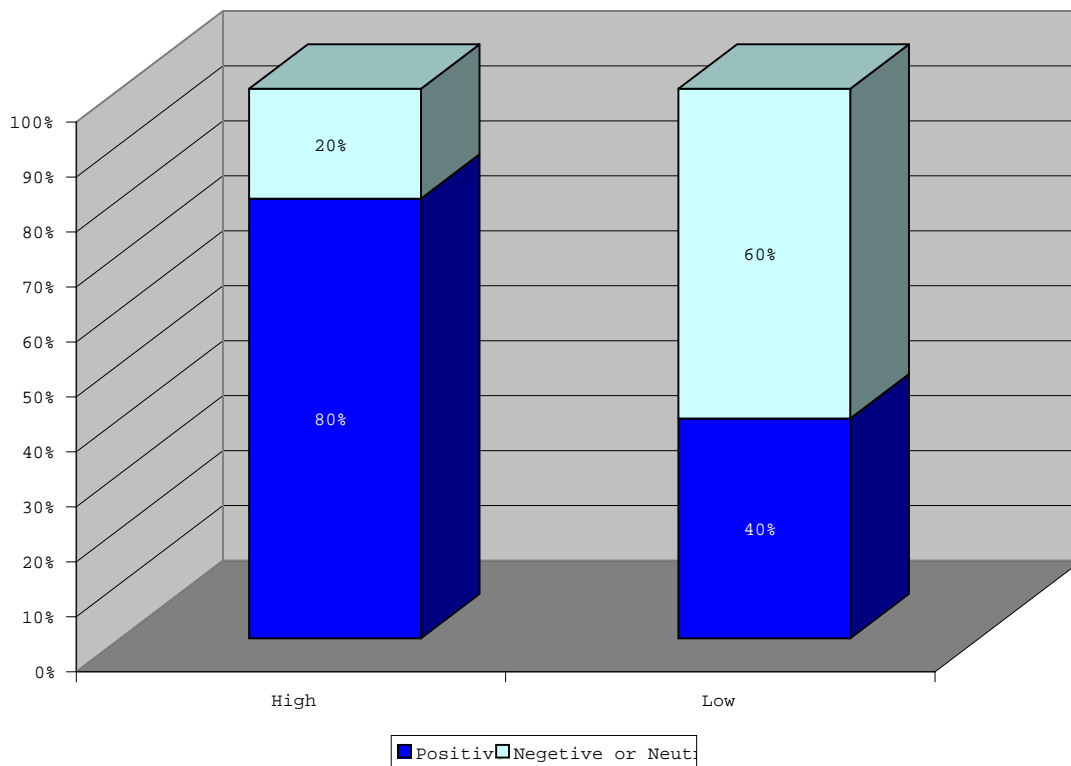
Workout (Classroom Interactions) Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	20%	60%	40%
Positive	80%	40%	60%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
3.333		0.068	

Workout (Classroom Interactions)



Overall Perceptions			
	High	Low	Total
Negative or Neutral	20%	60%	40%
Positive	80%	40%	60%
	100%	100%	100%
Chi Square		Significance Level	
3.333		0.068	

Overall Experience



Chapter 5

The System Speaks: An Interpretation

Comparing Affinities

An affinity, while representing a specific category of meaning, is by no means fixed or static in that all members of a constituency do not experience an affinity in the same way. In their discussion of categories in chapter 10 “Interpretation,” Northcutt & McCoy (2004) describe the dynamics as follows: “Elements that have the same meaning may have a different *timbre* or “feel” between constituencies, between an individual and a constituency, and therefore between individuals. “Timbre” is to “affinity” roughly as “value” is to “variable” in the quantitative research world. Just as temperature (variable) may range from hot to cold, timbre is a characteristic of an affinity that has a range. In general, there are three kinds of affinities: Structural, scalar, and dialectic.”

Lakoff (1991) observed, people form categories and subcategories by means of imaginative processes such as metonymy and metaphor that are not “transcendental,” which is to say the processes are more products of the mind than of an external reality. Although teachers may have agreed on the functional or structural features of the affinity, they attached different values to the features and to the affinity as a whole. The features or subaffinities of an affinity are more than just an unordered list. All comments that describe the affinity have some value placed on them, and it is this difference in value that creates the *timbre* of an affinity.

In line with this thinking, Northcutt & McCoy (2004) add: “Other affinities attend more to the value than to the structure. Descriptions of scalar affinities are usually short and do not require a long list of subaffinities. The range of expression for scalar affinities varies from one extreme to another, the extremes of which can be represented as a simple polarity. Participants might describe such affinities as having a range from pleasant to unpleasant, low to high, or negative to positive. An affinity that would fall into the structural definition would be the affinity of emotions.”

Those familiar with the theory of levels of measurement will recognize the first two affinity types as roughly analogous to the entire range of the levels from nominal to ratio. Traditional level of measurement concepts however, fails to adequately describe

the third type of affinity, the dialectic. Dialectical affinities, which quite often are the most interesting elements of a system, contain polarities, but are different from continuous affinities in that each polarity or opposition is required for the existence of the other. The affinity is a process, the reality of which is best understood as the dynamic interaction of opposing forces. For example, “Administrative Procedures” was identified by the participants of the study as a dialectic consisting of these subaffinities: legislation, campus procedures and standardized testing. These three subaffinities are more than just a nominal list; rather, the participants were describing an interactive process in which “procedures” are a dynamic resultant of the continuous interplay of outside forces affecting their ability to teach. The implications of this dialectical meaning of the affinity are that the subaffinities are essential components of the phenomenon of procedures even though they are not intertwined. A further implication of this dialectical meaning is that, if one of the forces ceases to be, then the phenomenon diminishes.

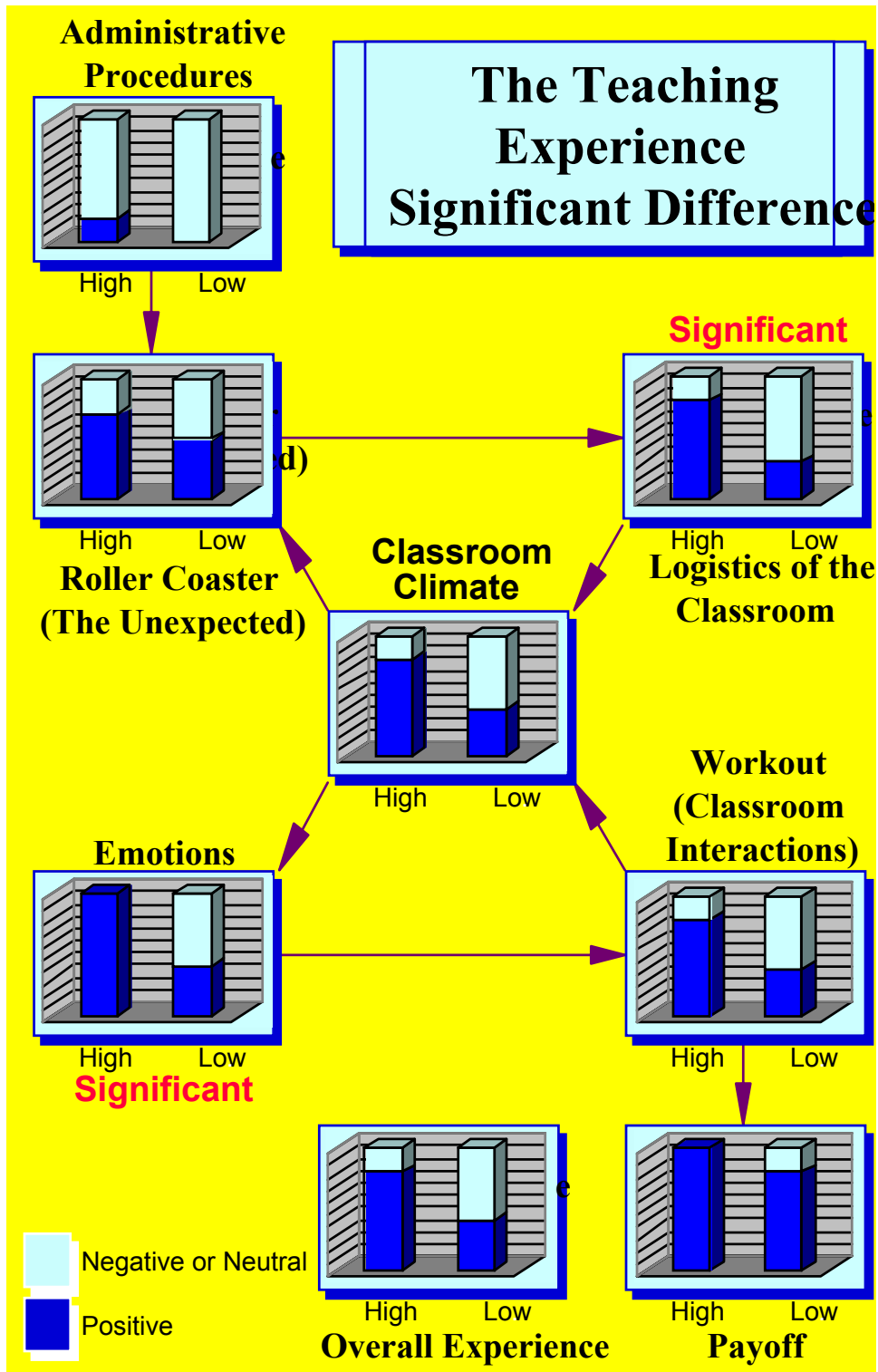
In this study, each affinity in all interviews was rated by the researcher on a simple Likert scale of value as described below and a contingency table analysis was conducted to obtain a more “quantitative” assessment of the affinity-by-affinity difference in value or timbre between the two groups of teachers. The SID that follows exhibits not only the overall structure of the mindmap for the two groups of teachers, but also displays a quantitative measure of the timbre of each affinity, highlighting the affinities that produced statistically significant differences.

Significant Differences

Taken as a whole, the two groups of teachers described and viewed teaching differently. The quality teachers had an overwhelming positive reaction to 6 out of the 7 affinities, while a number of teachers in the needs improvement group indicated negative or neutral reactions. Interviews were examined for direct indication of understanding or tone. A scale of 1 to 3 was used to record the experience (1=negative, 2=neutral, 3=positive). Significant differences were identified in two of the seven affinities:

Logistics and .03 and emotions at .02. There were two other affinities: climate and the workout at were near a significant difference at the .06 levels. Making these affinities noteworthy to investigate later in the paper. Moreover, the teachers' overall experience was in close proximity to significantly different again at the .06 levels.

For the quality teachers, 80% of the interviewed teachers, via the platform of language, expressed an overall positive experience, indicating an affirmative relationship in many of the individual affinities. Additionally, the other 20% of quality teachers indicated a neutral experience due to some negative or neutral effect with 'administrative procedures' and the 'roller coaster' affinities. Only 40% of the needs improvement teachers indicated an on the whole positive experience with teaching. However, 60% of the needs improvement teachers indicated a neutral or negative experience with teaching. For every affinity, teachers whose ratings were positive were more likely to be high performers than those whose ratings were neutral or negative. The strongest relationships were for Emotions and Logistics of the Classroom, (both statistically significant), followed by Classroom Climate and Workout (Classroom Interactions) (close to significance). This section will examine how the affinities are similar or different. The reasoning for the differences will be examined.



Administrative Procedures. Both groups of teachers identified administrative procedures as a negative reality of teaching; moreover, no significant difference was found between. A thorough analysis of the interviews resulted in a general feeling that the people making decisions were out of touch with what was needed in a classroom. Both groups of teachers espoused that lawmakers, at the federal and state levels, made either extremely demanding decisions, such as standardized testing, or trivial decisions like no candy in the classroom or reciting the Texas pledge. The teachers also identified that so called “experts” were always coming up with new and better ideas and programs changed frequently even if they were not helping kids be successful. This again, implies that many administrators and legislatures making the decisions are out of touch with what is really happening in schools. At a more local level, there were various rules to be followed each day for activities like attendance, assemblies and meetings. With increased accountability on all fronts, teachers are now required more than ever to document all details of instruction, as well as, children’s behavior. Paperwork is taking much of their time and some of it is redundant.

Roller coaster. The roller coaster is the unexpected events that can happen at a school requiring flexibility on the teachers’ part. The roller coaster springs from events like visitors, discipline problems and changing schedules. Since 85% of the sampling in both groups found the roller coaster to be a neutral or positive experience, there were no significant differences identified. Only three teachers in the sampling of both groups had a negative experience with this affinity.

Logistics. The logistics of the classroom are all of the requirements that must be met prior to the actual act of teaching taking place. Both groups of teachers described this affinity as planning, assessments, and surprisingly enough dealing with parents. This affinity revealed a significant difference between the two groups at the .03 levels. The needs improvement teachers noted that they felt overwhelmed with the amount of work

that went into the planning and execution of lessons, as well as, the demand to meet the needs of students on an individual basis. However, the quality teachers' descriptions ranged from knowing the curriculum to collaboration with colleagues.

Classroom Climate. Teachers characterized this affinity as creating a safe, caring and nurturing environment filled with humor and students attaining self-sufficiency. Since climate is the affinity in which all other affinities of the system will flow, it will be interesting to more closely examine the timbre surrounding this area. This affinity did not reveal a statistical difference at the .10 levels because both groups of teachers clustered around the positive to neutral tendencies with only 30% of the needs improvement group describing negative reactions.

Emotions. Teachers experienced the full spectrum of emotions from joy to heartbreak. They may have nurturing feelings on one day and frustration the next. Yet there was a significant difference at the .01 levels between the two groups of teachers. The quality teachers noted a 100% positive tone to the emotions surrounding teaching while only 40% of the needs improvement teachers found the emotions of teaching to be positive. Teachers in the needs improvement group described teaching as draining, frustrating and overwhelming. The quality teachers equated the emotional aspects of teaching for example: "loving the children," as closely related to the rewards of teaching.

The Workout. This is the actual act of teaching. Interviewees described this as hands on, collaborative, entertaining and pressure filled. The significance level was .06 between the two groups. Close enough to require a close investigation of the differences and their effect on the overall system. This is an area the teachers expressed that they can finally apply the abundance of knowledge and skills gained in teacher preparation programs. It is also one of the few areas in the system in which the teachers actually have some control.

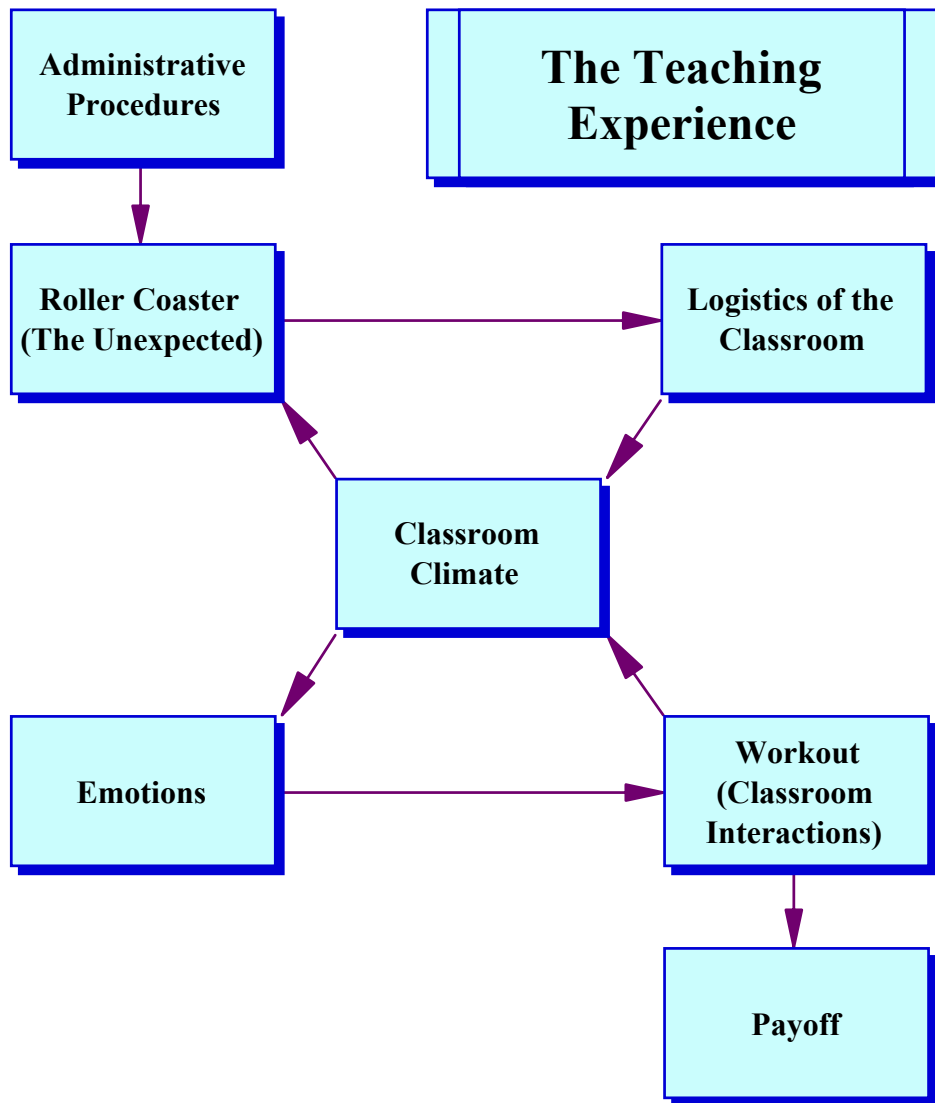
Payoff. The payoff was a positive perception of all teachers in both groups, thus no statistical significant difference was identified. Teachers acknowledged the most rewarding aspect of the job was seeing the students grow and being an integral part of their lives. Interviews revealed that monetary rewards, such as pay or insurance benefits

were low. Yet, the majority of teachers in both groups found the payoff in the intrinsic rewards. Both groups did note that they found administrative and parental appreciation part of the payoff.

Overall. To quality teachers the overall teaching experience was positive while needs improvement teachers struggled with all seven affinities in the overall IQA system. They identified that things needed to change in the system such as: pay, time, more help with students and less regulations and procedures. The quality teachers noted that at the end of the day it was all worth the efforts. One explanation for the difference is that the needs improvement teachers identifying the system of outside forces as the problem whereas the quality teachers' focus was primarily on themselves.

Why the Difference?

The systems represented by the teachers' SID's (system influence diagram) provides a basis for understanding why the two teacher groups experienced teaching differently. However, the meat of the differences came from the language utilized by the teachers themselves. Both of these conceptions will be analyzed through the structure of the teacher created SID. Upon close examination, we see the first significant difference lies in the affinity of logistics.



Does Anyone Have a Plan?

Logistics is the planning and preparation that goes into teaching. These activities could range from lesson plans to assessing student needs. Many late hours are spent in this affinity gathering materials and creating learning environments. With this much weight in one area, it is no wonder the descriptions are vivid and the feelings or timbre are strong.

Falling behind administrative procedures and the proverbial roller coaster, logistics is the first opportunity that we see teachers have control over one of the affinities in the system. Although both groups of teachers have to deal with administrative procedures and the roller coaster, the quality teachers' plan or control for them in the logistics phase. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher plans then reacts to the roller coaster. This is a vital difference between the quality teacher and the needs improvement teacher. In close comparison of the interview transcripts, several explanations were identified that could possibly lead to the difference in teacher groups.

Quality teachers employ a cyclical evaluation of the system. This evaluation would encompass their teaching effectiveness, student performance and success in the organization. Continual evaluation provided the quality teacher with the tools needed to be more flexible and better meet individual student needs.

Needs improvement teachers did not readily access their own effectiveness; thus are unable to make adjustments easily. They also noted much more difficulty dealing with individual student needs. Many examples were cited: "I need an aid in my room to help with the learning disabled students, " or " They are all on different levels so it is hard to teach them."

Quality teachers repeatedly cited examples of a team approach to instruction. They also sought outside training to better deal with special needs students, as well as, utilized collaborative planning to devise strategies for differentiation of individual student needs. Whereas, needs improvement teachers felt frustrated yet did nothing to break the cycle or seek outside assistance. A feeling of helplessness permeated the interviews.

If the system breaks down for logistical reasons, this leaves the needs improvement moving into the climate affinity with negative baggage.

What's the Temperature?

Both teacher groups defined climate as the need to create a safe, self-sufficient and caring learning environment. This affinity was very close in statistical difference at

the .06 levels with 80% of quality teachers identifying this as a positive aspect of teaching. While, 60% of needs improvement teachers found this facet negative. The difference can be summed up in two statements:

Quality teachers: How we teach affects the climate.

Needs improvement teachers: The climate effects how we teach.

The needs improvement teachers focused much of their attentions on rules and discipline. The systems in place were many times reactive rather than opposed to proactive. There are always some students who are not going to respond positively all the time. When this occurred, the needs improvement teacher was at the mercy of allowing that student to control the climate in their classrooms. How the students were behaving that day was the deciding factor in how well that teacher taught.

The quality teacher relied on the proactive strategies of a colorful, fun environment, incorporating humor and nurturing. Again, we see the quality teacher adopt big picture strategies. For example: if a student has a poor home life, the teacher may arrange for the child to eat breakfast at school. This is reflective that they see climate as extending past their own classrooms.

The quality teacher accepts the responsibility that they are the deciding factor in that classroom. Their ability to do a good job on all pieces of the puzzle called teaching; they will have the impact on climate, not the other way around. The needs improvement teacher is left to the mercy of the system since they gave away the control of their own climate.

Where Do I Go From Here?

As noted in the composite interview system diagram, the first loop of affinities consisted of the foundation. This includes the procedural components, planning and unplanned roller coaster. The second loop was titled edification dealing with emotions,

teaching and payoffs. Climate was the linking pin between the two systems feedback loops; it is a deciding factor on which way the teacher goes next in the IQA system. For example: if the needs improvement teacher fails at the logistic then climate may be negative. If the climate is negative, this could lead the needs improvement teacher back through the loop to the out of control roller coaster feeling. The quality teacher, on the other hand, placed the required administrative procedures and the roller coaster within their logistical planning. This action alone leaves them less vulnerable to falling into a negative climate or repeat the same loop. Climate will ultimately lead to the second loop in the system, which begins with the emotions of teaching.

Tell Me How You Really Feel!

Emotions were an affinity that was identified as significantly different at the .03 levels. Since emotions can vary from joy to frazzled in the course of an hour, it stands to reason that there would be perception differences in this area. The disparity between the two groups concerning emotions is tinged with a trace of the climate issues. In that, the needs improvement teacher once again gives up the power over his/her emotions to outside forces and carries negative luggage from the first feedback loop. This would explain the significant difference with 100% of quality teachers scoring emotions as a positive affinity; while, only 40% of needs improvement teachers found this affinity to be positive. Even though the data speaks to the differences, the voice of the teachers roars louder.

The needs improvement teacher interviews identified specific emotions that reinforce the findings. They clearly stated that the job was not rewarding and many times caused burn out. Or, teachers do not last because the benefits are just not there. Teachers further expressed emotions of having your feeling always out of whack and sometimes wanting to cry. These teachers were well aware of their feelings, but did not realize that by their chosen path through the IQA system. They were setting themselves up for failure. Once these teachers allowed administrative procedures and the roller coaster to

dictate the logistics and planning, they were vulnerable to some of the grimmer realities of education. From there, the stage was set for the climate to be negative thus the chances of emotions being positive were already low. All of this was happening before the teacher even gets a chance to do what they perceive as their job: to teach. That is why the workout affinity was close to significantly different at the .06 levels. As teachers continue the drive through the system, the luggage they were carrying just became a steamer trunk. Now they have packed their emotions. All of this culminated in the workout - the actual teaching.

I Went to School for This!

Both groups of teachers realized that effective teaching strategies require some flexibility and thinking on the fly. Teaching needs to be hands on and entertaining to students. Teaching also requires much collaboration and teamwork. However, recognizing what needs to be done and getting to done are two very different effects.

The quality teacher has created a system with continual feedback loops for success. They first recognized the affinities that were out of their control, such as: administrative procedures and the roller coaster. However, as soon as the first controllable affinity, logistics, came about, they capitalized on this opportunity by including as many of the roller coaster variables as possible. They also revealed high-level organizational skills and much interaction with others to aid in their success. This leaves the quality teacher arriving at the workout ready to implement all the training they have received, ultimately leading them to a positive payoff.

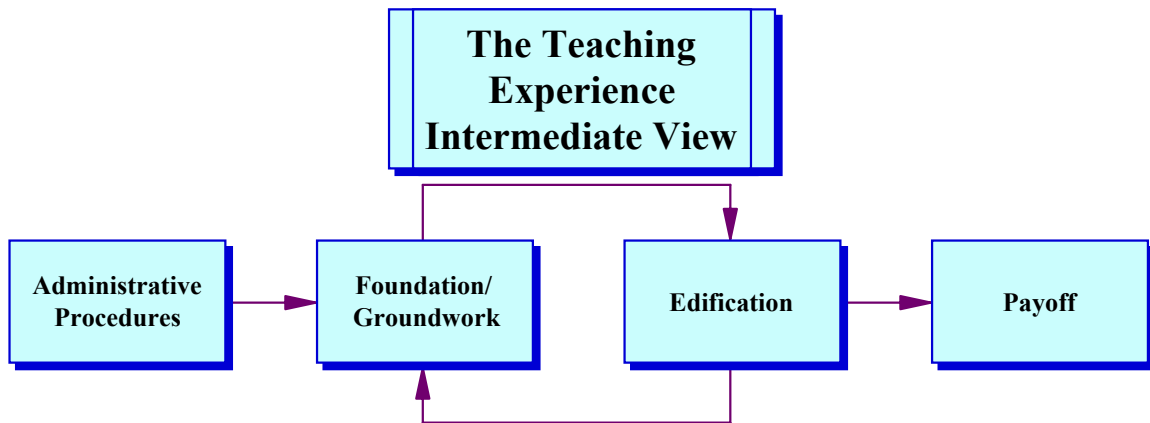
The quality teachers shared hands on planning, collaboration with team members and worked well under daily school pressures. While the needs improvement teacher felt there was never enough time to get things done and sometimes did minuscule planning. The timbre was very much one of overwhelmed and helpless. This leaves the needs improvement teacher arriving at the payoff window with no ticket in hand. "Where are my rewards," and "I went to school for this" were the mantra of the day.

So why is the majority of university preparation and school district professional development targeted at the workout affinity? Both groups of teachers have been well trained in what needs to be done. However, if we want the needs improvement teachers to be successful in this affinity, the focus must extend to include the earlier portions of the system. This warrants us taking a larger look at the system itself, including both feedback loops.

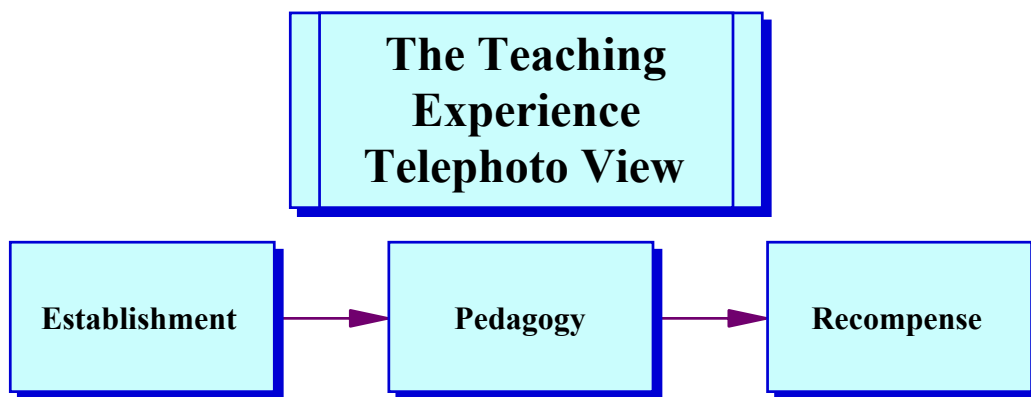
Walking Through the Looking Glass

If we take the looking glass and magnify the feedback loops, we get will see how these two groups of teachers better fit into the overall scheme of education. This allows us to apply the concepts from this suburban school district to the multifaceted prism of education.

Administrative procedures include all outside forces. These forces can embrace state and federal legislation, district policies and campus regulations. What we have identified as the roller coaster, logistics and climate can now be renamed the foundation/groundwork. By lumping the three affinities together, we can take a closer look at what part preparation plays in the system. The more human affinities of climate, emotions and interactions will be renamed edification. Note that climate is utilized in both because it was the linking pin of the two feedback loops: all had to continually pass through the climate, creating and recreating it each time. And lastly, the payoff, it stays consistent throughout education. It may be different for all individuals, but it is either there or it is not.



By applying what we know of quality teachers, we see that in a linear model they have the skills to flow to the payoff. The groundwork of controlling for procedures and planning is firm, so they move to edification with a positive tone. Ultimately, they will receive the payoff and cycle back through the loop to revising due to administration. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher struggles with acceptance of administrative procedures, does not plan well in the groundwork, and many times spins out of the linear system before edification. Note the arrows indicating the loop where the needs improvement teacher can get caught in a cycle of planning to get edification- not receiving it and back to the drawing board for planning again. They do not make it to payoff. To even further apply our concepts, we will look at the system from a global perspective.



Changing the name, administrative procedures, to a more encompassing Establishment, produces the global view. Pedagogy is the system of affinities that made up the central loop of the teacher system. Reward was changed to a more global term, Recompense. In all areas of education, the establishment makes the rules. Made even more difficult by the fact that the rules are always changing; thus, teachers must be always changing. That led to pedagogy. In order to keep up with the changing administrative mandates, pedagogy also continually changes. Best practice is forever being reinvented. That is why you hear so many veteran teachers saying: “I did this twenty years ago” This lets us know that as much as things change; they stay the same. That is why this system is applicable on a larger scale to encompass all teachers and schools. As for the recompense, it is defined as something given up for a loss, in other words: to compensate. This was chosen because all teachers in both groups spoke to the hardships of teaching. None said how easy it was. Therefore, recompense is the rewards you get at the end of each day that keeps you coming back.

Since the establishment drives all systems, it is worth our time to take a more comprehensive look at the magnanimous impact they have. Since the first reform push, in 1983, with A Nation at Risk, the mindset of this country has been that educators need to produce better results. This mindset has permeated legislation at the federal and state level culminating with the current implementation struggles of No Child Left Behind (2001). The trickle down effects of federal and state mandates caused considerable dissonance with the teachers in this study. Several teachers, in both groups, identified requirements such as: the Texas Pledge and no candy for children as being unnecessary. The timbre of establishment was that they were making decision for educators without being in the classrooms and fully understanding the dynamics of schools. It plays out as a double-edged sword in that increased accountability and requirements have proven to narrow achievement gaps and students are out performing test standards from twenty years ago. However, we must ask: at what price?

Our needs improvement teachers are many times not coming back. They are unable to get to recompense. All they found was the loss. Just like the teachers, I cannot control the administration; I am part of it. But, later in the paper, we will address possible solutions to the pedagogy aspect that will allow all teachers to get their just reward. Just as the zoom lens allowed us to view the system as a whole. Much can also be learned from the teacher's themselves. This is a closer look at how quality teachers and needs improvement teachers truly differ.

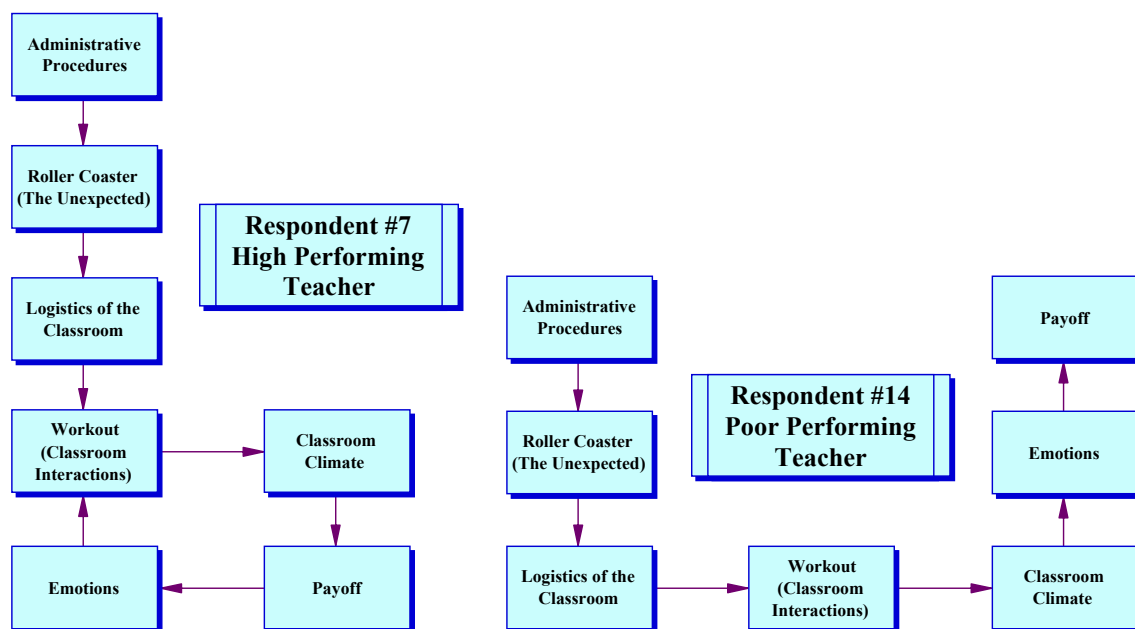
Individual Variation

Individual variation is another source of comparison for interpretive purposes. Individuals may be compared to each other or to composite descriptions or mindmaps. The individuals themselves may be selected for comparison because either they are typical of some constituency or group or because they vary in some interesting way from other individuals or a group.

By comparing the structure of the SIDs (systems influence diagram) of the two IQA case study teachers, we see the SIDs as slightly different. The structural differences between the two teachers suggests that, at a gross level, the needs improvement teacher has no feedback loops thus, indicating no mechanism for overcoming negative affinities. Whereas, the quality teacher has a feedback loop where teaching, emotions, climate and payoff are integrated providing a system of influences that allow for the correction of failed affinities. The differences in the timbre (feelings) of the affinities are also quite pronounced.

Examining individual differences can add some interpretive meat to the skeleton just described. The rationale for selecting individuals depends on the nature of the study: "Typical" representatives of different constituencies are often compared, or representatives deliberately selected to represent a range on some interesting dimension may be compared. Since the two teachers selected had different SIDs, the former criterion was utilized. The next section illustrates comparisons at the affinity level for

two individuals: The first teacher examined was selected as an outstanding teacher, and the second was in need of improvement. Teachers progress through the system on their own personal journey. For the needs improvement teacher, the path was linear. The quality teacher found herself recursing through a loop. What follows is the journey of the two teachers, each typical of the path taken by the teachers in the two categories of poor performing or quality. A look at the teachers' individual systems quickly reveals evidence that will help explain the differences.



Administrative Procedures

Administrative procedures are the driver for both systems. The difference here can best be examined by comparing their timbre (feelings) or reaction to this affinity.

Good. “We have morning duty once, for a whole week, when our team rotates. I am E so I have it next week and I have not had it yet. Every eight days we have lunch duty. What we have done on our team is, we are working our lunch and it is real hard to be eating and squirting ketchup

and opening milk cartons. So what we do, we go outside right afterwards, recess is built in right behind our lunch, so then the other three team members will take my kids so I can have thirty minutes in here, down in the teacher's lounge without children. Lesson plans are required to be turned in on Monday morning. I do my lesson plans well in advance. I know it is important for a teacher to have a plan and I like to have the administration know what is going on. The principal will look at them and say: 'I saw that you had your math tied in through language arts and social studies was coming this way,' so she can see how I am integrating and getting my subjects across- getting my activities across subject areas. We are big on security with name badges and we are expected to ask people in the hallway, for the security for others, and ourselves keeping everyone safe here. Faculty meetings, they are important, is it time for us to touch base. Here I feel like there is a really good balance when sometimes there is none. At the beginning of the year, we have been seeing them more often. We are working on dismissal procedures so we can have a good flow here within the building and everybody is brainstorming and saying what they are doing and then we are tweaking it, worked on it for a week and then yesterday faculty meeting, what can we do a little bit different. We have got three classes going this way but somebody is coming this way. Let us see if we can get everybody to go the same direction. Looking at the September calendar I noticed that there was some computer training 3:30 to 4:30 coming up. When I was on maternity leave and got things together for the classroom, I said, I am getting all this together, I was still being docked 200 per day that I was not here. Some districts you are docked the sub pay, but I was told, you are not there working. I said, 'I got all this done and they said, that was you; all you needed was the lesson plans.' But I had everything organized and that is just the way, I wanted my kids and the sub to be successful. So when I see things, after

hearing that, when I see things that go into my family time after 3:40, I kind of get a little ruffled and go, you know what, I only get paid from, da, da, da. I do not like those kinds of things. I am here early in the morning. I am here at 7:15 just to get my day started because I want to be successful. I do not want to be falling on my face and needing to be picked up. You know, there is give and take.”

Bad. “This is only my second year. Everything, I am not even familiar with everything yet. People expect you to know things and nobody tells you anything. When you do not do something you are blamed. That is really frustrating. There is no training for this. It is just on your work-you learn basis. There are a lots of procedures, so everything, it is still very confusing. Nobody tells you anything. Referring kids for special things, special ed, or speech or LT and all that. I do not know how to go about it and just like, I guess that is like my big concern is how to get the kids the help they need. The little things too, like signing the attendance sheet. Nobody told me that. I did not know that, just the little things like how emailing works. I did not know that either, all the little things.”

Interpretive Comparison

The quality teacher notes that turning in her lesson plans on Monday mornings helps her to be prepared and obtain collaborative ideas on how to better integrate the activities. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher feels that turning in the plans is just another administrative requirement that is not necessary. As you will see throughout the comparison examples, many times it is not that the teachers are performing different tasks but the way they perceive the tasks is different.

Quality teachers continually referred to a growing number of files and folders filled with materials for various topics and the lower performing teacher did not feel she

had the materials needed to extend beyond the textbooks. They also differed in their perceptions of outside assistance. The low performing teacher found it intrusive and described as “they should not tell us what to do until they have worked in our classrooms.” However, the quality teacher felt strongly that outside input was necessary for growth and improvement. It was noted by the quality teacher that team meetings and faculty meetings were a time to share ideas. The lower performing teacher felt these meetings were one more thing to do. To extend the concept of team: the quality teacher viewed herself as part of a team in regards to assigned duties and collective rules. The poorer performing teacher again felt these were unnecessary evils that prevented her from teaching. The needs improvement teacher also exuded a feeling of helplessness. She even noted: “I don’t like the rules, but there is not use fighting them.”

Since this was not an area that revealed a significant difference, it stands to reason that the two groups of teachers agreed on some aspects of administrative procedures; one being the continual change of school programs. They noted that curricular programs seemed to run in fads that changed as soon as you made the materials and learned the process. There were also closely aligned concerns regarding administration not being organized and prepared. This will become more apparent in the roller coaster when decisions could have been made and disseminated much earlier. The increased amount of documentation was another area of agreement. Things such as: textbooks, attendance and special need referrals were lengthy, redundant and time consuming to both groups.

The legislature was a point of contingency for the two teachers. The increased testing of students obviously added not only time to their workload, but a considerable amount of pressure. Also, the special interest issues; such as: the Texas Pledge, were noted as “A ridiculous waste of time.” Again, we see the increased outside mandates rear their ugly head in the sight of teachers.

Roller coaster

Roller coaster is a secondary driver in the system that has great influence over all affinities that follow. The quality teacher realized that the better prepared she was the more likely she was to not react negatively to the roller coaster, thus controlling for climate, emotions and eventually the payoff. There was an understanding that many times you cannot control for the roller coaster- only prepare for it. Some of the examples cited were difficult children; the teacher noted that she relied on peers, administration and most importantly being flexible. “Things are going to come up. You learn to weed out what you need to move to the next day or maybe next week.”

Good. “It is the unexpected, well, like you said before about the assembly thing, you have to make sure that you are prepared for the unexpected because you have to know the unexpected is going to happen. If you do what you are supposed to do and you are pretty prepared and organized, you will be expecting the unexpected! Otherwise, it is going to be chaotic again and stressful. Hopefully that, like I said, you are prepared for the unexpected and if you have a good classroom climate and a student suddenly vomits on their desk, hopefully the other kids are pretty much at task still and going on about their business and not creating more problems for you so you can quickly call a janitor and get that taken care of. If you are in the middle of a lesson and girl cuts her leg on her pencil point, hopefully you can easily take care of that and either send her to the nurse or bandage her up yourself without ruining the lesson that is going on. The unexpected can affect your emotions because anything can come up and that can affect how you feel. You could be, things could be going great and then all of the sudden a kid could go bonkers and that can affect a lot of things. I think that the unexpected roller coaster aspect will affect your emotions. You still will have to change and alter some things, but at least you will be more prepared and you will know. For example: unexpectedly the other day got an email that said: do you want an intern? I said sure,

and I read the next email and it was somebody from UT saying, thanks for wanting an intern. So, you know, I felt like my hands were really tied. I was thinking, is this going to be a good situation... I am turning around going, I have this extra set of hands, and how can I utilize this person within my classroom. It is going to be good. Sometimes you have unexpected with children's behavior. You do not know how they are going to be. I had a child once who was bi-polar. And you did not know from one moment to the next. He would rage. I had to deal with his up and downs, my up and downs with that and then other children who would see this. You just rely on cohorts, administration, when you need that kind of flexibility. My whole heart is in it. I have been known to dance on tables. I have been known to skip around here. I think if your heart is into it the kids know that. I like to present my materials in a creative way, whether it is a puppet or something suspenseful in a bag. Giving them clues. First I am asking them, what do you see, having them use their senses, listening to their friends, gathering information. My intern commented: There is so much up and down and what he meant by that was, they are not just here at this table or at that carpet working. We are here and then we go over here. And it is not always whole group. I might have groups over here and groups over there. You see me hopping around monitoring. You will see me working!"

Bad. "Yesterday, we had an assembly called and we were to be there from 8:30 to 9:30 and I was aware of it the day before. So it is like you just have to teach what you planned to teach during that time during a different time. This morning we had a fire drill first thing and so it just took a little bit of time out of our schedule. But, I still have to go back and re-teach, or teach where we were when we were interrupted. I think the administration is the roller coaster,

basically, in a lot of regards. They have things that they are required to fulfill. Some principals are better managers than others probably and some communicate a little bit better. Like for instance, in the situation that I was involved in recently, this school was expecting me to be here on Friday morning to set up this classroom. That school had me going and teaching at that school. So I called at 8:30 to find out if I could stop by after school or something to pick up a key, to meet the principal, to see my classroom and they are like what, we are expecting you over here today? My orders from my principal were, be packed up at 3 to be moved over to this school on that Friday and I was teaching on that Friday and I was to report to duty on Monday. This school was expecting me on Friday. And then the principal assured me Thursday night, oh, I will call all the parents and everybody and tell them what is happened, and let the parents explain to the children what has happened. Nobody called my children. My children came in the classroom Friday morning, precious class. And they look at the walls and they are bare. And of course, being polite children that they are, they sit down at their seats and they just go right on with what I want them to do. Finally I asked them, do you wonder why the walls are bare? One or two of them said, yeah, I guess we do, but we just did not say anything because we did not know. Which is really unusual. I have such a sweet, polite class. I did not say anything too them, but I knew that nothing had been done. So, that presented a dilemma for me. And here I am, a tenured teacher with a good teaching record and everything, and what is this looking like? I also think about, is an assembly that is going to be worthwhile to them, a good lesson on something, but it affects the teacher because she has to get that time back to teach

what they missed. I try to be flexible and as a teacher you are trying, you are going to have...so just expect it and deal with it. That is kind of what I think. Well, we do have a lot of schedule change. That frustrates me. Last year, almost every other week there was some schedule change either for ARI or special ed. It is like all these different things that change all the time; plus, like the kids, are constantly leaving my class and going to speech. Once those kids come back I have kids that go to ESL. Then those kids come back and I have kids that go to LT. They are constantly leaving my class. I do not know how to deal with that. I cannot stop the whole class just because of those kids. It is basically what you can get is what you can get. That is really frustrating, scheduling.”

Interpretive Comparison

The overwhelming tone of the two teachers summarizes the difference in this affinity. Whereas, the quality teacher describes teaching all students to the point of “dancing on the table.” The needs improvement teacher seems bitter about the schedule changes to meet the individual needs of all students; such as: special education, speech, English as a Second Language and reading. The tone of placing the children first in priority was also absent when the needs improvement teacher was being asked to change schools due to low enrollment. Instead of attempting to heal and smooth the transfer of children, she immediately drew attention to the bare walls. It was glossed with a tone of malevolence rather than healing.

Besides the tone or timbre of these two teachers, there were other obvious differences. The quality teacher noted that you “expect the unexpected.” While the needs improvement teacher found one days notice for an assembly not sufficient. Some of the examples cited in the interview were fire drills, cafeteria issues, dismissal and entrance,

as well as, assemblies. The quality teacher viewed these as school issues in which all teachers had a stake, whereas, the needs improvement teacher was questioning the need for such practice. Or, in the case of the assembly- was it informative and worth the time?

In addition to assembly times, the quality teacher was honest that her job could not be performed at the same level if she was not at school by 7:15 or so. This allowed her to feel confident that she was prepared to handle any changes that may occur. Time of arrival and departure for the needs improvement teacher was eerily absent from the interview.

The quality teacher was also verbal about asking and utilizing support from other school personnel. In her interview she briefly mentioned the nurse, the administrator and the counselor. Indicating there are resources available, but you have to be willing to seek them out.

It can be noted that both teachers shared some of the same concerns and issues: one being the behavior of some students and parents. Again, it came back to the attitude of the teacher in how she reacted or felt about the situation. The quality teacher noted that: “kids will be kids.” While the needs improvement teacher quoted: “You have more ADHD types of kids... it is just like, here they are, deal with them.” The teachers share the same roller coaster, but do not share the same level of understanding or empathy. Parents were considered in this affinity as well. The quality teacher identified a level of understanding that many parents are single and may be losing their jobs. While the needs improvement teacher responded: “I don’t understand why they cannot read to their kids for five minutes.”

The two teachers responses to the roller coaster lead into the next affinity- Logistics. In that, they both noted: it is how well you prepare for the unexpected that makes the difference.

Logistics

Logistics is the third driver of the systems behind administrative procedures and the roller coaster.

Good. “It all comes to being prepared. It all comes down to being organized and, I know that I have to do report cards. I make sure that if I have six weeks in a reporting period, which I am going to have at least six grades per subject. I am going to try and have a grade per week, a test per week. So I make sure when I do my lesson plans, I make sure I have at least one test to do with that lesson that week. What helps me is I teach during the week and I test on Friday so I know when I am on the weekend grading a test, I already have all the tests that I need. If I did not have time to give a science test, the following week, I will make sure that I give one test, not two. So you should have at least six per marking period. I know if I am prepared and my students are prepared that I am organized and they are organized so they pretty much go hand in hand. I like to have organization not only with me but also with them, making sure there are no loose papers in the desk and we have a folder for every subject and everything has their place. Sometimes I have my folders color-coded so everyone knows that if we are working in science you are taking out the green folder. I want to make it as organized as possible for them. If they are organized and I am organized everything runs smoothly and there is more learning-taking place. Students see teachers, they know who is not prepared and who is prepared. They know who is a good teacher and who is not a good teacher. I have got a plethora of files and folders and books and things back in my little closet and I gather information for it. Kindergarten is so material, cut, paste, trace. So we have lots of extra materials to get ready for the different activities. Then what I do, I am planning Monday, Tuesday, I like to have all my plans done on Wednesday. Thursday, which I will do later on today, I have bins with the

days of the week labeled and then each day has that stuff in it. I can just grab Thursday's bucket or if I were to be absent somebody could come in with my sub-box there and take Friday's bucket and go, oh, math is here, I am reading this book for language arts, we are doing this in social studies. At the beginning of the year I send home a survey, which can help at home, who can help with fieldtrips. I use that as my little database as to who can help me with different things. So things that I need traced go home with a pattern. I give them a good amount of dates. That takes planning on me but yet in the long run they are helping me get that stuff done. I have different record keeping type systems that I have changed over the year. They are tracing instead of having them put stuff in a pile, and then I would not know who did what during centers. I have a clip with their name. They just stick it on the other side of their clip. Centers are pretty much self-sufficient. I need activities for each of these centers when we have center time; there is always gathering and organizing. Then, you know, I get my stuff organized and then from my plans I write very detailed plans with an objective. There is usually a delivery of a concept and then there is an activity that goes with it. The maintaining of that and what do you do with these products when they are done, getting that organized and keeping things for conferences and sending other things home. Then you start all over again."

Bad. "The books that we do help. What I wanted my class to be was hands-on, but I do not get the items that I need to have a hands-on classroom. Science, I have nothing. I do not know where to go to get them, like even weights and measurements and scales. I do not have anything that is hands-on. I do not have any of the visual. Everything is from the textbook -which can get very boring. Just like same old thing over and over again. I cannot do all of it myself because it is a lot, like

three, four subjects and everything is hands-on. It gets expensive. I have to go out and buy these things for myself. I do not know where to go get them. I had to go out and buy everything and I cannot afford everything to be hands-on. Well, that makes, I have to keep thinking, when they are here, when they are not here. Who is going to have to go to content mastery and learn it later? That does, slow down their learning, I think, because the kids who are not here all the time will, I do have to slow it down and let the kids who are not here all the time, they cannot progress as much due to all these kids leaving. One really bad thing I do, which is my only option, is during AR time. That is my only time to get them. I know that is horrible, but I do not have any other time during the day. I do send them out during content mastery at other times, if they finish their other work early to get caught up, but I do use my AR time a lot. I know it is supposed to be to study or for tests and all that. That is the only time I have. Well, like, uh, generally Friday nights working on lesson plans. And maybe I can, and Saturday morning working on lesson plans. Sunday all afternoon is generally grading. And every night after I get out of my classroom to go home, I am generally organizing or preparing something for the next day. I work around the clock. That is pretty much how I do it. I get a lot of slack from my husband. It does not pay enough for the number of hours I put into it. I mean that is just off the record.... I just work around the clock. I worked all Saturday and all Sunday and I am just trying to get it all set and ready so I can be better organized. That is just the way it is.”

Interpretive Comparison

The most obvious difference between the two teachers is organizational skills. Since logistics is comprised of planning and preparation for the act of teaching, this

indicates that quality teachers take into consideration the procedures, as well as, controlling for the roller coaster prior to planning- not after. Feelings of confidence and preparedness allowed this teacher to not react negatively to changes in the system. The quality teacher makes numerous references to labeled bins, color-coded folders, substitute box, manipulative bins and clips with students' names for work. The needs improvement teacher never made reference to organization. Not for herself or to aid student success. The quality teacher also referenced organizing her actual lessons. For example: "I state the objective and an activity follows." The needs improvement teacher does not reference direct instruction in any specific manner- only in a global context.

The organization skills of the quality teacher lend themselves to aid all students- especially special needs students- in being successful. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher finds the logistics of rotating special needs students cumbersome and notes sometimes not adhering to the outside opportunities available.

The two teachers shared experiences in desiring hands-on and creative activities. Yet, the outcome was different. The quality teacher noted many ways from centers to science that she included this learning modality. While the needs improvement teacher only knew that this pedagogy was needed but made excuses about why she could not incorporate it. The same ideas flow with the amount of time needed to teach in quality fashions. Both noted many additional hours of grading and planning outside the bells of the school. The quality teacher was able to describe in detail how she planned for long-range activities and how that preparedness heightened her delivery and success. While the needs improvement teacher only noted that she spent a lot of time and was not paid.

Upon first blush, we see the two teachers addressing many of the same topics: time, planning, hands-on and grades. We reveal through their dialogue that their perceptions of these activities are much different. Yet, all lead to the next affinity in the system- the workout- the actual art of teaching.

Workout

Teaching was the paramount focus of the quality teacher. The priority that the quality teacher placed on teaching is apparent via comments like: “My whole heart is in it, “I might have groups over here and groups over there. You will see me hopping around the room,” I use higher level thinking skills, I play classical music, and I get them ready for upper grades.” The needs improvement teacher will share a different story.

Good. “If you come in with a positive attitude and you have high expectations, your kids will be positive and have high expectations. This makes the whole climate of the classroom enjoyable and positive. I would say 90% of the time I wake up and I want to go to work. I cannot wait to go to work. I cannot wait to see these kids and do the job that I always wanted to do. You never know what to expect. If you are expecting things that are good and you are teaching real good, if something comes up that can be a negative then it might affect the way you teach. My whole heart is in it. I have been known to dance on tables. I have been known to skip around here. I think if your heart is into it the kids know that. I like to present my materials in a creative way, whether it is a puppet or something suspenseful in a bag. We do a problem of the day. WE do that three days a week. Where they are looking at something, it is from the ____ series. And it is, first we just, there is a question that goes with this board that we are looking at. First I am asking them, what do you see, having them use their senses, listening to their friends, gathering information. The intern commented that he had done some work in a private school with kindergarten. He said, you know, it looks a lot different in here. There is so much up and down and what he meant by that was, they are not just here at this table or at that carpet working. We are here and then we go over here. And it is not always whole group. I might have groups over here and groups over there. You see me hopping around monitoring. You will see me working with small groups, with large groups, with one on

one. I have a student, actually a high school student who was having a seizure. I was yelling help; help, because I did not know that the student was epileptic. I did not know what was going on. She was a special needs kid and I knew those issues, but I did not know that issue. I had a kindergarten teacher across the way and one down the hall. They literally thought I was just reading a story. I get into my stories. I am like, I started sending the kids out and when they saw the kids coming out, and me still yelling, they knew I was not reading a story. I use higher level thinking skills. I play classical music just to calm us. At the end of centers we are singing songs that we have learned and I am passing out ___ getting ready for lunch as the kids are singing. It is lively but the noise level is down. That is more classroom environment, not the art of teaching. I am a team player. This means a lot to me. I know how it is to be shoes where you are new...always looking for new ideas. You will look in someone else's classroom and oooohhh. I am always looking for new ways and when I am going to workshops I am looking for ways of how can I bring that into my classroom. How is me sitting here listening to this person talk going to help out the kids and what can I do. Sometimes you wonder when you sit in those workshops and then others you are on overload. I cannot do everything so I am going to pick one or two things and incorporate that. So getting those kids ready for upper grades and how we play a role in the TAKs and incorporating the TEKS. I always try to be on top of things. I use my minutes of the day however I can to meet their needs and whatever they need to work on using different mediums, whether it is tactile, visual, and kinesthetic.”

Bad. “I try to utilize a lot of different methods of teaching and just not have students constantly in their chairs and that they can move around the room and use all the manipulatives or the materials. Lots of hands on

because I am in elementary school, small groups or whole group or working in pairs to do a lot of different things. There is a lot of interaction among students and a lot of interaction with the students and me. Like if we are doing writing and stuff we conference a lot together, that kind of thing. They read their writing to me. We talk about how much sense it makes and what kind of improvements we can make and go from there. I am just trying to get myself worked up to where I can be a little bit more flexible and more organized so that I do not have, so I can concentrate more on my teaching lessons and everything and all the physical up in my classroom and all these other little things taken care of. So I can get through all the reading tests with the second graders. The teaching, I feel like we do not have enough time during the day to do anything. I like the books that we have, it is just, and it goes back to being hands on. They do all tie together. The teaching, the curriculum itself is not complicated...all laid out and everything. I do not have a problem with the real teaching style but it is just scheduling. They do have to work together in the classroom to have a smooth classroom. This is elementary school and they need to be learning to get along. The way I project how we work is the way the kids are going to work. If things keep changing then the kids do not benefit that much from my teaching.”

Interpretive Comparison

Both teachers identified that the curriculum- via TEKS, textbooks and other district materials- was basically “laid out.” However, the difference in the workout was the presentation and delivery of the two teachers. The needs improvement teacher made reference to hands on and creative. While the quality teacher gave specific examples. She utilized puppets, centers, group work and “suspense bags.”

The needs improvement teacher also commented on the outcome component of teaching. She related the outcome as “getting them through the reading tests.” Moreover, the quality teacher cited high expectations and higher level thinking skills.

The needs improvement teacher identified time as a bandit stealing her opportunities to execute her prepared lessons and the quality teacher related time as not being able to wait to see her kids again.

The teachers were the same in their desire to have students learn to “get along.” But, again the execution of this task took different paths. The quality teacher incorporated this social skill directly into her lesson with group work and role-modeling a positive attitude. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher merely state that it was a needed elementary skill.

The reoccurring theme, through the teaching journey of these two teachers, is they may utilize the same educational jargon. But, the skill and willingness to put it into practice varies. It is this very difference that will reappear in the next affinity- Climate.

Climate

These two teachers both attempt to create secure and caring learning environments. They want the children to be self-sufficient and follow rules that shelter order. By looking at the words of these two teachers, we see they attempt to accomplish these effects by different means.

Good. “I do not know how else to say that other than, it is basically you want a good climate so make sure you are doing what you are supposed to be doing. If you are supposed to be giving tests to get grades to put on your report card, make sure that you are teaching stuff to give the test, to grade them to put on their report card. If you are out of whack and you are not following the procedures, I do not know how you could have a good classroom climate. If your classroom climate is a certain way, I think that

is how you are going to be emotionally and the kids. If you have a great classroom climate and there is a lot of learning and fun, you and your students and maybe their parents, everyone is going to be having fun and being happy. But if the opposite, you know, you are strict and too mean and you do not show any caring and you are just there to cut a paycheck and go home, then the climate is going to be negative and your emotions and your students' emotions are going to be negative and so will their parents. Classroom climate is bright and colorful, clearly labeled centers. There is a purpose for what we do here at math. Whole group down there, things are usually pretty organized. In my classroom when it is center time, they can be working. I will tell a student that you need to go to the restroom and come back. They are really self-sufficient. That starts from day one. I introduce just a few centers. We go there, we practice. This is what it looks like. This is what you do here. This is what you do when you are done. Then I introduce more and then by the end of the week all the centers are going and there are little apples on blocks. There is nothing here because they did not have to go to this one. But there is a little block with an apple on it and it says required center. So if it is an apple center they have to go to it. They can quickly go, okay, I have to go to writing and I do not have to go to math. I better go get the ones I have to do. I had a teacher come and observe. She was amazed that the kids were so self-sufficient. We do not work a center for 15 minutes, ding, the bell goes off and you move. Children do things differently, different rates. Some need more time. I try to have a really good balance and not just lecture, lecture. It is in short spurts so it seems real busy. I do not like it very loud. I turn off the lights for a visual silence signal that I need to hear.... I cannot hear my music but I can hear you over there and that a... And that is way too much. Just little things like that. Instead of them all coming up to me, having them ask three before they ask me. I will say,

did you ask three friends? Or I will give them a hint and say, you know, Claire just asked me that question and now she is an expert with that answer, go ask her. You will see me sometimes over at the teacher table with small groups while the other children are self-sufficient here.”

Bad. “The teacher to student ratio is like one to 22. I have 19 students right now. I like that in the classroom. I do not like the larger sizes. You can do so much more with a smaller group. That is no more than 22. I think my students quickly find out that I am an okay person and they can, they enjoy working with me and I enjoy working with them. I just like a classroom that has a lot of respect in it, where everybody treats each other like they would like to be treated and we work together. Well, I am pretty much of a discipline person so you try not to let those things be affected. I have just been trained that I am supposed to be positive and happy when I go in the classroom and everything goes to the side. I guess, as a professional, I just have to stay positive regardless how the student is. If you did not get enough sleep the night before and their happy faces are smiling, it does affect you. It does affect you to be more positive. My responsibility is regardless of what is going on with me at home or whatever, I am supposed to come in here and be positive and happy. Some of them have probably had a worse start. Well, I had a rough class last year. It was not my first year or anything, those kids were just—they were different. This year is so much better, I think, because they have been, last year I got all these new kids from all these other schools and they did not know how the system worked. They were just confused. They moved around a lot. They were just rebellious. Academically they were behind. This year, most of them have been from ____ so they know how it goes. They are more on top of it. I guess that is all I have to say about that.”

Interpretive Comparison

The quality teacher focused her climate perceptions on learning and fun. She noted caring and purpose were important to climate. She also spoke to the need for the physical environment to be bright, colorful and inviting. The quality teacher made reference to including parents in the learning.

Both teachers addressed the need for student self-sufficiency. The quality teacher provided two poignant examples: “I model what I want, this is what the outcome looks like and this is what you do when you are finished.” This is a sound principle is recognizing that students have differing abilities and will complete tasks at different levels and at different times. The quality teacher also tackled the organization of the surrounds with the apple on the block. This was a coded system for the students to follow and she taught them to utilize the dynamic. The needs improvement teacher expressed frustration at the students not innately understanding the classroom systems, thus affecting the climate. The needs improvement teacher noted: “The children came from other schools and did not know how the system worked.”

Classroom discipline is a component of climate in that it can affect climate in a positive or negative capacity. The quality teacher provided two examples of how she obtains respect and order in a busy classroom. She uses the “turn the light off” technique if the room gets too noisy. And, she teaches a firm procedure on how to ask questions. The in need of improvement teacher simply identified that she wanted respect, that she was a “discipline” person, and students were sometimes rebellious and academically behind. The needs improvement teacher provided no thoughts on how to accomplish the desires of a positive classroom climate. She also alluded to class size as being a variable in the climate. Class size or student teacher ratio was not noteworthy for the quality teacher.

Both teachers communicated that you had to be positive regardless of the circumstances. Ironically, it was the syntax that identified the differences in this

statement. The needs improvement teacher spouted a laundry list of obstacles then, as an almost afterthought, noted the need to be positive regardless of circumstances. While, the quality teacher identified the need to be positive as her first priority: the climate will follow.

Emotions

Both teachers reveal that teaching runs the gamete regarding emotions. The pendulum swings from joy and frustration to feelings of helplessness. Comparing how the two individual teachers view this dynamic discloses much about the differences between quality teachers and teachers in need of improvement.

Good. During the course of a day a teacher can go through many emotions: yahoo the day is started! I pat everybody on the back, so we all start off with a pat on the back coming in the door. You also have your feelings of frustration if a child repeatedly is misbehaving and not listening, but then you have to put all that behind you and move on. I have joyous feelings of accomplishment and happiness when that little light bulb clicks. I have feelings of what am I going to do when you have a child reading at the second grade level and writing complete sentences with capitalization and punctuation, and they do not pass the test to move onto first grade. I need to meet their needs, so I better figure out what to do. Thank goodness I have taught first and second grade before, so I have some of that baggage, those folders I can go to and pull out ideas for her. The notes from parents provide you with emotions and feelings, as far as, I am glad they wrote that because they are really pleased with went on. I feel stable and happy and secure when I follow the administrative procedures because if you do not follow these procedures then your principal is going to have a talk with you and you are not going to be a happy camper, so just make sure

that you follow all the administrative procedures. I feel like if the emotions are positive...pretty much all is going good. But, anything can come up and that can affect how you feel. Things could be going great and then all of the sudden a kid could go bonkers and that can affect a lot of things. If I am pretty glum or there has been a death in the family I am not going to be as good a teacher, as effective a teacher as I could be. The emotions, they drive everything.

Bad. I think a teacher has to be very tolerant because you have all kinds of different students in your classroom. Actually to not show any kind of upset emotions. You just need to kind of maintain your same expression to some extent. If a student upsets you or something like that; you do not try to show those kinds of things. You just go on with your disciplinary procedure, whatever your rules are and your classroom management system: and move right along. You have some students that are defiant; they do not want to do what they are supposed to do or they do not want to behave. To them it is more fun not to behave than to behave. Basically as a teacher I am just supposed to do my disciplinary role as far as my classroom management procedures are concerned. If I follow through and do those consistently, I have done my part. Outside of that it comes down to the principal having to deal with the student. My responsibility is to continue the work with that student. They are in my classroom and to make sure they are learning. Sometimes I have a private conference with them and their parent to get a handle on whatever their problem is and let them know that he needs to be able to pass TAKs and reading, writing and math. Your child is not listening. He wants to be a disruption in the classroom. We need to get a handle on this or else he will be back in fourth grade next year and I will not be his teacher. They will not give him to me; they will give him to somebody else. You just go through your

procedures that you have built for yourself and your classroom. I feel fine about it because I am doing my job. I am not trying to let them fall through the cracks and I am not trying to let them get away with being disrespectful or whatever their problem is. Of course there are happy times when you are reading a book with them and when you are interacting with them about various subjects. I think they need to understand you are happy and are positive and that is the way you need to present yourself and when you have a contrary student in your classroom you certainly do not let them notice one bit that they have pushed a button, or you will have a real problem on your hands. It is frustrating sometimes when they act up, but eventually you bond with them and you know how they work and it works out- the last day of school. I fall in love with so many of the kids, all my kids. Looking back they were not quite as bad, in hindsight. They look so much sweeter in the hall when you just wave to them. But, uh, yeah, I really do bond with my kids and I love them so much, but teaching does have those frustrating moments.

Interpretive Comparison

Both teachers noted incidents occurred that you had to put behind you and move on. The primary difference was the quality teacher described this as an act that transpired simultaneous to the incident. Whereas, the needs improvement teacher disclosed that she enjoyed seeing them in the hallway the next year. Or, she noted things would be good on the last day of school. Dealing with your emotions in a positive manner on a daily basis appeared to be a characteristic of the quality teacher, as well as, responding to outside forces.

One of the forces referred to by both teachers was the administration. The quality teacher identified following procedures responsibly as a guidepost to creating positive

emotions. The needs improvement teacher targeted the principal as the ultimate responsible party in dealing with a child's discipline problems.

Classroom discipline procedures were the primary topic of the needs improvement teacher's perceptions of emotions. She continually referred to students' misbehavior as causing a fluctuation in her emotions. She identified specific strategies on how she would react, but seldom acknowledged the children's emotions or reactions. The difference became even more apparent when the quality teacher chimed that her positive emotions were linked with student success. The two teachers focused their emotions on children just in very different manners.

Payoff

The end of the system is the payoff. Without a payoff, eventually you will choose to exit from the system. The two teachers identified various incentives that kept them teaching day-to-day and year-to-year.

Good. If you feel like you are following the rules, your principal is happy with you, and you are getting kudos and compliments; you feel good about yourself. If you really like the job the payoff is going to be great. I would say 90% of the time I wake up and I want to go to work. I cannot wait to go to work. I cannot wait to see these kids and do the job that I always wanted to do. There is 10% of the time that you do not want to wake up, you are tired, you went to bed late the night before or you know there is a student in your class that lately is struggling. The PTO does our spotlight, they spotlight a grade level and when they do kindergarten it is a great time. It is also such a wonderful feeling when those kids become readers and writers. Looking at their journals... I always like to look back and reflect and also monitor. When I see that growth over time with a child and just knowing I have one who cannot write his name- he can now.

Progress, here we go! When I first assessed him, he could not write his name, held the pencil in a full grip, which is a very young and primitive grip. He knows no letters and sounds and cannot sing the A,B,Cs. Then I have this other child who is way on the opposite end, created lots of feelings and emotions, but just seeing him, okay, now we have the correct pencil grip. We have that going. It took me putting dots on his fingers and dots on the pencil and a line right here where the pencil needs to lay. That is what it took. I will do what it takes to see him get those letters. Now he is recognizing his name. Just rewards like that. Seeing them develop into little readers and writers is a wonderful little feeling. Seeing them help each other on their own, being responsible for themselves, not only am I teaching them kindergarten skills, I want to teach lifelong learning skills and being kind to others. One is from a life skills classroom; I just want them to know that we are all in this together and it does not matter that we are not exactly like each other. The principal considers me a master teacher and that is very rewarding for me. I have worked hard to have her think that and to think I would be good for an intern. I like being asked to do things like this study.

Bad. You start thinking about pay. The job does not pay for what you are doing. It does not really pay. The pay is not really high enough in comparison to a lot of other things out in the real world. I hear people talking about no I am never going to teach school, it does not pay enough. Because people need to understand: Friday night, Saturday, every evening of every week. I am not going out and going to the movies; I am at home working on school. I eat, sleep and drink it basically. That is how we go. And now more so since I have been bumped down to a lower grade level, trying to get organized and geared to this age level. The reward, to a large extent, is just what you receive back from your students: if that is just a

smile-then it is just a smile. If they say you are the best teacher I have ever had, you know you have accomplished something with them. Evidently they are learning or they would not be saying something like that to you. So it is just making a difference in a child's life is actually the reward. It is certainly not the money, you know. This is survival for me. This is what I went to school to do. No there is not enough money. There is not enough salary. I also do not think people realize how much we have to spend on our classrooms. The resources are limited and to set up a classroom and everything else, that comes out of your pocket. A teacher who is just a single person, I do not know how they make it with your housing and everything else. You cannot just teach school. You would have to have a second job probably. I have even thought of it one or two times, having a second job. To do this job in the manner that it needs to be carried out requires a lot of time. So, I guess it is the students. I see them a whole year older and it is interesting.

Interpretive Comparison

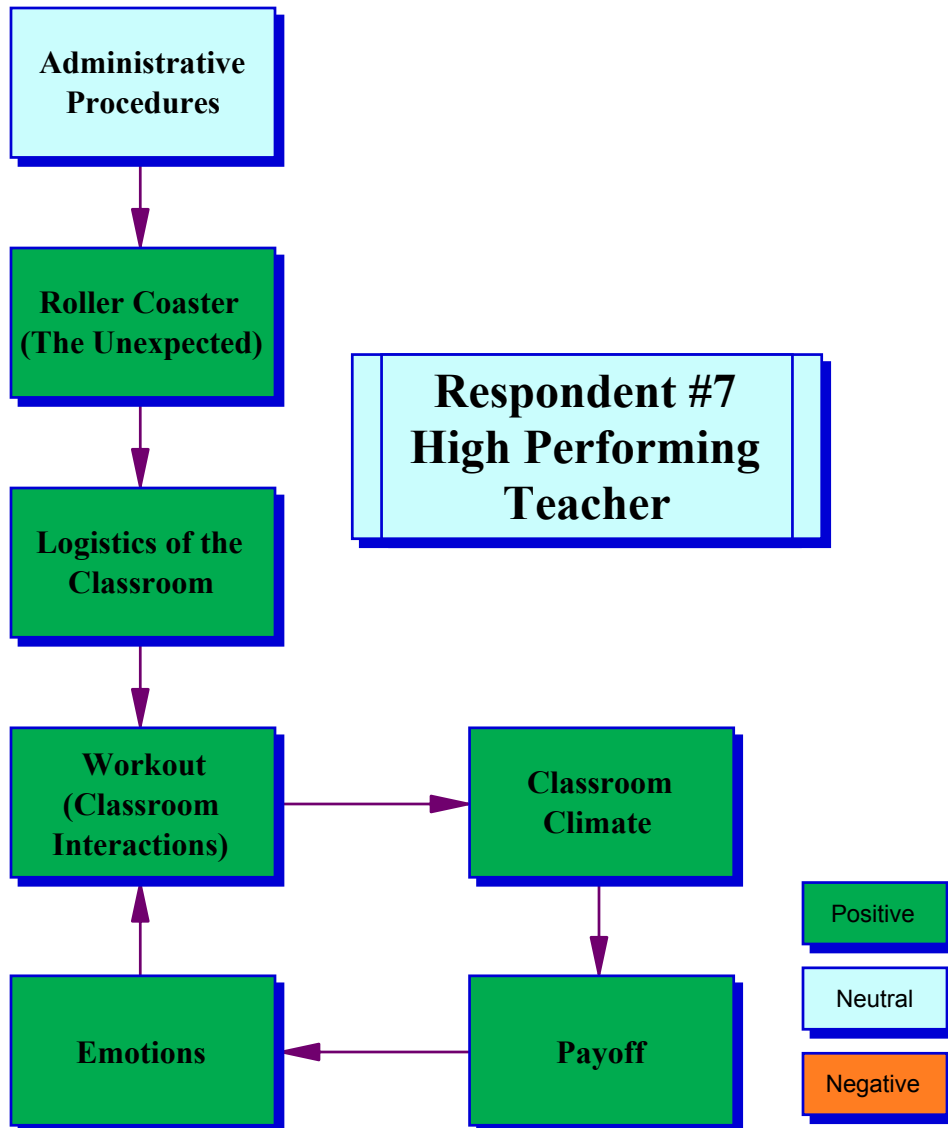
Both teachers make reference to the students being the payoff of the system. Yet, the needs improvement teacher only noted that seeing them a year older is interesting. And, she 'guesses' the students are the payoff since there does not seem to be enough monetary rewards. However, the bulk of the interview for the quality teacher was overflowing with specific examples of students being successful. The quality teacher was able to poignantly describe how she measured student success. She illustrated students learning new concepts, being responsible and self reliant and acceptance of other students with special needs.

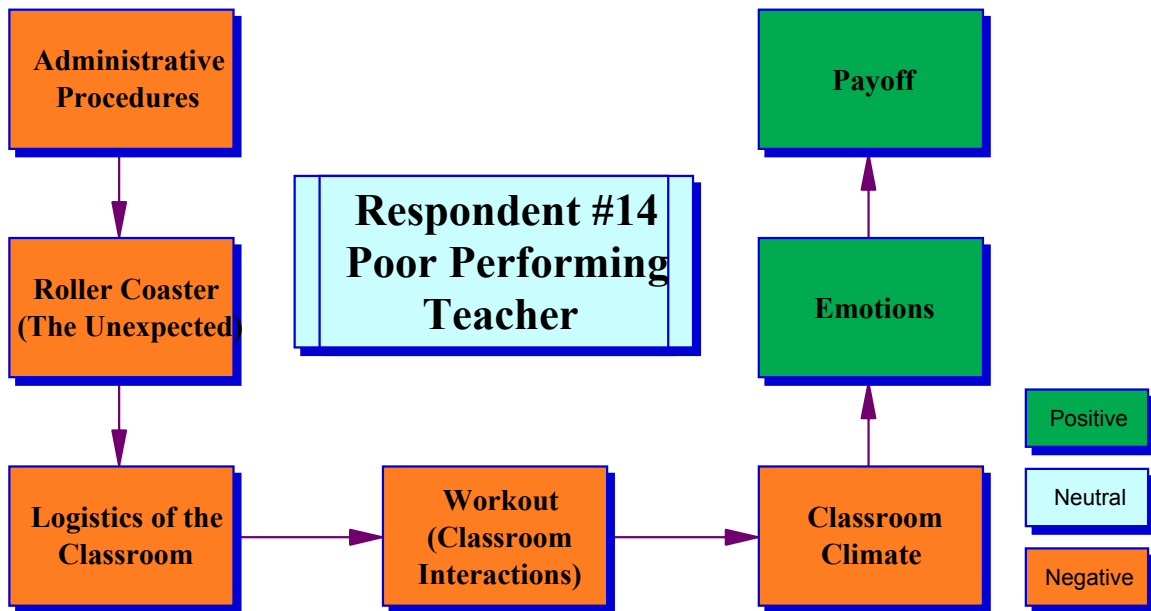
The two teachers diverged on other examples of payoffs: the money, time and recognition. The needs improvement teacher repeatedly referred to how low the pay was, how much time she worked, and only being trained to teach. The needs improvement

teacher viewed the glass as half empty with little if any skills to do something else. While, the quality teacher never identified money as a payoff. She was elated with the recognition she received from the parents, school organizations and administration. Being a quality teacher was her payoff.

Comparing Individual Systems

The experiences of the teachers, the first of whom is the quality teacher, and the second from the needs improvement group, were vastly different. The quality teacher described all but one of the seven affinities as a positive experience. The second system, which is representative of the needs improvement teacher, reflects an opposite experience with all affinities but two being negative. A look at the teachers' systems quickly reveals interesting clues that help explain these differences.





Loops and Lines

The quality teacher begins the journey through her system with a neutral reaction to administrative procedures. The interview examples revealed a teacher that recognized administrative procedures being in place to provide a structure to an organizational system. Her interaction with this affinity was one of compliance- not resistance. The quality teacher then considered and controlled for as many unpredictable roller coaster issues as possible. She did this prior to her logistical planning. This is a critical difference when comparing the systems. The needs improvement teacher has identified administrative procedures as a negative constraint to her teaching and placed planning as the second affinity in her system. This leaves the needs improvement teacher vulnerable in that she has not controlled for the daily-unexpected roller coaster items. At this point in the system, both teachers move to the actual teaching, or the workout affinity.

The quality teacher describes the workout as being only one component of the feedback loop of teaching. She indicates that the workout, leads to climate, which leads to payoff, and flows back to the emotions. It is a cyclical entity that can self correct at any point. And the four affinities intertwine to produce a positive outcome. Without the

feedback loop, the quality teacher would be susceptible to spinning out of the system at any time that one or more of the affinities produced negative reactions.

The linear system of the needs improvement teacher replicates this phenomenon. She associates the workout or teaching as leading directly to her climate. Thus, if her lesson is going poorly or students are not responding, the climate will automatically go to negative. Since the climate leads to emotions, then they would go to negative as well. Ultimately there would be no payoff for the needs improvement teacher. By viewing the system in a linear manner, the needs improvement teacher has created a potential chain reaction of negative events not only on a daily basis but possibly each class period. Because there is no feedback loop, there are no opportunities for the system to self-correct only to domino in a downward manner.

Ironically enough, the system divulges that the needs improvement teacher sees the affinities of payoff and emotions as positive. This does not cognitively equate with the linear makeup of her individual system. Knowing that the school day is filled with unexpected and sometimes unfavorable experiences, how could you end with a positive payoff in a linear non-cyclical system? Upon reviewing her interview, it is this researchers contention that she is saying that her payoff is positive and her emotions are good, but not truly meaning it. This occurrence lends itself as an example of the theoretical framework of this study.

Bakhtin (1981) explains that a passive understanding, is not understanding at all, it is only the abstract aspect of meaning. In order for a person to develop an active understanding, or the discourse, he/she would have to “knit together specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accent characteristics” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 289). In education the professional discourse takes on not only a shared vocabulary but assumes “intentional dimensions” that is, the discourse or language can drive the social practice of an individual (p. 289). Based on this assumption, we see the needs improvement teacher as having the assumed language of an educator; she knows what to say. Yet, understanding is impossible without evaluation. And, in this

area, we hear the echo of her negative comments. Upon this evaluation, we disclose that she gives lip service to the educational jargon without the ability or desire to implement.

The quality teachers' mindmap can be seen as a large positive feedback loop, the classic example of success breeding success. However, the needs improvement teacher has little chance for success. This revelation allows us multiple opportunities to closely examine possible interventions.

Predictions and Interventions

As described in previous sections, the system (SID) produced by the participants in the study can be used to identify likely points of structural failure. By identifying at what point or in which the affinities the system goes negative, one can identify the root causes of failure. The two groups of teachers demonstrated the power of the model, for while the structure of the system remains the same for both classes; the values of the path and the outcomes are very different. In this section, we will identify strategies to aid teachers in better maneuvering through the system of education.

Administrative Procedures

Teachers in both groups identified ineffective planning and leadership on the part of the campus principal as contributing to the roller coaster. This is an initial step to setting off a chain of events that for needs improvement teachers can result in failure. Many times, they do not have the skills to overcome this structure. We as educators need to police our own ranks. For too long, we have let educational leaders that all know are ineffective stay in the system. Therefore, one intervention may be the right for teachers to have input on the supervisors appraisal. The survey would need to be designed to have weighted specific questions regarding performance only. This is not meant to be unsigned or subjective. Nor, is it meant to be the only form of evaluation- only one piece.

The two teacher groups also identified redundant menial tasks as taking much time with limited or negative results. Possible interventions in this area might be automated attendance and textbooks. Most campuses with the technology push have the available hardware. It is a matter of shifting the paradigm to utilize it in a broader capacity. This strategy should also appeal to admiration in that it directly relates to dollars in education. We are funded based on attendance and textbooks resulting in a major cost to all districts. Getting this information to a more precise and predictable form would prove more efficient.

In regards to efficiency, the legislature in Texas has addressed the added burden of materials by providing a stipend to teachers to help lighten the cost. However, cost is not the only expense, there is also the time factor. Money allocated by the district to fund a materials aid for teachers might be well spent. At the least organizing a volunteer program would provide some relief and support. A unique approach would be to have a “house warming” at the first faculty meeting of the year for all teachers new to your campus. This would entail, every staff member bringing one of their favorite lessons including materials to the meeting. It also sets the tone for the much needed collaboration. These strategies would also lend themselves to omitting some of the roller coaster affects.

Roller Coaster

For all teachers, but especially the needs improvement teacher, this affinity delved in depth to the reactions to students. Therefore, an obvious intervention would to start with a strong school wide discipline program. There needs to be a foundation to all agree upon to achieve consistency. This is vital to student and teacher success. In that, there needs to be the same language and expectation in from the classroom, cafeteria, and hallway to the principal’s office. By creating this environment, you are setting all teachers up to be more successful in their classrooms. With stronger structures in place, the needs improvement teacher is less likely to react to negative forces thus causing the

system to stall. However, discipline is not the only aspect of students that needs to be addressed.

The model reveals that we would do well to increase the understanding of all students. In the past few years, schools have heightened the awareness of teachers' thorough diversity training. And, that training needed to happen. Yet, the interviews revealed a lack of understanding on the teachers' part of special needs students. If they did not fit into the so-called norm, teachers struggled with the ability to meet their needs. Several examples were cited from speech services, English as a second language, reading difficulties to special education. It is important to provide this training; yet, more important to apply. The language of the interviews that revealed these findings deserves a closer inspection.

The particular words utilized by the needs improvement teachers' reveals much about their ability to deal with the roller coaster. Citing specific example, such as: interrupts, gives orders and blames. In the opening segments of this chapter, Northcutt & McCoy (2004), describe placing a value on an affinity thus giving the affinity its *timbre* or feeling. Once the data reveals that needs improvement teachers tend to attach a negative value on the roller coaster, we as educators can look at the improvement of educational jargon and common language as an intervention. In today's society it has become almost acceptable if not prevalent to verbally discuss the poor plight of the educator- always under paid and over worked. That language needs to change, and it can start with educational leaders. We need to celebrate the successes and reinforce quality teaching on a regular basis. The interactions with parents, legislatures, administrators and teachers needs to reveal words shared in the payoff; such as: improvement, time off, having your children at work with you. The language of the quality teacher also needs to be shared more. It is many times the old adage of the "squeaky wheel getting the oil". Our quality teachers, and we have them, are not on the front lines of public relations in schools. This study revealed that quality and negative language exists. We need to shift the focus to the quality language, and aggressively set the expectations of "positive" jargon to the forefront.

Tying this concept back to the literature review, we find Gee (1989) reinforcing that discourse is a way of “being in the world” (p. 6-7). Meaning the way that teachers talk- the words they use- is the way they truly see the world. We need to retrain if you will, the way we talk about education and the roller coaster. This is a critical intervention in that according to Gee (1997), discourses are the way a community like teaching moves toward an agreed upon norm (p. 49). If we want the norm to move towards quality teachers, we need to move our discourse regarding the roller coaster, as well as, other affinities to the quality teacher level. This nudging of communities of people toward the norm plays well into the area of planning and logistics. Logistics is the area that university preparation programs and district level professional development, focuses their efforts on the norming of practice.

Logistics

The application comes in the logistics. Are they planning and preparing for the unique needs not only of the student but the organization? A strategy that would empower teachers and return some aspects of control in which the needs improvement teachers feel they lost, would be scheduling. A common irritation was the special needs student moving in and out of the classroom for various interventions. If the special education teachers, speech teacher, ESL teachers and classroom teachers had a vertical common planning time, they could coordinate the students’ movements and decrease disruption. This would also allow the integration of subjects to be taught and reinforced by all teachers. Many times our curriculum is less effective because students are receiving it in disenfranchised chunks. If they were all working on the same objectives, the child would have a better chance of retention.

Also, utilizing a hands-on approach versus a text only approach additionally assists the student in retention and ultimately success. However, this leads back to the teachers needing the materials. We may want to analyze the instructional budget and decipher how much is being spent on manipulatives and student materials and how much

is being spent on paper based products: textbooks and workbooks. It may be that sharing materials is a more cost effective and student value laden solution. The payoff affinity is applicable here in that teachers are reinforced by recognition. It may be that having a “best practice” celebration at the beginning of each faculty meeting would not only assist teachers in sharing ideas, but also reinforce quality. The principals’ selection of “best practice” would be one more was to incorporate the administration into the instruction.

Collaborating was a common theme in the affinity of logistics. The quality teachers repeatedly noted that they worked with outside sources, not only on lesson plans, but TEKS, materials, classroom management and general support. The needs improvement teacher simply identified that they did not have the knowledge or was not provided the knowledge. A strategy to rectify this would be to mandate collaborative grade level and vertical school wide meetings. This would allow teachers to learn to see the value in this practice and potentially prevent the needs improvement teacher from spinning out of the system at logistics. Campus administration planning on attending these sessions would loop back to administrative procedures in that the principal would be more informed of actual classroom activities, as well as, provide experienced input to instruction. Administration being involved in a more direct fashion to logistics would also legitimize the role of school leaders. Although these interventions require time, there are also possible interventions that would minimize menial tasks related to logistics.

One such idea is electronic grade books. There are relatively inexpensive software packages available that not only sequentially record students’ grades; Moreover, it can be extended to encompass specific objectives mastered. This allows the classroom teacher to overcome obstacles in the affinity of logistics while better meeting the needs of all students on an individual basis. Since most schools already have existing hardware on campuses, technology can be extended to further impact logistics.

Since the data provided reveals that needs improvement teachers are failing significantly in the area of logistics and planning, technology can be utilized to provide a canned instructional program. One example would be PLATO. This is an electronic resource that can be utilized in all areas of the curriculum K-12, including job and social

skills. It resents real world content that connects to students' everyday lives. Plato provides interactive audio and graphic lessons; while, monitoring and recording a students' progress on each objective on a daily basis. A program like this also prevents teachers' who have been in the field of education for a while from "pulling the same folder" year after year. I am not supporting that technology should replace the classroom teacher; I am simply noting that it be another tool in their ever growing toolkit.

Technology is especially prevalent considering the amount of interactive technology student in the 21st century is provided: cell phones, game boys, video now, iPods and Internet. I am suggesting that we incorporate a medium that our students are familiar with. Many times the resistance will come from the teachers- especially the ones fearful of having to learn something new. It is a shift in paradigms for classroom teachers.

There is not only a paradigm shift needed for teachers, but all educators. The literature review touted a section on quality teaching; planning included in this area. Wong and Wong (1991) identified that effective planning was a component of quality teaching. Planning was further explored by Porter and Brophy (1988): "quality teachers are clear about what they intend to accomplish through instruction." Good and Brophy (2001), extended this concept with good planning is knowing what you want to accomplish and how to measure it; thus, adding the evaluation component to planning. I agree with their analogies, but want to take the literature one step further by adding that the components of the roller coaster and administrative procedures need to be recognized as vital to teacher success; therefore, must be included in the planning/ logistics process. How a teacher progressed through this affinity will determine much of his/her success with the climate.

Climate

While logistics touched on planning issues of special needs students- particularly the scheduling aspects, the climate also contains interventions for special needs students. However, it hinges on the perceptions, direct encounters and instruction. Teacher

preparation programs delve somewhat into the special needs student with usually one or two courses. But, the differential needs of students are rising at a rate far faster than teachers are prepared to deal with. For example: twenty- years ago, emotionally disturbed students were riding on the different bus and attended classes in a separate room. Today, inclusion is best practice; yet, we have little if any additional preparation to deal with these children. A possible intervention would be target de-escalation techniques as opposed to traditional strategies; such as: you will mind me or go to the office. An oppositional defiant disorder child will not respond to these techniques and going out of the classroom is what they want. The reinforcement theories taught to teachers twenty years ago are not aligned to the motivations of the twenty first century student. Thus allowing the conflict between special needs students and the teacher to drive the climate of the classroom if not the campus. Having a school wide vision of all children will learn and be treated with respect is critical. This begins with administrative procedures, moves through the logistics and comes out in climate.

How a student behaves is not the only area for possible intervention. Students also learn in different modalities at different rates. Preparation of a teacher in specific reading strategies, an understanding of speech related issues, and learning disabilities would be valuable. Many times teachers are taught methodologies that target the middle of the road student. That used to work. Yes, there are specific techniques that are valuable, but the flexibility and differentiation to apply those techniques to all students much be enriched. This can best be done by modeling to teachers how that would look. For example: set an expectation, model the activity, model what an outcome looks like, and what to do when all students do not finish at the same time. This requires multiple levels of instruction and not all teachers know how to do that. Either including this kind of training at the university level or district professional development level would alleviate some of the climate issues. Good instruction is actually the proactive approach to good student behavior.

Another intervention might be to teach social skills as a mandatory component of the curriculum. Students are not always arriving at school the first day knowing how to

respond to criticism or when it is appropriate to ask a question. Things we used to take for granted need to now be included for they are the very things affecting climate in a negative manner. There are also social skills curriculums and trainings for teachers. There are also social skills curriculums and trainings for teachers. One such being: *Capturing Kids Hearts* The Flippin Foundation (2003). This program provides strategies for teachers to greet students at the door and welcome them to learning. It talks about helping students feel safe and loved. We saw in the interviews, that quality teachers encompass many of these characteristics. However, we also saw that needs improvement teachers do not. Specifically targeting training in these areas might eliminate some of the climate issues needs improvement teachers are facing and allow them to move towards quality. We addressed the need for a loving environment; now we can address interventions with the physical environment.

The quality teachers identified colorful and exciting environments as one of their yearly goals. I will take this one step further and contend that positive learning environments should be an administrative expectation. There are interventions such as displaying student work that not only reinforces student success, but also makes it a physical environment in which students are included and empowered. Once the ownership of the environment is shared, the climate moves toward being shared. The sole responsibility of making a positive or rich environment is no longer the task of only the teacher. However, the actual instruction or workout is the responsibility of the teacher.

Workout

The critical interpretation in this affinity is not that teachers cannot teach. It is, however, that they do not often enough find the time to teach. Thus, this lead us back into the loop as looking to providing support and interventions prior to the actual instruction to free teachers to actually apply their training and knowledge. Yet, there are specific instructional techniques that could be embellished upon to improve the quality of the workout.

Higher level and critical thinking skills are crucial for our students to cope with a rapidly changing world. Twenty-first century students' must be able to think critically and creatively. The times of teaching from a text have passed. Examples of this might include the ability to recognize assumptions and evaluate data and arguments. Basic skills are still a required and important component of the teachers' toolkit. However, these skills now must be extended to include analytical and original thinking. In order for teachers to regularly and proficiently infuse these skills into their lessons, they must be trained in this arena. For our students to become better problem solvers, our teachers must first become problem solvers.

Emotions

With the latter feedback loops cycling behind the other affinities, many of the suggestions cited can tie to other areas: for example, controlling for climate and the roller coaster will improve emotions. However, one intervention that would improve teachers' emotions would be the utilization of outside forces. Teachers again noted they were vulnerable to changes from outside forces like parents. Teachers need procedures for contacting parents in a proactive manner. This may include phone logs, contact information and interest assessments. This provides the teacher the tools to take control of the outside forces thus eliminating some of the negative emotions. Besides parents, seeking outside support from the community would be beneficial. Resources such as the library, elderly mentors, high school honors students as tutors, and large corporations as adopters for both financial and personnel resources. Again, the strategies and interventions noted in the administrative procedures, roller coaster, logistics and planning would minimize the negative emotions.

Payoff

It is no secret that educators do not receive high levels of monetary compensation for their contributions to society. However, providing intrinsic payoff interventions would increase satisfaction among teachers. The interviews revealed a level of appreciation as a payoff. Take that suggestion and implement it at the district and campus level. Ideas might include: weekly or monthly local newspaper articles highlighting a particular teacher or team of teachers. Another thought would be simple recognitions like parking spaces, leave early passes, principal teach while recognized teacher has one free period, lunch provided or classroom location.

Leadership empowerment is also a payoff motivator. To be selected as a mentor, reveals a level of skills that are admired. This could carry over to selection of teachers to have student teachers and classroom teachers utilized for district and campus training purposes. Many times districts will hire outside trainers to provide the professional development instead of drawing and recognizing our own quality resources. The theme of celebrating your successes at all levels continues to emerge.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations apply to the interpretation of the results of this study.

1. The literature does not contain a widely agreed upon definition of a quality teacher.
2. The sampling procedure limits the generalizability of the findings.
3. There may be factors affecting the teacher's responses to quality teaching that were not identified in this study.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations apply to the interpretation of the results of this study.

1. This study was conducted in a Texas school district.
2. This study was conducted in the fall of 2003.
3. This study was conducted only with individuals working in the school district.

Assumptions

The assumptions that underlie this study are as follows:

1. Teachers are central to quality instruction.
2. All teachers involved in the study have equal technical skills.
3. Teachers perceive teacher quality based on their current and previous experiences.
4. Teachers have the ability to effectively communicate their perceptions of a quality teacher.
5. The results of this study have the potential to improve the quality of teacher performance.

Suggestions for Further Study

The focus of this research was to examine the differences between the quality teacher and the needs improvement teacher. Since the first step in this research was founded on language and mental models, it seems logical that the next step would be to further validate this study by examining the behaviors of teachers to see if the mental models were good indicators of their actions.

In this same vein of thinking, a study probing teachers' locus of control would be worthwhile to the educational community. As noted in the beginning chapters of this study, all teachers arrive at the classroom with similar preparatory experiences. Delving

into the locus of control possibly based on Bem (1994) would further reveal links between the quality teachers' internal locus of control and the needs improvement teachers' external locus of control. Bem (1994) identified characteristics of internal locus of control as having a tendency to take responsibility for actions and intrinsically motivated, both themes arising in this research.

To further elucidate the generalizability of this study, it would be well served to overlay the IQA system developed onto an urban school district. This may find the system containing different loops and significant outcomes. Enriching our quest towards defining the quality teacher at all levels in all environments.

Since logistics and planning was a turning point in the overall system for needs improvement teachers, it would be interesting to build a qualitative study focused solely on this affinity. Specific strategies could be obtained by looking only at this critical juncture applied to teacher preparation programs and or professional development models.

The IQA representation would also be fascinating if glued to the required *Texas Professional Development and Appraisal System* (1997). We espouse cyclical and continual evaluation of progress; yet, are we truly measuring what quality teachers should be doing?

Conclusion

By analyzing the language and discourse of quality teachers and teachers in need of improvement, we have made the first small step in defining quality teachers. The initial focus group began the journey with cards containing random thoughts regarding teaching. This group then categorized these thoughts into seven categories that for the purpose of this study we called affinities. The campus principal selected quality teachers and needs improvement teachers to be interviewed using the same protocol. These interviews were further compartmentalized into system influence diagrams or SID's. The SID is an IQA replication of a mental model based on teacher language discussed in the

first three chapters. In comparing these mental models, we see that needs improvement teachers focus their language and thoughts on affinities outside their control, for example administrative procedures and the unexpected roller coaster of daily school life. The needs improvement teachers structured their models on little control of student behaviors and time for planning. They accepted minimal responsibility for their teaching performance and much blame was placed on outside influences.

The mental models of quality teachers reflected a high concentration of effort on organizational skills thus controlling for procedural effects and unexpected events. Much more emphasis was placed on the actual instruction affinities leading quality teachers to positive rewards and emotions. It is these mental models that guide us to the first step of defining characteristics of a quality teacher.

This body of research contends that quality teachers may not agree with all administrative procedures, but they readily accept them as “part of the job.” The same is true for the unexpected roller coaster events. Quality teachers spoke to the “humanness” of teaching and with that came unexpected events. Instead of continually fighting against the rapid pace and changes, quality teachers actually identified this affinity as an “interesting part of the job.” They planned for the unexpected. Quality teachers also did not work in isolation. They continually noted collaborative efforts on many fronts ranging from planning, behavior problems and differentiated instruction to meet the requirements of varying student needs. By developing these characteristics, the rewards and emotions of teaching were a positive experience.

The IQA system identified by this study suggests that the ultimate outcome of the teacher experience is a teacher who perceives value in their work. A product of that outcome is a teacher who facilitates student learning. While this study looks at the teacher experience, it is actually the student that is at the heart of the IQA system for they are most impacted. The question then becomes how do we identify quality teachers and what steps can we take to help others rise to this level. Removing burdensome administrative procedures is one first step in the system. Moreover, there will always be the roller coasters, but teacher must be able to deal with them. It is the teachers who are

unable to deal with logistics that are most likely going to need improvement. Much more attention needs to be dedicated to helping teachers plan and prepare for the entire school experience. When administrative procedures and logistics become the focus of the teacher, there is little time left for what they really want to do: teach our children.

This study seeks to present a system of influence to help identify what are the differences between good teachers and those that need improvement. Beyond identification of the problem, predictions and interventions can be made. This study suggests some steps for change, among them are:

- Educational leaders must be able to provide guidance that is deemed as valuable. We need to police our own ranks and remove less than quality administrators.
- Better utilize existing technology to decrease menial tasks such as hand written attendance or grade books.
- Check out materials to teachers via the library at the beginning of each year- this includes thematic unit support, center materials, manipulatives and colorful decorations. This alleviates the burden of purchasing for new teachers and equalizes classrooms so all students have the same opportunities.
- Include diversity and special populations training in all teacher preparatory programs.
- Design and implement schedules that include collaborative planning periods for grade levels, as well as, vertical transitional teams.
- Integrate computer-aided instruction to assist with individualized student learning needs, motivation and continual benchmarking of student progress.
- Incorporate a school wide consistent behavioral management programs based on proactive positive approaches.
- Include character education curriculum into the alignment of instruction.
- Provide feedback to teachers regarding their performance more than the mandatory two times a year. Evaluation of teachers, just as with students, needs to be ongoing.

- Embrace parental contact logs and student communications sheets as a part of the weekly lesson planning process.
- Celebrate your successes and recognize quality teaching. This does not have to be reflective of monetary gains; it can be a special parking place, extended lunch, early leave pass or local news articles.

Theodore Zeldin noted: “Dialogue doesn’t just reshuffle the cards, it creates new cards.” The premise of this research was based on listening to teacher dialogue and finding new information on what makes one teacher quality and the other needs improvement. It is now up to us to make new cards and not continue to simply reshuffle the deck.

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Vita

Ty Ann Harrell was born in Dallas, Texas on June 8, 1961, the daughter of Tewana Trimble and Donald Edward Harrell. After completing her work at Stephenville High School, Stephenville, Texas, in 1979, she entered Tarleton State University and played basketball. She later transferred to Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in May 1985. The following year she completed her Bachelor of Science degree at Texas Wesleyan University. She was then employed as a teacher for eight years in the Austin area. She was named Humane Society Teacher of the Year in 1992 and 1993 yielded the Parent Teacher Organization of Texas naming her the Outstanding Teacher in the state. That same year she graduated from Southwest Texas State University with a Masters Degree in Educational Administration.

Ty Harrell has been the principal and assistant principal at the high school level for three years, a middle school principal for two years, and led an elementary campus from low performing to an exemplary state accountability rating on one year. The next move was to the district level with the Pflugerville Independent School District as director of student services.

Ty has been named as a second team All-American basketball player and the TIAA college player of the year. She has been the principal of a blue ribbon middle school and named to the Who's Who list for Executive Leadership. She holds a Phi Kappa Phi 4.0 membership and presented her doctoral work at Oxford University in England. She was also named one of the Outstanding Young Women of America.

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