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A study of how teachers show love in the classroom

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A STUDY OF HOW TEACHERS SHOW
LOVE IN THE CLASSROOM

BEND, OREGON

BY

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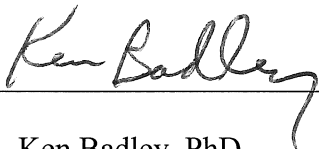
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"A STUDY OF HOW TEACHERS SHOW LOVE IN THE CLASSROOM - BEND, OREGON," a Doctoral research project prepared by MARY DENNIS in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Foundations and Leadership Department.

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ABSTRACT

There has been little research on how teachers show love in the classroom. This study investigated how five classroom teachers defined love as it pertained to their profession and how they showed love to their students. Through a series of interviews, observations and the collection of artifacts, the research showed that all the participating teachers exhibit love to their students and they speak about the importance of providing this to the children daily in their class. The literature revealed that teachers relate to their students in five areas; caring, enthusiasm, fairness and respect, the student/teacher relationship, and their attitude towards their job. The study revealed that the participant teachers love in many more ways than had been explored previously. Each teacher explained that in order to be an effective instructor, love would need to be present in the classroom and that without it, students would most likely do poorly.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"Love is a legacy that lasts."

Wink & Wink, 2004 p. 8

One would expect that teachers, on entering the profession, would love their students, but such is not always the case. Although love may be an important quality for teachers to have, educator training programs usually concentrate on teaching methods, not on how to care for students. This deficiency may stem from a number of assumptions: 1) that love is a natural attribute of any teacher, 2) that teachers will express love spontaneously in the classroom, and 3) that aspiring teachers therefore do not require guidance in how to love their students.

Today's schools must meet higher standards than in previous generations, and they must ensure that their students score well on standardized tests. Educational researchers, in trying to devise ways to improve learning, have discovered that effective teachers are the key to successful classroom learning experiences (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; de la Rosa, 2005; Stronge, 2007, p. 18; Walker, 2008). Indeed, teachers who can relate effectively to their students and who provide them with a warm and loving learning environment can have a profoundly positive effect on their academic formation (de la Rosa, 2005). If the teacher-student relationship is so vital, and if love is such an integral part of it, why, then, are educators not paying greater attention to it? Is showing love to students part of being an effective teacher? The paucity of research into

the ways in which teachers a) do love their students, and b) might love them more effectively has prompted me to explore these subjects in this dissertation.

The No Child Left behind Act defines effective teachers as those who are “highly qualified,” i.e., who hold a bachelor’s degree and a teaching credential, and who have mastered their subjects (No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, 2001). More recently, the emphasis has begun to shift from “highly qualified” to an understanding of effectiveness based on students’ achievement and on the pedagogical factors that contribute to high achievement.

In considering the personal attributes that contribute to teachers’ effectiveness, Stronge, in his book, *Qualities of an Effective Teacher* (2007), argues that the most important characteristics are subject knowledge, a caring attitude, good communication, and classroom management skills, and an appreciation of the value of process and mastery. In addition, teachers’ attitudes toward their jobs in general and the classroom experience in particular help to determine how their students perceive them and how they experience their school day. Attending a math class taught by a loving teacher is much more bearable than spending an hour with an angry teacher.

The question then becomes, does love have an impact on learning? Further, do teachers consider their caring attitudes to be a manifestation of love or of some other virtue? And how do teachers show love (or whatever they may call the phenomenon) to the students in their classes? I believe that a better understanding of the phenomenon of love as it occurs in the classroom, and a better understanding of what teachers mean by the term, may contribute to increasing the effectiveness of teachers and to improving the performance of their students.

By way of a negative example that illustrates the importance of love, I remember the day my fifth grade teacher removed me from the classroom and proceeded to tell me that I would

never amount to anything. She followed this with a barrage of other insults. Those words hurt and they stayed with me for a long time. From then on, I stopped trying in school, and my behavior worsened. Although I cannot blame my actions completely on this teacher, I wonder how differently things would have turned out if she had never said those terrible things to me that day. Fortunately, in the eleventh grade I had a teacher who believed in me and held me accountable. If it were not for him, I probably would not be the person I am today. So I can say from personal experience that I believe in the power of love and positive relationships.

An Historical Overview of Love

From ancient times philosophers, theologians, scientists, and literary authors (e.g., Plato, St. Paul, Pitrium Sorokin, and C.S. Lewis) have written about love in all its complexity, yet a universally acceptable definition of the term continues to elude the academic community. Some scholars consider love to be an emotion, an attraction to another accompanied by intense feelings; others regard love as a decision involving self-sacrifice; still others equate love with sexual desire, passion, and romance. Thomas Oord describes this diversity of opinion well:

Today we might say that love has millions, billions, and even trillions of versions. Love is pluralistic in the sense that many actions, depending on their motives and circumstance can be acts of love. Love is multiform and multi-expressive (Oord, 2010, pp. 31-32).

Why even try to define such a fluid concept? Perhaps this fluidity lies behind the reluctance of educational theorists to investigate the subject. Still, as Lisa Goldstein puts it, “The lack of research on love in education is troubling in that while love seems too obvious to study, it is too important not to” (Goldstein, 1997b, p. 8).

Despite humankind's perennial interest in the subject, no one decided to approach it scientifically until the late 1940's when Pitrim Sorokin started doing the research on which his study *The Way and the Power of Love* (Sorokin, 1957) is based. In that work he articulates what he considers to be the five dimensions of love: intensity, extensivity, duration, purity, and adequacy. According to Sorokin, people such as Gandhi and Jesus, who have exemplified all five of the facets, were somehow able to draw on a source of energy even during times of extreme hardship. Such love, Sorokin believes, comes from a higher source that has never been properly studied.

After Sorokin, research into love examined mostly its biological side. Scientists focused their attention on attachment behaviors (Bowlby, 1984), romance (Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992), and sexual intimacy (Hendrick, Hendrick, Lopez, & Snyder, 2003). Another influential scholar, Robert Sternberg, created the advanced triangle theory as a means of specifying how the various kinds of love develop. His triangle included the following components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment (Sternberg, 1986). Although his research examined many types of love, such as friendship and companionship, it concentrated, like that of his contemporaries, on romantic and sexual relationships (1986). Of these various approaches, only attachment theory has attracted the interest of educational theorists.

Eventually, researchers started inquiring into the factors that motivate people to care deeply about others and to help them without any expectation of their love being reciprocated. The Greek term for this sort of love is *agapé*. According to Templeton, "Agapé love is pure love, unlimited in its possibilities. Agapé love is altruistic love, love that is given for its own sake" (Templeton, 1999, p. 1). Such love delights in the well-being of others and expresses kindness, compassion, and self-sacrifice.

The Greeks continued to have more linguistic distinctions for the word love. *Eros* is used to describe when someone has sexual or romantic feelings for another. Often this word would be used when someone would say they are in love with another or they are in a state of being in love. While sex can occur without love, sexual intimacy with Eros (being in love with another) brings on a deeper emotional connection (Lewis, 1991, p. 91).

Another type of love the Greeks describe is *Philia* love. This term is usually identified with friendship. These are special relationships built on mutual trust and respect. *Philia* has much milder feelings than *Eros* and requires cooperation of another to form a friendship (Oord, 2010, p. 51).

The Hebrew term *Hesed* is used when describing "steadfast love." It is a covenant love that is promised by God. It is God's enduring, faithful love that is given to His people forever (Post, 2003, p. 18).

Christians believe that God is love. The Bible states that humankind is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22; 37-39). This involves not only loving people who are kind to us, but even loving those who are hurtful and cruel. *Agapé* love requires the help of God. One simply cannot express unlimited love on one's own. 1 John 4:7 states that love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Others, such as John Templeton, believe that people of many faiths, not only Christians, can love with this sort of divine intensity. Templeton bases his belief on the fact that all the major religions have an equivalent of the Golden Rule:

‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ A Buddhist would say, ‘Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.’ A follower of Confucius would say: ‘What you

yourself do not desire, do not put before others. ' Islam states it as follows: 'Do unto all men as you would wish to have done unto you.' And Hinduism says: "This is the sum of true righteousness, treat others as you would yourself be treated' (Templeton, 1999, p. 4).

I would contend that *agapé* love is a powerful energy that people of all religions, genders, cultures and sexual orientations can express.

Theoretical Framework

The literature that bears on the phenomenon of love in the classroom mentions five ways in which teachers relate on a personal level, or express love to their students: caring, fairness and respect, conscientiousness, emphasizing relationships and enthusiasm (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Goldstein, 1997b; Stronge, 2007). In this study, I examined the ways in which love was connected to each of these five categories and then used the categories themselves as a framework to address the research questions below. Although excellent teachers may use slightly different terminology when speaking of love, I believe that they define, model and teach love in relatively similar ways within each of the five categories.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this case study was to explore the ethos of love in the context of the elementary school classroom. More specifically, the purpose was to examine the ways in which effective elementary school teachers 1) define love, and 2) show love to their students through their behavior, through their presentation of the curriculum, and through the appearance of their classroom environment.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed were designed to be open-ended:

1. What is the range of the participants' understanding of the meaning of "love" within the context of their profession?
2. To what degree is love an essential character trait of an effective teacher?
3. What strategies do the participants use to communicate love in the classroom and through the curriculum?

Key Terms

Agapé: I used John Templeton's definition of agapé. According to Templeton, agapé "is unconditional and unlimited in its expression. . . . it is love that is given for its own sake without expecting anything in return" (Templeton, 1999, p. 1).

Altruism: I used the definition of altruism that C. Daniel Batson uses in *The Altruism Question: Toward a Psychological Answer*, namely, "a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare" (Batson, 1991, p. 6).

Caring: Nel Noddings defines caring as a connection or encounter between two human beings, a carer and a recipient of care. In her book, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, she calls caring "a way of being in relation" (Noddings, 2005a, p. 17).

Effective Teaching: There are many definitions of effective teaching in the field of education. For the purpose of this study, I will accept the definition of the principal at the respective school site of the five participants in this case study.

Enthusiasm: I will define enthusiasm as being energetic with ones actions and words as well as using humor, motivation, and encouragement to engage others in the learning process.

Fairness: For the purpose of this study I defined fairness as just treatment.

Hesed: This is a Hebrew word which, when translated, means "steadfast love." This type of love is from God and it is a constant, unwavering, unrelenting love (Post, 2003, p. 18).

Job Satisfaction: For the purpose of this study I will define job satisfaction as ones answer when asked to evaluate their job as positive or negative.

Love: Because the greatest minds in history have failed to arrive at a definitive understanding of love, I decided, for the purposes of this study, not to define love. Indeed, the purpose of my research was to determine how *my participants* understood and attempted to show love. Their contributions helped me to gain a better understanding of how love was expressed in the context of the classroom.

Philia: This is regarded as friendship love. It is a relationship built on mutual trust and respect (Oord, 2010, p. 51)

Respect: I will define respect as an attitude that underlies the provision of just treatment.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was delimited to the data collected from five teachers teaching grade levels from kindergarten through grade five at an elementary school in Oregon. The school in question is neither a charter school nor an alternative school. In using the case study design and in having only five teachers involved, it was not representative of the general population. Therefore, generalizations from the findings cannot be made. Another delimitation has to do with the nature

of case studies: I was the only one collecting and analyzing the data, which may bring into question the reliability, validity and integrity of the study (Merriam, 2009).

During the research, one of my participants had to drop out of the study due to an illness in her immediate family. I was able to use one interview and one observation from her for the research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter examines the previous research on types of love in the classroom as well as the various definitions of love and the many concepts associated with it. The phenomenon of love in the context of education has attracted little research. Educational theorists have focused instead on such topics as at-risk students (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Jenner & Jenner, 2007) and student assessment (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997). Researchers have only recently begun moving from studying pedagogy alone to examining the role of the teacher in improving students' achievement. The term "effective teacher" has become the new descriptor for the person whom administrators are seeking to hire and whom colleges are hoping to train. Part of being an effective teacher involves educating the whole student, emotionally, physically, and mentally (Noddings, 2005b; Stronge, 2007; Whitaker, 2004).

In this study I concentrated on the teacher as person, the human side of the educator. In the classroom, teachers may express love for their students in various ways. According to the literature, effective teachers possess a number of love-related traits, of which five stand out. Of these, three have to do with the ways in which such teachers relate to their students, namely, caring, showing respect and fairness, and enthusiasm. The fourth concerns the capacity of teachers to build relationships with their students. The fifth has to do with job satisfaction: satisfied teachers are usually effective teachers. I examined these five traits with a view to understanding how love plays a part in each.

While the actual term "love" appears in few journal articles pertaining to teacher-student relationships, the ability to connect on a personal level in each of the five dimensions enumerated

above would seem to be impossible without love, for “to love is to act intentionally, in sympathetic response to others, (including God), to promote well-being” (Oord, 2010, p. 29). With this definition in mind, one naturally assumes that love is one of the foundations of effective teaching.

Caring

A growing number of researchers believe that caring is both essential for school success and the key to students’ ability to learn (Collier, 2005; Lumpkin, 2007; Noddings, 2006). Nel Noddings has been widely recognized for her research on the ethics of care. In her book *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984), Noddings does not use the word “love” to describe how teachers feel about their students. Her preferred term is “caring,” and she contends that teachers must increase the capacity for caring in both themselves and in those around them (Noddings, 1984). She believes that if students (as the ones cared for) are receptive to their teachers as “carers” or “ones-caring,” then their teachers will be able to provide the needed caring. If the one cared for does not respond affirmatively, then one cannot call the encounter or relationship caring. Noddings sums up her philosophy of caring as follows:

I think care is more basic than love. In care ethics, caring does not mean care giving, although it may require giving care. Rather, it is a fundamental way of living with and meeting others. To care means to attend, listen, respond appropriately. It may involve a brief encounter or a relation defined by many encounters and considerable thought between encounters (N. Noddings, personal communication, January 23, 2011).

Noddings also explains that the one-caring serves as a model for others. Teachers not only care for their students, but also show them how to care for others, how to be the one-caring

(Noddings, 1984). When teachers are honest and open, students are more likely to trust them and to be willing to listen to them.

Providing students with an opportunity to share and communicate in the classroom is another way to care. Dialogue allows students the chance to ask questions as well as to maintain relationships (Noddings, 2006). Teachers can then listen to students' concerns and needs. Open dialogue also helps students to learn to care about others in the classroom. Teachers also show that they care about their students by getting to know them individually, discovering their interests, and helping them to explore these interests (Noddings, 2006).

More precisely, Teachers must know their subject well, but even that is not enough. As we listen to our students, their interests are enormously varied. Not only are their individual interests various, but the topics forced on them by the school are many. As teachers, we must help students bring these interests and topics together in ways that have meaning for them (Noddings, 2005a).

Caring teachers know how to encourage their students, and teachers who exemplify this skill can make a considerable contribution to their students' success. They will also use affirmation as a way to show caring, because affirmation seeks to bring out the best in the one being affirmed (Noddings, 2006). When a teacher affirms a student, she is looking at ways to specifically encourage his or her development. Such affirmations are most effective when teachers provide them to individual students working toward a personal goal.

Studies show that almost all students will do better when their teachers encourage them to develop their abilities (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Lumpkin, 2007; Stronge, 2007). Such encouragement involves providing feedback and giving praise. Openly encouraging students and recognizing their achievements helps increase self esteem. In "*How Full is Your Bucket?*" Rath

and Clifton explain that giving praise to someone is like filling their bucket (Rath & Clifton, 2004). The greater the amount of praise the more the bucket is filled. Good teachers understand the power of praise. Research has shown that teachers who value and care for students can affect an entire school (Whitaker, 2004).

Lisa Goldstein has studied feminism, caring and love in the context of the classroom. She cites Nel Nodding's book, *Caring*, throughout her work, but substitutes the term "teacherly love" for "care" (Goldstein, 1997a). Research has shown that teachers often fill the role of surrogate parent for their students (Collier, 2005; Goldstein, 1997b; Hatt, 2005; Vogt, 2002). Children spend long periods of time with their teachers, especially at the elementary level, and they often regard female teachers as mother-figures or "othermothers" (Collier, 2005; Goldstein, 1997b; Vogt, 2002). Children naturally look to their mothers for love and comfort; many students do the same with their teachers. Providing teacherly love to students with hugs and affection helps to meet their needs (Goldstein, 1997b, 1998b; Meyers, 2009; Vogt, 2002). Such love is rooted in commitment and a passion for teaching (Goldstein, 1997a). When students do not accept this love, teachers must be prepared to love them regardless of their response.

Goldstein has focused most of her research on early childhood education. For one of her case studies, she spent 150 hours studying Martha George, a primary-level teacher (Goldstein, 1998a). Using narrative description, she explained how Ms. George expressed commitment to and love for each of her students. Goldstein found that a teacher's love is distinct from other forms of love in that it represents a commitment to education, a passion for teaching, and a deep care for students (Goldstein, 1998a).

Goldstein's narrative recounts many caring encounters between Martha George and her class. She also cites extracts from George's journal that reveal her passionate belief that getting

to know her students and making an emotional investment in them were vital to her work as a teacher. Goldstein, in her assessment, implies that George's need to care individually for each student was rooted in a commitment to both her students and her teaching. This commitment is a form of caring (Goldstein, 1998b).

As one might expect, Martha George manifested her care by way of hugs and smiles, but she also tried to create a classroom environment conducive to care, and to use voice, tone, body language and attentiveness to convey her love for her students. However, her caring was not "love-dovey" nor "sticky sweet," for she encouraged independence, not dependence (Goldstein, 1998a).

Love and caring are often regarded as exclusively emotional attributes, but Goldstein found that George's expressions of teacherly love often involved actions stemming from deliberate moral and intellectual choices. Indeed, "caring for children is both an emotional and an intellectual act, and as such forms a legitimate foundation on which to base an early childhood curriculum." In her opinion, educational theorists have erred in considering teacherly love either not "professional" enough or "too soft" to be a legitimate subject of research. Teacherly love is simply too important a topic to overlook (Goldstein, 1997b, p. 8).

Research has also indicated that teachers show care or love for their students simply by listening to them. Such caring manifests itself in two different ways: allowing all students to have an opportunity to participate in class discussions, and requiring students to listen while their classmates are talking (Cloninger, 2008; Goldstein, 1998a; Sanchez, 2008). Students want to know that what they say will be accepted. To encourage this feeling of being accepted, some teachers hold weekly class meetings in which students can share their feelings (Goldstein, 1998a; Sanchez, 2008). Listening happens in student-centered classrooms in which teachers serve

primarily as facilitators. In such an environment students' performance and behavior improve and the effectiveness of their teachers increases (Rogers, 1983). To sum up, learning increases when students feel cared for and when their feelings are validated.

Loving also involves being responsible for others (Fromm, 1956). Teachers, because they are responsible for their students, in effect love them. Teachers express this responsibility above all by ensuring the emotional safety of their students, for "The climate for learning cannot be separated from a climate in which care, concern and love are central" (Wink & Wink, 2004, p. 8). Wink and Wink claim that teachers can express love in the classroom in a way that matches the diversity and complexity of learners and their needs. Such love can be lively, fun, quiet, thoughtful, and reflective. Again, effective teachers create an environment in which students feel loved, cared for, and free from fear (Cloninger, 2008). They ensure that their classrooms are warm, positive, and safe places by encouraging open classroom discussions and by providing positive responses to the contributions of the participants (Sanchez, 2008; Tomlinson, 2011; Weiner, 2004).

The Student-Teacher Relationship

According to some researchers, positive teacher-student relationships contribute to the improvement of students' performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jerome, Hamre, & Pianta, 2009). Teachers must bear in mind the unique needs of each student and must understand which of their students need care at any given moment.

Robert Pianta has done extensive research on the ways in which teacher-child relationships can affect the success of elementary school students. He found, for example, that students who had had good relations with their kindergarten teacher were more likely to have

fewer behavior problems in first grade than those who had had chronic conflict with their teacher (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). He also discovered that kindergarten students who tended not to get along with their teachers were less likely to be engaged. On the other hand, students who had positive relationships with their teachers had more success academically. Moreover, those who struggled with their teachers tended to experience a decline in their relationships with their peers and a slight increase in aggressive behavior toward them (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004).

Pianta also conducted a study that examined how race, gender, socio-economic status (SES), and behavior problems can affect the quality of student-teacher relationships. The researchers in the study concluded that boys tend to engage in conflict more frequently than girls, and that their teachers may therefore not tend to treat them as kindly as they would girls (Jerome, et al., 2009). Pianta also found that girls seem to experience more closeness with teachers than boys, and those children of lower SES whose parents have little education tend to be placed in more-teacher-directed and less positive environments than their higher SES peers. He also discovered that ethnicity is not a strong predictor of the nature of student-teacher relationships, although one of his findings suggested that students and teachers of the same ethnicity might stand a greater chance of having a positive relationship. These findings imply that new teachers need to receive adequate training in how to improve the quality of classroom relationships if they expect to relate well to all their students (Pianta & Hamre, 2009).

Teachers may choose either to express love or to withhold it. We all remember teachers who helped and cared for us; we also remember teachers whose words and actions hurt us and caused us great harm. Love or the lack of it profoundly affects what transpires in the classroom. Effective teachers spend time interacting with students, desire their well-being (Corbett & Wilson, 2002), and try to build relationships with them based on trust. Teachers violate this trust

and lose the respect of their students whenever they do the opposite of what they say. Such behavior also leads students to doubt their teachers (Freire, 2005).

One trait that helps break down the barriers between teachers and students, especially in the middle school years, is a sense of humor (Bain & Jacobs, 1990; Marzano, 2007; Stronge, 2007; Walker, 2008). Teachers also facilitate the building of relationships when they give their students the impression that they are interested in their lives. In such a constructive environment, students are more likely to participate in the life of the classroom (Collier, 2005). That is, they are more likely to learn, attend school, express creativity, and engage in problem-solving than they would be if they believed that their teachers are indifferent to them (Rogers, 1983). Children need to see that teachers are human, i.e., that they make mistakes, get embarrassed, can joke around, and can remember what it was like to be a child.

Enthusiasm

Teachers who express enthusiasm are more likely to keep their students motivated. Such enthusiasm can manifest itself in attitude, engagement with the subject of instruction, and emotional and assignment-related support. Much emotional support comes by way of encouragement; and the ways in which teachers attempt to provide encouragement will affect whether their charges are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Behavior motivated by interest is considered intrinsic and behavior motivated by rewards is called extrinsic (Marzano, 2007).

Edward Deci, in his studies of intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement, found that when teachers increased verbal reinforcement their students' intrinsic motivation also increased. However, when they gave rewards to their students for completing tasks the level of intrinsic motivation decreased. Hence teachers should concentrate their motivational efforts on making

their students feel valued (Deci, 1972; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Deci also conducted a study comparing the motivational effects of control-oriented approaches to instruction with those of approaches that encourage learner autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1981). He found that students who had the freedom to make choices about their learning were more motivated and had higher self-esteem (Deci, et al., 1991).

Another study of the effect of positive teacher behavior on intrinsic motivation involved the analyzing of survey data of 93 college students. This study looked at intrinsic motivation, vitality, teacher enthusiasm, and numerous other positive teacher behaviors. The responses indicated that teacher enthusiasm is the most powerful predictor of intrinsic student motivation (Patrick, Hisley, Kempler, & College, 2000).

Good teachers understand that each of their students are inspired differently and know how to motivate them accordingly. What is more, enthusiastic teachers not only increase the enthusiasm of their students but increase their level of achievement as well (Bain & Jacobs, 1990). Students will show interest if their teachers are energetic and keep activities flowing at a good pace (Bettencourt, Gillett, Gall, & Hull, 1983). Students become motivated when teachers vary their teaching methods according to their kids' needs and encourage their students throughout the day to participate actively in their learning (Marzano, 2007).

Effective teachers are passionately committed to both their profession and their students. Students may do well without a loving teacher, but most do better when caring teachers engage them and try to help them to succeed (Caldwell & Sholtis, 2008). Enthusiastic instructors provide opportunities for their students to engage with one another in the classroom. They also keep them motivated and on task by piquing their curiosity (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Yet another way in which teachers show enthusiasm is by having high expectations of both

themselves and their students. If teachers believe that their students can succeed, then they will (Marzano, 2007). Teachers who exhort their students to do well show that they care for them and their students respond by working harder.

Teachers who know their subjects well and who continue to expand their knowledge encourage their students to do the same. For example, in a another study, a group of at-risk students, when asked to describe the characteristics of an effective teacher, mentioned the ability to communicate information clearly, mastery of the subject being taught, and enthusiasm for the subject (Peart & Campbell, 1999). Teachers who have a love of learning and share from their own personal experiences as learners are able to help their students develop their own love of learning (Metcalf & Game, 2006; Penman & Ellis, 2009; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Fairness and Respect

Teachers have the opportunity to show love to their students by providing an environment that promotes fairness and respect. For the purposes of this study, I will define fairness as just treatment, and respect as the attitude that underlies the provision of just treatment. These two qualities are embodied in the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 7:12).

Students consider teachers who respect them to be honest and trustworthy (Bruning, 2000; Tomlinson, 2011; Weiner, 2004). Tschannen-Moran’s study of the effects of teacher trust on students and parents in urban elementary schools found that students performed better academically in those schools where teachers reported a higher level of trust. She also found that teachers in schools situated in low-income neighborhoods found it difficult to build trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Tschannen-Moran devotes an entire chapter of her book *Trust*

Matters to a discussion of how teachers can earn the trust of students and parents. She explains that students must trust their teachers in order to learn from them, and that respect and trust go hand and hand. For trust to occur, the participants in the relationship must make themselves vulnerable to one another; and as the relationship deepens mutual respect increases (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

In Tschannen-Moran's account of fairness and justice, justice ought to characterize the classroom because students want their teachers to be fair. Students tend to trust teachers more when they administer discipline consistently and fairly. In providing guidance for their charges, effective teachers will eschew both sarcasm and any form of demeaning treatment (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Fairness also involves setting clear rules for classroom conduct at the beginning of the year and having high expectations of all students (Bruning, 2000; Marzano, 2007; Sanchez, 2008; Whitaker, 2004). Learning can occur in such a positive environment because students feel safe and valued. Teachers also exemplify fairness by recognizing good behavior and by acknowledging their students' willingness to learn (Marzano, 2007; Sanchez, 2008). Teachers who manage their classrooms according to the principles of justice also let their students know that they are going to be held accountable for their actions, both positive and negative. Their classroom management skills promote an environment that is conducive to learning. They promote respect by refusing to express ridicule or sarcasm, and by taking pains to correct misbehaving students quietly and privately, instead of embarrassing them by reprimanding them in front of their peers (Walker, 2008).

The importance of teachers as role models is illustrated by the saying "children learn what they hear and see." Children feel loved if their teachers clearly communicate their

expectations, offer support in a positive way and conduct themselves in an ethical manner at all times (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Teachers must also avoid expressing biases based on race, gender or socioeconomic status as they seek to create a classroom environment in which fairness and justice prevail (Delpit, 1995; Peart & Campbell, 1999). If teachers love their students and listen to them irrespective of their backgrounds then their students will tend to extend the same grace to their classmates. With this in mind, teachers should also seek to provide opportunities for cooperative learning in which their students can work with students of other cultures (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). In so doing they will encourage the valuing of other cultures and will help to break down the barriers to the expression of diversity.

Attitude towards Teaching

Teachers' relative satisfaction with their vocation affects their performance in the classroom. Many teachers become discontented and end up changing careers after their first five years in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003; NCTAF, 2007). Teachers must feel supported if they are to be expected to care about their students. The profession has always been concerned about preparation and retention, but financial constraints seem to hinder change at any level. As a result, new teachers often feel inadequately prepared, and one study found that those who feel this way had a lower sense of self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). Teachers' dissatisfaction with their jobs usually has to do with salary, working conditions, the administration at their site, their colleagues, and the classes they teach (Kocabas, 2009; Muchhal & Chand; Weiqi, 2007). Other contributing factors include school safety, recognition, and benefits (Kocabas, 2009; Weiqi, 2007).

An important study by Klassen and Anderson compared the job satisfaction of teachers in 1962 with that of teachers in 2007. They found that the first group expressed its dissatisfaction mostly in relation to external sources, such as salary, condition of buildings, and lack of equipment. The teachers who participated in 2007 emphasized factors more closely related to teaching itself, such as time constraints and pupils' behavior. This same group struggled with meeting goals related to standardized test scores and with "teaching to the test," both of which minimize the scope for creativity or for the introduction of any curriculum not in the state standards. These constraints negatively affected student-teacher relationships because teachers had less time to give personal attention to their students; this in turn led to a deterioration in their students' behavior (Klassen & Anderson, 2009).

Klassen and Chiu also studied the effects of teachers' self-efficacy on their job satisfaction. They found that teachers with high levels of stress reported lower levels of self-efficacy, and that teachers with high levels of self efficacy in classroom management and instructional strategies reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). One would assume that teachers who are able to manage their classrooms and students well would feel less stress, and that students would more likely respect such teachers because they hold their students accountable. Indeed, Klassen and Chiu's findings indicated that teachers' self-efficacy influences their teaching behaviors and, consequently, their students' level of motivation and achievement (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Klassen and others also found that teachers with a high level of self-respect were more motivated and enjoyed their work more (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Kocabas, 2009). Teachers who feel good about themselves and their profession have a positive attitude on the job, which, of course, also positively affects their students. Satisfied teachers were also more likely to be

involved in activities at the school site and participate in school activities (Weiqi, 2007). To sum up, teachers who enjoy their jobs are most likely going to be happy in their classrooms, friendly to their students, and inclined to build relationships with and show love to their students.

Conclusion

The wide range of themes that emerged through this review has included multiple ways in which teachers show love to their students. While the term love is often elusive in the literature, it is still found in the caring, respect, enthusiasm, attitude, and relationships that teachers build with their students. This raises questions once again; how do teachers communicate love or whatever they may call this emotion? It also raises concerns if love is even necessary in the classroom for students to be successful? With the push for higher standardized test scores, most teachers are focusing their attention on teaching methods, not love, but what if they were? In this study, I address how teachers feel about the word love and if they believe it is pertinent in their classroom.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

The purpose of this case study was to explore how five public elementary school teachers define and express love in the classroom. The data sources consisted of observing the teachers three times each, collecting artifacts from their classrooms, and interviewing them three times. Using such a process of triangulation increased the validity of research findings (Yin, 2009).

Research Questions

I carried out my study to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the range of the participants' understanding of the meaning of "love" within the context of their profession?
2. To what degree is love an essential character trait of an effective teacher?
3. What strategies do the participants use to communicate love in the classroom and through the curriculum?

Setting

The research for this study took place at Emerald Elementary School (fictitious name) in a district situated in Central Oregon. The school district is medium in size. Multiple languages are spoken in the district, and a large percentage of the student population participates in the free and reduced lunch program. The city in which the school is located is situated near a stretch of

high desert. Permission to carry out this research was secured from the school district superintendent (Appendix A).

Participants and Sampling Strategy

In this case study, my unit of analysis was the teachers participants. I chose five elementary teachers as my sample size and the population for this study was any elementary teacher in Central Oregon. I used non probability with purposive sampling, so that I could use certain criteria with the selection of the participants. Each teacher was to be nominated by the building principal. I meet with the principal at Emerald Elementary School and explained that I wanted him to choose teachers for my study that he considered to be highly effective in the classroom. I requested that these teachers be well liked by students, parents and their peers. I also wanted them to have 10 or more years experience

Of the five participants the principal assigned me, four of the teachers were full time and one of the teachers was part time. The participants' teaching experience ranged from ten years to more than 20. All of the teachers had been mentors at one time, were on school leadership teams, had student teachers in their class before, and served on many school boards.

I contacted each of the teachers and obtained their agreement to participate in the study. Each teacher was supplied with an Informed Consent Letter to sign (Appendix B). Only teachers that signed the consent form participated in the study.

Figure 1

Teachers	Gender	Age	Grade	Years of experience
A	Female	40s-50s	K	20
B	Female	50s-60s	3	18
C	Female	30s-40s	4	17
D	Female	40s-50s	K	21
E	Female	30s-40s	K	10

Research Ethics and the Safeguarding of Subjects

I followed all the guidelines of the George Fox University's Institutional Review Board with respect to research ethics and the safeguarding of subjects and did not begin my research until receiving authorization from the School Board. I also notified the superintendent of the school district about the study and asked for written approval of an elementary school principal in the district who would be willing to host the project and select potential participants. I then began collecting data only after those who agreed to participate in the study had signed a consent form (Mortensen & Kirsch, 1996). I kept all of the signed consent forms in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I alone had the keys to this cabinet.

I audio recorded the interviews and kept the recordings in a locked filing cabinet. I alone know the subjects' names and personal information. In my report on the findings, I assigned letters to each of the subjects and a fictitious name to the participating school. In addition, I agreed to destroy the recording and consent forms three years after publication of this dissertation.

Instrumentation and Materials

The research took the form of a case study in which I collected data using three separate instruments (Yin, 2009):

1. Personal interviews
2. Collecting documents that provided site-related data
3. Direct observation

Personal interviews. I conducted three semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions (Seidman, 2006). During each interview, I used a set of guide questions, but I did not confine myself to these questions alone. Rather, I used whatever (ethically appropriate) questions I felt helped elicit stories and experiences from the participants. I began with broad topics and then focused in on increasingly specific and more personal topics. As the participants felt more comfortable with me, I asked about how they defined love and how love looked in their classroom. I also asked them to reflect on their past experiences of growing up in school and if they felt loved from their teachers. I was interested to know if they felt some of their students were easier to show affection to than others and why. I audio recorded the interviews and later had them transcribed. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. A copy of all the interview questions is attached (see appendix C,D, & E).

Gathering site documentation. Throughout the course of the study I collected site-related documents, such as classroom newsletters sent home to parents, class rewards, sets of classroom rules, and documents posted in the classroom (Merriam, 2009). These documents also took the form of public records, such as report cards, personal documents, and physical materials already present in the research setting.

Direct observation. As mentioned above, I observed each of the subjects three times during their classroom teaching (Burgess, 1982) with the purpose of gathering data with respect to the ways in which each defined, modeled, and expressed love in the classroom. I took field notes throughout these observations.

Analysis and Procedures

With respect to the collection and analysis of data, I followed this sequence: observing, recording and interpreting. After collecting the data, I entered the data into a software program called QSR Invivo 9 for analysis. As was mentioned above, I used the following instruments: interviews, a collection of site documents, and direct observation.

Teacher interviews. I coded the data from the interviews into categories that helped facilitate the discernment of patterns (Saldana, 2009). I did the coding in three stages: 1) open coding, which involved the tagging of any unit of data, relevant to the study; 2) axial coding, which consisted of scanning the data for patterns and categorizing whatever patterns emerged; and 3) selective coding, which involved analyzing the relationships between categories and assigning them as subcategories. This process enabled the development of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Merriam, 2009). In gathering the data the theories came from the various patterns and began to build. The theories were built from the ground up, hence grounded theory.

Gathering site documentation. I collected documents that had to do in some way with love, whether they were documents that the subjects had made available in their classrooms or those they had sent home with their students. I coded these documents and categorized them into the themes of the framework. Some of the artifacts were not able to be taken, but were observed

in the classroom. These artifacts are written about in chapter four under each theme but there is no appendix for them.

Direct observation. I observed each subject three times, in the course of his or her classroom instruction. I used a self designed form to validate what I was exactly doing in each classroom while observing. The headings on the form were; physical setting, participants, activities, conversations, subtle factors, my own behavior, and artifacts collected that day (see Appendix F). In these notes I documented the strategies each participant used. During my observations, I focused only on documenting behaviors that showed love. It is important to say that my participants were human and did not act perfectly as it may seem. My research was to note the areas of love that I observed and that is what I did. After gathering the observation information, I entered the data into the software, and looked for patterns or themes to emerge with respect to each teacher's definition of love.

Role of the Researcher

My role was to interview the participants, collect the data, and analyze the findings. I conducted myself in an honest and ethical manner throughout the process, so as to protect the anonymity of the participants. I followed the Institutional Review Board guidelines established by George Fox University. I also did whatever was necessary to ensure that the participants felt comfortable, and especially when I was making my observations. I clearly explained to them the significance and purpose of the study. In addition, I was responsible for organizing and coding all of the data that I collected. I was familiar with the school that I was assigned to, but not with the teachers who participated in the study.

My interest in teacherly love stems from the fact that little research has been done on the topic. I was also interested to get to know my subjects personally with a view to understanding how their exemplification of love contributes to their effectiveness as teachers. I hope to publish my findings and thereby contribute to the development of effective teachers.

Potential Contribution of the Research

Thus far, few educational researchers have explored with the ways that teachers show love. Additionally, researchers have paid little attention either to the ways in which teachers' personalities, and character qualities affect their students' academic achievement, or to the ways in which teachers might address their deficiencies in these areas. To be even more specific, the topic of teacherly love as expressed in the classroom has received next to no attention in the literature on education.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the ethos of love in the context of the elementary school classroom and, more specifically, to examine the ways in which effective elementary school teachers define love and the ways in which they show love to their students through their behavior, their presentation of the curriculum, and the appearance of their classrooms. To this end I pursued answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the range of the participants' understanding of the meaning of "love" within the context of their profession?
2. To what degree is love an essential character trait of an effective teacher?
3. What strategies do the participants use to communicate love in the classroom and through the curriculum?

This chapter presents a summary of the data I collected by means of interviews, personal observation, and artifacts that I requested from the participants. To facilitate my analysis, I used the QSR Invivo 9 software. Although the software did not allow coding, it did help with the organization of the data. I used a three-step process to code the data. First, I read through the interviews. Second, I scanned the interviews by means of the Invivo program and created nodes (i.e., categories) to connect the themes that emerged with the five themes in the theoretical framework. The software was able to organize in one place all of the data that I had collected for each node. This process facilitated the discovery of patterns within each node. Finally, I printed the data for each node and manually examined the coded data to analyze each theme into subcategories.

I found that the ways in which the teachers had shown love corresponded to each of the five themes of the theoretical framework and that I could analyze them further into subcategories within each theme. The data indicate that the subjects have demonstrated love in multiple ways. They also show that all of the subjects believe that teachers must demonstrate love in the classroom to do an effective job of meeting their students' needs. My personal observations reinforce these impressions.

The teachers told me stories about their favorite teachers and about the ways in which these role models had had an impact on their own teaching careers. They also recounted indelible memories of instances when a teacher had hurt their feelings.

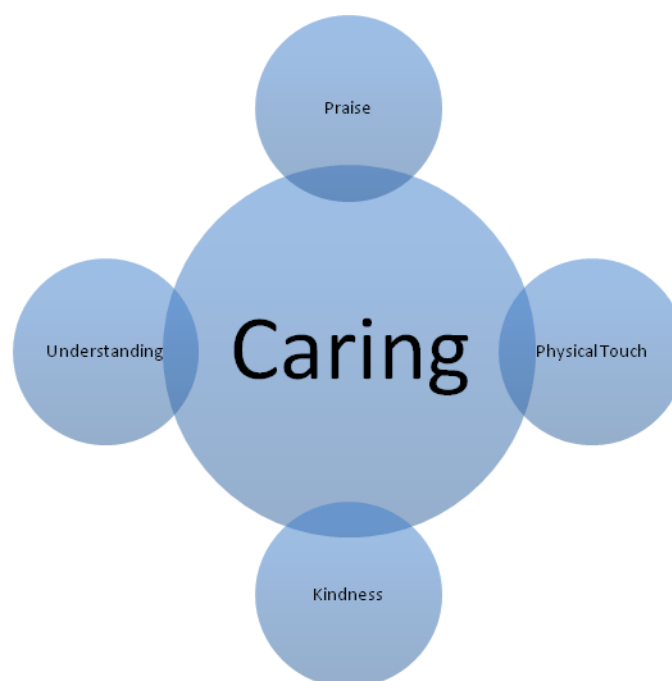
In my review of the relevant literature (see chapter two) I identify five main areas in which teachers demonstrate love: caring, fairness and respect, enthusiasm, attitude toward ones job, and the teacher/student relationship. From the interviews, observations, and artifacts, I found many additional ways in which the participants were showing love to their students in their classrooms. Moreover, all of the subjects made an explicit connection between the provision of love and the success of their students. I have provided below comments from my classroom observations and my interviews with the subjects, as well as indications as to the role the artifacts played in my analysis. The responses I have transcribed have to do with the ways in which the five teachers in the case study experienced love as schoolchildren and the ways in which they use love in their classrooms today.

Caring.

All the teachers in the study believe caring to be a form of love. In their own teaching they manifested this caring through praise, physical touch, kindness, and understanding (see

Figure 2).

Figure 2. Expressions of Caring.



Praise.

Throughout the observations and interviews, the teachers talked about praise and gave words of encouragement to their students. During my observations I saw teachers using facial expressions such as smiles and nods of acceptance; they also cheered, and one class even did a special celebratory "happy dance." According to Nel Noddings, these sorts of affirmation contribute to students' success (Noddings, 2006).

Sample comments from interviews.

"And I tried to point out why whatever they did was really good. Maybe it was something that they just learned or I don't know. So I always try to use good words. Um, sometimes depending on what it is, we have little certificates for if they learn, like, the pink words then they get to take a pink certificate home."

"Oh, we have the happy dance, where if something very exciting happens then . . . we stop everyone and everyone does the happy dance for, you know, whatever. If somebody has really been struggling with fives and then they make them right on their paper without anyone helping, then we all say, "Wow, yay! Happy dance. We're doing the happy dance."

"You can change a child's life by saying one thing: Oh, you're not a good reader. Man, if I told my kindergartens they weren't a good reader, I bet they wouldn't be a good reader for the rest of their life."

Examples from classroom observations

"I like the way some people are sitting quietly. Whisper into your buddy's ear what you are going to write."

"Okay, all you brainiacs . . . nice job."

"It is hard but I like your attitude today."

"I am so proud of you . . . You are getting to be first grade readers."

Artifacts observed or collected.

Each child has or her own named cubby hole.

Each student has work posted in the room.

Photographs of each student are in the room.

Each of these teacher comments and artifacts demonstrate the importance of caring. They are different examples of how teachers show love to their students through the quality of caring.

Physical touch.

During the interviews the teachers talked about hugging their students, and I also

observed them doing this in the classroom. Many of them have strong feelings about hugging and the importance of physical touch. These responses echo the research of Lisa Goldstein with respect to the importance of touch as an expression of teacherly love (Goldstein, 1997a).

Sample comments from interviews.

"Um, you know, if it, if it happens that we're told not to hug kids, then I will not teach anymore."

"You know, I give my hugs . . . I give hugs a lot to the kids and I always say, "OK, here's a high five." Like they get knuckles, high five, or a hug. But I also think that touch is really important and I think people sometimes do need a hug. So I know I touch the kids a lot on their heads, on their shoulders. . . ."

"Positive words, pat on the back, a hug. And I know, you know, now it's sometimes not politically correct to touch students and different things like that. Kindergarten, my kids need that, you know. They need to be hugged and touched and given high fives. And it's so important to . . . everyone needs that calming reassurance."

"And there's a little boy and he . . . it was a horrible home situation and his mom had slit her wrist in front of her . . . the boys. He . . . there was a kindergartener and a first grader. And, so, he came from that just traumatic and he came in one day and he's like, "My legs hurt." And I said, "Well, let's . . . you know, "--what's the matter with your legs?" And he said, "My feet hurt." And then, "My arms hurt." And so, I just sat in the rocking chair and held him and he just needed to be held, you know. It's so sad that . . . yeah."

"I think obviously all the research shows, you know, if you're a newborn and you don't... you aren't touched. And so, kids still, you know, they need that pat on the back. They

need that, "You know, I'm sad today, my dog died," or whatever it may be. I have a lot of, "Oh, I don't get to see my dad for a week." That's hard. If I didn't get to see my dad for a week when I was in kindergarten, that would be very, you know, that's hard. You need a hug."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher hugs student at snack time.

Teacher often puts hand on shoulders or pats hand of students.

Teacher helps put one child's hair into a ponytail.

While physical touch of students can be a sensitive issue because of perceptions of impropriety, the teachers in this study showed that hugs, gentle shoulder squeezes, and pats on the back can model a teacher's love to a struggling student.

Kindness.

The teacher participants constantly mentioned the importance of being kind, warm, and friendly. Many of them sat on the carpet during circle time and all of them walked around helping students that needed assistance with their work. The participants also recounted examples of how their own teachers had modeled these virtues.

Sample comments from interviews.

"Her name is Mrs. Jones, and she was just very kind and loving and warm and um, she was, you know, a family friend too."

"I mean she just was a great, kind, loving person, you know. I just, I mean, I just remember. I don't remember it like any of the things we learned, you know, but I just remember, you know, always feeling good, you know."

"She was just very kind."

"I don't know, I mean, I guess I just feel . . . like I would do, like, whatever it took for like any, any child in my class, like, whatever it took to help them or meet them. I mean, I don't know, I think it's just doing whatever it takes and . . . I really care."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher kneels down by students.

Teacher helps student pick up jacket and put it on the back of student's chair.

By the teachers desk on the wall are letters and pictures drawn by students . . . They say #1.

teacher, best teacher ever, my teacher rocks . . . and there are others that are just pretty drawings.

The type of kindness that was shown was natural and caring. The teaching participants were not afraid to demonstrate concern or give help to students that needed assistance. These teachers were not worried about being friendly to their students; they taught from their heart.

Understanding.

The understanding that I observed in the classrooms and heard the teachers talk about included the elements of gentleness and helpfulness. A positive classroom environment was provided by the participants in which empathy was shown to their students. This allowed for children to feel safe and free to make mistakes.

Sample comments from interviews.

"We're doing sharing, and he thought of something that was different and he wants to say it . . . and he had his hand raised, and then one of the other kids was called on, and he said what he wanted to say, and he had said, 'I wanted to say that.' I said, 'Oh buddy, you know, next time, you know, you'll get a chance.' And, but he just broke down, and I haven't seen him get this upset, sobbing. And it just broke my heart; so, anyway, I just

had him sit on my lap and I mean, and he was, like, on my lap, like, curled up on my lap like a baby."

"I think somebody who just connects with the kids and challenges them and understands, you know, understands them. I think challenging them for who they are. I think a really good teacher never lets anything get in the way of kids learning, you know, no matter what."

"I picture in my mind these two plants. One of them that has sunlight and, you know, water and that plant can grow. And then there's another plant that you, like, stuck and covered . . . doesn't grow, sort of wilts; and that's kind of what I picture the people: if they don't have love that's what happens to people. That's the visual I get."

"They take more risks because they know they can make mistakes, and it's not a big problem. Or they talk, or they get involved, or, I don't know, they smile. They yell, "I love you teacher!" out the door. I mean, you know you just can tell, and that's really big."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher moves closer to her student who is having trouble reading

While students working, child goes up to teacher with hurt tooth. Teacher gets down to student's level and helps her . . . looks and asks questions.

"Hi my dear . . ." helped student with band aid.

Artifacts observed or collected.

All materials were placed at children's level (students are able to reach everything easily).

The participants displayed empathetic understanding toward their students by sympathizing with them when they were hurt or by helping them comprehend a concept that was

being taught. Students seemed to feel free of judgment and able to express themselves openly.

Attitude towards job.

The participants expressed love through their attitude to their job in the following ways: by simply enjoying their job, by exhibiting (the requisite) love for children, by being lifelong learners, and by developing a mastery of the subject they teach (see figure 3). During the interviews the teachers talked about the importance of loving their job and the experiences they had had under teachers who either loved or hated their jobs. One mentioned an incident involving a teacher who was so burned out that his students were able to drink a beer in class without his even noticing. This participant described how sad she felt being in that classroom.

Figure 3. Expressions of Love via Attitude towards Job.



Enjoys job.

Each of the five teachers I observed had 10 or more years of experience. They indicated that someone who does not love being with children all day would not be happy as a teacher. This observation accords with the findings of the relevant literature. The participants also talked about their own childhood experiences of having teachers who were burned out, and the ways in which those teachers influenced the participant teachers' teaching today.

Sample comments from interviews.

"but if you didn't love it for whatever reason, whether it's the learning or the, you know, just the hilarious things the kids do or whatever; if you don't love it then you're not going to like it."

"I don't know. I think that's the hard part, and I think that's why so many people come into teaching and then they leave it so quickly, because whatever that drive is didn't connect with them, and if you didn't love to be a teacher and come in here and get involved with the children every day, you just couldn't do it."

"If out of all the teachers, um, just because I just remember, a lot of worksheets, row after row of kids, they're just, there wasn't a lot of pizzazz left in her; whereas the classroom next door had all the pizzazz. Um, it was my friend's father, and he was a goofy hands on social studies science guy and I just remember, ours was just rote, it was boring. Um, and I honestly don't remember if that was just her style, or if she was getting close to her retirement years."

"He would give us news articles. We'd read them and just . . . that's all we did. We wouldn't talk about them, just read them, and he would read the sports page. I kid you not, he would not even look over it, the entire class. And so my friends and I had this—I

can't even believe that we did this—but we said, “I wonder if you could get away with drinking a beer in class?” This is high school, and they're, like, ‘Yeah, I think we could do it.’ And we cracked it open in class and drank it in class. He never even batted an eye.”

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher has energy when teaching, says, “I love this problem.” Teacher claps.

During recess a few students stayed in. Teacher laughed and talked with them.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Words of love and praise sent to parents (see Appendix G).

The teacher participants took pleasure in the lessons they presented their students. Their facial expressions were animated with joy and excitement as they talked about the information they were giving the students. Each one of the teachers had a style unique to themselves, but it was evident by their enthusiasm and dedication that they loved their job.

Likes children.

The teachers in the study talked positively about their students. Some mentioned that loving kids was an important part of their job. These weren't the type of educators one would find sitting in the teacher's lounge complaining about their students, instead, I often found them on the playground interacting with their class, setting up projects in their classroom, or meeting one on one with a student.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I think you just can't separate yourself; you know, it's hard to leave them. But I . . . or maybe it's just, maybe it's kindergarten, too, that I really like. Um, I just really enjoy it.

I really like being here. I don't, I don't ever wake up and go, I don't want to go to work. Never."

"I like kids. I guess I'm kind of a kid at heart. I was into recreation my first year of college. And I like to have fun with them. It's a, it's a . . . mostly because I like kids."

"Um, and then, third grade was great. I mean she just was a great, kind, loving person, you know. I just, I mean. I don't remember it like any of the things we learned, but I just remember always feeling good."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher sits on chair next to student to talk to him. Gets on his level. Talks softly.

Teacher's directions are clear. She is a great math teacher. She reassures students and helps them to feel good about themselves regarding math.

The participants I observed took pleasure in teaching their students. It was evident on their faces and in the way they interacted with their class. Many of them expressed the joy of coming to work each day and how they truly loved their job.

Is a lifelong learner.

All five of the teachers had been teaching for ten or more years; they were still motivated and were excited to continue learning more. Given their many years of experience, the creative lessons I saw and the energy they brought to their classrooms, it was clear that they were life-long learners. Three of them had also earned a master's degree in education. All of the teachers were at one time on leadership committees, had student teachers in their classroom, and had mentored new teachers on staff. The need to continue growing and learning was present in all of them.

Sample comments from interviews.

"Yeah and your life experiences just shape you."

"With a student teacher in your room, I think it makes you better because you're like [sic] on your best game."

"I think just always tweaking the curriculum and making it fun and making it special for the kids."

Artifacts observed or collected.

Posting of master's diploma in classroom (teacher is continuing education).

Participating in weekly staff development meetings (teacher engaged with staff activities).

The participants in this study focused more on being teachers that love learning, than being seen as sources of knowledge. I observed the participants that were asking students their thoughts and ideas. Classrooms activities were focused less on the teacher and became places of discovery, group decision making, creativity, choice, and the love of learning.

Mastery of subject.

Teachers who have a love for learning are able to help students develop their own love for learning (Metcalfe & Game, 2006). In the interviews the participants talked about how the teachers they had had as children knew their subject, liked their job, and made learning interesting. They believed that these model teachers communicated love to their students merely by being prepared and by knowing their subject well.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I had a great, um, high school science teacher and I never really, um, knew that I was good at science or liked science all that much until I had him. Um, and he was just so

fabulous and so much fun. And so inspiring to me, um, that I didn't realize that I like science."

"But he made it interesting because he would take those lessons and relate them to real life, like different types of rock, where you'd find those; and then he did, you know, really, a study of maps in the world of different things and really made you think about different areas. So, not just geology but geography and just the world in general. He actually would take a class at summer in the summer time. They load up in a van and just travel the United States."

"Now, on the flip side, there was another class. We only had him for a trimester. We had Mrs. Norlyn, and nobody liked Mrs. Norlyn. She was very hardnosed, didn't show a lot of emotion but, man, she could teach and she taught us how to write papers."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher models a way to do problems on the board. She smiles and is clear with her directions and examples. She has good subject knowledge.

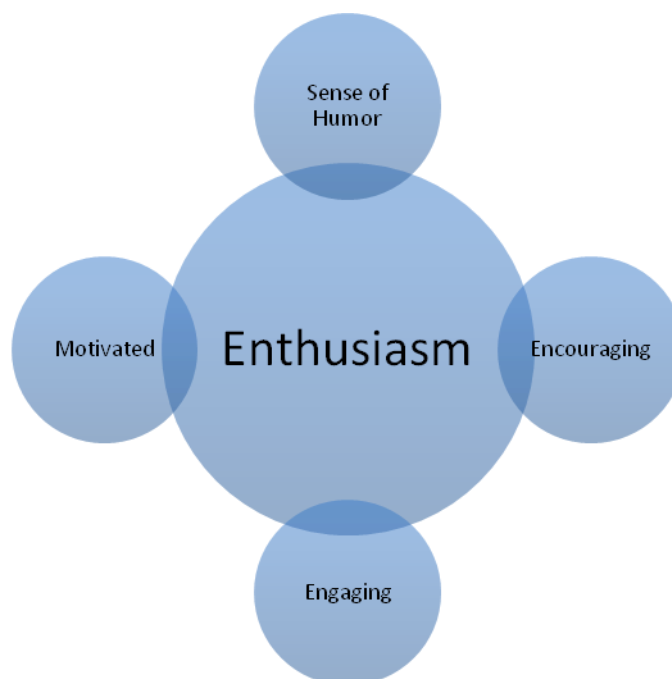
Teacher clearly explained directions, had her lessons prepared, and was organized when she presented.

In the interviews, the participants described former teachers of their own who had demonstrated subject mastery. To them, having a deep understanding of the concepts allows for them the ability to disseminate the information to their students in a variety of ways.

Enthusiasm.

The participants indicated that enthusiasm manifests itself in a sense of humor, motivation, engagement, and the capacity to encourage (see figure 4).

Figure 4. The Four Dimensions of Enthusiasm.



Sense of humor.

In the classroom the participants gave evidence of having a sense of humor by talking in funny voices, laughing, and joking with their students. They were not afraid to tease their class or to be teased. When asked to enumerate the most important traits for a teacher to possess, the participants gave top ranking to the ability to have fun.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I think it's because when you hang out with five-year-olds you tend to be sort of silly. I guess you don't have to be, but it's really more fun."

"I don't really have a specific example, but just how much, how much fun he was all the time. And how much I learned from him and how great he was that I ended up . . . I mean I was a science major. I majored in Biology and minored in Chemistry in college and really just because of him."

Examples from classroom observations.

Enjoys joking with students: “Fix that tie, Abraham Lincoln.”

Teacher says, ‘Goodness gracious’ Students repeat . . . ‘Great Balls of Fire.’

Teacher dances with students and sings with them.

Teacher uses a funny voice to get kids’ attention during small group . . . effective and fun. Kids liked this.

‘You have to use your very best listening skills.’ When doing math lesson teacher exhibits good sense of humor. Smiles and is encouraging.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Teacher wearing science lab coat (teacher dresses up as scientist to humor students).

Teacher has hair in pigtails (teacher is fun like one of the kids).

The comments and observations demonstrate the participating teachers' ability to use humor in appropriate ways to love their students. By using playful voices, laughing with their students, and acting silly, these teachers provided positive, caring environments. I found myself often laughing out loud during my observations at the teachers' hilarity.

Motivated.

The subjects kept their students motivated by their energy and excitement, and they used well-organized, interesting, and enjoyable lessons to keep them on task.

Sample comments from interviews.

"You’ve got to have um, motivation, and you’ve got to have energy; you’ve got to want to desire . . . I mean . . . what I love about teaching is the rewards. The fact that you see kids grow; to me, the beginning of the year to the end of the year, it makes you feel good. It’s like oh, yes, you know, they’ve broken through that, they can do it. And it’s not all

because of you, it's also, you know, you helped, but the child themselves has grown up and matured."

"He cared absolutely, you know. He totally was . . . he was completely . . . you can tell he just loved it. Um, loved what he was doing and he loved the kids and then he, um, just . . . this just went into the subject, you know, the way, just some people just get it."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher goes around and guides students on how to do their numbers correctly. Says, "Come on buddy."

Teacher has energy when teaching. Says 'I love this problem.' Teacher claps.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Kindergarten Chef (see Appendix H).

Hatching baby chickens in class (highly motivating activity for students).

Demonstrating enthusiasm for their subject matter and for learning, teachers are able to motivate their students without difficulty. Providing a curriculum that is interesting and involves what is happening in the students' lives inspires a creative learning environments. The teachers in this study used various methods to motivate their students to be effective learners.

Engaging.

The subjects were not afraid to be silly, to try a wild and crazy science lesson, or to stray from the required curriculum for the day. What they cared about was teaching their students and keeping them challenged. They had few discipline problems because their students were on task and engaged in learning.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I had an amazing um, world geography teacher who was in his last year of [sic] retirement and it could have been like his first year of teaching. Um, just, you could feel the love was still there; he was going out on a good note."

"Um, engaging. I just remember he was a phys. ed. teacher but he was always engaging us, right in there with us. If we had to run, he ran."

"Hands-on, engaged activities. I supposed happy, engaged activities and well, I was really sporty when I was little. I like the ones who would want to play games and come out to play at recess time and that kind of thing."

Examples from classroom observations.

The teacher has such a calm presence about her. This keeps the class calm and relaxed.

The teacher changes her tone of voice when talking to students. She gets quieter to catch their attention. . . . Almost a whisper.

The teacher participants described engaging past educators as animated and energetic.

The participant teachers used many ways to engage their students: promoting physical movement, challenging students' thinking, and using a variety of activities to excite their learners.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Class scavenger hunt (see Appendix I).

Encouraging.

The participants also expressed love by providing daily encouragement to their students, by giving them a cheer or a high five when they had done something right. This was often just

what students seemed to need, especially when they were having a bad day or had made a poor choice.

Sample comments from interviews.

"So many of them, in elementary school specially, well, even in middle school and high school, they want to please; and if you don't show love, they don't think you're pleasing them and they want you to be pleased, the teacher to be pleased and that, you know, of course, when I hug them or give them a pat on the back or thumbs up or, you know, I don't have to be touching them; but a good supporting smile, you know, I think it means a lot. It makes them, 'Oh yeah, she's happy with me.'"

"We had a track and field there, and I was a big runner and he, he came out to the playground and he was cheering me on during the running race, and then also the, the pull-ups, too; and I think just him encouraging me really helped me to want to go do better, and I won first place in both of them, and he was, you know, big . . . you know, congratulations at the end and everything. So, his encouragement really helped me keep going."

"Yes, I think I never ever want to tell a student they can't do something or they're bad at something. I would never tell a student they're bad at something."

Examples from the classroom observations.

Teacher circles around while students work and offers encouraging word: 'Good job,' etc. . . . and helps answer questions. Students are quiet.

First student answers question wrong . . . teacher does not say it is wrong . . . but says, "That sounds better . . . 'Can you make it sound closer?'"

Teacher reading a book . . . says 'You can be an author' to students.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Free Book Friday Program (each child encouraged to read, given free book every Friday).

The participating teachers showed encouragement in many ways. They offered praise and physical touch at times as well as reward systems to motivate the whole class to achieve. One example of encouragement was Free Book Friday, in which each student received a free book every Friday to take home and keep.

Fairness and Respect

As Figure 5 indicates, the data revealed that the category of “Fairness and Respect” had four different dimensions, namely, high expectations, responsibility, value, and listening.

Figure 5. The Four Dimensions of Fairness and



Respect

High expectations.

The participant teachers demonstrated their belief in their students' ability by communicating high expectations. They also assessed their students regularly and held them accountable, further indicating their support of their students' success.

Sample comments from interviews.

"Kids rise to, rise to the occasion and they want to do more and they care more. I mean, the kids have a relationship with me, and if they know I care about them and I love them, and then I set the bar high, then they want to reach that. I mean, it's just human nature."

"But I also think that I have to . . . not only do I have to be, you know, not just friends with my kids, but I have to build the relationship and I have to know where the point is. I know that at the end of the year all my kids need to know all the sounds and all the letters and all these things. I can't just be there for them and let them come in and play all day."

Examples from classroom observations.

One child misbehaves . . . I notice the teacher raises her eyebrows to the student. He quickly gets back in line.

Noticed teacher looked toward one student who was messing around and waited and until he stopped.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Red hot reader's bulletin board (kids names placed on board if they read all challenge words).

Report card (see Appendix I).

The teachers in this study demonstrated the importance of high expectations through their tone and quality of the interactions they had with their students. They provided situations for all students to feel successful. The teachers emphasized higher order thinking skills in many subject areas, consistently keeping expectations high.

Responsibility.

All the teachers in the study encouraged their students to be responsible. Some of them had homework policies; all had classroom management systems in place. No matter what grade

they taught, the subjects felt they were showing love to their students by requiring them to take responsibility for themselves and their possessions and thereby preparing them to act responsibly in their adult lives.

Sample comment from interviews.

"Being fair, because I think that is an important part. My kids know that I can be tough, you know, they know my rules: be safe, be respectful and responsible. And I don't . . . I, I get frustrated at times but I don't get angry."

An example from classroom observations.

At recess . . . had two students stay and talk about behavior contracts. Teacher explains how she is not happy about how they turn around and do not listen. The teacher was very calm when explaining, showed respect to students.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Homework Policy (see Appendix J).

Discipline plan (see Appendix K).

Classroom management was firmly established in all of the rooms and students were held accountable for many tasks. Encouraging students to be responsible for themselves and their belongings was promoted daily. These teachers believed in the importance of holding students accountable for their actions. In some classes, children were assigned jobs that assisted in helping keep the classroom clean and organized. The students took pride in these tasks.

Value.

The teachers in the study recounted childhood memories of when their teachers made them feel valued, i.e., special, and of what it felt like to be not valued by their teachers. They believe that teachers who value what their students do or say make them feel loved.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I would write things, and she would want to read them, you know, when I'd write it [sic] at home and I bring them in, and she would want to read them and, you know, just really value them."

"She just made you just feel just so special, you know, and she was fabulous, just fabulous."

"I was in the advanced math course. And she basically told me that I shouldn't be in there and I was not good at math, specifically. I figured I wasn't good and I moved down to the regular algebra class and from then on I avoided every single math class. I think it's huge and I think about her often and what comes out of my mouth is going to affect those kids."

Examples from classroom observations.

During the break teacher shows parent one of the student's art drawings and states how wonderful it is: 'She is a real artist.'

Teacher allows students to do their work next to someone they want to sit by 'Because sometimes it helps to do your work when you are next to a close friend.'

Artifacts observed or collected.

Special birthday project (song made up for child on their birthday from class with kind words).

The values these teachers had reflected in their instruction and classroom environment. Many of them decorated their rooms with colorful student work, showing off their students' talents. Other teachers had elaborate lessons with amazing hands-on activities to engage the learners. The teachers' values were demonstrated in their classes in a variety of ways.

Listening.

The participants expected their students to listen attentively for most of the time they were in class. Teachers asked them questions and solicited their opinions as a means of showing them that they love and value them. These teachers were not afraid to kneel down and put themselves at eye level with particular students so as to listen better to what they had to say. They cared about what their students were saying, and the children felt validated as a result.

Sample comments from interviews.

"Everyone has a story if you listen, you know. Everyone has something interesting in their background that if you don't listen, you never know. You know, even with my students, too, listening to them, I'll hear interesting things, you know. Somebody's aunt lives in the Bahamas, and I was like, 'Really? They live in the Bahamas?' And she was telling me about it, you know. And one of my kids, I just found out his dad is a prosecutor, and my dad was an attorney too. And I was like, 'Oh my gosh! That's so cool!' And, you know, I kind of talked to him about it."

"I was just thinking how important it is to connect with people, you know, not only in teaching but in other aspects of your life; not just speaking all the time but listening to what other people have to say, you know."

"She just would listen to all of our feelings and when she heard it all, you know, it just felt like she really cared, you know, and valued all of the things that we said."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher interacts with students while they are in line, listening to their conversations and smiling.

Laughs when student tells her a story about their writing.

She kneels down to get to the student's level.

Teacher nods and smiles to show she is listening.

She makes happy facial expressions.

Artifacts observed or collected.

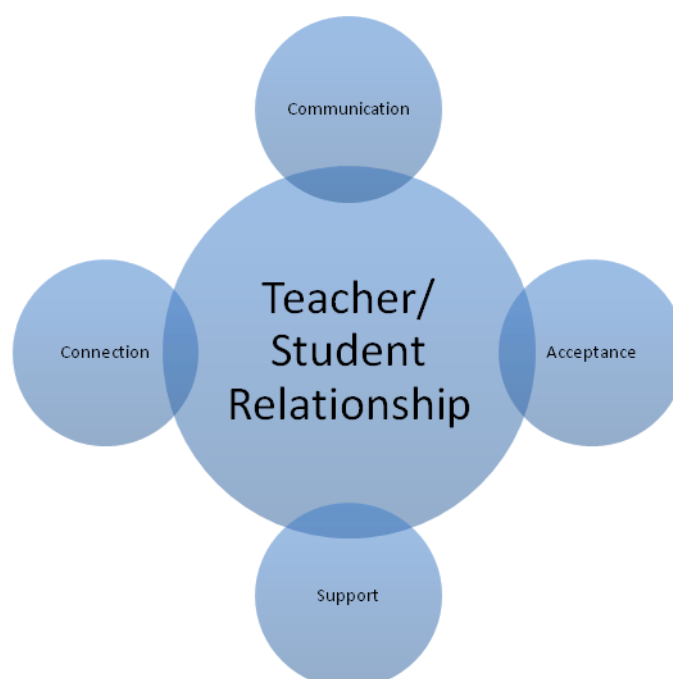
Star of the Week Project (see Appendix L).

By listening to their students, these teachers demonstrated respect and love. Their genuine interest in hearing what each child had to say gave students a feeling of acknowledgement and acceptance.

Teacher/Student Relationship

To show love to a student a teacher must have a relationship with him or her. The participants indicated four ways by which they expressed love to their students through relationship: communication, connection, support, and acceptance.

Figure 6. The Four Dimensions of the Expression of Love through Relationship



Communication.

The participants regularly communicated with both their students and their students' families via such means as newsletters, classroom websites, and impromptu conversations during class time. The last of these approaches demonstrate to the students the teachers' personal knowledge of each of them.

Sample comments from interviews.

"I can see other teachers that they don't . . . they don't want that. They don't want the kids to know about their life, and it's just like a wall there. And so, I think when you do share your life with them, it just opens up, you know, such a great communication. And so that's so very important to me and something I'm very aware of, and, you know, go to their games, you know. There are seven girls in here, a couple of boys too, that are on T-ball. And for . . . when I go and see them and I'm there, they're just so excited and then, they'll come back to school: 'You were at my T-ball game!' you know."

"He would . . . and he'd ask, like, [sic] my family skied all the time. He'd always say, 'Oh, how was the snow this weekend?' you know. He knew what they were doing, each child was doing."

"When you know your teacher loves you and you know they support you, when you go into a test—'I know you can do this'—they're going to want to do well."

Examples from classroom observations.

One student did not want a snack. The teacher responds, 'You can choose to try it or choose to not'. Later comes back to see if child liked it, the student does . . . teacher explains how she didn't like tomatoes when she was young, but now does.

Asks student where they are going on spring break.

Artifacts observed or collected.

Classroom rules posted (communicates what is expected).

Using communication techniques as describe above with students and families, the observed participants demonstrate a knowledge base of their students. They understand their students' home lives as well their students' personal interests. Through communications these teacher participants had built strong relationships with their classes.

Connection.

All the subjects believed that they should get to know each of their students and their families. They did this by sharing from their own lives, telling stories, meeting students' families, and looking at photographs students had brought to class. These activities strengthened the bond between the teachers and their students.

Sample comments from interviews.

"Walking into his classroom, it was . . . you felt very secure and comfortable. He was just a guy that [sic] he just would relate to each kid and make sure he had that connection to each kid. He would want to know about your family, where you came from, and he not only wanted to know about your family but he shared his family, and he had a little boy with special needs. And so he would tell us stories, like different things that he would do and, you know, things they were going through and that was such an . . . a big impact on but not until . . . not until I actually knew what I was doing when I was teaching. But that whole relating and sharing your family life, your outside of school life, it just brings a connection to the kids. That's something that's really . . . it's huge for me."

"Every day I make connections with all of them. I tried to find out what's happening."

"He cared for me, and so I think that if I care for a kid, they're going to want . . . they're going to remember me and then . . . I'll make a difference."

"I would say that the social problems if somebody is acting out for some reason, and I happen to know that child and I know that they might be living in a divorced family because I've talked to them. And I know that their mom is getting ready to have a baby any minute, so now they're not going to be the only child in this situation. I think just the relationship of communicating and talking, and they tell me things and they listen—that will help with their academics and their social. And then I really can't do my job academically if I don't know where the kids are. So in my . . . I mean academically, so in my daily schedule I have to build in somewhere I can talk to the kids one on one."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher helps one student move to a quieter location to finish writing. Helps him get started and then returns to check on him.

Teacher shares stories each day about something that is happening to her or her life. The kids like this and connect with her.

Two different times students came up and gave her hugs in the morning randomly.

Artifact observed or collected.

Parent-teacher conference information (connection for parent and teacher).

Teacher sharing about herself in newsletter (see Appendix M).

Support.

The participants showed their support for their students by spending time with them outside the classroom. Sometimes they introduced them to community resources, thereby

helping their families as well and making both the students and their families feel welcomed and loved.

Sample comments from interviews.

"You saw him out in . . . beyond school. And that's how I am, too, and we live two blocks from here. I go to their games. I try to . . . it's really cool, because I ski. And so, any of the kids that ski, I always say, 'Well, I'll give you my cell number and I'll meet you in the mountain,' and ski with them. And it's so cool to have that connection outside of the classroom, and I think once you get that connection, those kids will do anything for you, and it's so much easier to, you know, help them learn when you're not, you're not fighting them. You're with them. You're a team. They know you. You know them. It just makes it smoother."

"If there's not that feeling of support or there's not that connection made, then why would you want to do your best for somebody. And why would you want to learn something. And why would you even pay attention to what they were doing, if you don't have that relationship necessarily?"

"I guess it has taught me that it's OK to be not just a teacher, to know them personally and take other interest in the student than just what goes on in the classroom."

Examples from classroom observations.

Teacher talks to one student about getting a marathon award. She tells the students that she will be out today walking the playground if they want to continue working towards a marathon award. Some of the kids cheer. She is clearly involved with the kids even on her breaks.

Teacher offers snack to students who don't have one.

Teacher hands out extra gloves to students that don't have them, as well as extra jackets.

Artifacts observed or collected.

All classes had websites with teacher information (builds teacher/family relationship).

Classroom Newsletters (see Appendix N).

Through the use of emails, phone calls, and newsletters, these participants showed support to their students and families. Many of them attended events their students participated in outside of school, confirming the importance of their relationship.

Acceptance.

The participants believed in showing love to their students by accepting them regardless of how they presented themselves (i.e., regardless of whether they were loud, shy, smart, clumsy, funny, angry, or whatever) as they entered the classroom.

Sample comments from interviews.

"It makes a kid feel good, it makes a kid feel warmth and loved and um, like you've accepted them. I mean, that's like you or I; when I get hugged, I feel good."

"I just can think about the way he made me feel in class, secure, loved, um, and I want my students to feel like that, because if you feel loved and secure you're going to perform so much better. And I really find when the kids know you love them they want to do everything to please you. If you have that, 'I'm the teacher, you're the student, you're going to do what I tell you to do,' it's like . . . it's a battle. That would take too much energy from me."

"Well, I think it's very important to feel loved as a kid, to want to come to school, to feel safe. Um, you know now, it just seems like there are so many kids who don't want to come to school."

Examples from the classroom observations.

One student was off task during the project . . . teacher says, ‘Tommy, are you reading to be a red hot reader?’ This catches the student’s attention, and he answers ‘yes’ and quickly gets back on task. There is nothing demeaning in how she helps redirect.

Teacher has good relationship with kids . . . she listens to them when they ask questions. When two girls asked about something, she gave them an option and then asked, ‘Fair?’ the girls said, ‘Yes.’ It shows she respects the students.

Teachers says ‘LOVE spells love’. . . it is a song. The students spelled words with hands and then threw love in the air. . . . The teacher said, ‘You are a bunch of sweethearts, and I saw a lot of love in the air.’

Artifacts observed or collected.

Student welcome gift (see Appendix O).

Accepting students for how they are and understanding the challenges they face was another way I observed these teachers show love. With varying family dynamics, religious beliefs and values, these teacher participants made effort to recognize and appreciate every student.

Conclusion.

Comparison of the five teachers revealed that they were all similar. Their classrooms were well managed and the environments were welcoming. The teachers had taught for many years and it was evident by their responses and actions that they all enjoyed their job.

Several of the teachers expressed that they considered loving children to be part of teaching, although none of them could remember having any specific training on caring or

building relationships in their previous education courses. They all agreed that showing affection and making personal connections with students were vital in a child's success.

All the teachers were able to describe a difficult incident they had with a teacher when growing up themselves. They could remember the name of the teacher and exactly how they felt at that given moment. These experiences left negative impressions on all five of the teachers. The participant teachers also had mentors and teachers that they loved. Several said it was from these relationships that they learned to love and care for others.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how a small sample of teachers define and express love in the classroom. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, few educational theorists have examined the ways in which teachers love their students in the classroom setting. However, researchers have considered five relational categories that bear directly on love, and I used these same categories as a framework for my research.

As far as the first research question is concerned, my findings indicate that the five participants had a strong understanding of what it means to love a child in the context of the classroom. All five related to their students in ways that correspond to the five thematic categories and also loved them in ways that the observations, interviews, and collection of artifacts revealed. From their discussions of love and their practical expressions of it one cannot infer a tidy definition of the concept. Rather, one is left with the impression that love in the classroom involves meeting the full range of students' needs, not just their academic ones.

Nel Noddings states, "We should demand more from our schools than to educate people to be proficient in reading and mathematics" (Noddings, 2005b). No longer can schools put students' emotional needs on the back burner. Loving a student goes beyond teaching curriculum; it is partnering with that student, providing guidance, care, and knowledge. To meet the whole student's needs, schools focus more on providing students academic support, character building, family relationships, and social/health services.

When I was observing in the classrooms, I saw firsthand the powerful ways that teachers loved their students with praise, smiles, hugs, and caring. The research participants were looking beyond the standardized test and academics, in turn, meeting the whole student's needs. They were educating on a much deeper level, a level that involves human connectedness, a passion for teaching, and a commitment to care for their students.

These teachers knew what was going on in their students' lives. They were able to tell me which child was going through a rough time due to his parents divorcing, what children did not get along together on the playground, and who needed extra attention for various reasons. Instead of love fitting into one clear example or definition, loving students was seen and described in a myriad of ways by each teacher.

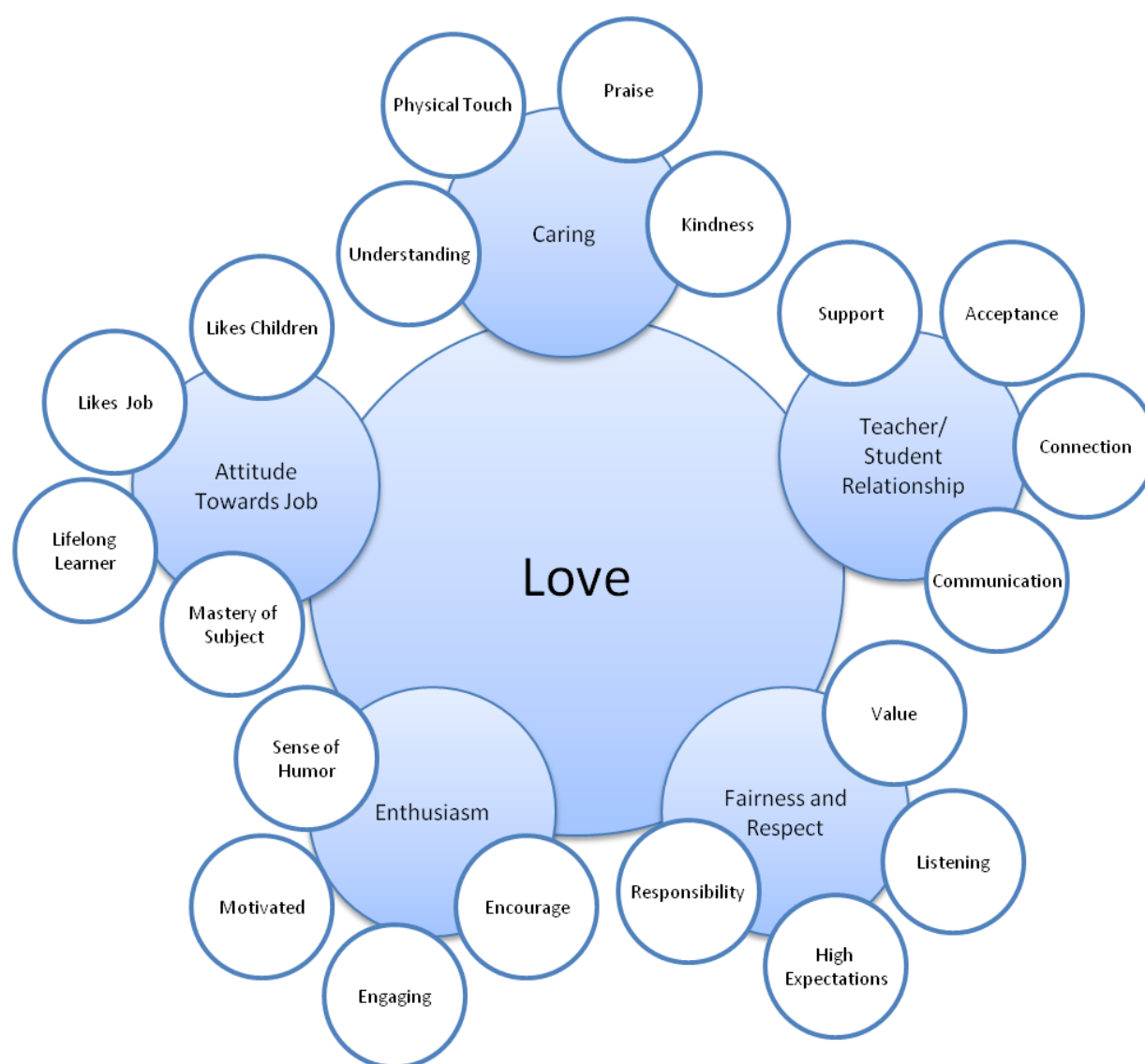
The second research question asks to what degree love is an essential trait of an effective teacher. From the discussions alone, it should be evident that the participants consider love to be so necessary to their pedagogy that they cannot understand why teachers who do not love their students would want to teach at all. They also believe that teachers' expressions of love have a positive effect on their students' academic performance—to the extent that they could even help to increase test scores. Indeed, when I asked them "Why are researchers not focusing more on love if it improves students academics?" some of them shook their heads in frustration.

As explained in Chapter 2, many interview and survey responses in studies regarding effective teaching emphasize the teacher's affective characteristics, such as love of children, love of job, and positive relationships with children, more than pedagogical practice (Stronge, 2007, p. 22). In my research, I was able to see how the teachers that participated were influencing their students in positive ways. The energy and enthusiasm that many of them brought to their rooms was infectious. They not only effectively motivated students, they served as powerful examples

of lifelong learners. The love for their students was not only shown in various ways it was modeled in their love of teaching as well.

As far as the third research question is concerned, the subjects used many strategies to communicate love to their students. All of these conform in some way to the five thematic categories that I used as the basis for my research, but they also transcend them. In fact, I discovered sixteen additional strategies in the course of analyzing the data (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7- Ways in Which the Participants Exhibited Love



I discovered in my observations that love comes in many forms in the classroom, but in an effective teacher's climate, love was central. When doing this research, I was often asked what was my definition of love. It wasn't until I completed this study that I was able to see the multitudes of ways love can be shown. For this reason, I found that my favorite definition to describe pedagogical love in the classroom and how I define love was from this quote by Wink and Wink:

"What does the face of love look like in a classroom? It turns out that it is highly diverse. The face of love in a classroom can be deep and abiding respect for people and for learning; it can demonstrate safety. It can radiate a freedom to think, to grow, to question. The face of love for learning can be quiet, thoughtful, and reflective. Love can also be lively and fun. Love in the classroom is as diverse and complex as the learners and their needs and the perspectives, experiences and philosophies of the instructor. Love can connect the teacher, students and curriculum" (Wink & Wink, 2004, p 8).

The five research participants had their own unique teaching style and yet they all loved their students in profound ways. With each lesson they planned, to the bulletin boards they placed on the walls, love was involved.

Conclusion

The data collected in this study support the hypothesis that effective teachers deem love to be a necessary part of their pedagogy. The participants had had no training on how to love, but they believed that offering pre-service teachers training in caring, building relationships, and ethics would likely have a transformative effect on education. While the data derived from this study come from only one school site, the results provides valuable feedback for teacher education programs. Examining the whole child through courses that include pedagogical love

should be given strong consideration. To engage students, a relationship needs to be formed. Guiding new teachers on the various ways to love their students opens the door to a closer connection.

Furthermore, from this case study, I believe that school administrators could discern the same results to be true for their teachers and ought to apply the same concept to their staff. Leading with love by being caring, building relationships, showing enthusiasm, treating the staff with respect and modeling a positive attitude, the same positive effects will be produced. Through this research, I can imagine that an administrator that is supportive and caring would most likely have a better school environment than one who was not. Therefore, it seems in poor judgment for a school leader not to lead using pedagogical love.

School need to be a place where children can feel loved and secure. It is irresponsible for educators to assume that their students come from loving, nurturing homes with attentive parents. Indeed, some children have such poor home situations that their teachers are the only positive adult role models in their lives. I believe teachers are responsible to investigate the importance of pedagogical love and the effects it may have on their students. What ways can they integrate love into their teaching everyday and build closer connections with their students? A culture shift is needed toward making sure all requirements of the student are met, not just the academic ones. Schools becoming more family centered instead of only child centered will need to be the norm

Future Research

The findings of this study have limited validity because of its restricted scope and the limited number of participants. During my research, one of my participants had to stop due to health reasons. I had already interviewed and observed this person once so I was able to use

some of the data. While this was frustrating, it taught me a lot about being flexible when doing research.

I believe that future research on the pedagogical implications of love should encompass a greater number of schools and a greater variety of grade levels, e.g., middle and high schools. During the approval process, my hope was to research at a few elementary schools, but I was only given one to do my research. I believe that expanding this study to multiple sites would increase its validity. I would then be able to see the differences and similarities between school climates and teachers. Also, three of the participants were kindergarten teachers. I am curious what my results would have looked like if I had more upper grade teachers.

This leads me to think about doing my research at various levels. One wonders whether middle and high school teachers will feel as strongly about the importance of love for effective teaching and whether they will express love differently than teachers in the lower grades. Are these teachers scared to hug their students for fear of retribution? Do they have too many students to truly build personal relationships? Why is it that many middle and high school teachers seem to be less involved with their students' lives?

Additional research on the topic should also include participants with differing levels of experience, since the participants in the present study had at least 10 years of classroom experience. It would be important to see how new teachers express love to their students. One wonders if they feel it is important when they already have to prepare, manage and teach a new classroom.

The participants of this study were also considered effective teachers by the principal. I am curious about what I would have found in the classrooms of other teachers that were not as excited about teaching. Studying all types of teachers would be important in understanding love

in the classroom. What are the environments like in classrooms where teachers are burned out? What about the teacher who only does worksheets? How does a teacher's attitude toward their job affect their students?

Greater diversity in sex and ethnicity would also increase the generalizability of the findings. All of the participants were white and were women. This gives a limited view of a teacher's love. I believe that expanding this study to include men and people of various ethnicities would provide broader data about loving students.

Ideally, further research would also take into consideration students' perspectives on the role of love in effective pedagogy. As I spent time in each subject's classroom, I wondered what the students might be thinking about love as it relates to learning and whether they believed that their teacher was showing them love. Children's insights into what makes them feel loved could contribute significantly to the development of a love-based pedagogy that would increase student achievement.

This raises more questions such as these: Does love from a teacher differ for boys and girls? Can love make a difference on student performance? What about students' attitudes? Are they more positive in a loving environment? This opens up additional ways to explore love by looking at ethnicity and economic factors and how love can play a role with students in the classroom.

It is my belief that love in the classroom is an important research topic. I know that without it, I would not be writing my dissertation today. As I explained in the beginning of my project, it was a high school teacher that cared for me when I needed it most. While he may not have known, the extra time, guidance, and love he showed me changed my life for the good.

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APPENDIX A

February 15, 2012
Mr. Ron Wilkinson
Superintendent of Bend-La Pine Schools
520 NW Wall Street
Bend, OR 97701

Dr. Mr. Wilkinson,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in your school district. I am currently enrolled at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled, "How teachers show love in the classroom."

The purpose of this case study is to explore the ethos of love in the context of the elementary school classroom. More specifically, I will examine the ways in which effective elementary school teachers 1) define love, and 2) show love to their students through their behavior, through their presentation of the curriculum and through the appearance of their classroom environment.

I hope the administration will allow me to conduct a case study on 5 elementary teachers. If approval is granted, I will work at one school site for a period of 2 months. I will be observing the teachers in their classrooms, interviewing each of them a total of three times and also collecting artifacts that relate to love from their rooms.

I will be asking the principal to choose the teachers for me, but this study will be done on a volunteer basis. The district, school and teachers will remain anonymous and the participants will sign consent forms before any data is collected.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Mrs. Mary Dennis
Graduate Student
George Fox University

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

My name is Mary Dennis and I am doctoral candidate in the School of Education at George Fox University as well as a former teacher and principal. I am conducting research as part of my doctoral dissertation and I am asking for your assistance. This research project looks at the participants' understanding of the meaning of love within the context of their profession. The researcher will also look for strategies in which each participant communicates love in the classroom and through the curriculum.

I would like your permission to:

1. Interview you a total of three times
2. Observe you teaching in your classroom setting 3 to 4 times
3. Collect artifacts from your classroom relating to love and caring (i.e. newsletters, documents, pictures of bulletin boards).

The interviews will last approximately one hour and will be audio taped. Your name will not be used in the study.

All identifiable information collected will remain confidential. You do not need to answer any questions that you do not want to. Any time during the interview you may stop your participation with no questions from me. All information from the interviews, audio tapes and signed consent forms will be kept in a locked file and will be destroyed after 3 years completion of my dissertation.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact one or both of the following:

Mrs. Mary Dennis
21415 Belknap Dr.
Bend, OR 97701
(541)419-8482
marydennis8@yahoo.com

Dr. Ken Badley
Dept. of Educational Foundations & Leadership
George Fox University
Newberg, OR 97132
kbadley@georgefox.edu

Consent Statement:

I have read this form. I understand that nothing negative will happen if I choose not to participate. I know that I can stop my participation at any time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Date _____

Principal Researcher _____

APPENDIX C

Interview #1

1. Name? City and State you grew up?
2. Where did you attend elementary school? Can you describe it for me?
3. Thinking back to your elementary school experience, Did you have a favorite teacher.
Why was this person your favorite?
4. What effect did this relationship have on you? Explain
5. Take me back to this time and tell me what your favorite teacher's classroom looked like? Describe it to me in detail.
6. Do you think that love played a part in your educational experience? Would you have learned without it? Describe what this love looked like?
7. Was there ever a teacher that you can remember that was hurtful towards you? What happened? How did this make you feel? Do you think this affected your learning?
8. Maybe when you were in school you experienced being in a classroom where the teacher was burned out with their job. How did that feel? What does that room look like?
9. When you were an elementary student, what would you say were the three most important characteristic traits you wanted your teacher to have, list in order from most important to least.
10. Have you stayed in contact with any of your past teachers? Why? Tell me about this.
11. Can you give me an example of a time when a teacher's words or actions made a huge impact on your life?

APPENDIX D

Interview 2

How long have you been a teacher?

What made you want to be a teacher?

What is your definition of a good teacher?

How would you define the term love as it pertains to your profession?

Do you think love belongs in the classroom?

In what ways do you model love to your students?

Describe how students would be successful without love?

How are you showing love to your students in your environment?

Describe how you show love through your curriculum?

Give an example of a time when you showed empathy to a child and how did the student respond?

Do you share personal information with students to help them see you as a real person?

What are some of the ways you praise students for a job particularly well done?

Although appropriate touching students is often discouraged, do you believe that hugging, a pat on the back, or arm around the shoulder can be necessary and does this happen in your classroom? Explain why you think so?

When asked about you, how do you think your students would describe you?

What happens when you have a student that just presses your buttons, how do you love this student? What strategies do you use?

How does the relationship you have with a student help you address that students academic or social problems?

How do you know when your students have felt loved by you? Explain

How do you maintain your love for teaching?

Are you still happy teaching? If not, Why?

APPENDIX E

Interview #3

1. When you think back to your elementary years and the positive experience you had with (Mr. Banning, Mr. Porterfield, Mrs. McCollem, Mrs. Jacobson) do you think he/she has affected you teaching today? Explain?
2. Do you think you are affecting your student's lives in similar ways? Do you believe that your actions or treatment of your students can affect their future? Can you elaborate?
3. What about the teacher that hurt your feeling (the high school teacher before the SAT test, Mrs. Permenter, the teacher who yelled at you for reading, Miss Nielson) do you think that impacted your teaching in any way? Can you explain?
4. You talked about growing up and the rooms being so dark and yet your room is so bright and colorful. What are your thoughts about that?
5. After doing these interviews and having me observe your room has this made you think more about loving your students in different ways? Explain?
6. When you took your teacher education courses did they teach you on how to love or care for your students? If so explain? How did you learn to do this?
7. If we offered teaching love and caring to new teachers how would this look at the university level? Do you think this is even important to provide?
8. Do you think love affects academics? Testing? Tell me how positively and negatively? Explain?
9. How do you think your students will look back on you? Why?

APPENDIX F

Observation Form

Teacher:

Date:

Researcher:

1. The Physical Setting

(What is the physical setting like? How is space allocated? What resources are available in this space?)

2. The Participants

(Describe who is in the scene, the people, and their roles. Who is allowed here and not allowed here? Draw setting in field book)

3. Activities and interactions

(What is going on? Is there a sequence? What are the rules? When do the activities begin and end? How long does it last? Is this usual activities or unusual? How do the people interact?)

APPENDIX F (con't)

(Page 2 observation form continued)

4. Conversation

(What is the context of the conversation? Who speaks and who listens? Write direct quotes and note silences and non verbal behavior.)

5. Subtle factors

(Informed or unplanned activities, non verbal communication, what does not happen?)

6. My own behavior

(Thoughts I am having during observation (observer comments OC). What is my role? This is the reflective component.)

7. Documents and artifacts

APPENDIX G

Friday, September 9, 2011

Today was a great day for our first day with all our kindergarten friends! We are so lucky. We have a great class! This is a short newsletter. I love your child and am looking forward to next week. We will be learning about rhymes and shapes. Writing workshop will also begin. Things are going smoothly and we are learning routines and rules. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. This is going to be a great year!

APPENDIX H

Dear Families,

Each family will be assigned a snack week. I try to make this a big deal. Your child is called the kindergarten chef for the week. They are in charge of "choosing the menu" and serving. Their friends make sure to acknowledge how thankful we are for such a great snack. Thank you for providing a healthy snack for the class on your chosen week (see Calendar).

I will send home a snack calendar at the end of each month so you can plan ahead for your snack week. Unless you contact me otherwise, I will assume that your

family is able to provide snack on a weekly basis and I will include your name on the calendar.

I try to keep a back-up snack in case someone forgets. If you forget to send snack on your day, please send a replacement as soon as possible so we always have a back-up. Any extra or uneaten snack will be kept in the classroom for our end-of-the-month supply and will not be returned home. From time to time, I may ask

parents for additional donations of snack if we don't have many leftovers for the end of the month.

Since I am responsible for feeding the children each Wednesday, it is very important to me to instill an appreciation of healthy food. In addition to laying the framework for healthy eating over their lifetime, I find that the children's behavior, attention, learning, and social problem-solving are better after they eat a healthy snack as opposed to junk food and sugary treats. The children and I have discussed appropriate snacks. Your child should be able to help you make a good choice for your snack.

On our snack week, please send only one kind of snack for each day.

APPENDIX I

Kindergarten Scavenger Hunt!

Please work with your child to find the following places in the school. Check them off as you locate them. When you have completed the scavenger hunt turn in your paper for a prize!

1. Find your name on the attendance chart and answer the question of the day by moving your name magnet.
- 2- Find your number on the chart at the front of the room and then locate your spot on the carpet and your spot in line (these spots will change during the year. Please also find your coat hook
3. Practice sitting on your number. In kindergarten we sit flat on our bottoms criss cross applesauce.
4. Practice looking at a book while sitting on your number. This is how we will begin the day each morning.
5. Practice standing on your number in line. We stand with our hands to our sides and our shoes on the front of the line.
6. Find the drinking fountain in our classroom and practice taking three big drinks.

APPENDIX J

Report Card
Kindergarten

Student:				Teacher Name:			
Pupil #:				School:			
Academic Year:				Phone:			
Grade:				Principal:			
Current Year Enrollment Date							
Marking Code (based on grade level expectations):				Effort / Social & Study Skills			
X = Consistently Demonstrates / = Sometimes Demonstrates 0 = Not Yet Demonstrating = Not Evaluated at This Time				S = Meets Expectations N = Needs Improvement			
				Services: TAG/TNT <input type="checkbox"/> ELL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP / PEP <input type="checkbox"/> Title 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
READING	1	2	3	MATHEMATICS	1	2	3
Effort	S			Effort	S		
Recognizes own name in print	X			Identifies shapes	/		
Knows letter names:				Counts objects: Goal: # / 50	10		
Upper case: Goal: # / 26	8			Names numerals out of sequence (1 - 20)	7		
Lower case: Goal: # / 26	7			Writes numerals: Goal: # / 30	6		
Knows beginning consonant sounds: Goal: # / 21	8			Sorts objects by likenesses / differences	X		
Knows high frequency words: Goal: # / 25	3			Makes simple patterns	X		
Can rhyme words	0			Uses beginning graphing skills			
Shows interest in books/stories	X			Measures with non-standard units			
Uses story patterns to read a book				Names days of the week	X		
Predicts what will happen next				Recognizes coins			
Recalls a story in sequence				Uses manipulatives for exploring + and -			
				Orders objects 1st to 5th			

APPENDIX K

HOMEWORK POLICY

This note is to inform you of my homework philosophy and expectations. Please feel free to discuss any part with me.

Why I assign homework:

- I believe homework is important, because it is a valuable aid in helping students make the most of their experience in school.

I assign homework because it is useful in reinforcing skills that have been taught in class, prepares students for upcoming lessons, teaches responsibility and helps students develop positive study habits.

When homework will be assigned:

- Homework will be assigned and sent home every Friday and will be due on the following Thursday morning. Each child has a blue Communicator Folder, which will be used to transport homework each week. Please help your child schedule enough time throughout the week to complete work by Thursday.

Student's homework responsibilities:

- Students are expected to do their best work on homework. Students need to work on their own and ask for help when they have given it their best effort. Students are expected to complete all assignments on time.

APPENDIX L

Our discipline plan is pretty simple. We have three rules...

1. Be Safe.
2. Be Respectful
3. Be Responsible.

We have 4 color cans. They represent the following...

BLUE= Great Job

GREEN= A little bit of trouble

YELLOW= 5 minutes of thinking

RED= Student will call home and discuss why they went to the red can and how they will avoid going there again.

I also sometimes make phone calls home to say your child had an awesome day... so don't panic right away if you get a call.

APPENDIX M

Star of the Week!

It is your child's turn to be Star of the Week! Star of the week is a special time for us to celebrate and learn all about your special kiddo.

Your child's week will be _____.

Please help your child to create a poster about him or herself. This poster can be created on a piece of poster board, or tag board. We will share the poster with the class at the beginning of the first day of the week. After the poster has been shared, we will hang it up in the room for the whole week. Feel free to come in and watch or help with the sharing of the poster. Some ideas for the poster are...

- photographs of family, friends, and special memories
- pictures of favorite things and places
- anything else you would like to include — remember, this is a fun project with room for any ideas your child may want to incorporate.

Please help your child fill out the “Star of the Week” information sheet. You may write for your child, or he/she may write if able to do so.

On WEDNESDAY, your child may bring some special items to school to share. These items may be toys, or other special things from home. Please limit to no more than 5 things. Remember, no toy weapons of any kind. If you would like to bring in a family pet, please discuss this with me first. We will share these items at the very beginning of the day. You are welcome to come and watch/participate.

Please contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to learning many special things about your amazing child!

APPENDIX N



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Dear families,

I just want to send my wishes to you all for a wonderful Christmas break! Hopefully, you will have a restful & enjoyable 2 weeks. I will stay in Bend with most of my immediate family. will be in Bend; most likely up at the mountain during their break from college. is board & ski instructing at Buttermilk Mountain, just outside Aspen, for a few weeks before she travels to New Zealand with Southern Oregon University to complete her Outdoor Leadership minor. This is the first Christmas not all kids have been home.

THANKS to all families for supporting our rainbow valley craft fair and book exchange/party.

***There will be no drop in the bucket homework over the break. However, kids are still expected to read and complete the place value math packet. Folders are being kept at school.

See you Tuesday, Jan. 3rd! Merry Christmas

APPENDIX O

Communication

I value the relationships that I form with my students and their families! I am committed to your child's education and emotional well being. I am always happy to talk with parents. Feel free to call, email, send a note, or stop by. My email address is I have the most time to visit before school from 8:00 – 8:30 and after school. I check my email frequently, so that usually the best way to communicate. If you have an urgent situation, please call the school office or classroom. Our classroom phone will be turned off during class time to avoid distractions. However, the office is always available to relay important messages to me. I send home a weekly newsletter that will update you on our classroom activities. After the first month of school the newsletter will be sent home via email. I do this to reduce costs and save paper. Please be sure you give me your correct email address. If you do not have access to the Internet, I will continue to send a hard copy. You can also go to our classroom website at

I will post all classroom information and newsletters on my website weekly, as well as photos from our classroom activities.

APPENDIX P

Welcome to Kindergarten!

I am excited to have you in my class this year. We are going to have lots of fun learning!

This little bag of goodies is just for you.

A Starburst - You're a star in my class!

Smarties - You're going to learn so much this year! A stick of gum - We will stick together!

An eraser - Remember that it is OK to make mistakes! A Hershey's hug - We all need hugs now and then. If you need one let me know! See you soon in our classroom!

