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AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Ed.D. 1985

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AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS  
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by

Genevieve Hunter Arnold

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

Greensboro  
1985

Approved by

  
Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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ARNOLD, GENEVIEVE HUNTER, Ed.D. An Interpretive Analysis of Teacher Expectations in Early Childhood Education. (1985) Directed by Dr. Lois V. Edinger. 173 pp.

The purpose of this study was to broaden the existing field of teacher expectation research by examining the following dimensions of the teacher expectation phenomenon:

(a) How do teachers in early childhood education develop their expectations for student success and failure within the classroom social system? (b) How are the stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student related to teacher expectations of the "model" or "ideal" student? (c) How are these expectations and stereotypes reflected in the daily life of young children? (d) How do teacher expectations for the model or ideal student affect the development and implementation of the basic curriculum?

The investigation was conducted by observing the phenomenon of teacher expectations in the naturalistic setting of two kindergarten and two first grade classes, through interviewing the four participant teachers and conducting group interviews with the students in each of the four classes. Four students from each of the four classes, who had been previously identified by their teachers as being either "good" or "bad" students, were interviewed individually. Data gathered from the interviews and observations were examined phenomenologically to reveal how students and teachers understand teacher expectations. Identified

perceptions and understandings of teachers and students were interpreted personally and theoretically to address the proposed research questions.

Conclusions drawn from the study are summarized as follows: (a) The formation and maintenance of teacher expectations were influenced significantly by four major forces: personal and past history of teachers and students; traditional role descriptions of teachers, students and the curriculum; society's needs and individual needs. (b) The stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student were found to be strongly related to teacher expectations for the model or ideal student. (c) Teacher expectations were observed to have a strong influence on the daily activities of young children in the early education classroom. (d) The teacher's ideal student profile and the curriculum influenced and shaped each other in a circular, interactive process.

Recommendations based on this study include: (a) directions for future research (i.e., follow-up studies on teacher perceptions of the ideal student at different age levels, analyses of the ideal student profile as it relates to success and failure in the classroom, comparisons of these findings with private alternative school settings); (b) the identification of a personal conceptual framework for curriculum development.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Warm and sincere words of thanks must go to those who are deeply and permanently connected to my research efforts. My course work and research endeavors were greatly enhanced and expanded due to Dr. Lois Edinger's invaluable support and assistance. Dr. Dale Brubaker encouraged, advised, and directed my writing in a unique and special way. I recall with gratitude Dr. Richard Weller's efforts to assist me in crystallizing my thoughts and refining my final drafts. My sincere appreciation and thanks also go to Dr. Joe Johnson, whose interest and encouragement facilitated my progress. Dr. Nancy White shared her expertise and experience magnanimously and generously.

I am deeply indebted to Jeannette Dean, Betty McKay, and Iby Hunt, who provided the essential technical support which was critical to this endeavor. The time, patience, and expertise of Dr. David Purpel and Dr. Svi Shapiro provided a catalyst to my research efforts. Further acknowledgments are in order for Dr. N. A. Miller, Superintendent of the Buncombe County Schools, and the Buncombe County Board of Education, who demonstrated their faith in me by providing an educational leave of absence as well as a site for my research. My husband Tommy and my children Copland and Thomas deserve special acknowledgment for their contributions to my educational development.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	iii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose and Significance of the Study . . . . .	8
Basic Assumptions . . . . .	10
Definition of Terms . . . . .	11
Research Design . . . . .	13
II. REVIEW OF TEACHER EXPECTATION LITERATURE . . . . .	19
Step 1: Teachers Develop Expectations . . . . .	20
Step 2: Teachers Behave Differently . . . . .	27
Step 3: Teacher Treatment Cues Students About Self-concept, Achievement Motiva- tion, and Level of Aspiration . . . . .	32
Step 4: If Treatment Is Consistent and Student Is Compliant, the Treatment Will Shape Achievement and Behavior . . . . .	35
Step 5: With Time, Students' Achievement and Behavior Will Conform More Closely to the Behavior Originally Expected . . . . .	38
Curricular Expectations . . . . .	40
Linear/Expert Model . . . . .	44
Circular Consensus Model . . . . .	48
Dialogical Model . . . . .	50
III. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	53
Introduction . . . . .	53
Observation . . . . .	54
Interviews . . . . .	57
Teacher Questions . . . . .	57
Student Questions . . . . .	60
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA . . . . .	64
Mrs. Smith's Kindergarten: Pineview Elementary . . . . .	64
Observations . . . . .	64
Teacher Interview . . . . .	71
Group Student Interview . . . . .	75
Individual Student Interviews . . . . .	76
Teacher and Student Perceptions . . . . .	80

CHAPTER	Page
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA (continued)	
Mrs. Brown's Kindergarten: Cedar Knoll	
Elementary . . . . .	84
Observations . . . . .	84
Teacher Interview. . . . .	89
Group Student Interview. . . . .	93
Individual Student Interviews. . . . .	94
Teacher and Student Perceptions. . . . .	97
Mrs. Parker's First Grade: Pineview	
Elementary . . . . .	102
Observations . . . . .	102
Teacher Interview. . . . .	107
Group Student Interview. . . . .	110
Individual Student Interviews. . . . .	112
Teacher and Student Perceptions. . . . .	115
Mrs. Jenkins' First Grade: Cedar Knoll	
Elementary . . . . .	119
Observations . . . . .	119
Teacher Interview. . . . .	124
Group Student Interview. . . . .	128
Individual Student Interviews. . . . .	128
Teacher and Student Perceptions. . . . .	132
Personal and Theoretical Interpretations . . . . .	138
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	158
Recommendations. . . . .	164
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	168

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The question of how the young child learns and develops has stirred the curiosity of countless individuals for over 300 years. John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), and Fredrick Froebel (1782-1852) were pioneers in early childhood education. They believed that children were not miniature adults but that childhood was a special time unique and critical to future development. When one examines this critical time in human development, certain questions seem to emerge for investigation:

1. Why do children learn?
2. How do children learn?
3. Why do some children learn certain things and others do not?
4. Why do some children succeed in certain areas and others fail?

The writer has had a deep and continuing interest in these basic questions, which has evolved into specific research and study centering around the education of young children. A narrowing of this interest has become focused on the subject of curriculum design in early childhood. Curriculum design has been studied and discussed by educators, parents,

and lawmakers as well as local, state, and national leaders. There are numerous individuals whose contributions have generated this concern for early childhood learning. Three outstanding contributors are J. M. Hunt, Benjamin Bloom, and Jean Piaget. Their theories have provided insightful information about the intellectual and cognitive growth of young children. Hunt, in his book Intelligence and Experience, stressed the idea of a critical balance between the child's development and the environment. He stated:

it is the appropriateness of the match between the circumstances that the child encounters as he develops and the nature of his own intellectual organizations at the time of the encounters that appears to determine in very large part his rate of intellectual development. (Hunt, 1961, p. 357)

Moreover, Bloom discussed in his writings the hypothesis that the effects of the environment are "greatest during the period of most rapid growth" (Bloom, 1964, p. 194).

These ideas are consistent with Piaget's findings which include the following:

1. The growth of knowledge can no longer be perceived as a simple learning process, but instead a giving up of erroneous ideas for more correct ones or as a transformation of these ideas into higher-level, more adequate conceptions. (Piaget, 1967, p. vii)
2. Mental growth is not determined entirely by the unfolding of innate structures nor entirely by the influence of the environment but rather by the constant interaction of these two factors. (Piaget, 1967, p. viii)

All of these theories seem to share three basic commonalities:

1. All children develop and progress through similar stages and require an environmental and experiential match to ensure maximum growth.
2. Educators should capitalize on periods of rapid growth due to the child's increased sensitivity to learning.
3. Cognitive and intellectual development comprised of inquiring and problem solving should be the focus of early childhood education.

These insights into early childhood learning stimulated additional study and research. Also, social and economic issues in the 1960's such as the "War on Poverty" intensified efforts to apply these theories to help solve the problems of economically and culturally disadvantaged youngsters.

One way the American society attempted to convert these theories into practice was through Head Start and Title I.

The basic assumptions of these programs were as follows:

1. The total environment has a profound influence on measured intelligence and pupil achievement.
2. Schools are an important part of the total environment.
3. Improved schooling for disadvantaged children can compensate for the inadequacies of the total environment. (Stickney & Plunkett, 1983, p. 287)

Unfortunately, the optimism of these Head Start and Title I founders turned to disappointment as evaluation reports

failed to document the progress that was originally expected.

In 1966, the Coleman Report stated,

For equality of educational opportunity through the schools must imply a strong effect of schools that is independent of the child's immediate social environment and that strong independent effect is not present in American schools. (Coleman Report, p. 325)

In addition, the Coleman Report noted that the gap between academic performance of the disadvantaged student and the national norms increased, the longer the student remained in the school system (Coleman Report, 1966).

In response to the Coleman Report, educators re-evaluated the programs that were in operation and conducted further research in this area. Deutsch and his associates from the Institute for Developmental Studies at New York University reported their extensive research in Harlem's preschool projects. They found that the initial optimistic expectations of the Title I and Head Start founders might have been unrealistic. Their research demonstrated that 1 or 2 years of preschool education could not erase the deficit which had accumulated since birth. Deutsch, Katz, and Jensen recommended both a downward extension of services to encompass birth to 5 years as well as the development of "different instructional models in traditional school grades" (Deutsch, Katz, & Jensen, 1968, p. 403).

Another response to the Coleman Report was made by Zigler and Berman (1983) in a recent article entitled "Discerning the Future of Early Childhood Intervention." Zigler

and Berman stated that poor Title I and Head Start program evaluation reports were the result of the following:

1. Some of the early preschool programs were too preoccupied with the malleability of I.Q.
2. Many of those initial programs were based on a deficit model which assumed that the culture of the lower class was inferior to the middle class.
3. Many program developers tended to "blame the victim" by focusing on getting the "deficient" child ready for school.

These authors suggested that program developers examine the school to see how the institution could be more responsive to the child and his or her family rather than focusing on the child as the problem.

If one accepts the learning theories of early childhood educators (Bloom, Piaget, Hunt, and others), then one would assume that all children would be able to progress given the proper match and balance of environmental input and developmental readiness. The school should not be expected to make up for the past deficits of a child's environment but should facilitate each child's sequential continuous progress. Instead, students who enter school "deficient" slip further and further behind the longer they remain in school rather than gradually closing the gap between their achievement and national norms. Therefore, blaming the child/victim for his or her deficiencies is not the solution.

Another way of looking at this issue is to examine the role of teacher expectations in the success and failure of children. Asbell (1963), Becker (1952), Clark (1963), Gibson (1965), Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (1964), Katz (1964), Kvaraceus (1965), MacKinnon (1962), Riessman (1962, 1965), Rose (1956), Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), and Wilson (1963) explored the phenomenon of teacher expectations as a possible critical variable in the total learning process. A classic contribution to the field was Rosenthal and Jacobson's work, Pygmalion in the Classroom, which brought the self-fulfilling prophecy concept into sharper focus. This self-fulfilling prophecy concept generated numerous follow-up studies. One such study, conducted by Rist in 1970, reviewed the earlier teacher expectation literature and concluded that the past studies

have all noted that the teacher's expectations of a pupil's academic performance may, in fact, have a strong influence on the actual performance of that pupil. This research had not elucidated either the basis upon which such differential expectations are formed or how they are directly manifested within the classroom milieu. (Rist, 1970, p. 413)

Rist followed up by examining

the critical factors in the teacher's development of expectations for various groups of her pupils and the process by which such expectations influence the classroom experience for the teacher and students. (Rist, 1970, p. 413)

He used longitudinal observations of one group of students as they progressed through the first 3 years (K-2) of an urban ghetto school to gain insight into this phenomenon.

In a synthesis of teacher expectation literature, Gollub and Sloan stated that

based on his observations, Rist hypothesized that a teacher's normative reference group (usually the educated middle class) becomes the basis for the teacher's evaluation of a student's potential; and on this basis, children are sorted into those expected to learn and those not expected to learn. (Gollub & Sloan, 1978, p. 105)

In this same study, Gollub and Sloan reported that the teacher expectation research "demonstrated a high correlation between low teacher expectations and certain socioeconomic and racial characteristics of students" (Gollub & Sloan, 1978, p. 105). In 1981, Martinek's findings on the role of teacher expectations in physical education programs reinforced earlier research results that teacher expectations not only determine certain types of student performance but also serve to sustain low and high levels of performance (Martinek, Crowe, & Rejeski, 1981). More recently, Dusek and Joseph (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of 77 studies on the bases for teacher expectancies which examined student attractiveness, conduct, information from the cumulative folder, race, social class, gender, and family structure (number of parents in the home). The five variables of student attractiveness, conduct, information from the cumulative folder, race, and social class were found to be significantly related to teacher expectations. The meta-analysis found no significant relationship between the gender of the learner or family structure (number of parents in the home) and teacher

expectations (Dusek & Joseph, 1983). An important component of this report was the section entitled "Implications for Future Research." Several suggestions were made for possible future research efforts.

First, and most important is the necessity of conducting research with classroom teachers and their own students. . . . The bases of expectancies may well be different at different grade levels. (Dusek & Joseph, 1983, pp. 342-343)

Therefore, research spanning different grade levels is necessary.

In the teacher expectation literature the "model" or "ideal" student stereotype or category is mentioned by Rist and others. However, there has not been a great deal of emphasis on this element of the broader teacher expectation phenomenon. Most researchers use the term "teacher expectations" to denote how teachers take prior information about children to predict their performance and achievement. The more generalized concept of what teachers consider to be the ideal student and how they develop those expectations, as well as its influence on curriculum, is another area for future research.

The results of research studies cited above have significantly expanded knowledge of the learning process.

#### Purpose and Significance of the Study

The studies referred to earlier not only expanded knowledge but also suggested new areas for further inquiry and reflection. Some examples include the following:

1. Inclusion of more rural and affluent schools in teacher expectation studies.
2. Using intact classrooms (teachers with own students) and spanning different grade levels.
3. Conducting additional in-depth research on the process that teachers use to arrive at their expectations of the "ideal" or "model" student.
4. Studying the relationship between teacher expectations of the "model" student and the development and implementation of the basic curriculum.

This fourth area, the relationship between teacher expectations of the "model" student and the curriculum, is the particular focus of this study. An understanding of how teachers develop and maintain expectations for the "model" or "good" student is critical to curriculum development. These standards of performance are often used by teachers to categorize their students, which may determine the students' success or failure within the classroom. Some educators assume that these categories have objectivity and validity. A study that delves into this reification process may uncover hidden assumed meanings that are contained in these categories. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to broaden the existing field of teacher expectation research by gaining additional insight into the following areas:

1. How do teachers in early childhood education develop their expectations for student success and failure within the classroom social system?

2. How are the stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student related to teacher expectations of the "model" or "ideal" student?
3. How are these expectations and stereotypes reflected in the daily life of young children in the classroom?
4. How do teacher expectations for the "model" or "ideal" student affect the development and implementation of the basic curriculum?

#### Basic Assumptions

There are four basic assumptions that provide a foundation and direction for the present study. They are as follows:

1. Success and failure in an early childhood classroom seem to be related to the teacher expectations for the ideal or model student.
2. An insight into the phenomenon of these teacher expectations could provide a better understanding of "what is" within the early education classroom.
3. Teacher expectations for the ideal or model student as well as the stereotypes of "good" and "bad" students are all humanly constructed or socially created.
4. These teacher expectations can be studied in depth by observing actual practice, having dialogue with teachers and students, and using personal history-- both biographical and autobiographical.

### Definition of Terms

An outline of key terms will provide a common frame of reference for this study. The development of these definitions can be enhanced by Scheffler's The Language of Education. Scheffler (1960) identified three types of educational definitions:

1. Descriptive: "used for explanatory reasons to clarify the normal application of terms, to describe prior usage of terms" (pp. 15-16).
2. Stipulative: "a given term is to be understood in a special way for the space of some discourse or throughout several discourses of a certain type" (p. 13).
3. Programmatic: "to embody programs of action" (p. 22); "an expression of a practical program" (p. 19).

In this study the following definitions are primarily descriptive:

1. Reification: Creation of a category which is then forgotten. The reified category takes on a life of its own and becomes objectified. In education, the objective category of the "model client" or "good" student is an example of this reification process.
2. Bracketing: Suspension of preconceptions about an event or a phenomenon.

3. Phenomenology: For purposes of the study, the writer has accepted Giorgi's definition:

An approach to the study of man by going directly to the phenomenon of man and seeing what concepts, viewpoints, methods, etc., emerge as a necessary result of studying him. (Giorgi, 1970, p. xiii)

4. Participant hermeneutics: The study of how one interprets the meaning of present-day events or phenomena. The writer has accepted Cox's four-step process:

1. studying the prehistory of the event or phenomenon now being studied;
2. studying the larger setting within which the present activity takes place;
3. a thorough observation of the phenomenon itself in all its many details; and
4. a meticulous awareness of the meaning it all has for me, the interpreter/observer/participant. (Cox, 1973, p. 147)

5. Curriculum: A course of study; the traditional definition is based on the Latin word currere, meaning a race course or race track.

The next four definitions are stipulative:

1. Teacher expectations: Those preconceived standards or criteria that teachers use to define the ideal or model client or student. (What teachers expect of the ideal student.)
2. Good/Successful student: The student who meets the preconceived standards of the ideal or model student concept held by the teacher.

3. Bad/Unsuccessful student: The student who least meets the preconceived standards of the ideal or model student concept held by the teacher.
4. Ethnography: In-depth observation and description of the social system of the classroom.

The definition of curriculum will be used to facilitate discourse as well as embody a program of action. Therefore in this study it will be both stipulative and programmatic.

#### Research Design

The accomplishment of this study requires a methodology which utilizes qualitative modes of inquiry to gain insight into the phenomenon of teacher expectations and to investigate the interactive process between these expectations and the social system of the early childhood classroom. In searching for such a methodology, the writer felt the need for a conceptual map to organize past experiences as well as future study and research. A curriculum planning model which was developed by Purpel and Macdonald provided this needed organizational framework. There are five basic steps in this planning model which are as follows:

1. Data gathering--Reviewing different theories, historical perspective, studying basic framework, and research in the field;
2. Participant observation--Observing closely and in detail gaining insight from actual practice;
3. Personal history--Relating the first two steps to your own personal history;

4. Decision making--Determining how decisions will be made and who will make them; and
5. Basic question development--Generating basic questions such as
  - What is to be planned?
  - Who should do the planning?
  - What should be left to chance?
  - What emphasis will be placed on control, understanding, and liberation?(Macdonald & Purpel, 1982, pp. 24-25)

Data gathering, the first step, provides a foundation and historical background for the subject to be examined. It includes reviewing and synthesizing different theories, ideas, and concepts that are germane to the subject. This data-gathering process seems to encompass the past education and professional experiences of the writer as well as her recently completed doctoral course work. The review of related literature which would become a part of the study would be another dimension of this first step.

The second step, participant observation, utilizes a type of ethnography as well as what Harvey Cox describes as "participant hermeneutics," one aspect of which is "a thorough observation of the phenomenon itself in all its many details" (Cox, 1973, p. 147). The researcher observes the phenomenon being studied in its natural setting gaining insight into actual practice. A phenomenological perspective is attained by understanding the event from the point of view of the participant. What is the participant's experience like? This step includes looking not just at individuals or participants but also at the transactional context

between the participants. Brubaker recognized the significance of this perspective in middle school research and stated that

emphasizing the transactional context rather than simply the individual and the "it" (consequences of his or her behavior) helps the middle school educator see that the chemistry of relationships within a particular setting deserves attention in its own right. (Brubaker, 1984, p. 19)

The writer also found that not only is this transactional context important to middle school research but it is equally valuable in the area of early childhood. The participant-observation step utilizes a variety of research tools: phenomenology, ethnography, portions of participant hermeneutics, and a focus on the transactional context.

Personal history is the important third step in this curriculum planning tool. In the first two steps, the researcher was gathering data, observing actual practice as objectively and openly as humanly possible. However, in the third step, the researcher must relate this information to her own personal history. The meaning the information has in the life experience of the researcher is a critical component of this process. Also, the researcher can relate to the personal history of the participants as well as her own. Cox said that this step is difficult because "the apprentice/observer/interpreter must often unlearn most of what he has heard in his previous education about keeping his own feelings out" (Cox, 1973, p. 148). Brubaker, in discussing this same issue, stated that a student sometimes

feels that true authority resides in textbooks and university instructors, not in herself. He stated further

the autobiographical research method argues that each of us has authority, and it is in recognizing this that we sense our own efficacy which in turn stimulates us to share learnings with others. (Brubaker, 1984, p. 18)

In summary, the personal history step uses autobiographical and biographical understandings to interpret both the gathered data and the observations.

Curriculum decision making is the next step in the process. How will these decisions be made? Three possibilities for making these decisions are consensus, majority opinion, or utilization of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Who will make the final curricular decisions? The schools, central office, school board, and state department all have to be considered. This decision-making process must be outlined before moving on to the final step, basic question development.

The fifth step consists of generating basic questions which structure the final curriculum design. The identified decision makers develop these critical questions. One example of such a question might be: Are students required to fit into prescribed curriculum or is the curriculum prescribed to fit the needs of the child?

The Purpel and Macdonald planning model gave direction to the research design for this study. The data-gathering stage has already begun and will be continued in the review

of related literature. Participant observation and personal history will be included in the research procedures, analysis of the data, as well as the summary and conclusions. Decision-making and the development of questions will be a part of the writer's recommendations for the future. These last two steps are areas for long-range projects that will be outgrowths of the present study.

The planning model's first three steps will comprise the major part of this study. Specifically, the writer will attempt to uncover hidden assumed meanings that are contained in the categories of "good" and "bad" students. The concept of reification of these categories will be examined. In education, the objective category of the "model client" or "good" student is an example of this reification process. The phenomenological method of "bracketing" the "good" and "bad" student categories will assist in examining (a) what do we mean when we use these terms and (b) what are our assumptions when we speak of the "good" and "bad" student?

The ethnographic approach will include observing and studying the social system of the classroom and interviewing the teachers as well as "good" and "bad" categorized students. Participant hermeneutics will be used to engage in the process of interpreting and reconstructing what goes on in the teachers' minds as they develop these expectations. This process will be given meaning by outlining the teachers' logic, examining common elements that have coherence and

some system to them, and articulating what the teachers assume when they use these terms and categories. Because the meanings of the terms have been assumed for so long, the teacher may be out of touch with her own reasoning. Therefore, the use of the personal history or biography of the participants and the researcher was included in the interpretive process. The findings from this investigation will be analyzed and interpreted in order to posit specific conclusions and recommendations.

In summary, as educators examine the K-3 curriculum for possible positive refinements, they must gain insights into the variables which determine a child's success and/or failure in the classroom setting. A study that investigates the phenomenon of teacher expectations for the ideal student can sharpen educators' understanding of what variables underlie the present curriculum design. If one can illuminate these critical variables in the present curriculum, one can move ahead to the development of a success-oriented, liberating curriculum for young children.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF TEACHER EXPECTATION LITERATURE

The majority of research findings on teacher expectations are encompassed by a teacher expectation model formulated by Brophy and Good. Based on a review of teacher expectation literature as well as their own research efforts, they posited that the teacher expectation process involved a series of steps:

1. Teachers develop expectations predicting specific behavior and achievement for each student.
2. Teachers behave differently as a result of those expectations.
3. This differential behavior cues students about self-concept, achievement, motivation, and level of aspiration.
4. If treatment is consistent and students are compliant, the treatment will shape achievement and behavior.
5. With time, students' achievement and behavior will conform more closely to the behavior originally expected (Brophy & Good, 1974).

The model was developed for the primary purpose of removing the mystery that had previously surrounded Rosenthal and Jacobson's Pygmalion in the Classroom. This classic study brought the self-fulfilling prophecy concept into sharper

focus and generated a plethora of unanswered research questions. Brophy and Good wanted to establish a series of observable steps that would assist in organizing and understanding past teacher expectation research as well as provide a foundation and direction for future research. The strength of the model is derived from its inclusion of the teacher, student, and the interactive process which they share. The model also contains limitations which should be understood before deciding on its use.

1. The teacher expectation phenomenon is complex and multi-faceted and cannot be reduced to a simple cause-and-effect system.
2. The process can break down at any point or step because of the uniqueness of individual teachers, students, and educational settings.

Despite its limitations, the Brophy and Good model can provide a "basis for conceptualizing" the teacher expectation literature germane to this study (Brophy & Good, 1974, p. 38). The majority of the reviewed studies focused on one of the identified steps. The identified focus of each study was used to organize the body of teacher expectation literature. Studies that address a multiple or all of the steps in the process are discussed as they pertain to each area.

#### Step 1: Teachers Develop Expectations

The question of how teachers develop their expectations of student ability, achievement, and behavior has been the

subject of numerous studies. Rosenthal and Jacobson's Pygmalion in the Classroom suggested expectations could be induced by outside experts along with objective test data. In this study the research team gave participant teachers bogus information which was supposedly generated by a new testing instrument. Based on this false data, the teachers were said to have developed expectations which influenced the students' future achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). The critics of this classic study stated that the results were simplistic and naive. One such critic was William Wilkins, who replicated the Rosenthal/Jacobson study. Teachers were told that three students in the classroom were going to make exceptional gains during the course of the year. The targeted students' achievement and intelligence were tested at the beginning and the end of the year. The results were contradictory to those in the Rosenthal/Jacobson study in that there was no significant gain in achievement or I.Q. Wilkins stated that "teachers' expectations are founded on a variety of complex and interrelated factors" and that future research should try and "identify the various social, psychological and academic factors utilized by teachers when they set expectancies" (Wilkins, 1972, p. 18).

Subsequent studies focused on the critical factors involved in teachers' development of expectations. One dimension which was identified by Rist and others was the relationship between teacher expectations and the ideal student type. Rist stated that each "teacher possessed a

roughly constructed ideal type as to what characteristics were necessary for any given student to achieve 'success' both in the public school and the larger society" (Rist, 1970, p. 414) The characteristics of this ideal type were as follows:

1. Ease of interaction among adults
2. Verbalization in standard American English
3. Ability to become a leader
4. Neat and clean in appearance
5. Family educated, employed and living together
6. Ability to participate well as a member of a group (Rist, 1970, p. 422)

The teachers that Rist observed in his research seemed to categorize their students as "fast" and "slow" learners as a result of their "possessing or lacking the certain desired cultural characteristics perceived as important by the teacher" (Rist, 1970, p. 428). In addition, the normative reference group that teachers identified with and valued appeared to be a strong influence in the development of an ideal type.

The role of the normative reference group in developing an ideal student type was examined by Goebes and Shore in their study of teacher gender and behavioral expectations. Teachers were asked to list behavioral characteristics of the "typical boy, the typical girl," and the "ideal student." The total ratings revealed that teachers saw the typical behavior of girls as significantly closer to the "ideal student" than that of boys. A breakdown of male and female

teachers showed that "female teachers significantly saw the behavior of girls as closer to the Ideal student than that of boys while male teachers did not" (Goebes & Shore, 1973, pp. 222-223).

Ethnic influences on the development of the model student were discussed by Wong in his article, "Model Students? Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of Their Asian and White Students." He examined the various components of the model student and how Asian and white students were perceived in relation to this concept. The model student was defined in this study as "one who possesses a certain degree of intellectual ability (grasp instruction/academic competence) and one who does not cause trouble (emotional stability)." The teachers viewed their Asian students as being more likely to be model students and had higher educational expectations for them than for their white counterparts. The explanation for these higher expectations was outlined by the author as being due to the following:

1. Asians are perceived to be more middle class in normative behavior (though not in actual social class) than white middle class students.
2. Asian students were seen as significantly more emotionally stable and academically competent than were their white counterparts. (Wong, 1980, pp. 244-245)

Another perspective on the ideal student type and teacher expectations was offered by Jerome Beker, who stated, "It was felt that an indication of how pupils and

teachers perceived the setting and its demands could be obtained from their own descriptions of an 'ideal pupil' in the classroom" (Beker, 1967, p. 1). Beker observed in three separate settings:

1. A suburban, affluent school with a "preppy" atmosphere.
2. An inner-city school which was rigidly structured and controlled.
3. A rural school which was characterized as passive and colorless.

The teachers' perceptions of the "ideal" pupil seemed to be a reflection of the different settings. The inner-city teacher described the ideal pupil as being well-mannered, courteous, and willing to accept the total environment and rules of the classroom. The suburban ideal pupil was one who had emotional balance, good self-analysis skills, participated in a progressive manner, anticipated responsibility, and was cheerful and charitable. The rural setting called for a friendly, courteous, trustworthy ideal pupil who was willing to take helpful criticism and not be content with the minimum of knowledge (Beker, 1967). These differing views of the ideal student seemed to be not a reflection of the teachers' normative reference group but what was appropriate to the setting.

As a follow-up to the ideal or model student bases for teacher expectations, one questions if certain ideal

student characteristics have greater significance or importance than others. As discussed earlier, Dusek and Joseph's meta-analysis of teacher expectations reported that student attractiveness, conduct, cumulative folder information, race, and social class were strongly related to teacher expectations but gender and the number of parents in the home were not factors in this process. Gollub and Sloan (1978) reinforced Rist's findings that social class and race were highly correlated with low expectations. St. George investigated the relationship of social class and teacher expectations of five ethnically mixed New Zealand classrooms. Results showed

Polynesian minority groups were perceived less favourably than Pakeha (majority) children. The test performance on standardized tests suggested that the Polynesians were categorized as low achievers and treated similarly to others with low ability. (St. George, 1983, p. 48)

These findings support the strength of social class and race variables in forming teacher expectations.

An alternate perspective on the genesis of teacher expectations was reviewed by Francis and Elizabeth Lawlor. They asked 72 student teachers to rank children (subjects) from high to low after viewing two 10-minute videotapes of a science lesson. The student teachers could also respond that there was insufficient information on which to make a valid judgment. Only 14% of the participants responded that there was insufficient evidence. They were also asked

to give the cues which helped them formulate their rankings. Verbal cues were found to be most important as well as speed of accomplishment. "In the absence of other evidence, the child who is seen to be a behavior problem is ranked low in ability" (Lawlor & Lawlor, 1973, p. 9). Individual performance is also of primary importance in Martinek, Crowe, and Rejeski's (1981) research in causes and effects of expectations in teaching and coaching. They stated that success was defined in terms of individual's progress and capabilities. Physical agility, strength, and coordination were contributors to positive initial performance. These characteristics led to positive teacher expectations for future performance. Students who were overweight or clumsy or the like were subjects for low performance expectations. The basic physical education learning goals appeared to be "learning to perform" rather than "learning to learn." Therefore, those who were initial high performers were believed to be those who would continue to achieve at the highest levels (Martinek, Crowe, & Rejeski, 1982, p. 153).

The question of how teachers develop their expectations has been addressed by numerous researchers. There appeared to be basic commonalities and themes which are summarized below:

1. A foundation for developing expectations is contained in teachers' perceptions of the ideal student or model client.

2. Teachers have a preconceived ideal of a student which they use to formulate their expectations for success in the classroom.
3. The profile of this ideal type is influenced and shaped by preferred cultural characteristics which the teacher believes ensure success in school and the larger society.
4. The teachers' normative reference group is also a strong influence on the ideal student profile.
5. Performance, speed of accomplishment, and educational settings may shape the profile of the "ideal" student.

#### Step 2: Teachers Behave Differently

The second step of the teacher expectation phenomenon has received the most attention and interest of researchers. The belief that abstract teacher expectations are converted into specific observable actions, and behaviors has generated numerous studies. Naturalistic studies which examined actual classroom life provided the basis for building hypotheses in this area. Researchers were required to spend extended periods of time in the classroom context to collect data pertaining to teacher behavior as it related to expectations.

In Rist's (1970) longitudinal study of ghetto education, he discusses his 3-year observations of differential behavior based on teachers' expectations. The teachers grouped their students according to their initial expectations of potential

(fast and slow learners). A caste system within the classroom emerged from the teachers' treatment and behavior toward the different groups of students. This caste system was characterized by the following:

1. Seating arrangement (Table 1, highs; Table 2, mediums; Table 3, lows).
2. Reading groups corresponded to the table groupings.
3. Table 3 received more control-oriented behavior and fewer teacher-student interactions.
4. Tables 1 and 2 received more teacher/student interactions.
5. Highs were called on more frequently to model good behavior or make public displays (example: "Jane, you stand by me and tell us about Fire Prevention Week").

Cooper and Good (1983) cited the additional research efforts of Rosenthal, who developed a Four-Factor Categorization typology for summarizing behaviors associated with teacher expectations:

1. Teachers created a warmer socio-emotional atmosphere for brighter students (smiling, eye contact, praise).
2. Verbal inputs were higher with higher students.
3. Verbal outputs were more frequent; teacher stayed longer with highs to answer questions.
4. Feedback (praise or criticism after an academic exchange); lows received more criticism, highs more praise.

Lawlor and Lawlor's research results, cited previously, stated that teachers make more positive moves to high ability students and tend to place the low ability student in a role subordinate to the teacher and their peers (Lawlor & Lawlor, 1973). In addition, Persell, in Testing, Tracking and Teachers' Expectations: Their Implications for Education and Inequality, stated that her analysis of teacher behaviors documents that "teachers interact more, they show more warmth, they provide more praise and acceptance, they teach more and differently" to the high students (Persell, 1976, pp. 158-159).

In 1980, Good and Cooper examined teacher interaction as a function of teacher expectations, student gender, and time of year. They reported that teachers used less praise in the winter and spring than they had used in the fall. Teachers gave high amounts of praise to high achievers early in the year. The authors hypothesized that the "teachers used praise as a control mechanism for socializing students into patterns of behavior" (Good, Cooper, & Blakey, 1980, p. 384). Time of year did not seem to have a significant impact on classroom interactions except in the area of praise (Good et al., 1980).

Good and Brophy, in 1980, conducted intensive observational research into teachers' differential behavior and teacher expectations. Their report contained "12 of the more common ways teacher actions co-vary with expectations":

1. Seating low-expectation students far from the teacher and/or seating them in a group.

2. Paying less attention to lows in academic situations (smiling less often and maintaining less eye contact).
3. Calling on lows less often to answer classroom questions or to make public demonstrations.
4. Waiting less time for lows to answer questions.
5. Not staying with lows in failure situations (i.e., providing fewer clues, asking fewer follow-up questions).
6. Criticizing lows more frequently than highs for incorrect public responses.
7. Praising lows less frequently than highs after successful public responses.
8. Praising lows more frequently than highs for marginal or inadequate public responses.
9. Providing lows with less accurate and less detailed feedback than highs.
10. Failing to provide lows with feedback about their responses as often as highs.
11. Demanding less work and effort from lows than from highs.
12. Interrupting performance of lows more frequently than highs. (Cooper & Good, 1983, pp. 10-11)

An alternative viewpoint on differential behavior was provided by Martinek et al. (1982), who hypothesized that "the original expectations held by teachers result in certain behaviors standing out. For example, 'errors and cues of incompetence are highlighted, thus reaffirming the original perception'" (Martinek et al., 1982, p. 143). In other words, teachers sustain their initial expectations by focusing on behaviors that confirm their original expectations and ignoring those that are not consistent with them. This differential behavior ensures the maintenance and sustaining of original expectations. Moreover, these authors utilize the

analogy of a dodgeball game to illustrate the "Catch 22" in teacher expectations. In a dodgeball game, the highly skilled play more and the least agile are put out of the game first. Therefore, the ones who need the skill development the most receive the least opportunity to enhance their skills. The ones who are already adept receive the most attention and opportunity for improvement. Some teachers simulate the dodgeball game format in the classroom setting (Martinek et al., 1982, pp. 134-136).

As cited above, the majority of research studies confirm that teachers do behave differently based on their expectations. However, there have been conflicting reports from other researchers. Cherry and Berman (1978) examined teacher-student interaction as it related to teachers' perceptions of students' communicative competence. Their results indicated that when one focused on a specific ability (communicative competence), teacher expectations did not predict teacher behavior. Wilkins' (1972) study of teacher expectations outlined interaction patterns that were different from many of the previous reports. For example:

1. Grade 1: High ability students had more interactions with the teacher than did low ability peers.
2. Grade 2: Average and low students had more interactions with their teachers than high students.
3. Grade 3: Lows interacted more with teachers than average or high students did.

Possible causes for these contradictory findings will be discussed later in this section.

Step 3: Teacher Treatment Cues Students About  
Self-concept, Achievement Motivation,  
and Level of Aspiration

Before teacher expectations can significantly affect student achievement, the student must be able to perceive these behavioral cues. The third step in the model is difficult to analyze because the researchers must interpret how students are cued by this differential behavior. Persell stated that the consciousness of the students is affected by the way teachers behave toward students in different groups or tracks. "Students in higher tracks tend to gain in self-esteem while those in lower tracks decline" (Persell, 1976, p. 158). Eder (1981) focused on the social context of high and low expectation groups in her microanalysis of teacher-student interaction. She stated that the "learning contexts of lower ability groups are likely to differ from learning contexts of higher ability groups in several crucial ways" (Eder, 1981, p. 156).

1. In low groups there are more inattention, more management problems, more reading-turn disruptions, and more reading-turn violations.
2. The low groups receive less actual time on task, less positive feedback for their performance.

These different contexts cue the students to behave and achieve in a way appropriate to the social context.

Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) found in their study of student perceptions of teacher interactions that students do perceive some differential treatment by the teacher even though the student perceptions are not always consistent with observers. They stated,

Teacher behavior toward individual students provides information about achievement status to the student as well as to peers. Students learn about the achievement hierarchy of the classroom. (Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979, p. 430)

Grades or marks that children receive provide concrete cues as to the teachers' expectations for success and failure in the classroom. Entwisle and Hayduk's (1981) examination of academic expectations and the school attainment of young children concluded the following:

1. Academic performance during the first grade can be directly affected less by measured ability than by deportment.
2. Once academic performance levels are established, they tend to persist.
3. Children do not perceive themselves in control of the early schooling process.
4. Crystallization of children's expectations does not occur until the second or third grade year. (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1981, p. 48-49)

These conclusions contradicted Rist's hypothesis that children's expectations are formed early, perhaps in kindergarten, and remain stable thereafter.

Moreover, the cues which are given to students and their peers nurture a climate of success and failure in the classroom. Levine and Wang (1983) postulated that success is

"individually defined" and judgment of success is influenced by societal norms and comparisons with relevant others (p. 13). Some classrooms where differential expectations are strong, over-emphasize competition which

may make it impossible for low-ability students to view themselves as successful in school environments. Students have both agenic and communal views but American classrooms favor agenic views and neglect communal values. (Levine & Wang, 1983, p. 126)

This lack of communal values was illustrated by Rist's observations that the students at Table 1 (fast learners) were cued by the teachers' differential behavior to ridicule those students at Table 3 (slow learners). The students were cued about their own achievement position in the classroom hierarchy as well as the position of each of their peers. This competitiveness and emphasis on agenic rather than communal values are intensified by the differential behavior of teachers, which may result in a clearly defined caste system within the classroom. It has also been noted that teacher differential behavior has a greater influence in the early childhood and primary years than at the higher grade levels.

In conclusion, students are all unique individuals and are cued by teacher behaviors in a wide variety of ways. However, the studies cited above establish some general patterns of behavior that require further insight and investigation.

Step 4: If Treatment Is Consistent and Student  
Is Compliant, the Treatment Will Shape  
Achievement and Behavior

There has been a plethora of studies which examine the effect expectations have on achievement and behavior. An examination of children's beliefs about success and failure will provide a basic foundation for further discussion. Frieze and Snyder (1980) studied children's beliefs about the causes of success and failure in school settings. They asked children what they attributed success or failure to in four situations: academic testing, football, catching frogs, and an art project. The children did not use the same causal schemata across different situations. The four variables which were attributed to success were effort, ability, interest, and task ease or difficulty. For example, in the situation of academic testing causes for success were perceived to be effort and ability. The reason for failure was lack of effort, whereas in an art project, ability, effort, and interest were success variables, and lack of ability and effort were perceived causes of failure. One might infer from this study that children did not attribute to the teacher any significant contribution to success and failure. Success and failure involved characteristics of the individual and the task to be accomplished. Children might conclude that when success and failure occurred they could blame either themselves or the task structure rather than the teacher's ability to teach or false expectations. Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest, and Rosenbaum (1971)

analyzed the behavior of students as to their achievement motivation which provides further insight into student attribution of success and failure. These authors found that

1. Individuals high in resultant achievement motivation
  - a) approach achievement readily because they attribute success to high ability and effort which heightens the reward or pride in accomplishment.
  - b) Persist in the face of failure because failure seems due to lack of effort which is modifiable.
  - c) Select tasks of intermediate difficulty because these tasks yield the most self-evaluative feedback.
  - d) Perform with relatively great vigor because outcome is determined by effort and intermediate tasks are greatly influenced by effort.

In contrast, students low in resultant achievement motivation

- a) Do not approach achievement-related activities because they attribute success to external rather than internal factors, and exclude effort as a causal factor.
- b) Quit in the face of failure because failure is caused by lack of ability which presumably is unchangeable.
- c) Select easy or difficult tasks because such tasks yield minimal self-evaluative feedback.
- d) Perform with relatively little vigor (outcome is comparatively independent of effort learned in part because performance at very hard or very easy tasks is relatively little influenced by effort). (Weiner et al., 1971, p. 17)

The authors suggested that the teachers examine intensively the attributional processes exhibited by their students. It has been found that if teachers ascribe high ability to students then they will blame lack of effort, not ability, to

failure and try harder. This success/failure attributional process assists in analyzing perspectives on teacher expectations and student achievement.

Levine and Wang (1983) postulated "that students who feel in control of their learning environment gain an increased sense of self-efficacy and personal control" (p. 22). If students' attribution of success is not viewed as a result of external factors, students will view setbacks as challenges and will modify their own behavior to solve the problem. Passivity may be the result of feeling one has no control over the learning process. When teacher expectations appear to be arbitrary, students may become discouraged and resistant to the structure of the setting.

Persell stated that

teacher and peer expectations may have a number of cognitive consequences. . . . One subtle feature noted by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), and Schindler (1970) is that students in the lower tracks began to form anti-school subcultures, perhaps in an effort to counteract the negative evaluations placed on them by the school. These students increasingly come to esteem ones who most effectively subverted the goals of the school. . . . By reinforcing the teachers' expectations that students are unable or unwilling to learn, such peer dynamics ensure that even less learning occurs, leading teachers to expect less and less. (Persell, 1977, p. 49).

In addition, reinforcing teachers' negative expectations that children are "unable or unwilling to learn" assures that less learning occurs and the teacher expects less and less (Persell, 1977, p. 149). This is consistent with Good's statement, "the ecology of a low group works to sustain an environment in which it is more difficult to learn" (Good, 1982, p. 54).

Step 5: With Time, Students' Achievement and Behavior Will Conform More Closely to the Behavior Originally Expected

There are two dimensions of the phenomenon contained in Step 5 of the model. One is the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy defined by Merton (1957) as occurring when "a false definition of the situation evokes a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true" (p. 423). This self-fulfilling prophecy acts to change student behavior and achievement to conform to the initial expectation. Another concept is that of a "sustaining expectation" which occurs

when teachers respond on the basis of their existing expectations for students rather than to changes in student performance caused by sources other than the teacher. . . . The self-fulfilling prophecies create change while sustaining expectation effects prevent change in student performance. (Cooper & Good, 1983, p. 6)

Rosenthal, Jacobson, and Rist seem to view the relationship between expectations and student behavior as characterized by a linear stimulus response design.

(Expectancy → mediating variables → outcome)

Martinek et al. (1981) envisioned this relationship as a "reciprocal causation" design, namely, a circular "expectancy loop."

(Expectancy ← mediating variables → outcome)

This proposal is based on the "assumption that human behavior is best conceptualized as a dynamic interactive process (Martinek et al., 1982, p. 143). Brophy and Good's (1974) model is perceived as a circular process as well. The teacher's expectations are translated into behaviors which cue the

students whose behavior reinforces the original expectation. This interactive process can continue indefinitely or break down in any of the five steps. Moreover, these authors stated that in their initial expectation research they perceived all teachers fitting into this model, but subsequent observations indicated that teachers responded and utilized teacher expectations differently. There were three general types of teachers with regard to their susceptibility to expectation effects:

1. Proactive teachers: Those who generally held accurate expectations and changes were flexible in modifying them as behavior changed.
2. Passive or reactive teachers: These made valid judgments about their students but did not pick up clues that change was occurring and modify their expectations (similar to sustaining expectations).
3. Over-reactive teachers: Those who exacerbated differences in students by treating them more differently than they really were; those who tended to think of students as stereotypes rather than as unique individuals (Brophy & Good, 1974).

Individual teachers can be proactive, reactive, and overly reactive in different situations and with different students. This could account for the discrepancies in many of the expectation research studies. Another cause cited for contradictory findings was methodology differences. Some naturalistic studies focus on only the high and low students,

whereas others examine the total group. The season of the year for observations can be significant because by spring a teacher is most likely to have given up on a student if he or she is so inclined (Brophy & Good, 1974).

In summary, a review of the teacher expectation research revealed that this phenomenon is extremely complex and multi-faceted. There is no model that one can apply to all classrooms and generate similar results. There are, however, some basic assumptions that can be derived from a review of the literature. They include the following:

1. Teacher expectations exist and can affect the behavior and achievement of students.
2. All teachers and students are not affected by these expectations in similar ways.
3. The primary age child is more susceptible to the effects of teacher expectations than older students.

These findings provide a foundation on which to build additional hypotheses concerning this critical variable in the learning process.

#### Curricular Expectations

An extension of this teacher expectation phenomenon involves teachers' curricular expectations for their students and their relationship to success and failure in the classroom setting. Just as teachers develop an ideal student type, they also have a "general level of expectation regarding what they expect their class or group to accomplish during the year" (Brophy & Good, 1974, p. 118). These general

curricular expectations are influenced by several educational practices. National and group norms are often used by teachers to assist in the formulation of their curricular expectations. The use of national and group norms ensures that regardless of individual progress a certain percentage will fail. Bloom stated that

Each teacher begins a new term (or course) with the expectation that about a third of his students will adequately learn what he has to teach. He expects about a third of his students to fail or just "get by." Finally, he expects another third to learn a good deal of what he has to teach, but not enough to be regarded as "good students." This set of expectations, supported by school policies and practices in grading (becomes transmitted to the students) through the grading procedures and through the methods and materials of instruction. (Bloom, 1981, p. 153)

The use of the normal distribution curve in grading and national averages on achievement tests contributes to this perspective on academic ability and potential. Good and Dembo (1973) studied teacher expectations for the general performance of students in their classroom by using questionnaires. One question asked the 163 teachers to state the "percentage of their students that they expected would fail or just get by in an average year" (p. 247). The alternatives provided for the teachers to check in answering this question were 10%, 15%, 25%, 35%, and 50%. Sixty percent of the teachers chose the first alternative (10%). Another 25% chose the second alternative, 12% chose the third alternative, and the remaining 3% chose the last alternative. These results showed that "40 percent of the teachers were willing to admit that they expected at least 15 percent of their students to

fail or just get by" (p. 248). When a teacher holds low expectations for the entire class, such as disadvantaged youngsters, this may prove more significant than intra-class differences. Good and Dembo (1973) reported that a class where the general expectations are low has a custodial rather than an instructive atmosphere.

Curricular materials are another type of norm which teachers use to judge the expected progress of their students. Brophy and Good (1974) stated that studies of different countries, different grade levels, and effects of tracking systems have shown the curricular materials which teachers are given form their general group expectations. They cited the examples of teachers who will not teach a certain concept to a fourth grade student because it is "sixth grade material" (p. 119).

Instructional practices are still another factor in the development of curricular expectations. Brophy and Good discussed Lundgren's (1972) concept of the focal group or "steering group" to which many teachers direct their general expectations and instructions.

Teachers with otherwise equal groups of students will probably get differential results if one tends to gear instruction primarily toward the high achievers in the classroom and the other tends to gear his instruction primarily toward the low achievers. (Brophy & Good, 1974, p. 119)

This steering group may determine the amount and type of curriculum as well as the instructional methods. In conclusion, curricular materials, national norms, the normal

distribution curve, and focal instructional groups are all significant factors in the formation of general curricular expectations.

A more insightful understanding of general curricular expectations can be enhanced by examining different curriculum development models. Implicit in curriculum development models are ideological frameworks which contain built-in curricular expectations. Macdonald (1975) related Habermas' concept of the cognitive human interests (i.e., control, consensus, and emancipation) to models of curriculum development. Macdonald posited that there are three distinct curriculum development models that are grounded in control, consensus, and emancipation. They are as follows:

**Linear/expert model:** A basic interest in control leads to a common linear-expert dominated model. Specific preordained goals and objectives characterize this model.

**Circular consensus model:** This "grass roots" approach is characterized by group processes and participatory planning of the curriculum. Teachers, staff, and community participate in consensus and communication.

**Dialogical model:** Student leaders are identified and join with educators to find major ways of matching the cultural resources of adults to the needs and interests of the students. Emancipation is the basic human interest. (Macdonald, 1975, pp. 292-293)

Present early childhood curriculum designs may be examined and evaluated using the curriculum development models outlined by Macdonald.

McCarthy, in her article "Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: The State of the Art," identified four curriculum designs:

1. Structured-Program
  2. Open/Interactive
  3. Child-centered
  4. Eclectic
- (McCarthy, 1983, p. 275)

The first three early childhood curriculum designs will be discussed in relation to Macdonald's curriculum models and their inherent curricular expectations.

#### Linear/Expert Model

McCarthy described the characteristics of the structured program design as consisting primarily of prepackaged materials which assist teachers in determining what should be taught. The skills and knowledge to be transmitted from the teacher to the learner exist in the format of learning kits, textbooks, step-by-step teachers' guides, etc. Standardization of results is another expectation of these prepackaged materials (McCarthy, 1983). Another dimension of the programmed approach is the element of quality control which some administrators think it provides. If everyone agrees that the material and curriculum are adequate, then teacher performance may be a variable if results do not meet expectations. Another curriculum design that shares this result-oriented focus is that of certain preschool intervention programs for disadvantaged youngsters. These programs were developed in the 1960's in response to the "War on Poverty." Zigler (1983) stated that these early programs were based on a "deficit model" which assumed the following:

1. The target population were victims of cultural deprivation which presumes the culture of this group is inferior to the middle class.

2. The culturally deprived children are the problem. The solution resides in "fixing" the children to meet the expectations of the predominant culture.

Therefore, these deficit-oriented preschools often adopted a structured curriculum based on a predetermined set of skills which would be taught to each child in the same way.

Another structured approach to preschool curriculum emerged as a result of new technology. Steg, Vaidya, and Hamdan (1982-83) presented a curriculum based on daily sessions with a Talking Typewriter, a Voice Mirror, and a Talking Page. Twenty-two Philadelphia children between the ages of 3 and 6 voluntarily participated in sessions with these instruments for up to 25 minutes a day. The skills introduced by the machines included

1. recognizing letters
2. typing letters from dictation
3. reading words orally
4. individual experience stories which were programmed for the equipment

The basic premise of this curriculum study was that if children could be exposed to a technology- and computer-based reading program when they are "most receptive to learning" then long-term gains would occur. The researchers administered follow-up tests in the ninth grade and they noted a significant difference in acquisition and retention of skills over the long term (Steg et al., 1982-83). This

technology-based curriculum holds the same basic assumptions of other structured approaches in that

1. every child should learn basic reading skills;
2. these skills should be introduced early because young children are most receptive to learning at this age.

The curriculum initially created by Madam Montessori for disadvantaged ghetto children has characteristics of the structured-program approach. This present-day curriculum design was based on the sequential development of perceptual, motor, prevocational and preacademic skills which are pre-determined and introduced to all children in a similar format. Suransky (1983), in her observations of "Montessori schools," noted that the daily activities were designed to structure the child's day into specific tasks that were defined as "work." The work ethic was also reflected in the "rewarding of conforming behaviors where good workers did good jobs" (Suransky, 1983, p. 153).

In addition to the Montessori curriculum, there is another popular design which is centered around the sequential acquisition of basic academic skills. Bloom's (1981) theory of mastery learning postulates that 90% of all students can acquire prescribed academic skills; however, the rate of learning must be personalized. Mastery learning stresses individual progress within a success-oriented, individualized program. However, the curriculum is still controlled and monitored by experts in a linear manner.

The Open/Interactive Curriculum design emphasizes the development of cognition rather than academic skills. Piaget's theory provides the foundation for this curriculum which is designed to enhance "learning experiences at each child's developmental level paced to each child's timetable." Also, the teacher strives to match the child's developmental level to appropriate learning experiences, interactions, and materials (McCarthy, 1983, p. 277). Sigel and Saunders (1983), in their article "On Becoming a Thinker: An Educational Preschool Program," describe a similar design which is guided by Piagetian developmental principles. The classroom organization and materials are all geared to

enhance problem-solving abilities, learning to think in symbolic terms, and to understand a variety of communication media (language, art, gesture, dance). The rate and quality of intellectual growth is influenced by the quality of social and emotional experiences. (Sigel & Saunders, 1983, p. 40)

The structured program and developmental approaches are similar in that they have a standardized body of activities, experiences, and materials, monitored by experts, with a preconceived ideal finished product (achievement). The general curricular expectations that seem to be present in these approaches are as follows:

1. Students are expected to adjust and adapt to the prescribed curriculum format whether it is comprised of skills or developmental states.
2. If failure occurs, the student is the defective element, not the curriculum.

### Circular Consensus Model

An example of the circular consensus model is the comprehensive family-outreach design which strives to create a multidisciplinary approach to early childhood education. The Head Start program which began in the 1960's was an example of this design. Zigler (1983) referred to this as the "cultural relativistic approach" which respected local cultures in contrast to viewing them as inferior. Parental locus of control was another characteristic of Head Start. Project leaders advocated more adequate access to community services, good schools, and a voice in the government (Zigler, 1983, p. 896). Another comprehensive program is Project BEEP (Brookline, Massachusetts, Early Education Project), which was funded by the Carnegie Corporation in 1972. The goal of this project was to "develop school competence by the development of cognitive skills and interpersonal behaviors" (Pierson et al., 1983, p. 192). The curriculum was developed cooperatively by parents and educators. Characteristics of this program include the following:

1. Services provided from birth until entrance into kindergarten (home visits, counseling, educational/school programs).
2. Family orientation--includes the family in services.
3. Multidisciplinary approach--involves health, social services, and community resources as well as educators and parents.

In the early years, birth to age 2, services were primarily home and family oriented. When the child was 3 to 4, the school-based preschool program predominated. This pilot project is now in the long-range evaluation stage. The results of these evaluation reports may have significant impact on future directions for comprehensive planning and services to the young child.

Another facet of interdisciplinary programming for children was recorded by Bate (1983) in the article, "Liaison Groups in Early Childhood." These community liaison groups meet and discuss early educational issues for the following purposes:

1. Providing continuity of the early years of a child's life in his or her community.
2. Discussion of early childhood problems from preschool to school.
3. Formulation of recommendations on ways of harmonizing transition and continuity in the early years (Bate, 1983).

This is an additional attempt to meet the needs of young children and their families from the beginning of life through the onset of formal schooling. Two curricular expectations seem to be representative of this model:

1. There is no one prescribed curriculum due to the involvement of families and multi-agencies. Therefore, expectations are a reflection of group consensus, not the individual teacher.

2. A wide diversity of curricular expectations will be present because of the broad base of curriculum developers.

### Dialogical Model

The Dialogical Model included the child-centered curriculum design, exemplified by the British Infant Schools, which serve students from age 3 or 4 until age 7 or 8. Freedom of expression, creativity, self-concept development, focus on the needs of the individual child and the quality of interactions between teacher and child as well as child and child are characteristics of this design. A basic part of the child-centered conceptual framework is the value placed on the process of education rather than an end product of skill development. The competence of the teacher is the key factor in the successful implementation of this program (McCarthy, 1983, p. 277). Another child-centered viewpoint was poetically portrayed in Richards' Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America. In this personal history, Richards described her introduction and involvement with Waldorf education and the Steiner movement in America. This conceptualization of the educational process was defined as "wholeness" by Steiner who believed that education is an art form addressing the whole being of the child. The spirit (intellect), the soul (spiritual dimension), and the physical body do not exist separately but are intertwined and connected

within the total human being (Richards, 1980). Therefore, educational endeavors must address all these dimensions in a comprehensive way to ensure wholistic growth and development.

Macdonald (1969) reinforced this conceptual framework in both his writings and his lectures. In an early article, "A Proper Curriculum for Young Children," he documented his concern that present curriculum designs do not address the wholistic aspect of child growth and development. He cited John Gardner's quote outlining the goals of education as being "the release of human potential, the enhancement of individual dignity, the liberation of the human spirit" (Macdonald, 1969, p. 406).

Both the child-centered and the wholistic approaches focus on the process of the educational experience rather than on a predetermined set of skills. However, the wholistic framework expands to encompass the spiritual dimension as well as the aesthetic, cognitive, physical facets addressed by that of the child-centered curriculum.

The last example of the Dialogical Model, Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed," has been used successfully with illiterate adults. This design incorporates the student into the curriculum development process. Students' interests and needs are matched with the cultural resources available to adults. This interactive process of "men educating each other" has definite potential for future early childhood curriculum development (Freire, 1970, p. 13).

The curricular expectations that seem to exist in this model are these:

1. Each child contains his or her own curriculum; therefore, expectations are fluid and flexible.
2. The focus is on the process of learning.
3. If the curriculum does not meet the needs of both educators and students, the entire process is examined and evaluated for appropriate modifications.

A review of early childhood curriculum designs as they relate to Macdonald's curriculum development models revealed that the linear-expert model is predominate in current educational practice. The emergence of new curriculum designs in the consensus and dialogical models provides exciting possibilities for future growth and development in the field.

In summary, the review of curriculum development models is essential to gaining insight into general curricular expectations. These models generate curricular expectations which require thoughtful and reflective examination. A comprehensive study of teacher expectations should include (a) an overview of individual teacher expectations, (b) an awareness of general curricular expectations, and (c) an analysis of their relationship to success and failure in the classroom.

## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The phenomenon of teacher expectations in early childhood education was investigated further by engaging in three distinct but highly integrated activities. The first involved observing the phenomenon of teacher expectations in the naturalistic setting of the early childhood classroom. Secondly, teachers' perceptions and understanding of this phenomenon were explored by engaging in direct dialogue with the early childhood teachers. Finally, the students' understanding of the teachers' role and their expectations were examined in group and individual interviews.

The data collected from the observations and group and individual interviews are treated as follows:

1. The data collected from the observations and interviews are presented as a descriptive review.
2. The data are examined phenomenologically to reveal how students and teachers understand the phenomenon of teacher expectations.
3. The perceptions and understandings of the teachers and students are interpreted personally and theoretically in response to the basic research questions outlined in Chapter I:

- a. How do teachers in early childhood education develop their expectations for student success and failure within the classroom social system?
- b. How are the stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student related to teacher expectations of the "model" or "ideal" student?
- c. How are these expectations and stereotypes reflected in the daily life of young children in the classroom?
- d. How do teacher expectations for the "model" or "ideal" student affect the development and implementation of the basic curriculum?

The analysis of data is presented in the form of a case study describing, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from the information as it pertains to each classroom social system and the classrooms collectively.

The format for the observations and teacher and student interviews is discussed in detail in the following sections. This discussion focuses on the specific modes of inquiry applicable to each activity.

#### Observation

Observational activities consisted of visiting two kindergarten and two first grade classes during the spring and fall of 1984. Two elementary schools within the same system but with distinct differences were chosen for the site

of these activities. One school is located in a community with a majority of lower-middle-class and low socioeconomic groups. The present building was originally constructed to provide a first grade through high school program for community children. After various consolidation and reorganization efforts the school now serves kindergarten through the sixth grade. Several new low-rent housing developments have contributed to a large increase in students which required the old school auditorium to be renovated to provide more classroom space. For the purposes of this study, the school will be referred to as Cedar Knoll Elementary.

The second school serves kindergarten through the fifth grade and is located in an upper-middle-class suburban community. The architecture is designed for open education; therefore, there are few interior walls. The school is relatively new, 15 years old, and has won many awards for its architectural and landscaping features. This school will hereafter be referred to as Pineview Elementary.

The principals of the two schools were contacted in early spring of 1984. They were asked if they would be willing to participate in a research study involving early childhood education. After a positive response was received, they were requested to present the idea to their faculty and ask for possible volunteers. The research design was explained to the volunteer teachers and subsequent interviews and observations were arranged. In order to maintain

anonymity and confidentiality, the teachers' names were changed. One school was observed in the spring and one in the fall. Cedar Knoll was selected to be observed in the spring, followed by group and individual interviews with the students to be conducted before the school year ended in June. The observations took place during the morning hours by and large because of rest time, recess, and the visits of itinerant art and music personnel in the afternoons.

The observational data were analyzed using recommendations posited by Lofland in Analyzing Social Settings and Bruyn in The Human Perspective in Sociology. Lofland suggested that the participant observer examine six categories of the social phenomenon under study. "What are the characteristics of acts, activities, meanings, participation, relationships, and settings, the forms they assume, the variations they display?" (Lofland, 1971, p. 15). This organizing question provides a device to observe and analyze a social setting. Bruyn recommended a structured study to the participant observer.

**Time:** record the different temporal phases of data-gathering which the observer experiences in becoming a natural part of the culture studied.

**Place:** record the experience which people have with their physical environment.

**Social circumstance:** record the experiences of people under contrasting social circumstances.

Language: record how the observer experienced and encountered social openings and barriers in seeking accurate interpretations of privately held social meanings.

Barriers: record how the observer encountered psychological barriers and openings in seeking accurate interpretation of social meanings.

Consensus: record how social meanings are confirmed in the context of the culture studied. (Bruyn, 1966, pp. 208-218)

A combination of these two methods structured and shaped the review of observational data obtained from the four classrooms.

### Interviews

In-depth interviews with the four participant teachers were conducted in their homes during the summer months. The questions which structured the interview were open-ended and were designed to encourage dialogue. This mode of inquiry was used to gain insight into (a) how their expectations have evolved, (b) how past experiences (biography) affected the development of their expectations, (c) how the curriculum has affected their expectations, and (d) how their expectations have shaped curriculum.

### Teacher Questions

Dialogue between the teacher and interviewer was initiated and maintained by using a series of open-ended questions. The questions and responses were recorded on tape for accurate transcription. The first series of questions were

based on Pinar and Grumet's (1976) use of autobiography in curriculum development. "Why am I a teacher?" "What can it mean to be a teacher?" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. vii). How are my first educational experiences remembered? What influence did my own early childhood years have on my life?

The remaining questions were designed to reveal each teacher's present state of consciousness about her curricular and behavioral expectations for the educational setting. They sought to peel away layers of "sedimentation" of stored-up meaning to illuminate the process and the kernel of meaning deep within. The interview was not restricted to these questions; however, they shaped the process and provided structure.

1. Why are you a teacher?
2. When did you first become interested in being a teacher?
3. What were your early childhood educational experiences like? Describe them.
4. What can it mean to be a teacher? What is the ideal teacher?
5. What do you expect of yourself as a teacher, and what should parents and students expect of you?
6. What do you expect of your students generally?
7. Can you think of any students in your classroom whom you would describe as a "good" student?
8. Describe a "good" student.
9. What makes a "good" student?
10. Does a student's behavior or his academic success determine whether he is a "good" student?

11. What is important to success in your classroom?
12. How would you define school ability in your classroom?
13. Can you think of any students in your classroom who could be described as "bad" students?
14. What makes a student "bad" or unsuccessful in your classroom?
15. How do you explain the phenomenon of "good" and "bad" students? Why do you think we have "good" and "bad" students?
16. Why do you think students are "good" and "bad"?

The teachers' responses in the interview process were outlined in a question-and-answer format. A brief biographical sketch of each teacher was followed by an outline of their responses to the interview questions.

The final phase included group interviews of students in the four classrooms as well as 16 individual student interviews. In an attempt to discover how students in early childhood perceive and understand the world of school, specifically the role of teachers, the entire class answered questions as a group. These questions were introduced in the context of communicating with a visitor from outer space concerning specific phenomena in the classroom. The popular extraterrestrial "being", E.T., was used to elicit student responses that would reveal their own unique view of the world. The students were asked to assist E.T. in understanding the experience of schooling by answering specific questions relating to the role of teachers and their expectations.

Following the group interviews, the students were asked to raise their hands if they would be willing to talk with E.T. individually. From this group of volunteers two students were selected who had been identified by the teacher as being good or successful students. Two additional children were chosen who had been previously defined as bad or unsuccessful students. Those chosen and their classmates were unaware of this prearranged selection process. The individual students were interviewed separately using questions that examined their perceptions of "good" and "bad" students.

#### Student Questions

These questions formed an outline for the discussion of teachers and students. The responses were recorded using a tape recorder to ensure accuracy of transcription.

#### Group interview questions

1. What is a teacher?
2. Why do we have teachers?
3. What do teachers like?
4. What makes the teacher happy?
5. How do you please the teacher?
6. What makes teachers smile at you?

#### Individual student interview questions

1. Have you ever heard the term "good" student?
2. If so, what is a "good" student?
3. How do you get to be a "good" student?

4. Are you a "good" student?
5. How do you know?
6. Have you ever heard the term "bad" student?
7. What is a "bad" student?
8. Have you ever been a "bad" student?
9. Why?
10. How could we help all students to be "good"?

The group and individual responses to the student questionnaire were recorded in a question-and-answer format.

In the second level of data analysis, observed events as well as student and teacher perceptions were examined phenomenologically to derive specific inferences and conclusions. Husserl, in Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, outlined his phenomenological research perspective in the following way:

1. There is a real world out there which we share with our fellow men called the "real world" or "fact world."
2. We accept this world just as it gives itself to us as something that exists out there.
3. To study this world more comprehensively we use the technique of suspending our preconceptions about this real world. (Husserl, 1931, p. 106)
4. This technique of bracketing is unique to phenomenology in that it "disconnects" the phenomenon, "sets it aside," "puts it out of action." (Husserl, 1931, p. 108)

The observed events in the individual classrooms were "bracketed" for intense observation and reflection. The

terms "teacher," "good" student and "bad" student were "disconnected," "set aside" for in-depth study.

The final level of analysis built upon the findings of the previous levels by interpreting the obtained insights and understandings from a personal and theoretical perspective. Hermeneutics, the study of meaning, was used to enhance this process. Spiegelberg (1960) posited that hermeneutics is an appropriate final phase of a phenomenological procedure. He stated:

Hermeneutics is an attempt to interpret the "sense" of certain phenomena; . . . its goal is the discovery of meanings which are not immediately manifest to our intuiting, analyzing, and describing. Hence, the interpreter has to go beyond what is directly given. Hermeneutic interpretation is a matter not of mere constructive inference but of an unveiling of hidden meanings or at most of an intuitive verification of anticipations about the less accessible layers of the phenomena, layers which can be uncovered, although they are not immediately manifest. (Spiegelberg, 1960, pp. 694-695)

Thus, hermeneutics extends the phenomenological perspective to include hidden meanings that are not directly observable in the social setting. This is a conscious attempt to further analyze the teacher expectation phenomenon by interpreting research findings from a personal standpoint. The elements of past experiences, review of the literature, and personal knowledge are superimposed on the collected data. In addition, the theoretical perspectives of sociologists Berger and Luckman were applied to these results. Their sociological concepts of reification, institutionalization, and man's place in society were critical in this

phase of analysis. Macdonald's curriculum models of human interests, cited in the review of the literature, were another "lens" to interpret the research findings. A synthesis of these interpretations was used to address the basic research questions formulated previously.

In summary, the data analysis process consisted of a descriptive review of collected data, a discussion of student and teacher perceptions, and personal and theoretical interpretations of those perceptions. The basic research questions which directed the study structured the presentation of the interpretations and conclusions.

CHAPTER IV  
ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data gathered from the interviews and observations are analyzed in three stages. The first stage includes the descriptive review of the observational and interview data. The second stage concerns teacher and student perceptions of teacher expectations from the individual classroom's perspective. The third stage consists of personal and theoretical interpretations derived from the total perspective of all the classes. A response to the study's basic research questions composes the concluding section.

A combination of Lofland (1971) and Bruyn's (1966) recommendations served as a guide for the presentation of the observational data: (a) time of observations; (b) physical environment; (c) activities; (d) acts; (e) relationships; (f) barriers; (g) social circumstances; (h) consensus; and (i) language. Phenomenological and hermeneutic modes of inquiry were used to gain insight into the teacher and student interviews.

Mrs. Smith's Kindergarten: Pineview Elementary

Observations

Time. The time of observation was from September 17 through October 15, twice a week for 1 to 2 hours in duration.

Because of an active volunteer program which brought many outsiders into the school for numerous activities, my initial presence caused only minimal attention. However, as my visits became frequent and regular, the students asked who I was and if I would help them or look at their work, etc. I felt at home and comfortable in my role as observer. Conversations among the students flowed freely around me. For example: "I have a big brother." "How big is he?" "Is he all the way up to heaven?" "No, he's 60 feet." Toward the end of the observations, the students would talk to me about what had happened in my absence: "Jeremiah broke his arm yesterday."

Physical environment. The architecture of the school was designed for open education with classrooms without walls, except in the kindergarten wing, which contains three walled rooms, with the fourth side on a common center island. Therefore, the kindergartens are the most enclosed, isolated part of the building. The individual kindergarten rooms have a depressed circular area in one corner called the "pit" where much of the large group activities were held. The rest of the room is open with large windows, movable furniture, and contained much of the same furniture and equipment of the average kindergarten (i.e., tables, chairs, T.V., cubbies for storage, blackboards, teacher desks and chairs, rocking chair). There are no permanent seats for the students. The room is organized around the concept of learning centers

which shaped the arrangement of furniture and equipment. A blue parakeet named Peter Pan stands in a cage beside a large cardboard elephant which contained rewards for good boys and girls. Children's work is displayed around the room as well as charts with themes of "Who lost a tooth," "What toothpaste do you use," and "Members of the class of 1997." A chart with our class rules--raise your hand, never hit anyone, no running inside, use indoor voices, no jumping into the circle--proclaims the behavior guidelines for the group.

Activities. The social system revolves around a structured schedule which the teacher explains orally and visually with the use of pictures which the children cut out and paste in the proper sequence. At the beginning of the day the children choose a center. There are charts which document each child's participation in the individual centers. Everyone is to visit each center once a week. There are a wide variety of centers which include painting, sand table, water table, writing, seashells, blocks, housekeeping, Lego's, trains, buses, cars, shapes, rubber band weaving. Around 9:00 a.m. a clean up bell rings and students leave the centers and come to the pit area for morning announcements and choosing the Special Day person. This is a rotating activity with each child being the Special Day person every 26 days. The Special Day person is designated to perform certain duties and responsibilities which include recording

the day of the week, the weather, running errands. Group work is next for skill development. The teacher and aide each teach a group skill and then the groups switch. Skill group time lasts from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Learning letters of the alphabet, sequencing stories, cutting, pasting, and coloring are examples of skill group activities. At 10:00 a.m. the students go outside in nice weather or to the gym in inclement weather. There is a PTA-financed physical education teacher who conducts these sessions. From 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. the children have snacks prepared by the volunteers. Center time occurs again from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The afternoon hours are divided around lunch, center time, and nap time. Each child has individual homework activities to be completed at home each night. These include letters, letter sounds or numbers to be reviewed by the parents in the evening. Later in the year, as words are introduced, word cards will be taken home each night.

Acts. "Acts" in the classroom will be defined as those unplanned, spontaneous occurrences which provide another dimension for analysis. The freedom of movement and language expression during much of the day facilitates a profusion of spontaneous events which include the following:

A girl is selling invisible candy bars that cost five dollars each. The teacher and aide both buy one with invisible money.

A boy spills orange and green paint and discovers, "Look, it makes brown."

Two boys in the housekeeping center invent a new form of baseball using a fry pan and a plastic egg.

A boy sits in the "time out" rocking chair until a kitchen timer goes off and releases him to rejoin his group.

Relationships. The relationships which seem predominant are those between the teacher or teacher aide and the students, as well as the students with each other. The teacher and aide direct the activities; however, sometimes the child controls the situation. For example, two boys dress up in the housekeeping center and tell the teacher they are going to a party. "What kind of party?" asks the teacher. "We are going to a pizza party," they reply. The children seem relaxed in their role of being under the direction of the teacher but being able to develop their own scenarios as well. In the large group and the small instructional groups the role of teacher and student are somewhat formalized. The teacher is the director and manager of the situation. The students seem to perceive the teacher as more of a helper and partner in the centers and during free play. For example, a child at the painting center asks the teacher for assistance in putting on a smock and securing the paper to the easel.

The student relationships with each other are similar in nature. Small and large group participation requires a set standard of behavior. "Look, Jerry doesn't have his name on his paper," says a child to the teacher. In the centers there seems to be cooperation and collaboration: "Let's pretend we're getting dressed up to go out to dinner."

Barriers. There are minimal psychological barriers in obtaining meaning from the setting because of the age and openness of the kindergarten students. They share their experiences freely with the observer. The teacher is relaxed and comfortable with the observational process. The teacher aide seems aware of my presence and may have responded to certain situations accordingly. For example, if the noise level rises, she will say, "Let's get quiet, everyone." I'm not sure whether the noise level bothers her or whether she thinks it bothers me.

Social circumstances. The behavior of the children and the teachers are different in various social circumstances. For example, the students did not seem as relaxed and outgoing in the lunchroom where they are exposed to a large group of older students and adults as in their own classroom setting.

Consensus. Consensus exists where social meanings are confirmed in the setting. The sanctity of the schedule, "This is snack time, not play time," and the authority structure of teachers and students were shared meanings of the group. The class rules were another example of consensus (i.e., raise your hand, never hit anyone, no running inside, use indoor voices, no jumping into the circle). These rules were enforced by writing names on the board of all offenders, a check after each name if misbehavior continued, and finally a time-out rocking chair with a timer

was used. During Center Time, the rule of raising your hand was understood by the group to be irrelevant.

Language. The language that flows in the classroom reveals a great deal about expectations. This is apparent in the symbolic forms of language such as the "clean-up bell," the "time-out" chair, and the timer, which all provide messages of expectations. The term "good" is used frequently to label acceptable standards of behavior and performance. Examples include: "If I be real good, I'll get something from the elephant"; "Is that good?"; "Joshua is going to come back to the group and be a good worker"; "You're being good this morning. I am? Yes, you're working so well."

The fact that foreign languages exist is discussed during small group instructional time. Carlos, who is Spanish, is asked to tell the class the Spanish words for the farm animals in today's lesson. Language expression is encouraged in the centers where the rules of "using our indoor voices" sometimes appear to be suspended. In comparison to the other classes, this one seems to be noisy. The teacher aide is aware of this and often says, "Let's get quiet." However, Mrs. Smith does not appear to be bothered by the noise level.

The adult's use of language is modeled for the children. For example: A girl arrives at 9:00 a.m. and the teacher aide says, "My goodness, why are you so late today?" The girl replies, "My father slept early." "No," the aide says,

"He slept late." The girl whispers to herself, "He slept early."

### Teacher Interview

In order to elicit a dialogue between the teacher and the interviewer a set series of questions was developed to structure the discussion. However, due to the open-endedness of the questions, additional ones emerged which were unique to each interview. The dialogues were recorded on tape to ensure accurate transcription. The first series of questions were incorporated into a biographical sketch of each teacher: (a) Why are you a teacher? (b) When did you first become interested in being a teacher? (c) What were your early childhood educational experiences like? The remaining interview items were incorporated into a question-and-answer format.

Mrs. Smith related that she came from a family deeply committed to education. Her mother, aunts, uncles, and cousins were teachers. She thought everyone taught school, and it seemed the natural thing to do. Her second grade year has unpleasant memories because her Aunt Martha was her teacher and called home each night to report any infractions that had occurred during the day. Her memories also included an incident where something had been stolen and the teacher interrogated each child intensively. This scenario made a lasting impression, causing Mrs. Smith to avoid group blame for an individual's actions.

Mrs. Smith was drawn to the area of early childhood when she began babysitting as a teenager. She responded positively to the openness and curiosity of young children which she observed diminished the longer children remained in school. The freedom of movement and flexibility in the curriculum attracted Mrs. Smith to the kindergarten setting as her first choice of grade levels.

What does it mean to you to be a teacher?

A teacher is a guide and director of children's individual and collective interests. For example, the county-adopted math materials were not suitable or appropriate for the children in my room. I asked to spearhead a pilot program using an alternative math series which proved to be so successful that it was later incorporated countywide. I organize my class informally with no set seating pattern, no names on the tables, which allows the students to work where they need or want to be.

What do you expect of yourself? What can others expect of you? (parents, children)

To ensure that there is fairness for each child.  
Taking a child where he is and not expecting too much but enough to provide a challenge.  
Being knowledgeable about subject matter as well as the developmental needs of children.  
To know what each child needs and how to meet those needs, physically, socially, emotionally, as well as academically.

What do you expect of your students? (general entrance criteria)

Academically: just to know a little bit about who they are, where they live, their birthday.  
To be eager, anxious to learn, curious, excited about being in school.

What is your description of a good student?

Likes to learn.  
Likes being in school.

Wants to cooperate by doing what I tell them.  
 A good student wants to learn; gets excited about it;  
 their heart is really in it.

Define "school ability" or what is important for school success?

I try to create an environment where anyone could be a good student.  
 School ability includes following directions, working independently, making decisions, listening (tuning out distractions).

What is your description of a bad student?

One who could not listen, follow directions, work independently.  
 Could not discipline themselves.

Would you define "work" as it is used in your class?

Work is any task, such as building blocks, working at a center. It involves time on task and task completion.

I tell the students doing a task is just like the job your father has. You are not here to play all the time.

Each child should choose the task to be completed. Sometimes a child does not participate for a good reason such as fear or shyness. They will not have to work if there is a good reason. Children can just watch if it is needed. I think school should be fun all the way through. Guide and direct them but not force.

Why do people have a problem with fun and play as concepts in schooling?

You just have to educate people about the fact that children learn through play. Some people feel children can't learn on their own.

How do you explain the phenomenon of good and bad students?

Parents or day care centers have restricted growth and caused curiosity and eagerness to die. Children lose the feeling they are in charge, lose confidence in themselves. The child has heard enough times that he isn't smart or was forced to do work he didn't want to do.

What determines whether they are good or bad students?

The home, initially.

The school after that--sometimes categorized the student. The curriculum becomes less student-centered and more teacher-centered.

Who determines whether a child is good or bad?

What he's heard about himself.

Not enough time with parents.

It is not within the child himself.

What is the schools' responsibility for the bad students?

Develop the type of program to include parents and other agencies to all help the child.

What specific strategies do you use for these "bad" students?

I zero in on their interests.

Provide positive reinforcement.

Provide individual attention focused on the interest of that child.

How do you communicate your expectations?

I specify what the task is for today and try to make it exciting and interesting.

I model curiosity.

Praise with looks, pats on the shoulder, and the reward of special activities, e.g., the computer.

Would you define the terms "slow learner" or a "developmentally delayed" child?

Most children come to school with certain skills.

When they don't have some basics:

a) Do not know where they live,

b) Do not know the difference between a letter and a number,

c) Can't sit down during the kindergarten screening program,

d) Can't go to the bathroom, get a drink, or hang up their coat by themselves, or

e) Can't share or play with others

I think they are delayed.

Group Student Interview

In order to elicit responses from the young children in Mrs. Smith's kindergarten, the entire class was introduced to the extra-terrestrial creature "E.T." The students were asked to assist E.T. in understanding the experience of schooling by answering specific questions related to the role of the teacher and their expectations. Due to the open-endedness of the questions, certain responses elicited additional questions which were not included in the original set. Therefore, the items for discussion in each group interview may vary. A tape recorder was used to ensure accurate transcription of the questions and responses.

Why are these big people here?

Children to get taught by teachers.  
Kids are little--big people.  
Tell little people what to do.

What are these big people called?

Teachers.

What do teachers do?

Work with you.  
Teach you how to write.  
Teach you how to do letters and numbers.  
Teach you no kicking, hitting.

How do you make the teacher happy?

No names on the board.  
No running in the circle.  
No hitting.

What makes the teacher smile?

Be good.  
Do what teacher tells you.  
Tell the truth.

What makes the teacher happy?

Be nice.  
Be good.  
Be kind.  
Don't hit, kick, bite, run.

### Individual Student Interviews

Following the group interview, the students were asked to raise their hands if they would be willing to talk with E.T. individually. From this group of volunteers two students were selected who had been identified as being "good" or successful students. Two additional children were chosen who had been previously defined as fitting into a category of "bad" or unsuccessful students. Those chosen and their classmates were unaware of this prearranged selection process. The individual students were interviewed with the use of a tape recorder using questions that examined their personal perceptions of "good" and "bad" students.

#### "Good" Student--A

What is a good student?

A good citizen, does good work.  
Not do bad stuff to people.  
Not hurt people.  
Don't talk.  
Listen to the teacher.

Are you a good student?

Yes.

What do you do?

I don't hit, kick.  
 Don't use the same color.  
 Don't scribble scabble.  
 Don't color out of the lines.

Have you ever heard the term "bad student"?

No.

Have you ever gotten your name on the board?

No.

What do students do to get their names on the board?

Don't listen right, hit people.  
 Don't do what teacher tells them to do.  
 Tattle taler.

How could we help all students be good students?

Teach them how to color right and teach them not to hit or kick.  
 Don't talk in the line, teach them how to do it.  
 Teach them not go running and yelling all over the place.  
 Show them not to do it, teach them not to do it.

"Good" Student--B

Have you ever heard someone call another person a good student?

Yes.

What is a good student?

Write their name good.  
 Good in the circle.  
 Sit quietly.  
 Keep your hands off of things.  
 Stay in the lines when you color.

Are you a good student?

Yes.

What do you do?

Color good; I practice at home; I don't get my name on the board.

My parents made the rule that if I get my name on the board I will get spanked at home. It's easier for me to be good since my parents made the rules.

Have you ever heard someone say someone was a "bad" student?

No.

Do you know what "bad" work is?

Yes. Scribble-scrabble.

Have you ever done bad work?

Yes, when I was just learning to color.

If you could tell E.T. how not to be a bad student, what would you tell him?

Not to stick his tongue out.

Not to spit.

"Bad" Student--A

What is a good student?

Don't get your name on the board.

Don't fight on the bus.

Don't put a pencil in someone's head.

Don't scribble-scrabble.

Are you a good student?

Yes.

What do you do?

I listen very good.

I do not fight.

What is a bad student?

It means you are being ugly to people.

Tell the teacher and don't be a tattletale.

They don't take a rest good.

When the teacher takes something away and you cry for it.

Have you ever been a bad student?

No.

How can you help students be good?

The principal has a talk with them.

"Bad" Student--B

What is a good student?

They help people do stuff.

Are you a good student?

Pretty good. I help people clean up.

What about your work?

I'm a good writer, good colorer.

Have you ever heard the term "bad" student?

No.

What about students who get their name on the board?

They run in the room.  
They jump in the circle.

Have you ever been a bad student?

(Did not respond to the final questions)

This concludes the first stage of descriptive data presentation. In the second stage the perceptions of teachers and students are examined as they pertain to their individual and collective roles, the institution of school, and curriculum.

### Teacher and Student Perceptions

Teacher perceptions: Mrs. Smith. A teacher is perceived by Mrs. Smith as a guide and director of children's individual and collective interests. She enjoys the kindergarten learning situation because it lends itself to spontaneity and creativity. The educational environment is designed to address the perceived needs and interests of her students. Children learn through play; therefore, opportunities for different types of play are incorporated into many of the scheduled activities. Freedom of expression and movement are enhanced by the informal, flexible grouping of tables and the variety and quality of the learning centers.

The profile of Mrs. Smith's ideal student reflects her perception of the student's role in the classroom social system. These characteristics are as follows:

1. A desire to learn (eager, curious)
2. A desire to be in school (sense of enjoyment in being "here")
3. A willingness to do what the teacher says to do.

The expression "having their hearts in it" summarizes these general expectations.

As the school year progresses, specific characteristics of "school ability" begin to emerge. They are more directly related to the academic side of the curriculum. School ability is defined as (a) following directions; (b) working

independently; (c) learning to make decisions; (d) listening, tuning out distractions; (e) self-discipline; and (f) task completion.

When Mrs. Smith defines a slow learner or a developmentally delayed student, it clarifies her specific curricular expectations. These are group norms which she assumes all entering kindergarteners should have mastered.

1. Know their address.
2. Know the differences between letters and numbers.
3. Able to sit down and stay in their seats for a short period of time.
4. Go to the bathroom, hang up their coats, get a drink, share, and play with others.

These form the prerequisites or entrance criteria that separate the average or normal from the slow and the fast at the beginning of the year. The curriculum is designed by Mrs. Smith to address individual student interests as well as the institution's perception of student needs, i.e., basic academics. The basic skill needs of the children are introduced in small groups with follow-up direct instruction on a one-to-one basis. Mrs. Smith's valued student characteristics shape her initial expectations for the beginning kindergarten students. As the prescribed academic curriculum is implemented, specific task-oriented behaviors are identified for school success. The skills of listening, staying on task, tuning out distractions, and following directions

determine "school" or "academic" ability. These skills may emerge as being more valuable in future educational experiences than Mrs. Smith's initial characteristics of curiosity, eagerness to learn, and spontaneity.

Students' perceptions. The role of the teacher is perceived by kindergartners in Mrs. Smith's class as being similar to other adults in their world (i.e., big people tell little people what to do). Teachers also "work with you" in certain joint endeavors but primarily they teach students how to get along with each other and how to unlock the academic mysteries (letters, numbers, writing) contained in school.

It seems that the majority of students are not sure about what specifically the abstract terms "good," "nice," "kind," "polite," and "tell the truth" mean. They respond to the question, "What makes the teacher happy?" in these terms which suggests that they realize the concepts are pleasing to the teacher. However, when one asks them to define these abstract concepts they find it very difficult. One reason might be that they are in the process of discovering what these terms mean. The students who have decoded the behavioral meanings for these vague descriptions may be the ones who are able to conform and be "successful."

The two identified "good" students are able to specify what behaviors are important to success in the classroom: (a) being a good citizen; (b) doing good work; (c) listening

to the teacher; (d) sitting quietly; (e) being good in the circle; (f) writing your name; and (g) staying in the lines coloring. They state that they have learned how to be a good student with the help of the teacher and parents, and describe this learning process by citing instances in which they performed poorly as "when I was just learning." Also, the question, "How could we help students be good students?" is answered, "Teach them, show them how to do it." This implies that good students perceive success as being a skill which can be taught and learned. They perceive themselves as fitting into the abstract category of the "good student" by discovering and mastering the concrete behaviors necessary for school success.

The two children identified as "bad" students perceive themselves as being good students who have never been bad. One boy says that he has never heard the term "bad" student but does relate to the phenomenon of getting one's name put on the board. The concept of "being bad" is abstract and must be related to something concrete. He seems more comfortable with the concept of a good student but has difficulty identifying specific characteristics. The other "bad" student describes success as not doing something rather than what is deemed appropriate -- for example, "Don't get your name on the board," "Don't fight on the bus," "Don't put a pencil in someone's head," and "Don't scribble-scrabble." She seemed to have learned what not to do by trial and error

but is not sure what positive behaviors will bring her success.

Mrs. Brown's Kindergarten: Cedar Knoll Elementary  
Observations

Time. Mrs. Brown's kindergarten was observed from the end of April through the end of May in 1984. The observations were in the morning hours between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. The group of students was seated at assigned tables and was involved in structured activities which did not allow for talking or conversing with visitors. The children seemed comfortable and at ease with my presence in the classroom. After a preliminary introduction by the teacher, "Our visitor wants to see what we do in kindergarten," the students became immersed in their own experiences and did not pursue further interaction. When I walked around the room there were a few instances of communication. For example, "Should I color the mouse's ears?"

Physical environment. The kindergarten is contained in an additional wing which was added to the old structure 15 to 20 years ago. Each classroom has its own bathroom and a shared asphalt playground which adjoins each of the four kindergarten classes. The classroom is standard size with adequate traditional storage space. The artifacts in the classroom consist of charts depicting numerals, the alphabet, colors, shapes. There are also bulletin boards with the

following themes: "I know my address," "Spring is popping out all over," "Heap Good Work." Work samples that are on display consist of purple ditto sheets with shapes, letters, and colors. The art work on display is a standard spring picture colored by each of the children. The ambiance of the classroom is that of quiet, order, and structure, with a place for everything and everything in its place.

Activities. The classroom activities are conducted within a structured schedule beginning with opening exercises. Choosing a special helper for the day, discussing the weather and the calendar, listening to the daily devotions read over the loud speaker, and pledging allegiance to the flag complete the opening exercises. The rest of the morning is divided into three specific activities: reading or skill groups, seat work, and learning centers. The teacher rings a bell once to signify it is time for Group 1 to come to the reading circle. There are pieces of masking tape to show each child where to sit in the circle. All students are asked to cross their ankles in unison and sit down "Indian style" on the masking-tape markers. The rest of the group receives "seat work" which are mimeographed sheets with coloring, cutting, pasting, and reading skills. After the completion of the seat work children raise their hands for the teachers aide to check it. If the work has been completed satisfactorily, the students are free to go to an

assigned learning center. A colored clothes pin attached to their "Cubby" alerts them to the correct center. Soon the bell rings twice to signal Group 2 to come to the reading center and Group 1 returns to their tables to do seat work. The learning centers include puzzles, art, toys, games, sand table, water table, blocks, library books, and housekeeping. T.V. programs, feeding the fish, along with the health department's required "Swish with fluoride" are other activities which are incorporated into the daily schedule.

Acts. Some spontaneous occurrences are observed: A new boy arrives with his mother. The teacher shows him where he will sit and the aide brings him his own box of new crayons. The other children seated at his table exclaim, "The new boy gets new crayons!" Mother and teacher talk quietly at the door while the students observe their new classmate closely. The teacher then introduces "Bobby" to the group.

The aide says, "Barney, sit down."

The boy drops his pencil repeatedly.

A girl looks around at the other students' work to see what others are doing.

Children whisper softly at each table while they complete their seat work. Two boys compare their green crayons. "Which is sharper?"

Children raise their hands for permission to go to the bathroom.

The intercom interrupts the activities calling the custodian to the telephone.

A boy whistles softly as he works.

The aide says, "Sh-h-h!"

A boy hangs backwards out of his chair.

Two children are separated from the group to work in isolation.

A girl in housekeeping rocks a doll and sings a lullaby.

Social circumstances. The students behave differently within the three activities. Small group instructional time structures the behavior in a uniform manner. Each child's behavior seems to conform to the teacher's directions. The large group (seat work) activities reflect a wider range and diversity of behavior. Children seem to exert their influence and control in the large group. Whispering, dropping pencils, comparing crayons, soft whistling all occur even though the aide calls for quiet and conformity. The students seem to sense that small deviations from the rule of "no talking during work time" will be tolerated. The center activities allow the students more opportunities for individual expression. The students can play quietly in twos, choosing their own method of interaction with the center. For example, in the toy center, two boys say, "Let's play with blocks, no, let's play with the Lego's."

Barriers. The students appear to be incorporated into the structured activities. They do not seem curious or excited about having a visitor in the room. There is a sense of an invisible wall between me and the group. I am

not an inhabitant of their personal world but am benignly tolerated as a friendly outsider. The rules of the classroom limit spontaneous freedom of movement and language. Therefore, this is a barrier to my chatting informally with the students and overhearing many language exchanges.

Consensus. There are shared meanings which were not verbalized or written down, such as being quiet sometimes, playing it by ear, whispering when it is tolerated, and keeping a low profile and mild deviations will be tolerated. In the small group with the teacher everyone is expected to pay full attention, keep hands and feet to themselves, and be quiet. All activities are directed by the teacher; her authority is recognized and accepted. However, the students' freedom of expression can be interjected in various ways. The teacher's description of a "listening position" (sitting up tall, quiet, looking straight ahead) provides an example of consensus in the area of listening.

Language. Symbolic language is present in the "bell" which signifies change of activities as well as the colored clothes pins to specify center assignments. The verbal language is dominated by the adults in the classroom for the majority of the time. Center activities allow for a moderate amount of interactions.

Relationships. The students have built a strong, warm relationship with the two adults in the classroom. The teachers' authoritative role has been accepted positively by

the children. If one observes the actions of the students and teachers there seems to exist an invisible inner relationship that is not readily apparent. For example, the rule of no talking during work time is interpreted and implemented so that "a little whispering discreetly" will be acceptable most of the time. It is almost as though the rule is there for a good reason--i.e., to teach students work is not a time to talk, but if it is not misused, it is permissible to exert independence or freedom. The teacher's relationship to the students consists of a warm, close bond between her and the children. Her behavior appears to be consistently positive with all the students. The highly structured environment does not seem to diminish the teacher's strong bond with the students. The teacher and teacher aide work as a team and no conflict is observed.

#### Teacher Interview

At an early age, Mrs. Brown's family had impressed upon her the value of an education. Neither of her parents graduated from high school, but her father's dream was to be an English teacher. Mrs. Brown always loved going to school because it was an exciting challenge to her. The field of medicine was her primary interest, and she pursued biology at first and then expanded to European history. Research as a graduate assistant in European history was satisfying for awhile. However, with her family's encouragement, she decided to enter the educational world as a history

teacher at the junior high level. She soon realized that adolescents were not the age group that she wanted to continue teaching. After teaching at six different grade levels, kindergarten emerged as the "place for me." The strong first impression that kindergarten has on the educational life of the child was the main reason the kindergarten remains as her central interest. She remembers her own kindergarten teacher with respect because this individual was so calm in any situation. There was a child who cried every day for the first 2 or 3 weeks of school. The teacher managed the situation by remaining calm and in control. This event made a lasting impression on Mrs. Brown. She returned to graduate school and received a master's degree in early childhood education and reading. The past 8 years have been spent in the kindergarten setting.

What can it mean to be a teacher?

Teachers share their knowledge, they motivate others to want to learn. A good teacher should be revered. Our society does not realize that a good teacher cannot be bought.

What do you expect of yourself, and what should parents and students expect of you?

They get everything I have to give.  
Subject matter is important but students deserve to be treated as being personally important.  
I should be expected to motivate them.

What do you expect of students?

Behaviorally, I want them to be secure in knowing exactly what I expect of them.  
I want them to be trained in my code system for smooth operation.

I do not want them to have fear. Hugging is important to me if the child likes it.  
 Parents are important. I try to win my parents over that first month of school. Then the rest of the year it is easy to get them involved.

What is your description of a good student?

Generally, they want to learn. They do not have to be quiet or still even if they are active. They are considerate and share.

They do not disturb others.

They take responsibility for their own actions and follow the rules.

They stay on task until the job is done.

They do not hurt others.

Do you see a difference in a curriculum good student and a behavioral good student?

I think they go hand in hand.

The better behavior the more they learn.

Good students do have good behavior by and large.

Some students have high intelligence but their behavior channels it in the wrong way.

Would you define intelligence?

Well, when I say high intelligence I mean those students who meet all the criteria for our gifted and talented program (high test scores, achievement scores, classroom performance).

Define "school ability."

Verbal ability; express themselves well.

Mental ability must be directed; if not, the child becomes very frustrated.

What is important for success in your classroom?

Stick to a task.

Respect the rights of others.

Obey the rules. My main rule is not to hurt others.

There are exceptions; some students I think had a successful year because they came a long way even though they did not meet these criteria. I want children to feel they can be themselves. Cookie-cutter children are not what I want. I do not like to categorize children.

Would you describe a bad student?

They do not achieve what I hope they would.  
 There is usually no backing from home. They come to us without the background. Do not know concepts like the names of farm animals, etc.  
 Generally, parents need to help their children take more pride and interest in education.  
 Fear and anxiety can cause failure.  
 They will not ask you for things, will not let you know what they need.  
 They will not open up and tell you they do not understand.  
 I'm verbal, and I want other people to be; tell me.  
 Do not play games with me.

What do you think causes the phenomenon of good and bad students?

Parent input, emphasis on education, interest in the child's progress.  
 Some children want to learn inherently. I do not know why.  
 Competition. Some children seem to just excel beyond your wildest dreams. Competition with a sibling, in-class competition.  
 I cannot measure one child against another in the area of success.

Do you think your curriculum is responsive to these disadvantaged students?

I would certainly hope so.

How is your curriculum responsive?

I am constantly experimenting. I have never felt pressured from others; I am in charge. I'm the professional. I know what my students need better than anyone else. I'm open to suggestions, flexible. One problem in our training is that we are taught vague generalities. For example, we are told to go in tough. What is tough? What is too tough? It's too vague. I feel sad about the fact that we are not as creative as we could be. There is more of a subtle pressure to conform not to be an individual. I have had to fight for my individuality. I stand out too much.

How would you react to the metaphor of the teacher being an artist?

I can identify with that. What is natural and normal to me is not natural and normal for other people. In

an open concept, if your area (classroom) looks too good, that is not popular. I've learned not to care what others are doing. For example, having the same bulletin board year after year. I can't sit behind a desk. We let this conformity occur--we need to stand up and resist. For example, the proposed county-wide kindergarten report card or checklist. We've got to stand up for what's best for children.

What about the adopted texts, the reading series?

I teach it my way. Because I want to, not the standard way. We should pick and choose for our kids what they need. We can't possibly teach everything they tell you to.

We should not be forced to do something that is not right for children.

The language in the reading series is important because they will continue to have it. For instance, you have to teach that a picture is a "waste paper basket, not a trash can." "Thistle"--how do you teach that? But we've got to teach it. Basics are basics. But they don't need to get them the same way.

#### Group Student Interview

What is a teacher?

Person who teaches things.  
Helps with homework.  
Helps people do their math.  
Does work for us.  
Teacher teaches students.  
Checks our papers.  
Lets us play in centers.  
Helps us do our work.

What is work?

Hard. Things that you write down: name, color; write a sentence.

What is play?

Recess time.  
Play with somebody.  
Play with balls.  
Play outside.  
Run around.

Why do we have teachers?

Help us learn, do things, remember things.  
 Be smart.  
 Be good (nice, not cheat in games).  
 Help you do work.  
 Tell you when it's time to get on the bus.

How do you make the teacher happy?

Be quiet.  
 Work nice.  
 Good work.  
 Be a good student.  
 Get stickers.  
 Don't hit.  
 Don't talk in line.  
 Don't run in line.  
 Don't run in the classroom.  
 Don't hop in the classroom.  
 Don't scream and yell.

How do you make the teacher smile?

Being good.  
 Nice.  
 Do work quietly.  
 Good work (color in the lines).

### Individual Student Interviews

#### "Good" Student--A

What is a good student?

Don't hit people.  
 Color nice.  
 Be good.  
 Look real close.

How do you get to be a good student?

Say you are sorry when you hit them.  
 Raise your hand if you have something to say.  
 Be a friend (play).

What is a bad student?

Hitting  
 Don't say you are sorry.  
 Scribble scabble.  
 Going out of the lines.

Are you a good student?

Yes.

Have you ever been a bad student?

No.

What makes people bad students?

I don't know.

"Good" Student--B

What is a good student?

Hands in their laps.

Being quiet.

Being good: help teacher  
do your own work  
be quiet  
keep your hands to yourself.

Are you a good student?

Yes. I work good, color right, writing good, do my name good, mind my own business.

How did you get to be a good student?

Learning things from a teacher and my momma.

Is it hard being a good student?

No.

What is a bad student?

Touching each other.

Playing around.

Looking around.

Talking.

Work--goes in different directions  
goes out of the lines and stuff.

Have you ever been a bad student?

Yes (a couple of times).

I didn't keep my hands to myself.

I played around.

I didn't finish my work. I got a paddling.

Why do we have bad students?

They get in a rush.  
They are afraid of getting a paddling.  
I get tired. I rush sometimes and get out of the lines.

How could we help students be good?

Make them understand about their work.

"Bad" Student--A

What is a good student?

Color good.  
Happy.  
Good: color in lines  
quiet in the centers  
work; write your name

What is a bad student?

Someone who goes out of lines in coloring, gets paddling; bad; throw stuff; hitting.

Are you a good student?

Yes.  
I stay in the lines.  
Be good while your teacher's talking.

Have you ever been a bad student?

No.

What makes a student bad?

When they can't eat chocolate and they do and they get wild.

"Bad" Student--B

What is a good student?

Quiet.  
Not fighting.

How do you get to be a good student?

Raise your hand when you have something to say.  
Be quiet.  
Not scribble/scrabble; going out of the lines.

What is a bad student?

Fights, punches, screams.  
Scribble scrabbles.

Have you ever been a bad student?

No.

Why do you think students are bad?

They have to do everything, try everything.

### Teacher and Student Perceptions

Teacher perceptions: Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown perceives herself as a highly trained professional who is totally committed to the educational process. Her scientific background may have provided a framework for developing her educational platform or plan of action. She values knowledge and thinks that the teacher's role is to share that knowledge by motivating each child and recognizing his personal needs and interests. Order and predictability in the educational environment provide security and a sense of well being as well as a smooth teaching and learning "operation."

There are certain valued characteristics which are essential in being successful within Mrs. Brown's structured setting. A composite of these characteristics forms a profile of her "ideal student." The ideal student in Mrs. Brown's classroom accepts her authoritative role and knows

what Mrs. Brown wants in the areas of behavior and curriculum. Many of the characteristics which Mrs. Brown values and possesses personally are expected of her ideal student:

1. Takes responsibility for their actions.
2. Likes to learn.
3. Respects the rights of others (be considerate and share).
4. Stays on task until the job is done.
5. Obeys the rules.

Love, not fear, is the motivation for developing and maintaining these characteristics. Some students who do not achieve these behavioral standards may still be labeled as having a successful year if they demonstrate significant effort toward meeting them. The student who does not succeed does not achieve what "I hoped they would." The child's background is an important variable in school progress, but it is not always an accurate predictor of success and failure. Some students have an inborn desire and ability to learn; others respond to the competitive challenge of a sibling or fellow classmate which results in achievement despite their limited background.

The social system of the classroom is viewed by Mrs. Brown as a cohesive group of individuals learning to get along with each other and mastering the basic skills in a quiet, orderly, standardized way. Within this smooth educational operation children are allowed to assert their

personal identity and needs into the process by deviating from the rules slightly or displaying behavior that is not specifically addressed in the rules (i.e., whispering, dropping pencil, hanging backwards from chair). There is a time for work and a time for play. The serious business of work is conducted in a clean, cheerful, quiet, nonthreatening atmosphere which is isolated from the rest of the world by its four walls. This learning environment addresses Mrs. Brown's need for individuality and autonomy in developing and implementing the curriculum.

The curriculum is perceived as being closely tied to "basics." These basics are academic skills dominated by reading and math instruction. A kindergartner's introduction to the basics has a "strong first impression on the educational life" of the child. The critical nature of this specific subject matter mandates an equally serious approach to the educational process. Mrs. Brown functions as the curriculum expert and directs the presentation of essential subject matter. The prescribed curriculum influences and shapes her behavior in some ways. For example, she wants to ensure that her students will have the appropriate background (i.e., reading series, language) to enable them to succeed in the more structured world of first grade. Therefore, she teaches certain concepts which are not personally viewed as important (i.e., thistle, waste paper basket).

Students' perceptions. The students have made sense out of the classroom world in ways that give insight into the phenomenon of teacher expectations. Their perceptions of teachers and their roles provide a key to understanding the way they view the educational process. Mrs. Brown's students posit that teachers are persons who teach, help, work, tell, and allow things to occur. Teachers serve as helpers, as well as directors in the classroom social system. A teacher teaches students, a teacher acts on the student, assists the student, and allows the student to engage in certain activities. The students have accepted the teacher's role as being reality. It is a fact, a part of the real world that is unquestioned. The teacher's role enables her to provide concrete meanings to abstract terms, such as "nice," "polite," "good," "bad," "respect," and "rights."

Pleasing the teacher is extremely important in this situation because the teacher sets the rules and directs the action. This omnipotent being has ways to help and hurt. Some students are defined as "good" because they are able to please the teacher a great deal of the time. Others exhibit behaviors and characteristics that define them as "unsuccessful" or "bad" students. "Good" students reflect the characteristics that please the teacher and are able to articulate them. They also are aware of those behaviors and characteristics which generate the displeasure and the dissatisfaction of the teacher. While some students had to learn by trial

and error, other students came to school forearmed with this valuable knowledge and have always been "good" students. Once you learn how to be a "good" student, it is not difficult to maintain this status. One "good" student who has learned by trial and error is able to discuss why we have "bad" students. His explanation reflects his learning experiences:

They get in a rush, get tired.  
They are afraid of a paddling.  
They just don't want to do the work.

The one who has always been a "good" student replies that she does not know why we have "good" and "bad" students. These two "good" students perceive themselves as successful in the classroom setting. They have learned to adjust to their environment by identifying what pleases and displeases the teacher and they have the internal resources to perform appropriately.

The two "bad" students in Mrs. Brown's classroom were not able to identify the characteristics of the ideal student as proficiently as the two "good" students. They have learned a few by trial and error which they describe in negative terms (i.e., not fighting) or in abstract terms (i.e., happy). The characteristics of a "bad" student are specific and concrete (e.g., goes out of lines, throws stuff, hits, fights, punches, and screams). These two students give specific reasons why "bad" students exist.

When they can't get chocolate and they do and they get wild.  
They have to do everything (i.e., try everything).

Their perception of themselves as being "good" students who have never been "bad" suggests they are still not certain about the concrete meanings of the abstract terms "good" and "bad." The behaviors identified as "bad" by them are so specific that it could be hypothesized that if one is careful not to repeat these specific acts (hitting, punching, screaming), one would no longer be "bad." Logically, if a student is not "bad," then he must be "good."

Mrs. Parker's First Grade: Pineview Elementary  
Observations

Time. Mrs. Parker's class was observed from the middle of September through the middle of October, twice a week during morning hours. The children accepted me as just another visitor. They had volunteers working in the classroom which seemed to affect their acceptance of visitors. After a few sessions, one or two students would ask me for help or volunteer information.

Physical environment. The first grade cluster is "open" with file cabinets and movable blackboards as the only dividers. Each class operates autonomously but the carpeting and indistinct boundaries encourage informal groupings. The building is centrally heated and air-conditioned, with a wealth of learning resources. The P.T.A. and interested civic groups have contributed to this enriched environment. The movable desks are arranged in fours with taped-on name

labels. There is a large cardboard spaceship which students can crawl inside of for reading or play. Hanging from the ceiling are yarn mobiles, a bee's nest, and lunch-bag puppets. On the wall are wall hangings, snakeskin, textured art work, and Winnie-the-Pooh bear pictures. An aquarium, an easel with paints, games, and a science center are other artifacts in the classroom. Charts with the days of the week, a number line, and alphabet letters are examples of academic endeavors. There is also a sign language chart with the alphabet signs used in manual communication. A rocking chair where the teacher sits is centered in front of the blackboard.

Activities. The morning exercises are the first formal activity of the day. Show and Tell comes first, followed by a discussion of the weather and the calendar. A handwriting lesson is explained by the teacher using a blackboard model. The teacher cautions the students "to put two fingers between each word." Students who finish their handwriting are free to come and sit by the rocking chair for the "morning story." The teacher reads a favorite book to those who have completed their writing. Three activities structure the rest of the morning: reading groups, seat work, and learning centers. The teacher and the aide each have a reading group, while a third group works on their seat work, and another group chooses a learning center. The students attach colored clothespins to their clothing to signify which center they

have chosen. A listening center, games, building blocks, plastic magnetized alphabet letters, library books, art, and a science table comprise the learning center activities.

Acts. John has a birthday today which means he can go to the principal's office to pick up his "birthday pencil." He returns and goes to the pencil sharpener to sharpen it immediately. The aide says, "Finish your handwriting so you can come listen to a story." One student asks, "Why do we have to finish our handwriting before we can hear the story?" The aide replies, "Because it is more important." During one of the reading groups, a child states, "I'm tired of reading all these sentences." The teacher looks up to see a girl asking her fellow classmate a question. "Get to work," says the teacher. The girl sits down to work but begins talking again when the teacher becomes immersed in her reading instruction. It appears the girl does not understand the directions for her seat work. I go over and offer to help and go over the directions. There are two boys sprawled on the floor writing a story. "How do you spell 'forest'?", one asks. I write the word "forest" on a piece of paper for them.

Relationships. The students seem to have many positive relationships with each other. Sometimes the children seem confused about their working relationship. If two students ask each other questions or discuss their work the teacher will put their names on the board. The child who is being asked for help has to decide whether she will be loyal to

the friend or obey the teacher. The aide is new and she appears to be unsure of herself and her relationship with the students. During one of her reading groups she says, "I'm not going to put up with this!" The teacher tries to assist the aide in feeling at home in the classroom and seems eager to establish a positive working relationship. The children and the teacher's relationship is different in the various activity settings. In the small instructional groups, the teacher relates to the students in a personal way, commenting on their attributes. "This group is super smart. I think you can write sentences with these words." When she is managing the seat work and learning centers the relationship becomes more directive. "Travis, sit down and get to work!" "Get it done now." "Stephanie, get back in your seat. You have lots of work to do." When the classroom functions as one large group, the teacher relates to them in terms of getting along together. She comments, "It's so quiet today, you don't hear anyone above anyone else. I like it this way."

Language. The amount of language used in the classroom is shared between the adults and the children. Teacher language predominates during the large group instructional time as well as the reading groups. Show and Tell and center activities provide times for the language development of the students. Examples of teacher language include: "Do you all have ears? Then listen. When you come to the reading group

sit on your bottoms." "You can do neater work, boys and girls." "This is what I want." (demonstrates handwriting) "Practice it one more time." The students interact freely with the teacher. "Mine is going to be good," says one boy. "Mrs. Parker, is this good?" Students commented candidly about their opinions: "Let's do the whole book so we won't have to do it tomorrow!" "I hate work."

Barriers. The social meanings of the classroom are not blocked by any readily apparent barriers. The students are immersed in their activities but do ask questions if they want help. They respond freely to posed questions about hidden meanings in the classroom. For example, the class rules are not posted as in other rooms. I asked a student why they were not posted. He replied, "We have memorized them."

Consensus. The rules of the classrooms and their consequences are a common ground of meaning for the students. The fact that different activity settings call for slightly different interpretations of those rules causes some confusion in this area. For example, talking quietly is permissible in the centers but not in the seat work context. If a student needs help from a fellow classmate in a center activity such as writing a joint story, this is permissible. If a student seeks assistance in the seat work activity, his name might go on the board. In the large group, one was allowed to work at his own pace. In the small group, one was to attend and keep up with the group.

### Teacher Interview

Mrs. Parker grew up in a large family in Washington DC where she enjoyed her early childhood schooling experiences. She vividly remembers how "alive" and interesting her kindergarten teacher was and how her enthusiasm for crafts and science influenced Mrs. Parker's later interests. Her mother and grandmother were teachers, which may have guided her decision when she tried to choose between being an interior designer or a teacher. Another factor in this decision was the fact that she would be unable physically to have children of her own. Her choice of specializing in the early childhood area was an outgrowth of her observations that "sixth graders don't want to learn any more." In kindergarten, the desire to learn just "pours out." Mrs. Parker has always taught kindergarten but will teach first grade this year as a new challenge.

Why do you think children get turned off by the sixth grade?

Teachers expect so much from a child. They want them to be a certain way. This causes children to rebel. You see your students years later and they are not the same. They're so different. Their teachers say, "He's trouble" or "She's trouble."

What can it mean to be a teacher?

The ideal teacher--showing the children that there is a whole world out there for them to enjoy. Girls can do anything they want to. To always be open to new ideas. Never yell, have patience with them. Be human.

What do you expect of yourself? What should parents expect?

We're like a family. Different but together. Give and take. Share. It's their classroom. They need to put forth an effort. I like to have parents' respect and understanding. I tell them I'll believe half of what I hear if they will do the same.

What do you expect of students?

To give me the best that's in them. To treat one another like you would have them treat you.

How would you describe a good student?

I had a good class this year. They were eager to learn. They played together, treated each other like they should. They were giving and sharing. They were huggers. I like huggers. They were eager to learn. They didn't mind getting dirty. I like to go on nature walks and sometimes students wear clothes that they hate to get dirty.

What is important for success in your classroom?

To give me all you have to give.  
Do the best you have in you.  
Find one thing that you are good at.

Would you define "school ability"?

Being able to meet the high expectations of Pineview School. Before you leave kindergarten you are expected to know your numbers (1-12), letters, letter sounds, shapes, and colors. Some students who come from the country know a lot about common sense and nature (natural sciences) but they don't know these academic things.

Who determines these criteria?

The objectives outlined in the textbooks and the county-wide kindergarten skill checklist. First grade teacher assumes you've covered the adopted textbook goals and objectives. Sometimes I would like to throw out textbooks.

Why don't you?

The administration and pressure from county-wide teachers and supervisors.

Why do we have textbooks?

We need goals and objectives to learn concepts. Someone makes "big bucks." I think our textbooks are designed for Texas and California.

How do you use textbooks?

In kindergarten I can be flexible but this year in first grade I'll probably go by the textbook.

Would you describe bad or unsuccessful students?

This year it would be hard to think of anyone who is a bad student. Some were slower to catch on. Even though they were slow, they could learn. Sometimes they catch up unexpectedly.

Three years ago I had a child who, no matter how many times or ways I tried to teach this child, I couldn't get through.

How would you explain the good and bad student?

The "good" become molded to my goals. They give me their best and get along with others. The others do not give me their best or get along with their classmates.

Are you saying that the good and bad student exists only in your expectations?

Yes, realistically that's the way it is.

When you said that some slow students "catch up" to average students, what do you mean by an average student?

An average child picks up letter sounds, numbers, shapes. It's fine if they are noisy if they learn.

How do you determine what is average?

I look at the two extremes to help me determine average. Above average are those who have already, by mid-year, picked up the goals for the entire year. The below average are the type you have to go over and over the same concept, and they don't pick it up. The average listens well and is able to go at a good pace. I use people who are not average to define the average ones. Sometimes these above-average students know it all.

Would you define "it"?

The objectives and goals in the curriculum. The text-book is your "bible." Academics.

Why do you think some students are "good" and others "bad"?

Realistically, because I have goals for the way I want children to be. Also, the institution wants them to be a certain way. I don't think family background makes "good" and "bad" students. I think everyone is their own person unless abuse is present. I've seen students from all types of backgrounds still eager to learn.

Would you define "ready for first grade work"?

The academic expectations (books, standards) that first grade develops determine whether they are ready. For example, eight years ago, I would never have had kids writing on lined paper. Now I start with lined paper in kindergarten. Children are different now than before: they are smarter and more interested. The first grade teachers have asked me to change and write on lined paper. The new county-wide checklist (report card) will force me to do things we're not used to.

How do you plan to use the report card?

Gives goals for the year. It is a checklist for conferences.

How do you think first grade will be different?

I don't know what's expected of me in first grade. I guess I will try to finish all the books designed for first grade.

What is our responsibility to these children who are behind or "don't know anything"?

Don't skip anything, hold them back until they get them (goals). Retention in kindergarten and first grade. Have them work over the summer to see if they can catch up.

### Group Student Interview

Who are these big people in school?

Teachers.

What are teachers here for?

Help you in school.  
Teaches you words.  
Learn new words.  
Help you read.  
Grades your papers.  
Helps you learn a lot of things.  
Gives you lots to do.

What makes teachers happy?

Be a good citizen.  
Do good things at school.  
Give her an apple.  
Be nice to her.  
Don't get your name on the board.  
Give flowers.  
Try your best.  
Do your paper nicely.  
Clean up room.  
Follow the rules.  
Be nice to other people.  
Clean up everything you do.

How do you know that your teacher is happy?

She sticks up her thumb.  
Gives you a listening badge.  
She tells you.  
Gives you stickers.  
Smiles at you and winks.

What is the chart at the back of the room that has names and stars beside the names mean?

If you do not get your name on the board you get a star beside your name, and if you get lots of stars you get stickers.

How do you get your name on the board?

Hitting.  
Hurting others.  
Throwing food.  
Tripping someone on purpose.

What does "good" mean?

How do you keep your name off of the board?

Be polite to other people.  
Do things your teacher tells you.  
Stand up when you say the pledge of allegiance.

What is the one thing that makes the teacher the happiest?

Be nice.  
 Be good to other people.  
 Don't get your name on the board.  
 Don't say bad things to your teacher.  
 Don't bite.  
 Hang up your jacket when you come in.  
 Follow the teacher's rules.  
 Be nice to other people's property.

### Individual Student Interviews

#### "Good" Student--A

What is a good student?

Do work good.

How do you know it is good?

It looks like the teacher's.

Are you a good student?

Yes, I do my handwriting good.

Have you ever heard of a bad student?

Yes, they do sloppy work. It doesn't look good.

Have you ever been a bad student?

Yes. I didn't do my work because someone talked to me.

When you did good or bad work, how could you tell?

Teacher puts red marks, dotted lines or circles on handwriting that is bad.  
 I want to finish my work so I can go to the circle.

How do you get stars?

Stars are for not getting your name on the board.

How would you change the rules?

I would add "Be nice to other people."

How would you change the school?

Make classrooms quieter.

What's your favorite thing?

To get my work done.

What makes you most unhappy?

When the teacher gives me a red mark on my handwriting.

How does that make you feel?

Makes me feel sad.

Could everybody be a good student?

Not every day. The first day of school we didn't get stars, then we started getting them.

How did you learn to be a good student?

My teacher taught me and my sisters and mother we always played school. I learned to take my time, medium time. The teacher said to do it a little bit faster.

Why do you think some people don't get their work done?

They talk to people and don't get their work done.

"Good" Student--B

What is a good student?

Don't get your name on the board.  
Do good handwriting--no red marks.  
Get 100's on your paper.

Are you a good student?

Yes. I'm nice to the teacher, do my math right, and get 100's on my paper.

Have you ever heard of a bad student?

No.

(Did not respond to other questions.)

"Bad" Student--A

What is a good student?

Does good work.  
Neat, takes time to do very best.

Are you a good student?

Yes, I do my work real good.  
I don't do it sloppy or messy.  
I be good and don't get my name on the board.

Have you ever heard the term bad student?

No, never heard of it.

Do you know students who are not good students?

Steven is the only one, he pushes people down outside.

Have you ever not been a good student?

Yes. Be loud.

How could we help students be good?

Don't be loud.  
Tell them not to scream and stuff.

How would you change things?

I'd add the rule, don't scream.

"Bad" Student--B

What is a good student?

Somebody who is polite to other people. Do not talk,  
do their work nice and neat.

Are you a good student?

Yes, sometimes. I help other people. I tell the  
teacher when someone gets hurt. Every time something  
happens to me people come help me.

Have you ever heard the term

Yes, George was a bad student back in kindergarten.  
He always wanted to win. I said, "George, you can't  
win all the time."

What is a bad student?

They fight, hit other people, not polite.  
Their work looks sloppy.

Have you ever been a "bad" student?

Sometimes I hit people. I kick and hurt people when they fight back at me, and I hurt them because they do it to me.

How do you know that's bad?

When you hit someone it hurts them. It's bad to hurt someone.

Why do bad students do these things?

I have no idea.

How do you get a star on the chart?

Be quiet, do work, talk lowly.  
Get good manners badge, eat with your mouth closed.  
I learned to be good from my Paw-Paw and bad from my Daddy.

If you could change things what would you change?

Add a rule, "Be nice to other people."

#### Teacher and Student Perceptions

Teacher perceptions: Mrs. Parker. The role of the teacher in the classroom social system is to introduce students to new ideas and all the possibilities that exist in their world. This individual must be patient and share the curiosity that is "pouring out" of young children. The classroom operates much like a family with its members accepting their differences but sharing a common bond among themselves. Each member of this educational family is expected to treat each other with the same respect that he expects of others. Effort is also extremely important. Family members should give the educational endeavor the "best that

is in them." "Good" students are viewed as contributing members of a group. Mrs. Parker describes "good" students as being giving, sharing, affectionate, eager to learn, and curious. She perceives the whole class as being "good" students this year because they were able to function as a cohesive group. "Bad" students are those who do not contribute to the common good of the classroom community or are not able to "pick up" curriculum objectives even after repeated and varied instruction. There is a common goal and purpose for the existence of this educational family, which is the mastery of the curriculum. The objectives, skills, and learning activities that comprise the standard academic goals are essential for every student. The teacher should not skip anything that she thinks is important, and if students do not master the necessary skills, retention will be considered.

The learning environment is organized for basic skills development. Seat work and reading groups predominate the instructional time, with opportunities to participate in learning center activities as well. Art and science are two of Mrs. Parker's special areas of interest which she tries to incorporate into the curriculum frequently. However, the basic academics of reading and math are viewed as being the most valuable areas for mastery.

In order to identify average students, Mrs. Parker uses the two extremes of above and below average. Those students

who master the yearly instructional goals by Christmas are considered above average. Some children who are unable to master those concepts without repeated instruction or sometimes do not "pick it up" at all, are identified as being below average. Average students are those who progress through the curriculum as the textbooks and supervisors predict. Mrs. Parker thinks that children as a whole have changed over the years. They are smarter, more interested, and more advanced. This phenomenon accounts for more advanced concepts being introduced at an earlier age. Eight years ago formal handwriting instruction occurred in the first grade. Today, kindergarten teachers begin teaching this skill at the beginning of the year.

Students' perceptions. The students in Mrs. Parker's first grade class perceive the teacher as someone who fulfills a variety of roles. She is a helper, who helps the students function in the place called school by teaching important school-related concepts. The unknown or little known world of sounds, letters, words, reading, and writing are disclosed to students by the teacher. She grades students' papers to clarify what she wants them to be. Red marks, dotted lines, and circles signify needed changes and revisions. Red marks make some students feel sad. She also gives them lots of work to do and encourages them to finish it in a prescribed amount of time. There are certain rules or standards that the teacher explains which are very important.

Being good to each other and getting along well together is one rule that has been emphasized. Trying one's best and doing what the teacher says to do are also very important. The things which cause conflict and displeasure from the teacher include hitting, hurting others, throwing food, and tripping someone on purpose. The teacher helps students learn how to be "good," "polite," and "nice" by giving rewards such as stars, stickers, smiling, and winking at them. If students break one of the rules or do something "bad," their names go on the board which makes everyone very unhappy. Students are confronted with dilemmas in the classroom when they have to resist the temptation to answer a friend's question or respond to a classmate's request for assistance. Students who talk to people during work time may not finish their work and they may see their names put on the board. Other rules are hard to obey. For example, students are not to run inside even when they are in line for lunch and find themselves "way behind." Sometimes it pays to just follow the rules and not question them.

One way they know their work is good and done correctly is that it "looks just like the teacher's." Good work and keeping their names off the board are the key ways to be good students. "Bad" students often perceive themselves as possessing certain characteristics of a "good" student. They are also able to readily identify specific acts which are considered "bad." One bad student states that he is

"good" sometimes and "bad" sometimes which indicates that he does not think of himself as being in one category to the exclusion of the other. When asked how he knows hitting, kicking, and fighting are bad, he replies that anytime you hurt someone, it is "bad." The reason he displays this aggressive behavior is that others provoke his anger and he feels committed to strike back.

Mrs. Jenkins' First Grade: Cedar Knoll Elementary  
Observations

Time. Mrs. Jenkins' first grade was observed from the last of April until the end of May, 1984. The first two observations took place during a schoolwide "Heritage Week." This was a celebration of mountain heritage traditions with each class demonstrating art work, music, dance, or drama around this theme. Mrs. Jenkins' class rehearsed its square dance routine during my initial visits. I also accompanied the class to the gym where the demonstration festivities were held. My presence was not distracting or of major interest. The rest of the observations were during the morning activity time. I walked around the room on occasion and asked questions or made comments. The students were polite and gracious but not observably curious or interested.

Physical environment. The first grade classroom is housed on the first floor of the old section of the present school building. The room is small and rectangular with

limited storage or counter space. The modern desks are lined up in five straight rows with the two teachers' desks at the side against the windows. There are two tables with chairs at each end of the room for group work. Storage cubbies with the children's names on them provide a place for personal belongings. Bulletin boards are decorated with art patterns (all the same), work samples, classroom rules, and alphabet letters. Some of the work samples displayed have comments such as "much better," "much improvement." Others have 100's or perfect scores. The ambiance of the classroom is that of warmth within a rigid, structured environment.

Activities. The activities begin with the morning exercises, pledge of allegiance, devotions, comments on the weather, and finally an outline of opening events. It is "Swish Day" which means the children will file up to the front of the room to pick up their fluoride liquid in cups, return to their desk for the signal, and swish for 60 seconds. The cups will then be thrown in the waste basket. Instructional time begins, consisting of four specific activities:

1. Teacher directs a skills-oriented reading group.
2. The aide reads with each child, either in a small group (two to five students), or individually.
3. Silent seat work (handwriting copied from the board, skill sheets).
4. Art-related free time which is for those who complete their seat work (clay, coloring, cutting, pasting).

All children are instructed as to how to complete their seat work. The two reading groups are called to the tables, leaving one group in their seats. Rotation of these activities is completed before lunch time.

Acts. During the seat work, one boy seems restless and crawls around on the floor under the guise of looking for his pencil. Another student makes faces and appears to be in a fantasy world playing with his crayon and pencil as if they were toy airplanes. Two children are painting at an easel and spill some paint on the floor. The aide helps them clean it up. The aide notices the boy who is playing with his pencil and pulls his desk up close to the blackboard away from the group. One girl plays quietly with clay for almost an hour. No one seems to notice her. One student seems distracted by the reading group activities and turns around in his seat to observe the teacher's lesson.

Relationships. The classroom has an atmosphere of being a place for serious business. Therefore, the relationships appear to be structured by the work ethic that prevails. The students are to do their own work and are warned not to help or interfere with the work of others. Few opportunities are apparent for collaboration and the building of relationships among the students. The teacher within the structured environment transmits the nonverbal message of genuine concern for children. It is almost as though the students and teacher are functioning in predetermined roles, but

underneath the role playing is a sincere positive feeling for each other. The teacher and aide work together with ease. There seems to exist a mutual admiration for the expertise that each one possesses.

Language. Work and its parameters occupy a large part of the language in the classroom. The adults generate the majority of the interactions within the setting. For example, the teacher says, "I believe everyone has work to do," "I want you to get your work done," "Richard, get busy and do your morning work," "This group makes entirely too much noise coming to the reading group," "One day you'll come quietly and you may all get a surprise." The aide speaks: "Richard, is your writing finished? Now you finish the last line. Sandy, don't you tell him anything. Jane, leave Bob alone, he hasn't finished his work." These statements are directed to one person. However, they seem to be spoken to the whole class and answers don't appear to be necessary. General statements by the teacher are comments on individual behavior: "This is not talk time--you all have something to do. I see two girls who don't seem to have much to do. Everyone has plenty of work to do." Quiet is valued above language. "Who can be the quietest person?" asks the teacher. The students' language is confined to chattering and whispering among themselves during informal times during the day. They appear to have a sense of when the adults are immersed in an activity and quietly whisper or communicate by pointing, gesturing, etc.

Barriers. Being an adult within the first grade classroom setting was a barrier to obtaining meaning. When I would observe a child or two children, they would look up and stop what they were doing as if they thought I was disapproving of their actions. It seemed by focusing on a child's action that I was examining it for possible negative evaluation. There was little freedom of movement or of language expression which was a barrier to spontaneous discussion or exchange of ideas. When I asked a question of the students they were willing to share the answer with me. However, there was little volunteered information.

Consensus. The classroom rules are an example of shared meanings: (a) walk at all times except playtime, (b) do not disturb reading groups, (c) listen to the teacher, (d) keep hands and feet to yourself, (e) use your voice quietly. The rewards for following the rules are: (a) praise, (b) stickers, (c) happy grams (messages sent to parents), (d) special activities, (e) special treats. The consequences are concrete: (a) name written on the board, (b) unhappy corner (time out), (c) note to parent, (d) visit to principal's office. Other shared meanings include the concept that school was a place to work and that play occurs after work has been completed.

Social circumstances. The differing social circumstances of the various settings were observed within the class as a whole. Some students exert individual control over their

environment during the seat work activity by slowing down their work pace or interrupting it to daydream or play with their pencil, etc. Others work quickly through their assigned tasks in order to choose an art activity that will allow them individual expression. When individuals are asked to work with the aide they exhibit conforming behaviors. In the small instructional group some students exert control by making unnecessary noise, coming back to the reading table. This is commented on by the teacher who says if they will reduce the noise they may get a reward.

#### Teacher Interview

Mrs. Jenkins grew up in a mountain farming community with her parents and older sister. As a young child, she stated she was overprotected due to a series of childhood illnesses. There was a really strong bond between her mother and herself because of the concentrated amount of time they spent together. Her first grade year was "miserable." One instance stands out graphically in her memory which she still thinks about today. The teacher asked her to match a picture with the correct word by drawing a circle around the word. Mrs. Jenkins could not read the words so she guessed and circled the wrong words. The teacher, upon discovering the error, slapped the child so hard she turned over backwards in her chair. Mrs. Jenkins spent her first grade year "scared to death." Her second grade teacher, she thought, was very

lenient, followed by another strict teacher in the third grade. Not until the fourth grade did school become enjoyable and exciting. She hypothesized, "If I had had my fourth grade teacher in the first grade, how different things would have been." After high school she attended business school and obtained a job doing office work. After marrying and having a child, she inquired about possible teacher aide positions in her community school, Cedar Knoll. The principal informed her that there was an opening in first grade and Mrs. Jenkins got the job. During her years as an aide she went back to college and obtained her teaching certificate. She reported that "she dearly loved first grade" because "you can teach so much and see so much progress." She stated that "If you can give a child a good background, a good beginning, they will get along fine the rest of their school career." However, "If they get a slack beginning, they never catch up, or it takes a long time for them to catch up." She tries to be patient and kind with the students to ensure not turning them off. Mrs. Jenkins continued her education by earning a master's degree in reading and early childhood education.

What is the meaning of the word teacher to you?

It is the most important thing anyone can ever do. To mold this child is so important.

What do you expect of yourself? What should parents and students expect?

To be to notch, to do the very best by the child.  
To give them a strong basic beginning.

To create an environment where every child is considered important and gets attention. I believe in discipline, but I don't want them to be scared. I have rules but I do not scream and shout.

What do you expect of students? (entrance criteria)

I expect them to be able to sit in their seats, to listen to the teacher and follow directions. I try to accomplish this in the first six weeks.

Would you describe a "good" student?

I had quite a few this year. They sit and listen, follow directions, and get a concept without re-teaching.

Do you see any difference in a "good" curriculum student and a "good" behavioral student?

I really don't see much difference. The main difference is being able to quickly grasp concepts the first time it is introduced. This seems to separate the average from the extra "good" student.

What is necessary for success in your classroom?

Listening, sitting in your seat, and following directions.

How would you define "school ability"?

School ability consists of being able to sit and listen, follow directions, grasp a new concept quickly, exhibit neatness in their work, be independent workers (work on their own). The top students have more ability, they really grasp concepts easily and quickly.

Would you describe a "bad" student?

I had more this year than I have ever had! They were very immature, couldn't sit in their seat, couldn't concentrate, couldn't get along with the other children.

What do you think causes "good" and "bad" students?

Their environment, the "bad" students have not been exposed to anything.

What responsibility does the school have for these children?

We need to set up a special pre-first grade for these immature children to give them an extra year to mature. This first grade work is "Greek" to them and they know by Christmas where they stand on the "totem pole." When they start out low they never get up with the high achievers.

Do you think it is difficult to catch them up?

Yes, because the standard reading lesson contains the same amount of minutes for each reading group, low, middle, and high. I have to spend just as much time with the high group as I do the low. I'm afraid not to cover everything at first because I might leave out something important. I sometimes feel the high group doesn't need as much time. They can work independently

How does the reading series influence your curriculum?

The reading series does control my time. Even though some of the students aren't ready, we have to start them in the first level. After 6 weeks if they can't make it in the beginning level we refer them to special education. We have ordered a new series for these slower children which we will be using this year.

How would you describe your first grade curriculum as far as what you design and what is prescribed?

I think 75% of the first grade curriculum is prescribed and 25% is teacher-directed.

Would you change your curriculum if it was not prescribed?

I would use other materials to build on the present reading series. I'd try to find better materials that relate to the children's everyday life. The math and social studies would remain the same. I've neglected science and I need to do better in this area. I think maybe I've used the reading and math time as a crutch to rationalize not teaching much science.

What determines a child's classification: their reading groups or your own personal expectations?

A little bit of both. The most important academic skills are sounds (reading), basic addition and subtraction concepts. Also, being aware environmentally, knowing concepts of "over," "under," "on," or "in."

Group Student Interview

What is this big person in the room?

Human being.  
Teacher.

What do teachers do?

Help you to do work (papers, sheets)  
Work--something you have to do.  
Play--fun.  
Teach you something.  
Teach you reading (something you have to do).  
Math (work you have to do).  
Let you do things--go on field trips.  
Help you learn.  
Learn words.  
Help you learn to write, read and play games.  
Help us respect the flag.  
Help us learn different things.  
Helps people work.

What makes the teacher happy?

Send her a note.  
Be good in the library.  
Do your work right.  
Give her roses.  
Be quiet, do work.  
Do your math.

What is "good"?

Obey, be quiet, sit down, finish your work on time.  
Love them.  
Listen, no fighting, color nice (stay in the lines).  
Don't rush through your work.  
Don't look at someone else's paper.  
Don't rush through your writing.  
Presents.  
Be quiet.  
Give her a kiss.

Individual Student Interviews"Good" Student--A

What is a good student?

Listen to the teacher.  
Be good--nice.  
Share.  
Does good work--do good writing.  
Not sloppy.

Are you a good student?

Yes. Write cards to the teacher. Be nice to people.

Describe a bad student.

Sloppy, messy work.

They don't write good.

They don't color good--don't stay in the lines.

Have you ever been one?

No.

Why do we have bad students?

They didn't sleep good.

Something happened at home.

How could we help students to be good

Show them how to write good.

Help them color inside the lines.

Do you think we could ever have a class of all "good" students?

Yes.

Why?

You can help the bad be good.

"Good" Student--B

What is a good student?

Does work right.

Be good--obey the teachers.

Person is quiet.

Not fight outside.

What is a bad student?

Fight, kick people.

Do not obey the teachers.

Don't do what the teacher says.

How do you get to be a good student?

By listening to what the teacher says.

Doing your work right.

What does a bad student do?

Don't listen.  
 Don't clean up a mess; if they make a mess they don't clean it up.  
 When their parents say don't leave the yard they go anyway.

Are you a good student?

Yes. I stay in my seat and do it good. I check over my math when I'm finished with it.

Have you ever been a bad student?

No, because I listen to the teacher.

How can you tell she's mad?

Make you do your papers over.

Why do you think bad students do the things they do?

They think they can get away with doing what they want to do. They don't know right from wrong because they don't listen.

"Bad" Student--A

What is a good student?

Be good: quiet, listen, work right, never be bad.

What is a bad student?

A bad student talks, fights, don't listen, fusses.

How do you get to be a "good" student?

I get along with friends.  
 Play with friends.  
 Don't try to wreck people when they are riding on their bike.

Are you a good student?

Yes, I play with friends, ride my bike with my brother, play with my cousins.

Have you ever been a bad student?

Yes, just one time. I got out of my seat to look at Jennifer's book.

Why are students bad?

They like to fight.  
They are bad for the fun of it.

What does the teacher do to show you she's happy?

Smile. One day I will bring her roses.

How do you know she's not happy?

Unhappy--face gets sad.

"Bad" Student--B

What is a good student?

Nice to students, not hit other persons.  
Don't fight.  
Don't throw people down and let them get hurt.  
Color work.  
Do good writing.  
Love the teacher--write her love notes.  
Tell her that I love her. Tell her stuff that happens.

What is a bad student?

Hit people.  
Be mean to people.  
Push them down a bank.  
Throw rocks and hit them in the eye.  
Fuss over stuff.  
Push them down in the bathroom.

Are you a good student?

Yes, I color and work nice.  
Be quiet.  
I surprise Mrs. Jenkins.

Have you been a bad student?

One time. I accidentally hit someone. I was playing like I was a motorcycle. This boy was in my way and I hit him. I told him to hit me back. He didn't. So I didn't get in time out.

What is "time out"?

If you hurt someone, you have to stand with your nose in the corner.

Why do you think we have bad students?

They are minding the devil instead of God. God doesn't want them to go downstairs and burn.

Have you ever made the teacher smile?

Yes. I gave her a sticker.  
I gave her a love note.

How do you know if she is sad?

Her mouth and eyes show she is sad.  
Her forehead wrinkles.

### Teacher and Student Perceptions

Teacher perceptions: Mrs. Jenkins. Mrs. Jenkins is enthusiastically involved in the most important endeavor that "anyone could ever do." Teaching first grade is a fulfillment of a long-term goal. Even though the education field was Mrs. Jenkins' second career, she devoted a great deal of time and energy, while working as a teacher aide, to receive her teaching certificate. She continued her education by pursuing a master's degree in the area of reading and early childhood. Unhappy memories of her own first grade year when her teacher "scared her to death" are still vivid to her. For this reason, she strives to use discipline in a positive way that will provide a structure but not imbue fear in the child. Mrs. Jenkins does not scream or shout in her classroom because children are able to learn and understand what she wants by communicating in a more appropriate manner. One reason Mrs. Jenkins views her work as so important concerns her belief that children who have a strong

basic beginning will progress up the educational ladder satisfactorily. On the other hand, those who are denied this opportunity will have difficulty, and in many cases, never "catch up." Because this strong beginning is extremely critical, a concentrated effort should be made to maintain student interest and not "turn them off." A good academic background is an opportunity that each child should have. Therefore, equal attention should be given to all children. The traditional academically oriented curriculum provides the basic foundation needed by every child. A climate conducive to skill acquisition must be offered to ensure the sequential development of prescribed concepts. The term "slack beginning" portrays Mrs. Jenkins' fear of not meeting the critical academic needs of her students. In order to be prepared and receptive to these academic concepts students must possess the following prerequisite skills: (a) ability to stay in your seat; (b) listen to the teacher; (c) follow directions. With these three prerequisites, students can achieve success in Mrs. Jenkins' first grade classroom. To be a "top notch" or "ideal" student, one more attribute is necessary--to be able to grasp a concept quickly. Not having to reteach or go over a concept after it is first introduced alerts Mrs. Jenkins to the high ability of a student. An understanding of abstract language concepts such as "on," "under," "in" is an additional sign of an ideal student. There are some children who arrive on the first day of school

devoid of these prerequisites. They are immature as evidenced by their inability to concentrate, stay in their seat, and get along with other children. One primary reason for this is limited exposure to appropriate preschool experiences. Sometimes they behave like typical 3- or 4-year-olds by wanting to play, make noises, and fantasize instead of paying attention to the teacher. First grade curricular concepts are "Greek" to them, and by Christmas they realize their position on the "totem pole." These children should be served in a specialized program such as a pre-academic first grade where they can have another year to mature.

The first grade curriculum is prescribed by the textbooks, the principal, and specific county-wide objectives. There is a certain amount of dissonance between Mrs. Jenkins' implemented curriculum and the one she would design herself. Her concern is based on the observation that the range or gap between the high and low reading groups gets wider and wider. In addition, "when they start out low they never catch up with the high achievers." The reading lesson which has a set format requires the same amount of time to be spent on each lesson. Therefore, the slower students receive the same lesson format and time as the "high achievers." A possible solution to this problem involves omitting specific concepts which are perceived to be unimportant. Upon reflection, this alternative is not viable because an omitted concept may prove to be valuable and essential to the child in subsequent grade levels.

Students' perceptions. The students' perceptions of the teacher denote that this individual is a human being who helps, teaches, and lets children do things. She helps students do work (those things they are required to do), and lets them play (those things they like to do). Schooling involves learning specific things: math, reading, respecting the flag, and even how to play games. The teacher's role is to help students master the required skills necessary to be productive members of the educational community.

The teacher is happy and shows signs of pleasure when students learn these required skills well. For example, obeying, finishing work on time, listening, coloring nicely, doing work correctly are ways to please the teacher. Acts which make other adults and children happy such as bringing roses, presents, a kiss, or a note please the teacher as well. Behaviors that cause displeasure from the teacher are more school related (e.g., rushing through work or looking at someone else's paper). The two identified "good" students both perceived themselves as "good" students who had never been "bad." These two students were able to verbalize the characteristics that were indicative of a "good" student. They had mastered the skills of being "good," being nice, handing in neat and correct work, obeying the teacher, and staying in their seats. Each student had formulated specific hypotheses concerning the causes for

other students' inability to master these essential skills. One posits "They ("bad" students) didn't sleep good" the night before and "something happened at home." The other "good" student attributed "bad" students' lack of skills to their own shortcomings. "They think they can get away with doing what they want to do." "They don't know right from wrong because they don't listen." In other words, "bad" students have not learned that the teacher controls the situation. Therefore, students have to subjugate their individual desires to those of the teacher. The main reason this reality is hidden to them is the fact they don't listen.

One of the identified "bad" students reported that being quiet and listening, getting along with friends, and never being "bad" are what "good" students do. He is able to identify what is involved in being "good." His stated "bad" student characteristics (e.g., fussing, fighting, talking, and not listening) reinforce this awareness. A clue to this discrepancy between theory and practice might be found in his reason for the existence of "bad" students. "They like to fight and be bad for the fun of it." Talking, fighting, not listening may be the only source of "fun" that is available to them in a world so closely tied to prerequisite academic skills. This student says that overall he is a "good" student but that one time he "got out of his seat to look at Jennifer's book." The reasons he gave for classifying himself as a "good" student were not school related. "I ride

my bike and play with cousins and friends." The other "bad" student identifies "good" student behaviors in negative terms (e.g., don't fight, don't hit, and throw people down). He did mention coloring and good writing as being a part of a "good" student profile. In addition, he identified some other ways to be a good student: (a) love the teacher; (b) send her love notes; (c) telling her things that happen. These activities may be the primary way he has been successful in pleasing the teacher due to his inability to perform academically. He stated that he was a "good" student because he colored and worked "real nice" and he surprised the teacher. He stated that he loved the teacher but apparently he does not obey her. The only time he was a "bad" student was an accident when he was pretending to be a motorcycle and hit someone. His reason for the existence of "good" and "bad" students is related to "minding the devil and not God." This inclusion of an external force might be interpreted as a way to avoid taking responsibility for one's actions when one violates rules of the school social system.

The identified characteristics of bad students reflect aggressive, hostile behavior (hits, pushes, throws rocks, push people down in the bathroom). This behavior is very concrete in nature, unlike the more abstract ones identified by the "good" students (don't write or color good, do sloppy work, don't stay in the lines). These "bad" students appear to be struggling with understanding what general

behavior expectations are appropriate and don't seem to be able to relate to the higher level abstractions of "good" school-related behavior.

#### Personal and Theoretical Interpretations

In the first two stages of the data analysis process, the data were presented and examined for possible inferences germane to this study. The third stage consisted primarily of personal interpretations which are an outgrowth of my role as a participant observer in the four classrooms described earlier. These personal interpretations, supported by earlier theoretical interpretations, provide answers for the questions outlined in this study.

As one examines the perceptions of the participants in the early childhood educational process, it is important to gain insight into how and why teachers and children have come to view the world of schooling as they do. A significant part of this world is made up of the classroom learning environment which includes physical and social dimensions. The creation, maintenance, and development of the learning environment are characterized by an ongoing dynamic process comprised of the interrelationships between the physical setting, the roles of teachers and students, and the curriculum. When one observes the social system of an individual classroom, these interrelationships provide a rich source of information about teacher and student perceptions. The

perceptions of each individual teacher of her own role, of the student's role in the classroom, and of the curriculum were varied and led to different expectations of students. Each teacher participant shared her perceptions through open-ended dialogue and actions observed in the classrooms.

Two basic perspectives emerged concerning the teacher's role within the classroom. One perspective was that of the teacher as a guide and director of student needs and interests. In other words, the teacher's role was that of a facilitator, a helper, an assistant who fostered the students' individual and collective needs and interests. The second perspective was that of the teacher as a transmitter of a specific body of knowledge; that is to say, the teacher's role was to ensure that subject matter (basic skills) was presented to and acquired by all the students in the learning environment. Some teachers developed their personal role description by creatively mixing the two perspectives; e.g., Mrs. Smith's perception of the teacher's role was grounded in the direction and guidance of student needs and interests with a secondary emphasis on basic skill development. By contrast, Mrs. Brown's role description reflected the dominant influence of knowledge transmission critical to each child's educational development. The emphasis of "molding the child by giving him or her a good academic foundation in an environment where every child is considered important and gets attention" was indicative of Mrs. Jenkins' perceived

teacher role. The academic foundation was primary, with the child's interests secondary. Mrs. Parker described her classroom social system as a family where sharing, giving and taking, and exposing each other to new ideas were the general expectations. However, observation data from Mrs. Parker's classroom indicated a major emphasis on the mastery of basic skills and a minor emphasis on individual needs and interests. This emphasis may be related to her desire to have her students meet the "high academic expectations of Pineview School."

Teacher perceptions about the student's role in the educational process were a natural extension of their own roles. In Mrs. Smith's classroom, for example, the activity level, degree of freedom of movement, and language expression identified the student as the basic focus. This seemed to come from her perception of her role as guide and director of student needs and interests. A "good" student for Mrs. Smith was one who radiated an eagerness to learn, was highly verbal and even noisy at times. Within this student-centered setting, basic skill acquisition was also an integral part of the program. Small group instruction required shared norms concerning acceptable behavior within this learning context. I concluded that the student's role description included following directions, completing a task, and conforming to rules of conduct. The other three teachers valued their role as a transmitter of knowledge and developed

the student's role description around the organizing framework of basic skill acquisition. From my observations and interviews with these teachers, I concluded that the transmission of critical knowledge necessitated that the student be receptive to instruction. A "good" student was not only receptive to but was also proficient in the acquisition of the prescribed subject matter. I was told by Mrs. Parker that exceptionally "good" students or ideal students acquired the set body of knowledge in record time (i.e., by Christmas).

Teachers' perceptions of their own roles as well as the students' role appear to influence the children's perceptions about their individual and group roles within the classroom social system. A close look at the interview data outlined at the beginning of the chapter is helpful in making inferences and generalizations pertaining to the following questions: (a) How does the students' perception of the teacher role influence or color their own role? (b) How does the teacher's perception of the student role affect the student's role perceptions? (c) How does the teacher's perceptions of the curriculum affect the student's perceived role? The next section will address the questions cited above.

(a) How does the students' perception of the teacher role influence or color their own role?

The students used several key terms (e.g., help, teach, give, and let) to describe their teacher's role within the

classroom world. Students in Mrs. Smith's and Mrs. Parker's classrooms described a teacher as someone who taught students academic skills (e.g., how to write, do letters, do numbers and words) and who "helped you to learn a lot of things" which included social skills (e.g., no hitting, kicking, running inside). Mrs. Brown's and Mrs. Jenkins' students used the same terms (e.g., help, teach, give) as well as the word "let" (e.g., "lets us play in centers," "lets you do things like go on field trips"). From my observations and interviews I believe that the reason for the students' use of the term "let" could be strongly related to the following factors: (a) Cedar Knoll Elementary has standard, traditional classroom architecture which is reflected in the structured learning environments of Mrs. Brown's and Mrs. Jenkins' classrooms, and (b) these Cedar Knoll teachers valued their role as transmitters of knowledge and placed major emphasis on subject matter. Therefore, the Cedar Knoll students perceived Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jenkins as being mainly concerned with their students' mastery of academic objectives (i.e., doing your work right) but would allow or let the students engage in activities which were more directly related to their needs and interests (e.g., field trips, centers). A composite of the four teachers' role description would be someone who helps, teaches, and gives students work to do. The students' role is to work with the teacher, be helped by the teacher, and do the work that is given to them.

Sometimes the teacher will let the student do things that he or she wants to do but the teacher remains in control. The student's role is for the most part defined by the teacher but the students will assert themselves on occasion by choosing activities which are closely related to personal interests.

(b) How does the teacher's perception of the student role affect the student's role perceptions?

The teacher's perception of the student's role evolves into her personal profile of a "good" or "ideal" student. The four teachers in this study shared their valued characteristics which comprised their profile of a "good" student. After reviewing these characteristics I detected three categories or generalizations that seemed to encompass them all. They are as follows: (a) "good" students exert effort (i.e., eager, try their best, take their time, give the best that is in them); (b) "good" students conform to the group rules, regulations, and guidelines prescribed by teachers (i.e., follow the rules, do what teachers tell them); (c) "good" students achieve the curriculum objectives and the academic performance standards (i.e., get 100's, do good work). If one is successful in making the teacher happy, both in social skills (behavior) and in mastering academic skills (work), one is recognized as being a "good" student by peers as well as the teacher. Many of the "good" students who were interviewed stated that they learned how to be

successful with help from siblings, parents, and teachers. Others said they had always been "good" students and had never experienced anything but success in their educational endeavors. I concluded that these students came to school with a valuable background of information and experiences which prepared them for their initial confrontation with the formal institution of school. Preschool educational experiences such as church activities, nursery schools, and organized play groups, all closely related to middle class values, could be contributing factors in this learning foundation. Ray Riot (1970) supported the position that the possession of middle-class values and characteristics contributes significantly to school success.

Why aren't all students "good" students? The majority of the children interviewed were able to describe essential characteristics of a "good" student. However, there were eight students interviewed who had been identified by their teachers as being "bad" or unsuccessful in the learning environment. Responses to the question, Why do you think there are "bad" students, included: (a) bad students don't listen, (b) they have to try everything, (c) they think they can get away with doing what they want. These responses support the generalization that when students do what they want to do instead of what the teacher wants them to do, negative outcomes may occur. During the classroom observations I saw some students appear to withdraw into a world

of their own. One child was playing with his pencil as if it were an imaginary airplane. Another student was hanging backwards from his chair as though he were swinging from a make-believe trapeze. Others directed their individual needs and interests in counterculturally related ways (e.g., hitting, kicking, tripping). They may have asserted their individuality on the learning environment in an attempt to say, "Look, I'm here, I exist, I merit attention!"

In short, the students' perceptions of their role appear to be directly related to the teachers' ideal student profile. Their interpretations of the teachers' ideal student focus on two dimensions: (a) production of "good" work (performance standards) and (b) demonstrating "good" behavior (conforming to valued norms). A frequency count of responses dealing with behavior and academics supports the generalization that students view "good" behavior and "good" work as being of equal importance.

(c) How do the teacher's perceptions of the curriculum affect the student's perceived role?

A composite of the teachers' perceptions of curriculum was derived from their interview responses which included the following: (a) knowledge of basic skills, (b) exploration of new ideas, (c) play-oriented, and (d) textbook-oriented. The students seemed to perceive the curriculum as "doing your work" which consists mainly of reading, math, writing, and coloring. Some describe "good" work as being

like that of the teachers': getting 100's, being neat, coloring in the lines. There are also perceived ways to facilitate the production of "good" work (e.g., don't rush, work quietly, finish on time, do it right), which will please the teacher. From the interviews and observations I inferred that students perceive "doing work" as the basic reason for their presence in school.

In seeking to understand what I saw and inferred from the classroom observations and what I heard in the interviews, I realized that I brought my own perceptions to this experience. This then became a personal interpretation of the data.

There seemed to exist in the classroom social system multiple forces or influences that interacted in such a way that patterns and themes began to take form. Teachers perceived their roles as being either primarily concerned with directing the needs and interests of the individual students or primarily concerned with the effective transmission of a specific body of knowledge. Each of the four teachers recognized these two facets of her role description and attempted to reach an equilibrium or proper match and balance between the two. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith were comfortable in their role and believed they had obtained both an inner and outer equilibrium. In other words, they felt good about themselves as human beings and as teachers. Their self-esteem was high and they displayed pride and confidence concerning

the learning environment they had created and maintained. Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Parker have not been as successful in obtaining a comfortable match and balance. There was a feeling of dissonance and disequilibrium which caused them to express feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent in a variety of ways which included (a) stating that they felt coerced or forced to teach concepts and skills that were not meeting the needs of their students (e.g., Mrs. Parker stated that "sometimes I would like to throw out textbooks"; when I asked her why she didn't try that approach, she responded, "The administration and pressure from county-wide supervisors"); (b) blaming the student (e.g., Mrs. Jenkins said she had more bad students this year than ever; "they were immature, couldn't sit in their seats, couldn't concentrate and couldn't get along with the other children"). The reason "bad" students exist is related to their environment; "they have not been exposed to anything."

From my observations, I would say the students also appeared to experience a similar inner and outer balancing process. On the one hand, there was a need to express their individuality by responding to elements in the educational world which matched their own needs and interests. On the other hand, there was the matter of "fitting in," being a part of a common group, sharing joint goals and achievements. In order to fit in, they must learn how to please the teacher and conform to her standards. Those who achieved

the proper match and balance between these two forces could be said to be "centered" and "grounded" in the educational world. In most cases they were labeled by teachers as being "good" students by identifying their successful "balancing act." Other students had a difficult time achieving the equilibrium of the "good" student. One identified "bad" student described his disequilibrium in these terms: "I kick and hit people, it's bad to hurt someone. I learned to be good from my Paw-Paw and bad from my Daddy." From his responses I inferred that he recognized his behavior to be out of line and wrong according to group norms. His explanation centered around his lack of control over what he did due to the influence of his father. The good influence of his grandfather was not sufficient to help him reach a state of balance and be labeled a "good" student.

From my observations of the four teachers in this study I saw teacher expectations as a reflection of each teacher's inner and outer struggle to achieve an acceptable match and balance between her own personal needs which include societal values and beliefs and her recognition of the student's needs and interests. These expectations affect the curriculum and the roles of teacher and student. In a similar manner, the students and the curriculum (i.e., the subject-matter orientation) have an influence on the formation and maintenance of teacher expectations. This subject matter can become the primary focus of educators, parents, and eventually the children

themselves. Another dominant force which I observed in the early childhood classroom was the individual's basic need for selfhood. The teachers have a need to create and design their own personal learning environment where their values and beliefs are honored and accepted. Students also bring inherent interests and needs to the classroom which require acceptance. It was my observation that these two forces (i.e., individual and societal needs) interact in an ongoing dynamic manner. Both teachers and students are influenced by society's need for them to conform to traditional norms and standards. In the teacher's case this is manifested in having to assert herself as an individual in the institutional setting. Mrs. Brown said, "I feel sad about the fact that we are not as creative as we could be. There is more of a subtle pressure to conform, not to be an individual. I have had to fight for my individuality." In addition, the curriculum is sometimes considered sacred (e.g., "The textbook is our bible," said Mrs. Parker), because it has been developed around society's need to transmit culturally based subject matter.

This type of ongoing dynamic relationship between the individual and society has been discussed by Berger and Luckmann (1966). They point out that the creation of the real world or fact world is shaped by the ongoing interaction and the constant dialectic (i.e., an imaginary dialogue) between the individual and society. One perspective of this

dialogue is dominated by the individual (i.e., society exists as individuals are conscious of it). This implies that people create and structure their society. The second viewpoint emphasizes society's influence (i.e., "individual consciousness is socially determined") (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 73). The consciousness of individuals is determined by the society in which they live. An understanding of this dialectical process is helpful in interpreting the interactions of students and teachers in the four classrooms observed for this study. The teacher personifies society's norms and standards which have an ongoing imaginary dialogue with the student and his or her inherent needs and interests. Both dimensions of this dialogue have value and should be honored in achieving a proper match and balance to ensure that both the teacher's and the student's needs will be met.

Questions outlined for purposes of this study are examined in light of both personal and theoretical interpretations:

1. How do teachers in early childhood education develop their expectations for student success and failure within the classroom social system?

A teacher's expectations are developed as she interacts personally with the educational world. This ongoing dynamic relationship with the institution begins early, as was seen from the biographies of the teachers in this study, and evolves throughout the teacher's life. It shapes the values,

beliefs, and behaviors which become the foundation of teacher expectations. In some cases the individual's personal values are stronger than the institutional ones, in which case the teacher's expectations often reflect a focus on the individual child and his or her personal needs and interests. In contrast, other individuals' values and beliefs are influenced by the needs of society or the institution and their teacher expectations reflect an emphasis on the transmission of a select body of knowledge or standards of behavior. In short, the interaction of two forces (i.e., individual needs and societal needs) create an ongoing evolutionary relationship that is instrumental in the development of teacher expectations for the children in the classrooms.

2. How are the stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student related to teacher expectations of the "model" or "ideal" student?

Teachers develop a conceptual framework of characteristics which comprise an ideal or model student profile. These characteristics are a combination of their own personal values and their perceptions of institutional values. Their perception of the teachers' role is critical to the development of their perception of the ideal student. For example, if they perceive the teacher role as a helper and a guide, the role of the student will be perceived as the recipient of this helping process. On the other hand, if

their role is viewed as an expert who transmits knowledge to an unknowing recipient, the student's role and ideal type will be different. The dynamic relationship between the individual and the institution shapes and structures the profile of each teacher's ideal student. If cultural knowledge is valued above individual needs and interests, the ideal student possesses characteristics which are essential for the acquisition and mastery of subject matter (i.e., follows directions, conforms to instructional methods, masters the body of knowledge). An ideal student profile which reflects the focus of individual needs and interests is characterized by divergence, creativity, curiosity, and inquisitiveness. As students enter the educational world, they are placed into categories created by their comparison to the ideal student profile. If students match or come close to the ideal student they are classified as "good" students. When students are lacking in the desired characteristics, they are often stereotyped as being "bad" students. The ideal student profile becomes an assessment tool to describe and categorize the heterogeneous children who present themselves to the institution.

3. How are these expectations and stereotypes reflected in the daily life of young children in the classroom?

The physical environment is structured to communicate the teacher's expectations with desks placed in straight rows or tables placed in informal clusters. The freedom of

movement and language that is present in the daily planned activities exemplifies teacher's expectations for the student and herself. The shared social meanings found in the classroom such as written rules, concepts of good and bad behavior and work are representative of these expectations and subsequent stereotypes. Novak (1970) commented on how students are initiated into the world of society as follows:

When a young person is being initiated into society existing norms determine what is to be considered real and what is to be annihilated by silence and disregard. The good docile student accepts the norms; the recalcitrant student may lack the intelligence or have too much; may lack maturity or insist on being his own man. (Novak, 1970, p. 94)

The interactions present in the classroom are another area where teacher expectations are evident. Teacher-dominated monologues with no response necessarily portray one type of expectation. Spontaneous interactions among the children as they participate in their learning experiences demonstrate an alternate perspective. The frequency of unplanned acts within the structured schedule provides further insight into the teacher's expectation for control. The charts, bulletin boards, and work samples portray the standards of academic achievement and appropriate behavior in a concrete way. Those students who have accumulated the largest number of stars are the ones to emulate. Work samples that are posted on the "Heap Good Work" bulletin board provide a model for everyone to follow. The ultimate model for good work is to make it "look like the teacher's." Correct language usage

is modeled by the teacher and student language is often modified to conform to this model. For example, "My father slept early this morning." "No, your father slept late." Sometimes the students interacting with each other are able to use their own language without outside commentary. "How tall is your brother? Is he up to heaven? No, he's 60 feet tall." By observing young children in the naturalistic setting of their classroom, one will find numerous examples of teacher expectations and stereotypes.

4. How do teacher expectations for the model or ideal student affect the development and implementation of the basic curriculum?

The relationship between teacher expectations for the ideal student and the curriculum is similar to the interactional process between the individual and society. The ideal student is in some ways the product of the curriculum, and the curriculum is strongly influenced by the teachers' ideal student profile. The push and pull of these opposing forces is manifested in the development and implementation of the curriculum. For example, Mrs. Smith's profile of an ideal student included the characteristics of curiosity, eagerness to learn, desire to be in school, willingness to do what the teacher said. These valued personal characteristics influenced her implementation of the basic curriculum. Her kindergarten program was a manifestation of her personal ideal student profile. On the other

hand, the influence of a subject matter orientation is reflected in Mrs. Smith's definition of school "ability" which included following directions, completing a task, tuning out distractions, listening carefully. Mrs. Smith's valued personal characteristics of an ideal student (i.e., eager, curious, happy to be in school) shape and design the implementation of her curriculum. In a like manner, the subject matter orientation of the institution influences the evolution of her characteristic defined as "school ability."

Students who are similar to the ideal student profile, "good" students, interface with the curriculum in a positive way. Their success is assured because they possess the characteristics essential to mastering the educational objectives and goals. Those individuals who are lacking or devoid of these valued characteristics do not meet the standards and criteria for the ideal student. They are often categorized as "unsuccessful" or "bad" students who will predictably experience difficulty, even failure. This suggests that success and failure in the classroom are built into the curriculum. Students who do not conform to valued norms and standards are deemed deviant. Sincere effort is made by educators to assist them in changing and adapting to the curricular expectations. Motivation, rewards, and punishments are resources which the teacher uses to maximize a positive adaptation to the educational process. Remedial and special education are additional mechanisms to help the

deviant child succeed. In a subject-matter-oriented curriculum the unsuccessful child becomes the focus for modification and adaptation, not the prescribed body of knowledge. Changing the curriculum instead of the child is not a viable alternative because the valued knowledge takes precedence over children's needs and interests. The child who does not have the skills to acquire and master the required body of knowledge becomes labeled as the problem. When efforts fail to fix the problem, it may be assumed that the students are unfixable and therefore unsuited to educational endeavors.

Teachers develop an ideal student type which influences curriculum development and implementation. "Good" and "bad" student categories are created as teachers compare each child with an ideal student profile. Students accept the teachers' values and standards as being reality. Therefore, they strive to unravel the mystery of what is expected of this ideal student. Some enter the learning environment with numerous clues and background information which assist them in pleasing the teacher. Others come to the institution devoid of this valuable knowledge and find it more difficult to make the teacher happy. These students must learn how to please the teacher by trial and error. Some students do not have the prerequisite skills necessary to please the teacher, especially in the area of academic studies. Their academic performance does not meet the set

standards mandated by the subject-matter-focused curriculum. These unsuccessful children often become labeled or categorized as "bad" students early in their educational life. Educators expend the majority of their collective energies in devising ways to fix the unsuccessful child rather than examining the prescribed body of knowledge for possible positive revisions and modifications.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to broaden the existing field of research related to teacher expectations by gaining additional insight into the relationship between teacher expectations for the ideal student and the development and maintenance of the early childhood curriculum. This complex relationship was investigated by engaging in three distinct but highly integrated activities. The first involved observing the phenomenon of teacher expectations in the naturalistic setting of the early childhood classroom. Secondly, teachers' perceptions and understandings of this phenomenon were explored by participating in direct dialogue with the early childhood teachers. Finally, the students' understanding of the teacher's role and her expectations was examined in group and individual interviews. The perceptions and understandings contained in a descriptive review of the data were interpreted personally and theoretically. These interpretations were used to address basic research questions which had been identified to guide and direct the study.

These interpretations were also germane to theoretical commonalities and posited basic assumptions discussed in the first chapter. The major findings will be outlined as they relate to these two areas of interest.

Learning theories cited from the previous research efforts of Bloom, Piaget, Hunt, and others shared three basic commonalities:

1. All children develop and progress through similar stages and require an environmental and experiential match to ensure maximum growth.
3. Educators should capitalize on periods of rapid growth due to the child's increased sensitivity to learning.
3. Cognitive and intellectual development comprised of inquiring and problem solving should be the focus of early childhood education.

The findings of this study documented that teachers were aware of and utilized specific elements contained in these learning theories. For example, their interview responses and certain classroom activities reflected a workable knowledge of developmental readiness and young children's eagerness and sensitivity to learning. The teachers commented on how eager, enthusiastic, and curious children were when they first entered the school environment and how this enthusiasm appeared to diminish as the child progressed through school. These developmental characteristics were stated as being the primary reason the four teachers were involved in early childhood education. As I observed and listened to teachers and students, I discovered that there were few activities where students were involved in problem solving or inquiry.

The majority of the children's instructional experiences were devoted to competency-based, performance objectives grounded in the acquisition of basic skills. There did not seem to be conscious effort made to achieve a match between developmental readiness and experiential activities. Instead, a standard set of skills was presented to all the children. Even though they were allowed to progress at different rates, the learning activities were not personalized for each student's developmental readiness.

Another research effort germane to these findings was Ray Rist's hypothesis that a teacher's normative reference group became the basis for the teacher's expectations for the "ideal" student (Rist, 1970). In this study four influences were identified as contributing to the formation and maintenance of teacher expectations. They included the following: (a) an ongoing, interactive process which exists between individuals (teachers and students) and society (institution or school); (b) the personal and past history of teachers and students; (c) traditional aspects of schooling (i.e., teacher roles, student roles, ideal student types, perceptions of curriculum); and (d) society's need to transmit cultural knowledge and the individual's (teachers and students) need for selfhood. In light of the identification of these four influences, I concluded that teachers' personal values and beliefs were not the single basis for the teacher's development of the ideal student type.

As a part of my initial research design I developed basic assumptions to provide a foundation for this investigation. Relevant findings generated from this study will be discussed as they relate to these four basic assumptions.

1. Success and failure in the early childhood classroom seem to be related to the teacher's expectations for the ideal or model student.

The four teachers in this study described their personal profile of the ideal student. I observed that if a child possessed these valued characteristics there was a high probability for success. However, a severe deficit or lack of these essential characteristics often caused the child to be identified as being a "bad" student which was an indication that failure was a strong possibility.

2. An insight into the phenomenon of these teacher expectations could provide a better understanding of "what is" within the early education classroom.

By examining the formation and maintenance of teacher expectations and their relationship to the daily classroom life of children, I obtained an increased understanding of the present state of the art in early childhood education. I noted that teacher expectations had a significant influence on the students' perceptions of themselves and the implementation of the curriculum. Moreover, the interaction between two seemingly opposing forces (i.e., societal-institutional and individual-personal needs) was observed in a variety of

ways within the learning environment (e.g., a prevalent subject matter orientation versus a stated desire for a more child-centered curriculum). Often the teachers seemed to be caught between these opposing influences which forced them to match and balance creatively these influences to achieve a personal educational equilibrium. Two of the participant teachers felt comfortable with their match and balance. The others were still struggling to develop a similar comfortable position. The students also experienced the influence of these two forces by having to conform to the teacher's and institution's values as well as maintain a sense of selfhood.

3. Teacher expectations for the ideal or model student as well as the stereotypes of "good" and "bad" students are all humanly constructed and socially created.

These findings supported this basic assumption in that each teacher personally constructed her individual profile of a "good" or ideal student. One teacher, Mrs. Parker, stated in her interview that "'good' students become molded to my goals." Therefore, her goals determined the definition of a "good" student. When I asked her if the "good" and "bad" student existed only in her expectations, she responded, "Yes, realistically that's the way it is." I also observed the social creation of the stereotypes ("ideal," "good" students) by the school in that they were a reflection of traditional institutional values.

4. These teacher expectations can be studied in depth by observing actual practice, having dialogue with teachers and students, and using personal history.

The description of the interviews and observations contained in the study provided a rich source of information concerning teacher expectations. An in-depth analysis of this valuable information generated findings which were then used to address the basic research questions summarized as follows:

1. The formation and maintenance of teacher expectations were influenced significantly by four major forces: personal and past history of teachers and students, traditional role descriptions of teachers, students, and the curriculum; society's needs, and individual needs.
2. The stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student were found to be strongly related to teacher expectations for the model or ideal student.
3. Observations of the four classrooms documented the strong influence of teacher expectations in the daily life of young children in the early childhood classroom.
4. The development and implementation of the basic curriculum influenced and was influenced by teacher expectations for the ideal student. It was found to be a circular, interactive process where each influenced and shaped the other.

### Recommendations

The information, insights, and understandings derived from this study provided a foundation on which to develop recommendations for future educational endeavors. These recommendations will consist of possible future research directions and the identification of a personal conceptual framework for curriculum development.

Recommendations for possible future research efforts include the following:

1. Follow-up studies examining the teacher's ideal student profile and its influence on the curriculum. One possibility is to conduct a longitudinal study which would include K-3 and explore teachers' perceptions of the ideal student at different age and grade levels.
2. Conduct additional intensive analyses of the ideal student profile and its relationship to success and failure in the classroom.
3. Compare the ideal student profile generated from this study with those derived from similar interviews and observations in private alternative school settings which have different articulated ideological frameworks (e.g., Montessori, British Infant Schools, and religious academies).

The second major recommendation I would make is that teachers identify for themselves a personal conceptual

framework for curriculum development. Such a framework might follow a pattern similar to the one which I have constructed for myself which is grounded in the belief that there is a proper match and balance between individuals (teachers, students) and societal needs and interests. In order to develop a curriculum that will provide this critical match and balance, I believe three elements are essential: a curriculum planning model, an educational platform, and an ideological perspective.

Curriculum development must be conceptualized as an ongoing evolutionary process analogous to a continuous journey or pilgrimage rather than an end product or destination. Just as a physical map is important to a successful journey, a curriculum planning model becomes equally significant in curriculum development. The curriculum planning model that I recommend has no predetermined end product but is process oriented and frees educators to perceive this endeavor as spiral-shaped rather than following a straight predetermined course. This planning model would be all-inclusive and able to accommodate divergent and diffuse ideas.

An educational platform is needed which includes the two viewpoints of "what is" in the area of early childhood education as well as a mental picture of "what could be." The study's review of the literature, analysis of data, and summary comprise my interpretation of "what is." My vision

of "what could be" consists of a proposal to strive for a proper match and balance between the needs of individuals (teachers, students) and society.

The ideological perspective which I have chosen to direct and guide this curriculum development process is grounded in liberation, transcendence, and the unleashing of human potential. The adoption of such a perspective could serve as a plumb line or assessment tool to evaluate present and emerging curriculum designs for possible modifications and refinements. Self-assessment would be the natural first step in this evaluation process. Teachers could analyze their expectations for themselves, the institution, and the students in relation to a liberating perspective. Does actual classroom practice (i.e., student success and failure) correspond to the characteristics of transcendence and liberation for teachers and students? If not, educators would determine why this had not occurred and take appropriate action. I believe that the creative use of these three elements, a curriculum planning model, an educational platform, and an ideological perspective could assist individuals (students, teachers) to recognize and celebrate both their **personal uniqueness** as well as their connectedness and dependence on each other. When individuals recognize and appreciate these interrelationships they can respond more positively to their own individuality as well as the common good of the group.

A curriculum design based on a proper match and balance between these two dimensions of existence might be analogous to the caucus race in Alice in Wonderland.

"What is a Caucus-race?" said Alice.

"Why," said the Dodo, "the best way to explain it is to do it." . . . First it marked out a race-course, in a sort of circle, . . . and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no "one, two, three, and away," but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out, "The race is over!" and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking "But who has won?" . . . "Every-  
body has won, and all must have prizes." (Carroll, 1978, pp. 49-50)

Everyone would win and everyone would have a prize.

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