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SOURCES OF STUDENT ANGER

IN

SCHOOLS

by

Dawna L. Johnson

A thesis

submitted in partial

fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Dedicated to the Students

Who Participated in This Study

ABSTRACT

This study examined student anger. The students from grades eight through ten were asked, in focus groups, to identify what, in schools, made them respond with anger and how students responded to this anger. Common sources of anger related to styles of teaching and means of evaluation used in classrooms. These were related to the power relationships which existed between students and teachers. These relationships appeared to be an aspect of a sense of inequity between the students and teachers.

The responses of the students indicated that their frustration could be lessened if teachers focused more on the progress of all students during lesson delivery and provided activities suited to a wide variety of academic abilities. These students wanted consistent and concise feedback and explanations of marking criteria. Other concerns to students were the need for students' rights to individuality, trust (not based on status), and improved communications between teachers and students. Students felt that equity between students and teachers could be enhanced by fairer treatment to students of all ages, balanced workloads (both in class and between different classes), and attention to diversity. Students' responses to anger included feelings of unworthiness which resulted in the reduction of effort in school work, or "acting out" in class.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

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SOURCES OF STUDENT ANGER

IN SCHOOLS

CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Background/Rationale

The purpose of the research was to identify sources of anger for students in schools, and to examine student responses to that anger in the hope of understanding non-conforming behaviour and teacher/student relations. In order to identify these sources and responses accurately, students were given an opportunity to express their concerns in focus groups. Focus groups were chosen as the methodology for this research because students may be afraid to discuss their concerns on a one to one basis with an older adult and answers on questionnaires do not always reflect the emotion that can be observed in discussion type settings.

The focus groups were comprised of high school students. In order to most accurately identify sources of student anger and to determine how students respond to that anger, members of each group were asked "What, if anything, about school frustrates or concerns you?", "What in school makes you angry?" and "How do you respond to this?". There were also subsidiary questions in order to maintain flow or further clarify statements made by students.

As people attempt to respond to students' violent expression of anger, be it in the form of organized walkouts (McBride, 1994), or individual students bearing arms (Two School Staffers, 1994), - schools are examining the manner in which anger is

being created. School responses to violence are mandated in the form of written policies which outline organizational procedures for creating violence free schools (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1994). In this study, an attempt is made to examine the causes of student anger, student responses to anger, and less directly, the issue of school violence itself.

Anger "can vary on a variety of dimensions and domains" (Cummings, Cummings, & El-Sheikh, 1989). Anger is "a complicated emotion, and many times it's difficult to know when you are really feeling it (Laiken & Schneider, 1980, p. 15). It can develop when an individual feels that an injustice has been done. "While anxiety is the anticipation of being hurt, anger is the recollection of experiencing hurt" (Viscott, 1992, p. 187). Anger can take many forms and may range from:

> being annoyed, irritated, displeased, critical, teed off, resentful, indignant, harassed, exasperated, vexed or embittered to feeling animosity, enmity, rage, wrath, hate, fury or vengeance to being homicidal (Viscott, 1992, p. 187).

Thus, when an individual is asked "what makes you angry?", that individual may describe an incident in which any of the above forms exist.

In order to deal with student anger, teachers need to be able to determine the factors which cause it, and to recognize how students react as a result of it. In some cases, there may be an obvious source and resolution for anger. However, when the root of the problem is not obvious, the resolution can be even less apparent and resultant student nonconformity may be misinterpreted, mishandled or ignored. Schools can be stressful places and school personnel and their practices may

contribute to the development of anger and misdirected expression of that anger.

School and Student Stress

School can be a major source of stress for children (Brantlinger, 1993). Many chose to express their frustration in detrimental forms such as using drugs, dropping out, failing, or developing a low self-esteem. Student feelings toward school was one of six major variables correlated with drug use among youths (Oetting & Beauvais, 1988). Anger and chronic hostility increases the risk of school failure and is "the most common context of negative states of adolescents" (Klingman & Zeidner, 1993, p. 340). There is evidence that school conditions "affect students' attitudes toward school and dropout rates" (Brantlinger, 1993 p. 1). By examining student nonconformity and reaction to school processes, perhaps it would be possible to reduce the number of anger producing stimuli to which children are exposed.

Significance of This Study

The problems of childhood are "seen as little matters of no real consequence" (Duncan, 1983, p. 2) but children do have problems and need help in addressing them. Effective communication is critical in helping children cope with emotion:

> Children, just like adults, need someone who will listen empathetically and will respect their problem-solving ability (Duncan, 1983, p. 11).

To establish effective communication channels, teachers need skills in "identifying situations that elicit emotional reactions ... because it allows us to gain access to that which is significant and meaningful to the adolescents themselves" (Klingman & Zeidner, 1993, p. 341). Once the situation is identified, "one of the most

important things teachers can do is to help children understand what feelings are, how emotions originate and what their consequence might be" (Curtis, 1989, p. 100). In order to teach children how to understand feelings, teachers must understand what goes on in the minds of students.

There is also a need to investigate school organization and examine how students are influenced by this structure. "Clearly, our knowledge of students' interpretations of their school experiences is incomplete and merits further study" (Brantlinger, 1993, p. 2). Schools may have a dual responsibility. They are being asked to help children deal with their emotions but they are also beginning to examine their own role in contributing to student anger. This thesis represents a small step toward developing awareness of student emotional responses to school processes and organization.

Limitations

This study may be limited by participants' understanding of anger and other emotions because not all students are able to identify emotions and their causes. "Adolescents' emotional development can be chaotic" (Gruber & Chambers, 1987, p. 661) and "The same anger stimulus can have different effects on different children" (Cummings & Cummings, 1988, p. 298). The majority of respondents were just concluding grade nine. They may have been less able to provide more in depth information related to high school organizations than older students.

It is difficult to assess truth or exaggeration in student answers. Specific concerns were repeated several times during the interviews. The intensity of each

occurrence may or may not represent the entire truth but repetition of themes supports the prevalence of each concern.

The study may also be limited in that it does not treat anger as a goal directed behaviour. The anger of some individual's may be expressed because of the rewards which accrue to the person who expresses it. For example, the reward of instant recognition may exist for the interviewee when the moderator acknowledges that individuals thoughts.

During the interviews, students discussed anger on a cognitive level. They did not display emotional anger as it was said to exist originally at the time the situations occurred. These forms of expression are both real. However, people do not always value emotional outbursts but we do value cognitive, rational, controlled dialogue about anger. This study did not deal with emotional anger. It dealt with anger at the cognitive level. Students used the terms "frustrated", "angered", and "annoyed" during their discussions. There were no incidents of swearing and no violent outbursts. No one mentioned responding to anger producing situations with violence. Students did not report wanting to damage school property or physically harm any teachers but they were critical of teacher behaviour. All participants were experiencing anger in the forms of frustration, irritation, displeasure or annoyance. They were not expressing anger in the forms of rage, or vengeance. The body language exhibited by students supported the idea that although students were angry, they did not want to deal with that anger in an aggressive manner. Instead, students gave up or became somewhat docile.

Definition of Terms

Anger: "an affective response to stress during which a person experiences levels of physiological arousal" (Klingman & Zeidner, 1993, p. 339). Anger can take many forms and may range from:

> being annoyed, irritated, displeased, critical, teed off, resentful, indignant, harassed, exasperated, vexed or embittered to feeling animosity, enmity, rage, wrath, hate, fury or vengeance to being homicidal (Viscott, 1992, p. 187).

Organization: "Organizations are collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized social structures" (Scott, 1992, p. 22). This study focuses on school organizations.

Elicit: draw or bring out a response (Hawkins, 1991).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What Is Anger?

Our definition of anger includes emotions ranging from annoyance to homicide. Student responses to anger may encompass the spectrum of anger levels. Individuals may or may not describe situations in which they are feeling annoyed. Since the definition of anger is so diverse, some students may not perceive irritability as a level of anger and thus may not report being angry. However, others may feel that violence is beyond anger and may not report on situations in which he or she responded violently. In order to understand the levels of anger felt by students, the interpretation of the word "anger" was left up to the respondent.

Studies of Student Anger

Studies of student anger have focused on several disparate issues (Anderson & Fulton, 1987; Cummings & Cummings, 1988; Gwinn Coffman & Roark, 1992). Anger has been related to family structure, socio-economic status, race, and learning ability. These sources of anger have all been reported to relate directly to level of student achievement. Physiological conditions, food additives, disease or injury can also cause a person to become enraged, cranky or irritable and genetic defects or infantile convulsions are often considered to be an antecedent to rage and angry outbursts in children who have had difficulty with rage since early childhood (Tavris, 1989). Children who have experienced severe head trauma can experience problems with anger (Tavris, 1989). While these factors may predispose an individual to angry

feelings, they cannot be responsible for the angry feelings of all persons.

Family Structure and Student Achievement

Gwinn Coffman and Roark (1992) studied the relationship between family structure and student achievement. They determined that one of the most stressful events for a child is a marital separation and that attitude toward school is greatly affected by this stress. Cummings and Cummings (1988) stated that "childhood problems are frequent outcomes of divorce and separation" (p. 296). The manner in which a student who has been exposed to anger in the home responds to anger inducing situations in school may differ from a response by children who have not been exposed to anger producing situations at home. Different anger stimuli elicit different responses (Cummings & Cummings, 1988).

A child's own feelings of anger and frustration may be increased simply by being around parents who are frustrated with having to work more than one job or who have added stress because of the birth of another child (Anderson & Fulton, 1987). These occurrences are often noted as the cause of a drop in productivity and academic achievement at school.

Socio - Economic Status and Race

Pink has suggested that the best predictors of academic achievement in school are social class and measured intelligence (Pink, 1985, p. 12):

Children with backgrounds favouring success in our society have a much better statistical chance of high academic and social achievement than do those with unfavourable backgrounds (p. 18).

In this, there is no reference to the actions of school personnel as a cause or source of student anger.

In Brantlinger's (1988) study of the link between social class and student attitudes towards school, "low-income adolescents reported a greater number of disciplinary infractions" (p. 3). When students were asked to determine the cause of misbehaviour in school, 57 per cent of low income students reported that hostility and anger (in the form of verbal and physical conflict in school) caused their misbehaviour. Only 8 per cent of high-income students reported similar causes. This indicates that social class is considered as the source of student misbehaviour and anger.

Racial discrimination was a major contributor to anger-producing situations in a study of self-reported anger in black high school students (Jones, Peacock & Christopher, 1992). These authors, like Pink and Brantlinger, did not consider the actions of school personnel as contributors to students anger. These researchers placed emphasis on the need to teach problem management skills, stress management techniques and effective recognition of anger to teens.

Learning Disabilities

Many learning disabled students perform at standards lower than fellow classmates in both social and academic ability. The anger of these low achievers is seen as a "cover up" of the problems associated with the low achievement. For example, students wear different "personality masks" in order to hide the feeling of being stupid (Smith, 1988). Some students do so by talking in an overly confident manner (the mask of super competence), by becoming the class joker (the mask of

the clown), or by pretending to be sick (the mask of being frail). They may also show anger and bitterness toward authority. The school setting in which learning disabled students are placed can strongly influence the students' behaviour.

Poor teaching, parenting or laziness on the part of the student are other factors which researchers believe may contribute to, but are not the sole cause for poor achievement by learning disabled students (Smith, 1988). However, causes of student anger, misbehaviour, and poor achievement at the school level are not examined. This study adds to the knowledge that outside sources influence the success or failure of students within the academic system by examining sources of student anger which exist within the school system itself.

Educational Responses to Anger

Many recommendations exist as to how to deal with children who are not conforming to the academic and/or behavioral standards that are deemed appropriate in the school community (Martin, 1991; Jones, 1987). Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.), Systematic Training for Effective Teachers (S.T.E.T.), William Glasser's Control Theories, and Barbara Colorosso's methods focus on the need to trust in, empower, positively influence, and believe in students thus reducing potential outbursts in the classroom. Teachers and administrators may use behaviour modification techniques such as operant conditioning, social learning theory, or cognitive learning theory to control expressed anger. These methods focus on reducing the disruption caused by anger, not on the sources of the anger itself. However, they recognize the connection between the need for control and the need to

direct student anger and frustration related to that control.

Classroom Management

Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.) focuses on the teacher-student relationship. Emphasis is placed on diffusing the potential for an explosive situation. Students at the high school level can no longer be controlled by "teacher's efforts to engineer their (student) behaviour with rewards and punishments" (Gordon, 1974, p. 197). Students respond to teacher "power" by rebelling, resisting or defying authority figures. In implementing T.E.T strategies, teachers try to implement a "win-win" situation when conflict occurs. Teachers work directly with students from the beginning to the end of a conflict. Both parties:

> put their heads together in a search for possible solutions that might work, then decide which solution would be best for the purpose of meeting both the needs of the teacher and those of the student (Gordon, 1974, p. 221)

When teachers know student needs and students know teacher needs "it is not difficult to find a solution" (Gordon, 1974, p. 222). Users of T.E.T. strategies attempt to examine both teacher and student behaviours.

Another student discipline method is S.T.E.T. or Systematic Training for Effective Teachers. S.T.E.T. is based on Adler's concepts of human behaviour pertaining to human relationship skills and mutual encouragement. Adler believes that behaviour is purposive in reaching a goal. Understanding the behaviour of both teacher and student is key to implementing this method and reducing student misbehaviour. Teachers attempt to alter student misbehaviour when they:

1. Establish a climate of equality and mutual respect.

2. Encourage students

3. Offer students a role in decision making.

4. Develop students' self-discipline by offering them consistent, logical, fully understood guidelines for behaviour (Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer, 1980, p. 6).

William Glasser (1986) reported that less than half of students in school are willing to make an effort to learn in school and thus conform to existing rules. Glasser assumes that stimulus/response methods of controlling misbehaviour do not work. His control theory is based on the "belief that all of our behaviour is our constant attempt to satisfy one or more of the basic needs that are written into our genetic structure" (Glasser, 1986, p. 17). Students do not "react or respond" to any given situation but instead "act". Glasser theorized that:

> only when we learn more than most of us know now about what does satisfy students will we stop exhausting ourselves trying to make them apply themselves when they are frustrated (Glasser, 1986, p. 19).

Glasser determined that discipline problems developed when students were not getting needs met. For example:

> It is this lack of power in the academic classes that is so frustrating to students because it comes just at the time when students are beginning to experience the increased need for power which is part of the normal biology of adolescence (Glasser, 1986, p. 63).

Control theory is based on the assumption that teachers need to structure classes so that students, when they work, can "gain an immediate sense of power" (Glasser, 1986, p. 68). This will vastly reduce discipline problems and the number of angry students will be kept to a minimum.

Another well-known style of dealing with student non-conformity is based on the concepts of Barbara Colorosso. Differentiating between punishment and discipline is an essential component for Barbara Colorosso's concepts in dealing with behaviour problems. She recommended that teachers empower and positively influence students instead of trying to control them by following these guidelines:

1. Show kids what they have done.

2. Give them ownership of the problem.

3. Give them options for solving the problem.

4. Leave their dignity intact (Colorosso, 1994, p. 29).

A teacher should "say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you said you would do" (Colorosso, 1983, p. 5). Colorosso suggests that teachers let students know that it is okay to be angry and provide them with assertive positive ways to deal with that anger.

This concept is based on the principle that students need to learn that they are responsible for their behaviour and that responsibility and good decision making skills are prerequisites to self-discipline. Colorosso recommends using contracts, which are drawn up by the teacher and student. The teacher's role is to ensure that the contract is carried out should behaviour problems occur.

The above concepts all focus on specific aspects of human behaviour and/or human interaction. Emphasis is placed on changing inappropriate behaviours through altering the relationship between individuals or attempting to alter the belief system of students.

Behaviour Modification Techniques

Behaviour modification techniques include operant conditioning, social learning and cognitive learning styles. Operant conditioning is based on operant acts such as walking, talking, hitting, hugging or reading (Kaplan, 1991). It is controlled by the central nervous system and voluntary muscles. These behaviours produce an effect on their environment. For example:

> When you talk to someone, the effect of your talking is that the person listens
> to you. Having a person listen to you while you talk will probably strengthen, or
> at least maintain, your talking behaviour. Having someone hit you back after
> being hit will probably weaken your behaviour (Kaplan, 1991, p. 3).

Operant conditioning is behaviour modification through the use of positive and negative reinforcers (Martin, 1991). Positive reinforces are added benefits, rewards for compliance. Negative reinforcers take something of value away from the non-conforming individual. Conversation with an individual in an authoritative position may be considered a positive or negative reinforcer. However, this technique does not stress questioning the nonconforming individuals in order to pin point the source of nonconformity. "The skill of behaviour modification lies in discovering what consequences produce what effects for which pupils" (Martin, 1991, p. 14). Emphasis

is placed on resultant changes in behaviour rather than cause.

Social learning theories use role modelling in managing for, and teaching appropriate behaviour (Martin, 1991). First, the student observes another in a role which illustrates a certain behaviour. Then the student becomes the performer. Appropriate behaviours are learned through observation and participation. This gives students an opportunity to "receive cognitive information about specific modeled behaviours and it motivates the observer to attempt to perform the modeled behaviours" (Martin, 1991, p. 58).

Collins and Kuczaj (1991) indicated that "role taking and other social-cognitive processes may also be affected by the emotions aroused in interactions with others (p. 383). Emotional states at the time of role playing influence the cognitive processes occurring as a result of the role playing but little emphasis is placed on questioning the underlying reasons behind nonconformity.

Cognitive learning, "begins with the notion that learners often construct meaning and create their own reality" (Martin, 1991). This theory links environmental stimuli with previously developed cognitions. Self-reinforcement and self-instruction strategies in this category lead students to examine their behaviours and help them cope with stressors productively. Avenues to examine the underlying origins of emotion are available to the student, however, emphasis tends to be placed on changing student behaviour instead of examining the system.

Other Responses To Expressed Anger

Many people fear anger when it is expressed in unhealthy ways. Unfortunately,

this fear often results in coping with another's anger in an equally unhealthy manner (Tavris, 1989, p. 130). This may include responding in an aggressive manner or simply walking away and ignoring the problem. When children express anger in school situations and teachers or administrators deal with that anger in these ways, that person may be inadvertently showing a lack of respect for the student's feelings. When:

> factors intervene through which the child experiences the key figure as rejecting, not meeting his or her needs, unavailable, ignoring or devaluing, then the child's self concept will suffer and he or she will experience the lack of gratification as a reflection of himself or herself and his or her lack of worth (Schick, 1988, p. 12).

In order to determine whether students are interpreting teachers' actions as rejecting, students must be able to express concerns in a safe and non-rejecting environment.

Why Study Anger?

School is a major source of stress and feelings of alienation and that unresolved stress leads to anger. Student perceptions of school are directly related to academic achievement and the development of social skills. Unresolved anger often leads to depression and other emotional and intellectual difficulties. If teachers are unable to understand or resolve student anger, many childhood difficulties cannot be dealt with and may develop into serious problems in adulthood.

School is stressful and that stress can lead to anger. The "neutrality of school factors in the genesis of psychological problems has been challenged by the growing

documentation that school is a source of stress for certain kinds of students"

(Brantlinger, 1993, p. 1). Student violence may be the consequence of alienation from

school and the purposes of school:

> aggression in students can be understood by examining the
>
> underlying violence in official school beliefs, practices, and organization.
>
> (Brantlinger, 1993, p. 1).

Raviv et al. (1990) concurred with Brantlinger: "climate, as measured by students'

perceptions of their classroom environment, is a useful construct in predicting

achievement and school satisfaction" (Raviv, Raviv & Reisel, 1990, p. 142).

School organization "reflects not only the attitude of the staff to the formal learning

process, but also their approach to the children's social and emotional development"

(Curtis, 1989, p. 102).

Anderson and Fulton (1987) supported the need to promote student discussion

on frustrating issues and thus to help students identify and face tensions arising from

these frustrations. For example, they noted that the elementary teacher may

unknowingly place stress on her students with homework assignments because school

work and family expectations may be in conflict. Duncan (1993), stressed the need

for understanding and anticipating major stressful events. Teachers may become

aware of some of the stressful events that contribute to student aggression and

hostility.

Students who develop some level of angry feelings towards school may perform

at low standards and fail to obtain adequate social skills. An angry student may be

less motivated to succeed in school. "Students' perceptions are important because they are likely to be related to their overall motivation" (Vaughn et al., 1993, p. 108). Vaughn noted that "if success and failure to learn is partially attributed to the learner, then students' perceptions of teaching practices need to be discerned" (Vaughn et al. 1993, p. 108). Anger that is not expressed "alters the way you perceive reality" (Viscott, 1992, p. 188).

Unresolved anger can lead to depression and emotional difficulties later in life (Schick, 1988,Clay et al, 1993). Depression may stem from a low self esteem that is the result of "longstanding and unresolved conflicts built around hostilities which generally tend to be turned inwards" (Schick, 1988, p. 1). Providing a safe forum in which students can express their frustrations and anger and thus resolve conflict may be a way to prevent depression in many adolescents.

Teachers may need to teach adolescents proper anger management techniques (Newman, 1993, p. 18). One aspect of this would be to teach students that it is okay to discuss anger openly. Teachers need to "discuss anger openly, both individually and in class sessions. What is it? What makes us angry? How do we deal with it?" (Newman, 1993, p. 18).

Sources of student frustration can be and often are derived outside the school system, however, the actions of persons within the school system can trigger angry feelings in students. In order for students to be successful in school, it is necessary to determine what those sources are and to help students deal with them. This study is an attempt to examine what underlies student anger and frustration.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research was to identify sources of anger for students in schools and examine the emotional responses to this anger. The basic methodology for this study was the use of focus groups.

Focus Groups

When the goals of the research are general, call for qualitative data, require data that is not in the respondent's top-of-mind, and when there is minimal prior knowledge about a particular problem and the range of responses likely to emerge, the focus group may be the appropriate research design (Byers & Wilcox, 1991, p. 64). Focus groups were appropriate for this research because students may have needed to listen to the statements of fellow students to remember occurrences which occurred in the past. They may have been unaware of the anger which stemmed from a given circumstance and hearing the comments of others to understand their own anger.

Focus groups provided an avenue by which students could express their concerns among peers and thus remove some of the potential inhibitions associated with having to deal with an older person on a one to one basis. Attitudes, perceptions and opinions can be enriched with group interaction (Carey & Smith, 1992). This methodology also provides opportunity for observing body language.

Carey and Smith (1992) suggested that focus groups "ensure validity of the measures and interpretability of the research findings" (p. 109). They are "effective in

determining why people think or feel the way they do, providing insight into beliefs and behaviours" (Carey & Smith, 1992, p. 111)

Participant Selection and Group Structure

The focus groups in this study were selected and structured to adhere to the Byers and Wilcox (1991) guidelines that suggested that the most productive size of a group was eight, and that group participants should not be acquaintances (p. 70).

Five focus groups were interviewed. Each group was scheduled to include eight students but because of conflicts and no-shows, groups size varied from four to six students.

Students were selected within an age group that had the ability to express emotion; that is between 14 and 16 years of age.

Younger children (approximately three to five years old) understand feelings as an external phenomena, precipitated by a single event, such as getting a present. Latency-aged children (approximately six to ten years old) view feelings as internal processes communicated by external signs, such as facial expression. By adolescence, more internal and mentalistic explanations are used. Adolescents acknowledge the importance of situations in precipitating or maintaining an affective state, though they recognize that there is an internal process under a person's control that will help them to evaluate situations and direct affective expressions. (Nannis, 1988, p. 33).

Student names were randomly selected from grade eight, nine, and ten class lists and placed in one of five interview groups. This supported Nannis's

recommendations.

Interview Format

Participants were briefed as to the purpose of the research and reminded that everything discussed would remain confidential. The researcher acted as the moderator. Students were asked to refrain from using teacher and fellow student names during the focus group discussion. Because interviews took place at the schools, it was difficult to arrange groups so that participants were not aquainted. As a result, students often backed up the comments and descriptions of instances made by others.

Because this was the first and/or only time each group had been together, the interviews began with small talk (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96). Once a working level of comfort was attained, the moderator posed the questions."What, if anything, about school frustrates or concerns you?", "What, in school, makes you angry?", and "How do you respond to these frustrations or concerns?".

Initially, each student was given up to ten minutes to express his or her concerns without interruption from other group members. This was followed by a moderator led group discussion. The moderator imposed questions which helped clarify personal statements or helped determine whether or not participants were in agreement on specific issues, as suggested by Byers and Wilcox (1991):

"The moderator must ensure that the discussion does not stray too far from the point of interest, yet must not rule out things that may seem unrelated" (p. 65). During the interview, the moderator noted behaviours such as body language, tone of

voice, and level of enthusiasm or aggression expressed by the participant.

Interviews were conducted in a location that was comfortable, private and accessible to the participants. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of school staff and student participants (Appendix). During the interview, the participants were seated in a circle because it was important that "all the participants see one another" (Corey & Corey, 1992).

Interviews were initially scheduled to be completed within a two and one-half hour time frame as Corey and Corey (1992) noted the importance of setting a time frame to "allow for some intensive work yet not so long that fatigue sets in" (p. 86). If both the participants and the moderator felt that more time was required, the time frame was extended. "It is necessary that the openness of the question be preserved and not cut off too early by rapidly formed opinions and conclusions" (Carson, 1986, p. 79). The interviews were concluded when the moderator felt that the subject had been exhausted.

<u>Grade and Gender of Participants</u>

Six focus groups of three to six students from a total of four different schools were interviewed. The composition and results of each group is described below.

Students were from 14 to 16 years of age. Both male and female students were interviewed in mixed groups (Table 1).

Table 1: Participants by Grade and Gender

Grade	Gender		
	M	F	Total
8	4	0	4
9	8	9	17
10	4	0	4
Total	16	9	25

Interview Locations

The first four interviews were conducted in the schools. Each school provided a small interview room where the group was required to sit in a circle close to each other. This environment provided safety in that no one had to speak loudly and no one else could be present in the room while interviews were taking place. Interviews five and six were conducted in a parent's home. The parents were not present at the time of the interview. The rooms were larger and students were spread out more than in the first interviews.

Pseudonyms

Prior to commencing each interview, the moderator asked each student to write on a blank paper, a name other than that of anyone in the group to be used as a pseudonym. This showed students that anonymity would be maintained during the taping of the interview. One student remarked that this really helped him feel at ease. He was nervous that his real name might be heard on the tape. "Mike" admitted that he would have said very little had this step to maintain confidentiality not been taken. The following table shows the pseudonyms selected by each student by group:

Table 2: Group Composition

Group	Participant Names	
	Males	Females
1	Al, Eric	Emily, Laura, Stephanie, Tai
2	Tim	Kim, Stacey
3	Mike, Mel	Kelly, Jasmine
4	Bob, Paul, Joe	Jess
5	Pedro, Dominique, Phillipe, Leon	
6	Dexter, Sam, Harry, Herman	

Interview Analysis

The interviews were tape recorded and transcripts of pertinent portions of the group discussion were transcribed. The data were summarized and analyzed using the methods suggested in Byers and Wilcox (1991). First, a coding system was assigned to each transcript. Patterns or themes were developed representative of both the group and individual ideas. The occurrences of each theme were compiled.

When analyzing the data, the interpreter adhered to the following five recommendations made by Byers and Wilcox (1991):

1. Consider the words - both the actual and implied meaning

2. Consider the context by identifying the triggering stimulus and examining the flow of conversation

3. Consider the internal consistency - examine whether or not participants change their views throughout the interview

4. Consider the specificity of responses - give more weight to responses that

are specific and concrete rather than those that are vague and ambiguous

5. Find the big ideas - accumulate the evidence (words and body language of

participants) (p. 75).

Focus group methodology allowed for a high level of participant interaction.

This assisted the moderator in determining the extent to which opinions regarding

given statements pertained to the group as a whole. When analyzing this data, the

moderator assessed the extent to which individual opinions and ideas varied.

The random selection of students allowed for input from students of various

academic levels. As students were selected from four schools, the information

obtained can be attributed to school organization as a whole and not just to an

individual high school.

Implications of Focus Group Methodology

Focus groups were selected as the interview method in order to gain as much

information as possible about students' concerns and perceptions regarding their

emotional response to school organization, The use of focus groups provided access

to a vast amount of information within a short time frame. If one on one interviews

had taken place, the responses would have varied considerably. Hendershott and

Wright (1993) stated that the "hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of group

interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without such

interaction (p. 154).

Participants interacted primarily with each other. The moderator kept students

on topic. Students spoke in turns and added to previous statements without having to

be cued. Students were initially reluctant to discuss the topic with the moderator. The difficulty seemed to be in deciding who was going to speak first and not in what was to be said. When the moderator asked someone to start, students immediately became very interested in providing input. This ease in "breaking the ice" may be attributed to the small talk that took place prior to the actual commencement of each interview. Had the moderator simply began the discussion with the interview question, students may have been less at ease and thus less reluctant to provide "instant input".

Although Byers and Wilcox (1991) suggested that the best size for groups was eight, the actual group sizes proved best for the locations. Group size varied from three to six. It is recommended that group size should remain at four through six. However, because students can back out at any time, there is no guarantee of group size remaining as planned.

Interview rooms would have been crowded and uncomfortable had more students actually shown up for the interviews. The size also allowed for input from all students. No one sat back and let all of the others speak. Each student listened intently and often provided support for a statement made by another student. Had the group size been larger, students may have been reluctant to provide input as they felt necessary. Also, the amount of themes covered in each interview may have been reduced. Time restrictions and attention span may have been factors in this case.

The initial nervousness associated with having the conversation tape recorded quickly diminished when each student selected a pseudonym and the interviewer addressed each student by this name only. Once students realized that their real

names would not be used on tape, they became much more comfortable in speaking freely while being taped. Prior to turning on the recorder, the moderator asked students to refrain from using the names of teachers, principals or other students so as not to create tension during the interview. All students respected that wish.

The fact that students were from more than one school resulted in a broad range of information. Collaborative evidence for most themes resulted when the discussions were held at more than one school, but it became evident that some problems existed at one school and not at others.

The moderator developed a comfortable working relationship with all students. This may not have been possible in larger groups. Because several students in each group either supported or disagreed with the statement of an individual, it became easier to determine how many students had difficulty with certain situations. This trend and the extent to which a given situation angered students may not have been as clear had fewer students been interviewed in each group.

Most interviews lasted for 1 to 1.5 hours. This time seemed sufficient for the given group sizes. When the group of six students were interviewed, the interview took 2 hours. This time was sufficient. Toward the end of that interview, one participant became distracted and began to lose interest. The other students could have kept talking. However, the information provided became repetitive but simply told in a different manner.

Random selection of group members resulted in participants from all different academic levels. Some had been labelled as behaviour problems while others stated

that they were exemplary students in most respects. This distribution may have been completely different given the process of random selection. On a positive note, each student respected and valued the opinions expressed by students of all levels. This may have been the first chance that academically challenged students interacted with academically gifted students in a professional format.

In the past, concerns were often expressed about the validity and reliability of data obtained from focus group discussions (Hendershott & Wright, 1993). Many renowned researchers now consider focus groups "a highly appropriate means of obtaining an in-depth look at motivations behind human behaviour" (Hendershott & Wright, 1993, p. 154).

Validity refers to the fit between research questions, data collection procedures and analysis techniques. In this study the research questions provoked excellent discussions among all participants. The questions asked were understood by the participants and were not overly technical or too advanced for the subjects. The data generated from this study pertained directly to the research questions.

Research reliability is present if two different researchers were to independently study the same subjects in the same environment and arrive at the same conclusions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

> In qualitative studies, researchers are concerned with the accuracy and
> comprehensiveness of their data. They tend to view reliability as a fit between
> what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study,
> rather than the literal consistency across different observations. (Bogdan &

Biklen, 1992)

In this study, a vast and diverse amount of data was collected. Because students from different schools often reported on similar areas of concern, the reliability of the study is high. Those students interviewed from different schools neither knew each other or had the opportunity to meet each other. Students from all four of the schools which participated reported being angry at the manner in which teachers communicated with students. Although there may have been some level of exaggeration in the information told by students, themes resurfaced several times throughout all six interviews. The results of observations made by one researcher over time were similar. Interestingly, students often added recommendations for correcting problems during their discussion. These recommendations were also similar from interview to interview.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several issues are discussed in this chapter. Students indicated several

sources of anger and provided examples to support their concerns. Participants also

indicated how they respond to anger that is created in schools. Without being asked,

students provided examples of situations that are dealt with in a positive manner.

Throughout the interviews, students showed support for the actions of students,

teachers and administrators. For example, one student stated that he improved when

teachers pointed out his mistakes (Al). Another felt that being placed in a classroom

where the academic levels of students was very diverse helped her choose between

attending advanced or general courses in grade ten. She felt that this prevented

failing in grade nine had she chosen the wrong avenue (Stephanie).

A third felt welcome to high school because the school "does a good job

welcoming students to grade nine" (Mel). Another liked being able to select students

to work with in groups (Jasmine). Most students liked teachers who provided

leadership but did not dictate to students. According to students, several teachers

provide this style of leadership in their classrooms.

Individual Group Descriptions

<u>Group One</u>

Group one was comprised of six grade nine students, four girls and two boys.

Two students described themselves as average achievers. The other four described

themselves as being academically inclined and very interested in succeeding in

school. The students were in a destreamed grade nine class and five of the six were planning on taking advanced level courses in grade ten. All were enthusiastic about being given the opportunity to talk about school in a safe and confidential environment. The interview lasted approximately two hours. Many themes emerged from this discussion. Students expressed concern in the following areas: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, Consistency, Stereotyping, Destreaming, and Sexism in Athletics.

Al was the first student asked to provide input. After taking a moment to think about his response, he adamantly began by saying "Teachers can be jerks". It was safe for him to release his anger at teachers in this controlled environment. Other students respected this and let Al continue. No one reacted in a surprised manner to Al's comments. He needed more time to think about the topic of discussion. The moderator asked the second student in the group to proceed. Laura added several points and other students expressed agreement or disagreement with Laura's input. This was done so in a very professional manner in which all students respected the time allowed for individual speakers even though they may have disagreed with an opinion.

As the interview proceed, students began to add to an opinion expressed by those individuals who had the floor. The moderator had to ensure all students had the opportunity to speak as a particular student wished to speak most of the time.

After all six students were given an opportunity to comment, the group began a discussion in which all students spoke to each other about their concerns. Students

continued to respect the rights of others to speak without interruption. After approximately one hour had passed, the moderator did not need to lead the discussion. Students conferred with each other as if the moderator was not in the room. Students felt very comfortable talking to each other.

When topics became repetitive, the moderator ended the interview and reminded students of the need to maintain confidentiality. All students agreed and proceeded to their next class.

Group Two

Group two was comprised of two female grade nine and one male grade 10 students. These students were not high achievers. One female was particularly quiet and didn't seem to trust the interviewer. She described herself as a difficult student who had difficulty paying attention in class. The other two carried most of the conversation. The quiet student provided input but never expressed much emotion. The two female students knew each extremely well and the other was acquainted with the two prior to the interview. These students reported being angry in the areas of: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, Consistency, Stereotyping, Destreaming, and Sexism in Athletics.

Kim began the discussion. She initially commented on the sexism evident in athletics. Both Tim and Stacey were interested in what Kim had to say and respected her right to talk without interruption.

The flow of the conversation was interrupted with long pauses many times throughout the interview. Students did not always offer input into what had just been

discussed and moved on to different concerns without elaborating on prior topics. The moderator had to work to maintain the conversation. After fifty minutes, the students felt that the topic of discussion had been exhausted.

Group Three

All four students (two females and two males) in group three described themselves as academically inclined. Three of the students were in grade nine, the other, a male, was is grade ten. The grade nine students had future plans regarding university and knew the career route they intended to pursue. High achievement in school was of utmost importance to these students. Although none of the students were good friends, each was acquainted with others. Angry feelings were reported that pertained to: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, Consistency, Stereotyping, Destreaming, and Sexism in Athletics.

Mel expressed an interest in starting the interview. The moderator let him proceed. The flow of the discussion was maintained by the students with little input from the moderator. The group decided who would proceed after Mel. After each student had a turn to discuss their concerns, the group began talking and interacting. Students offered either agreement or disagreement with the opinions offered by individuals. The moderator had to ask students to try to discuss responses to anger. They had difficulty responding to this question. After an hour, the students felt that they had talked about all of their concerns. Interestingly, when a student provided an example of a situation which angered them, they often counteracted with a situation they liked about school.

Group Four

Three of the four students in group four were male. Two male students were in grade ten. The other two stated that they had survived most of grade nine and were looking forward to moving out of the grade they termed as "the bottom of the barrel". Although each student in this group communicated in an extremely intellectual manner, only one grade ten student felt that he was an above average student. The others felt that they were meant to succeed at the general level and would only fail if they tried more difficult courses. These students only knew each other by name prior to the interview. Concerns were expressed in the areas of: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, Consistency, Stereotyping, and Destreaming.

The moderator selected Bob to begin. All students said they were nervous about speaking and needed to be sure that the other students in the group respected the need for maintaining confidentiality after the interview. After each student spoke their turn, the group proceeded to interact cautiously and express opinions about topics that had been brought forth in the initial stage of the interview. Paul was the only student not reluctant to talk openly. He spoke with confidence. He led the group for the remainder of the discussion. Others relaxed only when the interview ended.

Group Five

Group five was comprised of four grade nine male students. All were friends prior to the interview. Two students felt that they would do well in school. The others described themselves as slow and uninterested in academic achievement.

It was initially difficult to get the students on task. The moderator had to

interject several times to prevent constant interruptions from students who did not have the floor. These students laughed and joked at what others had to say but expressed their individual concerns in a serious manner. After approximately fifty minutes, the students had little to say and lost interest in the discussion. The interview concluded at this time. Students reported anger from the following sources: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, Consistency, and Stereotyping.

Group Six

The last group was comprised of four fourteen year old male students who eagerly expressed their ideas. All students in the group described themselves as successful students. Students in group six were completing grade eight. Although they attended school at the intermediate level their concerns corresponded with the high school students interviewed in grops one through five. These students also knew each other prior to the interviews. Although they had shared classes, some students disagreed with the others when they described the seriousness of certain anger inducing situations. These students expressed concern in the areas of: Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, and Consistency.

Dexter spoke first. He commented on the imbalance of workload. Others added to Dexter's comments. Each respected the opinions of others even though they disagreed. These students were excited about having the chance to assist in the research project. All students acted in a very respectful and professional manner.

Most students expressed their opinions in a very knowledgeable manner. They showed great respect for the other students in their groups even though they may

have disagreed with an individual's point of view. All students were a little nervous at the beginning of each interview. As the interviews progressed, students quickly became more relaxed.

Reported Sources of Anger

The transcript from focus groups were analyzed and seven themes emerged pertaining to the questions "What is it about school that frustrates or concerns you?", and "What, in school makes you angry?". Similarities in the causes of student anger formed the configuration of each theme. The number of times certain themes emerged governed the level of importance placed on the theme. Interview statements often applied to more than one major theme. Themes of Teaching Practices, Evaluation Techniques, Discipline, and Consistency, were discussed in all six interviews. Stereotyping was discussed in five out of six interviews. Destreaming and Sexism in Athletics were discussed in three groups.

1. Teaching Practices

Most concerns expressed by students pertained to the manner in which teaching practices were conducted. The most common complaint was that lessons were not always delivered in a fair and consistent manner. Work did not accurately reflect the effort that individuals put into succeeding. The issues were with teacher skill, group work, workload, and communication between students and teachers.

Teacher Skill

Students described skilled teachers as ones who help students, teach by using new and innovative methods, know the subject material, stay on topic, and understand

today's youth (Eric, Bob, Jasmine). Students reported that teachers lacked skill in interacting with students, and did not always adhere to appropriate teacher behaviour. They also noted an apparent lack of teacher knowledge and organization. They suggested that lessons were not always well paced and that some teachers were lacking in creativity. Students were concerned about teachers who did not respect student confidentiality and rights to privacy.

Teacher: Student Interaction

Seven students from four groups expressed concern regarding the inappropriate manner in which teachers interacted with students. These students didn't like it when teachers ignored them. They showed elevated levels of somatic responses (feet stomping, rapid hand movement, shaking heads) as they discussed how they felt. Tai, for example, was frustrated when "teachers give you something and then sit at the back of the class". They also resented not being given enough direction. When the moderator asked students if they felt the teacher was attempting to promote self-directed learning and independence, Al responded "Some times the teacher just doesn't explain this enough and you get frustrated". This was not alleviated by asking other students for help. Emily, for example, felt that seeking help from others after teachers don't get involved "doesn't do anything".

Eight students felt that teachers had ignored them because of their ability level, some because they were too "smart" and others because they were poor students:

> Good people got ignored and I didn't get my work checked but if you got
> something wrong, she never bothered to help you because she didn't know

you got a wrong answer (Tai).

Other students felt that just the opposite was true; that poor students got ignored while good students received the attention:

> I think people who aren't smart get ripped off. I have to go to another teacher
>
> to get help in math because the teacher doesn't help me. He's concentrating
>
> on the smart kids (Stacey).

In both scenarios, students believed that they couldn't get assistance from a teacher who did not get involved with students of a particular academic level. Students were particularly agitated when this happened in math classes because "In math you can't really ask other students what you are doing wrong because they can't really understand how to explain it" (Kim).

Jasmine identified the source of her nervousness on tests as a "lack of caring" on the part of her English teacher. She was told that she had to figure out what she had done wrong on a test after being told that she was "off topic". Because the teacher refused to help her with more than a very general statement, she felt reluctant to write further exams. Some complained that teachers did not make an effort to help even if the student made an effort to ask for it:

> A lot of teachers don't really make an effort to get the work for you even if you
>
> ask. They put it off by saying like ask me at the end of class. You do and they
>
> say ask me tomorrow (Paul).

Teacher Behaviour

Students in all groups had strong opinions of how teachers should behave.

The students in group four, for example, were upset that teachers took a smoke break during class time. When this happened, the teacher assigned work that wasn't pertinent to the lesson. Bob sat on the edge of his chair and his eyes opened wide as he remarked: "The teacher just gives us busy work to do when they leave for a smoke. It usually has nothing to do with what we are working on".

Other inappropriate behaviours included violence. Dominique reported being hit in the back of the head by a teacher. Although this treatment reportedly "did not hurt", Dominique felt that if he had hit a teacher he would be suspended.

Students were angered by the apparent lack of consideration by teachers. Students felt strongly that teachers did not care about them when they behaved in certain ways such as ignoring students, centring out students, not caring about class progress and showing very little interest in the personal lives of students.

Students sensed that teachers "didn't care about all students" (Sam), and ignored individual concerns or dissatisfactions. Others felt that teachers did not respect them when they were accused of doing something that they did not do or when teachers did not ask students for permission to share their work.

Some students simply felt that teachers didn't care although they couldn't support this with specifics. Emily insisted that teachers showed a lack of caring because "teachers don't care when you try to tell them how you feel. They shove you away and say get out of here" (Emily). Al bowed his head as he added "they probably don't care what you feel".

Teachers were also seen as uncaring when they asked shy people to speak in

uncomfortable circumstances. For example, forcing shy people to speak in front of a peer group where students did not know each other. Eric wondered: "Why embarrass yourself in front of others? Shy people feel even more uncomfortable and, after all, image is everything in high school".

Students often reported frustration with the boredom of performing the same assignment many times, or not being challenged enough. Students in group one reported that they had to play name games at the beginning of each semester and expressed anger at having to repeat this exercise "all week". Students expressed a desire to be challenged:

> Some of the classes are too easy. It just gets boring. You just have to sit
> there when you are done your work and the teacher never challenges you
> (Mel).

Jasmine did not like going to classes where the environment seemed "cold and boring". She felt more comfortable in rooms where teachers "put posters and stuff on the wall".

Some students felt teachers ignored them. In one instance, females who wished to use the gym stated that the gym is not available during the time allocated for them. They attempted to discuss their concerns with teachers and perceived the response as one of indifference. "When you ask the teachers they seem to ignore you " (Kim).

Kim felt that the teacher's apparent lack of interest may have been because teachers "have more than one student to worry about".

Students also reacted to being "centred out". The students felt strongly that teachers who centred out individuals did not care about the student's feelings:

Some teachers find out you are good and something and then they always centre you out... its embarrassing when you are always asked. Teachers get really picky about my work and they don't really look at others like that (Stephanie).

A recommendation to reduce the anxiety created when teachers held up student work is evident in Stephanie's statement: I think it would be better if he (the teacher) held up work from a previous class and then like no one would be centred out.

Emily had been centred out for a different reason:

I had this teacher who made me so angry. I'm from out of town and we were doing geography in this city. He kept saying it was ok for me to get things wrong and marking me out. He treated me like the teacher's pet and I hated it.

Although only five students expressed concern with being centred out in class, those that did comment spoke in an commanding manner.

Several students wanted teachers to show more interest in the personal lives of students. Jess noted "teachers think that your life is just school and sports don't matter to some teachers". Joe felt teachers did not support his outside interest in athletics and told him that he should quit playing hockey because he missed school.

<u>Subject Knowledge</u>

In four interviews, students said that it frustrated them that teachers didn't know the subject material, however, most could not provide examples. They just felt that

"teachers really don't know anything" (Sam). Laura maintained that her teacher could not spell. "She could speak French really well but she didn't have the words right!" Student teachers were sometimes the problem:

> I hate student teachers who don't know what they are doing. They really waste time. Its really confusing when the student teacher gives you the wrong answer and then your real teacher has to give you the right answer. (Mike)

Students liked it if teachers admitted they were not perfect. Eric, for example, felt that it was alright if teachers made an occasional error, however it frustrated him that "teachers hardly ever admit they make mistakes".

Organizational Skills

Some students were angered when teachers did not stick to an agenda but students were divided on the importance of following the lesson plan. For example, Tai hated being assigned homework when her teacher talked about "stuff that isn't important" instead of letting the students work on their assignments. However, others liked it when "teachers get side tracked". Al said students "ask questions for jokes because we know they will waste the whole class". Students were also upset if teachers were disorganized: Lots of times the teacher isn't organized and he loses it (assignments) (Kim).

Lesson Pace

Fifteen students stated that the pace at which lessons were taught made them angry. Most were concerned that teachers went too fast:

> Like even if only five kids knew the stuff and 20 didn't, the teacher would still

move on to other stuff. They need to take the time to figure out what is wrong. The teacher continues regardless of what is going on (Kim).

The students in group three felt that the teachers moved at a pace suitable to either the advanced or general level students in a destreamed class and rarely paced a lesson to suit all students. Jasmine felt angry because her grade ten math teacher moved too fast. She attributed this "fast pace" with her own lack of training in a destreamed grade nine class:

This may have something to do with destreaming because in grade nine, the teacher moves slower because of the slower kids but in advanced math, the teacher moves fast and you don't get as much time (Jasmine).

Only four students commented that teachers moved too slow. Mel, for example, complained that he often had to sit doing nothing while waiting for the teacher and rest of the class to catch up to him.

Teacher Creativity

Eleven students' responses related to a lack of creativity in teaching. Students in Group one, for example, voiced their frustration about having to repeat one exercise, journal writing, throughout the entire school term. "Time would be much better spent discussing the chapter in class instead of doing individual writing" (Laura).

Students in group three also agreed that teachers lacked creativity. Jasmine and Kelly felt that teachers needed to develop new and more creative skills. Kelly argued that she would be much more successful in school if teachers would "spice up the lesson". Jasmine felt that teachers "give you old assignments and expect you to

just do it. There is no new stuff". Other students nodded their heads in agreement. Jasmine continued:

> We had a young supply teacher who was really creative and when the regular teacher comes back it gets boring again. When teachers are creative your marks are better and you really want to be there. It's easy to work with a really creative teacher instead of a teacher who just says do this do this and there is no creativity to it.

Kelly felt that creativity was lacking in math classes and that more students would succeed in math if innovative and creative teaching methods were used. "Math is hard but if I have a teacher who makes math interesting it is better. This doesn't happen a lot in math".

Confidentiality and Right to Privacy

Some students were angered by teachers who disregarded the student's right to privacy. Mike, for example, was angry when he confided in a guidance teacher and then discovered that the teacher relayed confidential information to his classroom teacher. His frustration was evident as he recounted this occurrence:

> The guidance teacher went back to my math teacher and this is wrong. I didn't tell the guidance teacher not to talk to my math teacher but she should have asked me before talking to someone else.

Jasmine remarked that teachers transfer information about student behaviour to new teachers. She sensed that this led to stereotyping because the new teacher had a preconceived belief about a particular student. Others agreed: "They (students)

know teachers talk in the staff room and stuff and what you say isn't confidential"
(Bob).

According to students, some teachers did not respect their privacy and forced

them to volunteer to help others without considering their rights. Some reported

having to share their notes and test results without any consideration for their right to

privacy. Al felt he had a right to keep his work private. He got angry when teachers

showed his work to other students.

> Teachers make you feel stupid by singling you out. He brings out our work and
>
> shows it in front of the class. A teacher doesn't have the right to do this. I
>
> wouldn't want the teacher to do this even if the work was good. It's nobody's
>
> business how good I'm doing.

Others felt that they should not have to mark other students' work because it wasn't

fair to the students who did the work. Six students disliked marking other students'

work and having other students see or mark their work. This breach of confidentiality

was described by Jess: "We had to mark another classes' test for this one teacher...

This isn't very confidential for the students who wrote it".

Three students were angry at involuntarily having to discuss personal

information to people that they didn't know and didn't feel comfortable with. Kelly was

disturbed when teachers and guidance teachers asked her for personal information.

She stated:

> I hate the way they try to get you to think about your career in grade nine.
>
> They met with us twice to talk about what we wanted to do. They asked really

personal questions like do you have any problems at home or with kids or anything. It's too early to ask you this and put pressure on you to decide.

Group Work

Group work was defined by the students as any classroom activity which involved working in groups of two or more students. Students reported being angry at: the excess of group work, having students work in groups in inappropriate situations, the uneven distribution of workload for group members, and the unfairness of evaluation pertaining to individual effort in group situations.

Students who expressed dissatisfaction felt that group work was necessary sometimes but that teachers tended to use this format too often. "Everything is group work now" (Tai). One felt that there is too much group work in English: "English goes overboard" (with group work). (Laura)

The second concern pertained to the manner in which group work applied to classroom activities. Several students in group one felt that group work took place in inappropriate situations and actually inhibited learning . Eric believed that group work was not appropriate in learning mathematics: "There is nothing you can learn more from being in groups in math. You should just be allowed to do your own work".

A third repeated concern was the distribution of workload. Students felt that someone ended up doing more work than others:

The teachers say they try to make groups even. They don't put all the people who don't do anything in the same group. They put someone they know who will do all the work in a mixed group and that person ends up doing everything.

(Tai).

The other students in her group showed elevated levels of anxiety when she said this. Kelly's group felt that teachers did not attend to this concern:

It's still not fair that they mix up the groups in grade nine because the smart people end up doing all the work. The teachers don't push the slackers at all. It just hurts the person who has to do all the work.

This was considered a detriment to those who didn't work as well as to those who did: "The people who coast by in groups get hit hard later on if the teacher doesn't make them do the work. It isn't fair to them". (Mel)

The students were also angered by the process used to evaluate groups. Emily was upset at not getting the appropriate recognition for her extra effort in comparison to the contributions made by other group members. "The same person comes up with the answer and everyone gets credit" (Emily). Others agreed. Tai, with hands banging on the table, commented "In classes where you have to work in partners, you have to have a good partner. If you get a lousy partner, you lose" and Eric concurred: "This isn't really fair".

Workload

Workload refers to the amount of work assigned both in school and for homework. Students were not keen on homework. A major complaint pertained to the imbalance of workload distribution. Some students expressed frustration at having "either no homework or tons" (Joe). They felt that the teachers didn't talk to each other and spread out the work. According to Paul, the homework workload for four

courses wasn't fair. "Like it (the amount of work assigned for homework) could be fair for one class but when you consider four classes the work is too much sometimes".

Joe agreed. He stated:

> My math teacher tells me I should be doing two hours of math homework each night. When my science teacher also tells me this and then my other teachers tell me to do more, you just can't do it. You just can't.

Not only was there too much homework, some of it was meaningless. For example, Herman got mad when he got lots of math homework and already knew how to do the questions. He felt that "It's just repeat stuff and if you know the stuff, you shouldn't have to do tons of it". Bob also felt that teachers need to reassess the amount of homework given to students:

> This is the 90's. Like it's totally changed. Some kids aren't living at home and some have to have jobs to support themselves. It's not really fair to them. They don't have time to do the homework that back then they could do.

In class, there was a perception that students who finished quickly had to do more work. Instead of being praised, they got more assignments:

> Like the slow kids end up having less to do than the smart kids. Its not fair. You end up pretending to work so you don't have to do more and then the teacher doesn't know you are as smart as you really are. (Pedro)

He pointed out that if the teacher thinks students finish work and understand it "he sometimes gives us more work".

A couple of students reported that slow learners were not responsible for the

same amount of material as the average and above average students and felt

students of all levels should be required to do the same amount of work. The difficulty

level in that work could vary. Dominique adamantly pointed out that "nobody likes

doing more work". He added "The dumb kids do less work and that isn't fair".

Laura was concerned with the inconsistency between different classes of the

same course: "In another class they talk about the book and only write journals every

once in a while. We have to journal about the book every class".

There was also a frustration expressed about "busy work". For example, one

group resented having to mark tests from a typing class during a french period.

> It was our independent study class but we had to do the marking... We are
>
> doing the teachers' homework and they talk about us not doing homework
>
> (Jess).

Students also resented repetition. Emily had difficulty in understanding why

teachers wasted her time when they could be teaching new and more relevant

material:

> In science the teacher gave us a picture of a microscope and had us label it
>
> then he gave us another one and made us cut out the labels and paste it on to
>
> the new paper. I couldn't see the purpose. Why do we need two diagrams the
>
> same with the same labels? It's a waste of a whole period.

Communication

Concerns which pertained to communication related to the manner in which

teachers responded to student concerns and messages, and to the lack of

communication between teachers and between regular and supply teachers. Most complaints in this category related to the response teachers made to students who had attempted to communicate concerns to them.

<u>Teacher: Student Communication</u>

When students discussed incidents pertaining to this theme, they exhibited somatic responses such as bouncing up and down in their chairs, speaking loudly and rapidly, shaking their heads and pounding the table. Although this theme was mentioned less often, it appeared to evoke stronger emotions.

Students felt there was a need for better communication between teachers and students in several areas. These areas included assignment information, evaluation procedures, getting to know each other better and explanations of everyday classroom procedures and rules. Student frustration developed when teachers reportedly ignored student input, said one thing and did another, or when students perceived teacher messages in certain ways.

First and foremost, students expressed real anger when they described incidents in which teachers ignored their input. When Kelly (group 3) expressed concern at doing the group work and being marked the same as other people, she talked to her teacher but was unsatisfied with the response. "When you explain this to the teacher it doesn't matter". In Mike's case, although the teacher asked for input, Mike felt that she ignored it:

> You sometimes get to mark people in your group but the teacher never uses it.
> It's like you get a chance to say who is not working but the teacher never

listens. (Mike)

Students also felt that teachers did not listen to them when they claimed that they were having difficulty:

Last week, my math teacher, like the whole class said that they didn't understand but the teacher just got mad and said like I've taught this a hundred times. I think I know what I'm doing. The teacher just went on. (Stacey)

Tai also attempted to explain difficulties she was having. Her concerns pertained to the difficulties associated with being grouped with students that did not contribute to assignments:

You try to explain this to the teachers and its like it doesn't matter to them. They say you won't have to work with this person much longer. That may be true but you end up getting grouped with them again.

There was a lot of "frustrated" laughter at this point from all members of group one. Two students started shaking their heads and sat upright in their chairs.

Other students got mad when they would get accused of doing something they claimed they didn't.

When you try to explain that it wasn't you the teacher never gives you a chance to explain. You can't do anything and it makes you feel bad about school. You don't want to do the work but you have to or you fail. The stuff just doesn't mean anything though when you are mad and don't like it. (Dexter)

It annoyed Harry that some teachers interrupted students when the student tried to explain certain behaviours. When Emily discussed her experiences in talking with

teachers, she reported that teachers "don't give you a chance to express yourself" and "they demand and don't really talk".

Tai was concerned with the repetition of assignments. She reported her concerns about repeating the "name game" and received little response: "The teacher ignores this and doesn't listen to you".

The second area of discontent in communication pertained to a "say one thing and do another" attitude on the teacher's part. Although students did their best to communicate, they sometimes felt betrayed by their teachers. Eric missed classes because he participated in science class. He displayed good organizational skills by questioning the teacher about assignments before he left. After being told that he would not miss anything of great value, he was upset to find that the teacher included content material from these classes on an exam. "I was really mad. I got penalized because I missed class for academic reasons. Man this made me mad". Emily got very angry when her science teacher gave her binder to another student without asking for her permission.

The third area of concern regarding poor communication between teachers and students was student interpretation of teacher messages. Students believed that teachers conveyed the message that they did not care about students when students tried to talk about their frustrations:

Teachers pick on me specifically and teachers don't care when you try to tell them how you feel. The teachers don't care about everything. They really get hard headed. They don't really talk. They demand. They don't give you a

chance to express yourself. (Emily)

Several students thought that teachers needed to give more notice for extracurricular activities: "They need more than one quick announcement". (Tai) Eric had similar concerns regarding the notification for club meetings.

I go home for lunch, but if there is a club meeting that day they announce it only that morning. I can't go in the club because I have to go home for lunch. I can't afford to bring money all the time but if they told me a couple days ahead I could bring a lunch.

Anger stemmed from the apparent lack of notification regarding assignment requirements.

I'm taking a correspondence course. This year they didn't have the course here. We are supposed to do twenty books this year but they never told us. Just yesterday I found out I have to do another ten books before the end of the year. I have no choice. I have to do ten and I'm sweating. I don't exactly have time to do all these books. (Paul)

"Teachers really just give you a basic outline but don't really let you know what is going on" (Bob). Paul recommended that teachers notify students of assignments at the beginning of each semester in order to prevent this error from occurring again.

Students felt that communication gaps existed in communication of not only subject material, but the purpose of doing certain assignments. "Too many times the teacher gives work and doesn't explain why we are doing it" (Emily). She felt that had the teacher explained the purpose behind certain assignments, she may have done

better in school. Stacey contended "you do better in classes when the teacher talks to you. You feel like your aren't dumb by asking questions".

Other areas of discontent included the lack of enthusiasm principals put into announcements, the lack of effort by the principal to address students in the halls, and the manner in which authority figures spoke to students. "The principal never says "hi" in the hall. He just doesn't seem interested" (Tim). Stacey added "This really bugs me. It's like he doesn't really seem to want to know you".

Communication difficulties between students and teachers were discussed in every group. While the majority of students felt that these difficulties existed between students and teachers, three of these students also expressed concern about difficulties which existed between teachers and other teachers.

<u>Teacher: Teacher Communication</u>

Although most areas of contention regarding communication problems were related to the style and level of communication which occurred between teachers and students, some students reported being angry at the inappropriate discussions that occurred between more than one teacher.

Students also reported a lack of communication between teachers and supply teachers. Two students vocalized difficulty in this area. Jasmine shook her head and spoke rapidly:

Our one teacher came back a week before the exam. We had a supply

teacher for a long time. The supply wrote the exam and this was good but the

regular teacher marked the test. This wasn't fair. He didn't really know what

we were taught while he was away and he marked us hard on stuff that wasn't really covered when he was away.

Jess spoke of the punishment she unjustly received because teachers and student teachers didn't relay the appropriate information.

I had this project a little while ago. The teacher forgot to tell us that we couldn't do it in groups when her husband (who supplied for the course) told us we could do it in groups. She gave us zeros because she thought we copied. We were getting different instructions. The two of them were saying different things and it was like they never talked about it together.

The students listening to Jasmine and Jess agreed that this was extremely unfair. The other students in Jasmine and Jess's group could not think of any other communication problems between teachers and other staff members. The students focused more on communication breakdown between teachers and students.

2. Evaluation Techniques

Fifteen students felt that evaluation methods used by teachers were unfair. Others related their anger to the standards used in the evaluation process, components of the marking system, and frequency of evaluation. Students were also angry because they were not made aware of their progress.

Fairness in Evaluation

Comments pertaining to unfair evaluation included: unequal treatment, unjust evaluation of individual efforts in group work, manipulation of marks based on behaviour, discrepancy from year to year, being set up for failure, and an imbalance

in testing.

Students felt they were treated unfairly if they were not treated equally. For example, some students did not like being considered better than any one else. Emily hated being treated like "the teacher's pet". She wanted to be judged the same as other students. All students argued that teachers should not implement different standards for students who are liked by the teacher.

Teachers "who know that you are good at something" reportedly marked that student harder than other students (Stephanie).

I went on a school trip for 2 days and when I got back, my partner hadn't done a thing. After, I worked my butt off to do this really good report with the time I had she got a good mark. I didn't get a good mark for me.

It also concerned Stephanie when students, who realized that she excelled in certain areas, copied her work and received unjustly high grades as a result. Herman insisted that "one French teacher gave more marks to this girl for getting the same answer".

Students felt that they didn't get graded fairly when they participated in sports. For example:

I'm away with sports and they still give me zeros even though I ask for work but they say I get zero because I'm not in class. If you skip class and don't have a reason for not being there then you get zero. (Joe)

When Kim handed work in on time and received the same treatment as students who handed assignments in late, she got angry.

Students were also frustrated that individual effort in group situations was not included as a component of evaluation. They felt angry that some students didn't have to contribute in order to receive high grades. "The same person comes up with the answer and everyone gets credit" (Emily). "Being in group situations and being marked the same as other people who don't work isn't fair" (Kelly).

Another issue pertained to the way teachers manipulated marks based on behaviour. For example: "Teachers really black mail you with your grade. This is very unfair and that teachers shouldn't be able to lower your grade because students behave inappropriately" (Dominique). "Teachers should have a certain percentage of marks for academic achievement and another for behaviour" (Leon). Joe claimed that grades were inconsistent: "If a teacher decides he doesn't like you it doesn't matter how much work you do".

The discrepancy of grades from year to year angered students. Kim reported that those students who received high grades in grade nine often had difficulty in grade ten. Kim equated this with differing expectations between teachers. She maintained: "if you pass with an 80 when you have a slack teacher, it is wrong because the next year you are lost and the teacher expects you to know everything".

Another issue which frustrated students was that students felt that they were being set up for failure. For example, Paul believed that students were unjustly set up to fail because they were not permitted to drop advanced level courses if they discovered that it was too difficult: "If you sign up for advanced classes and you can't handle it you can't get out. You are in there and you fail".

Frustration resulted when the students perceived that there was an imbalance in testing. According to students, tests did not always reflect the distribution of work done in class. Bob pointed out that after spending a month working on a book that there were no questions on the exam about it.

Student Awareness of Marking Procedures

Another area of strong discontent between teachers and students pertained to assignments and student evaluation. When teachers failed to return assignments promptly, students became disheartened. For example:

I hate when teachers ask you to hand in work and they don't mark it. I had a really low mark and so I tried to do a really good job on a book report. My mark never changed because the teacher didn't mark it for a really long time. When he finally did mark it my grade really went up a lot. I would have felt better about my work if he had marked it right away and I saw my mark improve. (Tim)

In another example:

I hate it when teachers keep work for a long time. This teacher keeps stuff. He doesn't take marks off for handing things in late so you can like hand it in 2 months late. But when you do, he doesn't tell you your mark. He just says not everybody has handed in work. In a way its fair and in a way its not. If I'm proud with an assignment I did and I don't hear how I did for a long time, it doesn't matter anymore. (Kim)

Students felt that the requirements for certain marks were inappropriate and

that letter grades gave them little indication of how they were doing.

It makes me mad that you lose full marks for a wrong answer in math when you may have made a mistake on the last line. Every other part of the question is right but that doesn't matter. It makes you feel stupid when you really haven't done much wrong. (Laura)

The marking system was confusing to some students. For example: "You don't really know how you are doing because if you get a B it could be anywhere within a 10 per cent range" (Leon).

There were also communication problems relating to evaluation. According to Kim "the teachers tell you how much the exam and work and stuff are worth but they don't tell you how to get marks". It angered Kelly when she received low marks and the teacher would not find the time to discuss this matter with her. "You ask him but he just puts it off by saying talk to me later".

Students also reported having difficulty understanding the reasons why they didn't receive a good mark. "They never give you a really good reason why you didn't get a good mark" (Jasmine).

Paul had to go to the office to find out that he had failed.

The teacher didn't tell me. It was a slap in the face. I thought I got perfect on the exam and I caught up on all my work and I failed. He wrote on the report card that I didn't pay attention in class and was inattentive and argued with the teacher. I didn't find out I was failing until the last minute. Any time I tried to talk to the teacher we just ended up fighting.

Frequency of Evaluation

Students expressed anger at having only year-end exams and at handing in several assignments before they were evaluated on the work. Bob was angry that midterm exams were cancelled. He didn't feel that being tested on an entire semester's work in one exam was unfair.

> It's hard when you have so much information. You have to cram for it at the end. With mid-terms it is easier to do better and it would look better for the school because more kids would be passing. You'd know how you were doing earlier. Especially like in math, you wouldn't have to memorize so many formulas.

He described himself as very academically inclined and felt that he needed to know how he was doing more often. His concerns were supported by others. For example:

> Like this one teacher will tell us our mark at the end of the year but what good does that do. You want to know how you are doing through the year and not just at the end (Pedro).

Students reported taking evaluation very seriously. When they did not know how to do well or felt that they were treated unfairly, they became frustrated and angry.

3. Discipline

According to students, discipline strategies used by teachers and administrators are too strict, too lenient, inconsistent, and unfair. Students agreed that the level of discipline exerted by teachers was inappropriate.

Level of Discipline

Teachers who were too lenient angered students as much as teachers who were too strict. Students in group one who reported getting angry when teachers are too lenient agreed with Tai who indicated that "sometimes student teachers can try to be too nice too you and this is irritating. This teacher had no control". In another example, Eric contended that being picked on by other students at the beginning of the school year was a natural component of the high school atmosphere. However, he was upset that teachers let this go on longer than was necessary.

> This guy (student) in the hall (repeatedly) hits me in the back of the head and calls me loser. It really ticks me off. He broke my pack sack. I'm angry that the teachers are standing right there and they never do anything. They don't even talk to him. They just ignore him.

Other examples provided by students which indicated their frustration when teachers failed to discipline students are as follows: Tim felt that it was "ridiculous" when teachers don't implement enough classroom discipline: "You can't do the work, like it's a waste of time. You just show up to get attendance. Students start to run the class". "Like he can't even control the class so we never get anything done" (Pedro). "If a teacher is too slack the kid (who is acting out) bothers everyone else" (Mel). Dexter reported that he doesn't get anything done when teachers don't have control over the class.

Students, on the other hand, disliked teachers who were too strict:

> This teacher really went nuts at us when we broke two test tubes. It was an

accident but she really let us know that they are expensive and stuff. (Stephanie)

I like teachers who aren't too strict, don't have too many rules and respect you but don't demand instant respect from you because respect is something you have to earn. You have to earn the teacher's respect for you so it should work both ways. (Phillipe)

"Teachers are too strict. I threw my lunch in a garbage can once instead of putting it delicately in and the teacher yelled at me" (Herman). "The older teachers especially just yell at you" (Bob). Students also got angry when teachers demanded something of the students instead of asking politely (Emily).

Students provided many recommendations for teachers and administrators. Jess remarked that teachers "have to be lenient when they want us to do something but not too lenient". Pedro "liked teachers who kept control of a class but were still nice". He respected them. Dexter did not respect teachers that were "either really mean or really lenient". He argued that "there needs to be respect both ways" and contended that teachers need to have control over the class. "If they don't, bad students dominate the class and you can never get anything done". Herman recommended that teachers be nice but have control over the class.

Fairness of Discipline

Discipline strategies used by teachers were described as unfair by students. One such strategy was the use of threats of being pulled from school teams.

When you do school sports the teacher expects more from you and makes it

harder for you. You do the work or else you are off the team. It is a threat. They expect you to do good in sports so the school gets recognition but you don't get the recognition. (Paul)

Reported incidents of favouritism, misdirected blame, and making examples of individuals were of the source of anger felt by four students. One student reported getting in trouble for not doing work while her partner, who had not contributed to the assignment received no reprimands (Emily). Another was angry and confused because a teacher would be "really nice and then he would be really strict" (Harry).

Some students were blamed for things they did not do.

Once I came out of the washroom and somebody before me had put paper towels all over the counter. A teacher came in after me and he accused me of making the mess. Even when I said I didn't do it he didn't believe me. They don't even care about what you say. (Harry)

Other students felt their behaviour was the teacher's fault.

When the students get rambunctious the teacher yells at you and blames you for getting out of hand when it is really his fault to begin with for not being able to handle the class. (Dominique)

Students did not like "being made examples of" when they performed at certain levels, being "embarrassed" by teachers or having their "weaknesses" being brought to the attention of other students. One of the quietest students interviewed was not quiet when he stated: "Teachers can be jerks. They narrow you out and specifically make an example of you" (Al):

Teachers make you feel stupid by singling you out. He brings out our work and shows it in front of the class. A teacher doesn't have the right to do this. I wouldn't want the teacher to do this even if the work was good. It's nobody's business how good [sic] I'm doing.

Others agreed that being centred out "really bugged" them. They "hated teachers who centred you out" (Al).

4. Consistency

Discussions, which centred around the major theme of inconsistency, pertained to school rules, recognition and privileges.

<u>Consistency of Rules</u>

Students became agitated and responded with louder voices when discussing the need to improve the consistency of rules. This topic arose 13 times and when students discussed it, they were openly angry. One example was locker privileges. Grade 10's could go to their lockers during class time but the grade 9's could not:

Some teachers let you go to your locker and others don't. This isn't fair because it is inconsistent. The rules should be consistent (Jasmine).

Another could not understand why females were allowed to wear hats in class and males were not. A similar inconsistency in rules pertained to gum chewing (Harry).

Students wanted consistent rules. In one school, teachers were allowed to smoke on school grounds while "us kids have to go off school grounds to have a smoke but the teachers just go outside" (Paul). "If a student goes over where the

teachers are they say that the students are supposed to be off school property and they kick you off" (Bob). "It should be equal for both teachers and students" (Jess).

Another inconsistent rule involved the use of force. Dominique, for example, reported being angry because a teacher came up behind him and hit him as he was talking. This is a good example of the double standards that angered students.

Consistency of Recognition

Reported inconsistencies in the manner in which teachers dealt with students were based on age differences and athletic distinction. Students felt that all students should be recognized for their achievements in athletics. They reported that senior teams (grades 11 and up) were recognized more than junior or midget (grade nine and ten) teams and that not all sports were given equal consideration.

Students reported that older students had better uniforms, had preferential treatment for gym time, and got more recognition from teachers.

Midget teams get lousy uniforms. They are ripped and look awful. We also have to practice in the mornings. The seniors get really nice uniforms. They also get the games on the announcements and midget sports hardly get mentioned. (Emily)

Reported incidents of inconsistent recognition often pertained to athletics. "Teachers seem to only care about some sports. Like soccer isn't as important as basketball or football or whatever" (Kim).

5. Stereotyping

A total of 19 statements were made relating to stereotyping by teachers and

administrative staff. Students felt that teachers stereotyped them based on: previous performance and behaviour, the way they dress, the general way all students behaved and the history of family members at the school.

Stereotyping Based on Prior Performance

Students from most groups commented on how they had been misjudged by teachers because of past behaviour problems. Stephanie mentioned that her teacher treated students badly if they acted bad once and treated students well if the students tended to behave well. According to Jess "if you do one thing wrong in class then they look at you like your bad for the rest of the semester". Bob expressed a similar level of dissatisfaction: "Any time you are branded as a discipline problem they kind of avoid you like the plague." They are afraid that they will get in a confrontation with you".

According to Leon, "one teacher totally ignores people who are slow like me and Phillipe". This triggered an angry response from Phillipe:

He just gave up on us. Lots of kids get ignored. Some of them are bad and don't do well in school but they could if the teachers paid attention to them. I could do good in school if teachers paid attention to me. They (teachers) figure that there is no way these kids will ever do good.

Students felt that teacher's opinions of them would never change. For example:

One thing made me mad. For one teacher, she thought a group of four of us were trouble so no matter how hard you tried nothing we did in class was good enough for her. Its always like we aren't brains and she won't give us a chance

know that we screwed up once. She thought we were slackers. (Jess)

Those students who did poorly on past assignments expressed anger toward teachers who gave them the impression that they would never become an academic success. Pedro felt teachers stereotyped students based on performance. He stated, "teachers thought students who were bad or did not do well in school would never do well in school". If a student is a reported "slacker", he or she isn't given a chance in successive years.

Those students who participated in athletics were not exempt from stereotyping based on past performance:

I know from experience that some teams are picked based on your performance in other sports. Like if you were good in basketball, you make the volleyball team no matter how good you are. This isn't fair. (Jasmine)

One student felt that students were stereotyped if they were successful in one area. Paul, for example, contended that when students excel in sports, teachers expect more from them.

Stereotyping Based on Generalizations

A generalization about a persons characteristics is a form of stereotyping based on a group's history. Teachers reportedly generalized about a student's personality and overall ability based on the friends he or she "hung around" with or felt that all students were trouble because that was the way all students had been in the past.

Two students felt that teachers formed opinions of them because they dressed in loose baggy clothes. Students wear certain styles of clothes to indicate which peer

group they associated with. One of these students felt that the teacher, who knew very little about him, felt that he was a poor student because he wore baggy clothes. There are teachers who don't trust students based on the way they dressed (Leon). Phillipe sat on the edge of his chair as Leon spoke. He quickly added:

> That happened to me. Like my teacher when I first walked into the class called me ugly because I wore baggy clothes. He just gave me "shit" because of the way I looked. Nice way to welcome kids to a new class.

Students also felt that they had been judged in a stereotypical manner because of the performance and history of students they associated with. They felt that teachers "brand" students based on the friends they hang around with. One was thrown out of a school dance because her friends were drinking (Kim). Another was angry at peers who behaved inappropriately: "The kids that don't care end up giving us a bad name" (Tai).

One student felt that his teacher stereotyped him as a trouble makers because older siblings had a history of behaviour problems (Paul).

6. Other Themes

The themes of destreaming and sexism in athletics were developed after analyzing student reports. These topics arose in conversation in only a few instances. This indicated that while these issues were of concern to individuals, most students did not perceive problems in these areas.

Destreaming

In Ontario, high schools have advanced, general and basic level courses.

Those wishing to attend university take advanced level credits. Others work toward a high school diploma by accumulating general or basic level courses. In the past, students began grade nine in either advanced or general and basic level courses. In 1994, schools in Ontario started separating students into either category in grade 10. All grade nine students were destreamed into one class. This study was conducted during the second year that grade nine students had been destreamed.

Only students from one high school liked destreaming. Those from other high schools did not. Most of the students who were or had been in destreamed classes were angry at this structure. They felt that the level of difficulty in a destreamed class varied from too easy to too difficult because students with differing academic abilities remained in the same class. Some students felt that destreaming only led to student failure in higher grades or prevented an avenue for socializing with a large number of others.

Both high and low levels of difficulty in subject matter angered students who attended destreamed classes. The statements provided by the students explain why they get angry at being placed in classes where academic proficiency is diverse. High level achievers felt that teachers taught at a lower level than the student's ability because general and advanced level students attended the same class. "The work is a lot of general work and is a bit too easy in grade nine because of destreaming" (Mike). "Sometimes the work is too basic and too easy because everybody in grade nine is in the same class" (Stephanie). As a result she reported getting bored and then doing nothing.

Low level achievers felt that teachers of destreamed classes often taught at a level above the student's ability. Some students felt that instruction in destreamed classes was directed to "smarter" students.

> I don't see why you come to high school and are treated the same as you were in public school. It makes you feel different than grade tens. The teachers teach to the smarter kids so we lose out. You end up failing because the teacher teaches the smarter kids. (Tim)

"Since it is destreamed you sometimes get work that is too hard and this isn't fair to the students who aren't as smart" (Mike).

Grade ten students reported that methods of instruction in destreamed classes differed greatly from those in segregated grade 10 classes. Jasmine found herself failing a grade ten advanced after being very successful in a destreamed grade nine class. She felt that the work in grade nine was too easy and didn't accurately reflect the challenge she would have in grade ten:

> If you are having trouble in math, the teacher doesn't always come and help you. The teacher goes too fast. This may have something to do with destreaming because in grade nine, the teacher moves slower because of the slower kids but in advanced math, the teacher moves fast and you don't get as much time.

Students argued that destreamed grade nine classes did not provide any guidance in deciding their level of study. As a result, they felt they were not given enough time at the beginning of the year to evaluate the difficulty of grade ten

advanced classes prior to having to decide whether they should attend advanced or general level classes. They wanted more time to assess the difficulty of advanced level courses because teachers are "really nice" at the beginning of the year and don't accurately convey the course requirements to the students during the first week of classes. "They only give you a week at the beginning of the year to decide if you can handle advanced. That isn't enough" (Paul). "Teachers are all like peachy keen the first week. You don't really know what the course is like in a week" (Jess).

> They don't really introduce you to what you are doing in class until the second week. My English class was like that. The first week was great. We got to know each other and we got to know our teacher a bit but it was really a month or so before we really knew what the course was about. Then it was too late to switch if the advanced was too hard. (Bob)

In one group, students expressed concern over the low level of student interaction that occurs across the whole grade in destreamed classes. One student felt that they were not given the opportunity to mingle with other students since they remained with the same class of students all day.

Sexism in Athletics

Some students expressed anger at the different treatment of males and females. Most anger resulting from apparent differences in recognition of male and females pertained to athletics and only one student reported sexism relating to physical development.

Both male and female students felt that female athletes did not receive the

recognition that male athletes did. They hated the way teachers cared about male athletes and did not display equal caring for female athletes (Stephanie). Others commented:

> I think school are sexist in sports. They get more credit in announcements. The principal announces their names and say so and so scored so many points but when the girls win that is all that is said. (Eric)

> Like (girls') soccer isn't as important as basketball or football or whatever. This isn't just for girls. But when our junior girls soccer team won and I never heard a word from anyone. Not one teacher said anything. The principal doesn't seem to care about being at games or even getting to know anyone. (Kim)

"They (teachers and principals) care about guys and their teams but they don't seem to care about female sports" (Stephanie).

> We (girl's soccer team) had this competition coming up but we couldn't get the gym because the soccer team had to practice for a tournament that was for fun and not part of the season. Our competition was really important but we couldn't get the gym. This wasn't fair to the girls. The teachers didn't seem to care or do anything about it. (Jasmine).

Students also felt that more teachers wanted to coach male teams than female teams:

> It seems that there is more interest in coaching and helping the boys teams and senior teams. It is like guys and older people are more likely to win so they want to be associated with them and not the younger teams. (Emily)

They felt an injustice was done by teachers who let male students have more gym time. "The guys also get to practice after school and we only get morning practices" (Emily). Even boys felt this was a problem:

Guys sports have better equipment and they get more attention. They get more gym time. Girls really have to fight hard to get the gym. (Tim)

There was one reported instance of sexism outside of sports. One female student reported being told that her poor achievement in mathematics was attributed to her gender. Kelly's guidance teacher told her "that a girl's brains don't develop as fast as a guy's" and that she would eventually succeed in math because it is only natural that she be less adept at math than her male counterparts at the grade nine level.

Summary of Student Complaints

Of the seven themes described by the students, those pertaining to teaching practices and evaluation techniques dominated the discussions. Students reported getting angry at the apparent lack of teacher skill present in the classroom. This lack of skill pertained not only to the manner in which specific material was taught, but the manner in which teachers behaved both in and out of the classroom. Communication gaps between teachers and students dominated the theme of communication, although some concerns regarding the manner in which teachers communicated with other staff members were also reported.

Events which preceded the anger felt by some students included a lack of fairness in evaluation and discipline procedures. When individuals received different

or preferential treatment for what students felt were unjust reasons, students became annoyed and frustrated. Inconsistent rules and recognition angered students. Most felt that reasons for restricting privileges for individual groups of students were unjust.

Students also felt that teachers judged them based on past performance or the peer groups they associated with. Stereotyping was also reported to be based on the performance of siblings who had attended school in the past.

Although one group of students felt that the process of destreaming of grade nine students was effective, most felt that it was detrimental to learning. Student frustration developed because the courses were not set up to satisfy their academic needs.

Sexism was reported. All but one concern in this area pertained to the preferential treatment male athletes received over female athletes. The lone concern in this area pertained to growth differences in male and female brains.

The following table provides a summary of the responses:

Table 3: Overview of Occurrences of Each Theme

Major Theme	Subtheme	Occurrence					
		G1*	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
Teaching Practices	Teacher Skill	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Group Work	■		■			
	Workload	■		■	■	■	■
	Communication	■	■	■	■	■	■
Evaluation	Unfair Evaluation	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Student Awareness of Marking Procedures		■	■	■	■	
	Frequency of Evaluation		■		■		
Discipline	Level of Discipline	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Unfair	■			■	■	■
Consistency	Consistency of Rules	■		■	■	■	■
	Consistency of Recognition	■	■	■			■
Stereotyping	Stereotyping Based on Prior Performance	■	■	■	■	■	
	Stereotyping Based on Generalizations	■	■				■
Other Themes	Destreaming**	■	■	■			
	Sexism in Athletics	■	■	■			

* G refers to Group

**In Ontario, high schools have advanced, general and basic level courses. Those

wishing to attend university take advanced level credits. Others work toward a high

school diploma by accumulating general or basic level courses. In the past, students

began grade nine in either advanced or general and basic level courses. In 1994, schools in Ontario started separating students into either category in grade 10. All grade nine students were destreamed into one class.

Implications in Student Reports

The concerns raised by students varied considerably. Most often, students had difficulty with the manner in which lessons were delivered, a lack of teacher skill, and the apparent lack of communication between teachers and students.

Students often expressed anger at having to work in group situations where one or more students are not contributing to the productivity of the group. Individual differences in ability and contribution reportedly resulted in anger. Students did not mention that this altered the way that they interacted with peers. Simply, they reported becoming less motivated and reluctant to be the "one who does all the work".

Twenty students agreed that group work was necessary and a good learning tool. However, they felt that this set up is overused. Teachers need to reduce the amount of group work in their curriculum or evaluate group work with a component that assesses individual contributions. Open discussion with the teachers and providing an evaluation process which accurately reflects individual effort may reduce the tension which results in groups where all students are not contributing. It may place more pressure on individuals who do not contribute to add to the group effort. The output from groups where individual effort is a component of the assessment may be more diverse and intriguing than that of groups where only certain individuals do the work.

An area which precipitated much discontent in students was the manner in which students of all academic abilities were grouped. Many students felt left out when placed in destreamed classes. The students who felt alienated by the effects of destreaming had strong feelings about the problem. For example, students of all academic levels reported being left out when teachers focused on either "the smart kids" or "the dumb kids". When students are placed in destreamed classes, they became very frustrated and developed a feeling of not belonging. When these negative feelings develop in grade nine, the stage is set for student failure. Students lose faith in the high school system and put forth little effort into doing well.

Teachers have always been faced with the task of covering a required number of topics and material. This study indicates that teachers are under so much pressure do meet these objectives that individual student progress and levels of understanding are being ignored. It angered students that teachers moved on to new and more difficult topics when students did not understand the topic just covered.

Knowledge is built upon knowledge (Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994). The brain links new knowledge with old. When students fail to understand a topic and teachers are under pressure to continue with a curriculum, the opportunity to link new knowledge with old is not complete. Therefore, students are not being given optimal conditions required to learn. Students reported that teachers often continued with new material even when the majority of students in a class failed to comprehend the old material. This led to anger and frustration. If one of the goals of education is to promote the love of lifelong learning, does the need to cover the entire curriculum

actually inhibit the achievement of this goal?

It is necessary to provide a level of consistency in schools in regards to rules and recognition. Students became very frustrated when certain rules applied to some and not others and when the rules changed from class to class. Teachers should set rules that are consistent. The consequences of not complying with rules need to be consistent. It is essential that school personnel recognize junior and/or female athletes as much as senior and/or male athletes. When one feels less important to role models than others, frustration, anger and low self-esteem develop.

The results of this study indicate that students respond positively to skilled teachers and tend to withdraw when faced with teachers who lack certain skills. It is essential that new teachers are trained in a variety of areas. Teachers need to be able to develop, understand and implement a curriculum. In order to do so most effectively, they must be trained to have exceptional interpersonal and organizational skills. Teachers must understand the needs of individual students. In the interviews, students indicated that a skilled teacher is one who respects confidentiality and has the ability to challenge students.

The students felt that the level of communication between themselves and teachers needed to improve. This is backed up by the literature:

Past research has shown that perceived teacher involvement and feelings of relatedness, mutual liking, and lack of alienation in relation to the teacher are all associated with student engagement, grades, and achievement test scores. (Schunk & Meece,1992)

In this study, students reported feelings of alienation from teachers and administrators. In order to increase the motivation and academic achievement of students, it may be necessary to increase the level of communication which occurs between students and teachers. According to the students interviewed, if they knew more about the purpose behind certain activities and assignments, many of the tensions would disappear.

Another area which provoked a lot of dissention in students was that of evaluation. Students would like more notification on progress. Schunk and Meece (1992) indicated that students' perceptions and interpretations of the evaluation process directly influences motivational levels in students (p. 340) In this study, students recommended that they become more informed of their progress as it happens as opposed to the end of the semester. If students receive marked assignments quickly, they may be more motivated to do better or maintain the success rate that they have attained. Frustration over the process of evaluation can be reduced if all students understand the components of the evaluation. For example, students felt that letter grades do not give students an accurate account of their performance, nor do they provide the feedback necessary to indicate how students can improve. In order to help students understand why they are being evaluated, they must be informed on how they can improve, why they received a certain grade and what specific portions of the curriculum weigh heavily in the evaluation process. It is essential to remember that the purpose of evaluation is two-fold. First, it allows teachers to assess the progress of both the class and individuals and secondly, it

relays information to the students. Since so much of a student's self esteem is derived from grades, it is absolutely necessary that they understand how that grade, be it a letter grade or percentage, is developed.

Students reported feeling anger towards teachers who were too strict or too lenient. In both cases, the existence of positive rewards was lacking. Teachers who were too strict reportedly "controlled students" and failed to remember that communication is most successful when both parties send and receive messages. Glasser reported that an "adversarial teacher-student relationship" (1990, p. 28) can be destructive, especially when it focuses on the use of punishment instead of positive reward. It angered students that strict teachers tended to be senders and not receivers. Teachers who were too lenient tended to act more as receivers and did not send enough information back to the students. Discipline problems resulted in both situations. Students felt that teachers should provide leadership without being too controlling.

Other themes reported in this study occurred less frequently in discussion. Students would like to have teachers who display a genuine caring for them as individuals, be consistent, get to know them and not judge them on past achievements and respect their confidentiality.

Emotional Responses to Anger

Students had difficulty answering the second question in the interviews. When asked "How do you respond to this frustration or anger?" a majority of the students just shook their heads and said that they were not sure. Of the 277 statements

provided by students, only 18 pertained to the second question. During the interviews, the moderator made several attempts to provoke a response to this second question. Students were more interested in describing that which invoked angry feelings in them. When students did provide an answer, they reported that they often didn't bother doing the assigned work, would yell at the teacher, would waste time, act out in class and stop trying. Two students laughed at this question and thought that these situations led them to do the opposite of what was asked of them.

Students also stated that in response to frustration, they would feel different than other kids and not belong. Some ended up refusing to ask teachers for assistance because they felt that the teachers did not provide or did not want to provide help. This resulted in a reportedly lower self esteem and provided the foundation for feelings of hatred towards school.

When the moderator asked students about their responses to the anger which stemmed from the many incidents they described, some reported acting out, not wanting to complete assignments or hating school. Jasmine described her response to the anger created as a result of unfair marking and work distribution in groups. "I've acted out in class because the teacher makes me sit with someone who is really disruptive and I didn't want to work with this person". Others responded by getting frustrated "I get frustrated at having to do all the work. If you know the people who you are working with and they don't work, nobody does anything and nothing gets done" (Mel).

Other students felt that the best way to combat anger was to refrain from doing

work. When Stephanie was angry she responded by "sitting there and doing nothing". She felt it was not fair to have the workload be so easy she ended up wasting time and getting angry. When Pedro finished his work early and was not praised for this, he got angry and began to hate school.

Students had no difficulty in stating how they responded to boredom. According to Dominique, he completed school work faster than all of the other students. He got bored and responded by talking and disturbing the class because there is "nothing else to do". Phillipe said that he "mouthed off" when he was really bored.

Another response to anger was based on student achievement. When students had to do more work because they finished assignments ahead of others, they reported feeling like they were being punished for being successful. "It makes you hate school, You end up pretending to work so you don't have to do more and then the teacher doesn't know you are as smart as you really are." (Pedro). Others felt like they were "getting ripped off" (Stacey).

Students reported responding to inappropriate teacher behaviour by showing little interest in school activities and assignments. Jasmine said that she acts out in class in order to receive attention from a teacher who she feels conveys the message that the teacher doesn't care.

Other responses to frustration that resulted from communication problems included stopping trying, fear of failing in the future and transferring that anger to next class.

I just stop trying. I get frustrated at having to do all the work. If you know the people who you are working with and they don't work, nobody does anything and nothing gets done. (Mel)

Because students did not understand why they did poorly, they became frightened of having to attempt similar assignments in the future.

This one time I got marked low on an essay and the teacher told me it was because I was off topic. I asked him to explain this and show me what he wanted but he just told me I should figure it out for myself. It frustrated me. I didn't want to try to do better. He never showed me how to do it right. Now I have to write an exam with an essay question and I think I'll fail before I even see the question. It makes me really nervous. (Jasmine)

Another major complaint pertained to the manner in which teachers talked to students. Students felt that teachers who yelled at students evoked non-compliance. "Older teachers just yell at you and then you end up doing the opposite of what the "yelling" teachers asked" (Bob).

It is really hard to do good when you have a teacher who you don't get along with. When the teacher yells at you she thinks she is making you do the work but it's not. It just makes you not want to do the work even more. You just want to sit there and just do nothing. Then if you do do something you don't remember it. (Jess)

When anger developed in one class, students felt that the resulting emotion interfered with their productivity in other classes:

It influences how you do in all of your other classes that day. You don't do the work as well and then that teacher gets mad at you even though they don't understand why you can't do the work. (Paul)

Another response to anger was losing the desire to perform well and put forth any extra effort. Eric felt that the effort he put into representing the school at a science fair meant little. He shook his fist as he stated "Man this made me mad". Kim felt that there was no incentive in working hard to hand work in on time. When she doesn't get her work graded in a short period of time she contends that her effort "doesn't matter anymore".

Only three students were able to describe how they responded to teachers who used inappropriate discipline techniques. Pedro got angry at teachers who were too strict, his self-esteem was lowered.

The teacher always points out that you are failing. She never says anything good. She says that if you don't do this you will fail. She always puts you down. It really lowers your self esteem and makes you think that you are stupid and can't do anything. (Eric)

Jess added:

It's really hard to do good when you have a teacher who you don't get along with. When the teacher yells at you she thinks she is making you do the work but it's not. It just makes you not want to do the work even more. You just want to sit there and just do nothing. Then if you do do something you don't remember it.

Teachers who treated students as failures or behaviour problems were not helping students improve. Students who felt that they had been labelled as not likely to succeed or behave responded by mimicking the behaviours and academic abilities that were expected. They reported that there was "no use in trying" (Paul). if it did not matter how you performed.

Students expressed anger towards the destreaming process but failed to comment on how they responded to it. These students argued that destreaming should be eliminated.

Students reported feeling less important than other students. When Stephanie reported that teachers care about "guys and their teams" and not about female athletes, her shoulders were slouched over and she spoke with a soft voice. In response to the anger Emily felt from the differential treatment given to older athletes, she felt "like you are not worth anything and that seniors are better and more important".

Those students who expressed being angry when their rights to confidentiality were not maintained responded by not trusting administrators or teachers, not sharing information and losing interest in school.

Students responded to anger by feeling unworthy, less important than others and by putting little effort into assignments. When students got angry, they carried that anger into following classes. Angry students reported acting out and becoming disruptive.

In this chapter I have reiterated the individual responses of students. Each

individual response to anger producing situations seemed minimal when examined on its own and out of context. It is the context of schooling with many individual irritations which provided more complex student to teacher relationships. In the chapter to follow, the underlying core issues associated with student anger will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Dysfunctional family life or troubled upbringing are often equated with behavioral problems and academic failure (Cummings, & Cummings, 1988), but it may be possible that schools may also be contributing to increasing student unrest and anger (Brantlinger, 1993; Jones, 1992; Klingman & Zeidner, 1993). This study collected information relating to the following three interview questions:

1) What, if anything, about school frustrates or concerns you?

2) What, in school, makes you angry?

3) How do you respond to this?

Students were asked to describe situations which made them angry. They were not asked to supply information on the situations that made them feel important, welcome or respected, but students did report that they had good teachers and many positive experiences in school. Teachers continue to supply students with an exemplary education. Students understood that teaching is a very challenging and demanding profession.

Reflections

I took interest in this topic for several reasons. First, I felt that in order to teach effectively, I needed to know more about students. Secondly, I believed that students need to have an avenue to express their concerns and that they need to discuss concerns in a safe environment.

While I was gathering background information for this research project, several

people, including teachers and parents, suggested that students at the grade nine and ten level could not accurately describe their feelings. Some assumed that if students did speak, it would be in a condemning and rude manner and the discussion would be treated like a "get back at the teacher" session. Despite these warnings, I felt it necessary to give the students a chance to assist in the research and that students would take this opportunity seriously.

Prior to the group discussion, parents and participants were asked to sign a consent form. This form included a full description of the purpose of the research project. Students and parents were advised that they could telephone me at home should they have questions or concerns. I received telephone calls from two parents. The purpose was not to ask questions or express concern about the nature of the project. Instead they expressed gratitude for my willingness to include their adolescents in the study. One parent stated that "research projects which give students an actual voice are long overdue".

It was a pleasure speaking to all of the student participants. They responded with the utmost levels of maturity. In all groups, students respected the opinions of all others. Although not all students agreed with the opinions and concerns of the others in the group, they respected the right of the individual to feel differently. Students also respected the time given to individuals to express his or her concerns. Each speaker tried to back each concern with an incident or incidents that suported their discussions. All participants should be congratulated on their excellent behaviour during the study.

Interpretation of Student Reports

The participants discussed frustrating circumstances which occurred mainly in classrooms. Very little was said about school organization outside the classroom. Most concerns pertained to the manner in which teaching practices were implemented. For example, students were frustrated about the manner in which group work was evaluated and assigned. Teachers who did not know the subject manner, were unorganized, did not pace lessons appropriately and did not respect student confidentiality, angered students. When lessons were delivered at an inappropriate pace, the needs to comprehend subject material and/or to be challenged at their level were not being met. Teachers who did not respect confidentiality were not respecting the need of the students to be trusted.

Another area of strong discontent among students pertained to reported incidents of unfairness in evaluation. Students became frustrated when teachers did not regard their input into the evaluation of group work, when they felt uninformed about assignment requirements and when deadlines did not apply to all students. This resulted in students feeling less important than others. Students wanted to be respected on an individual basis. When individual efforts in group situations were not recognized, this need for respect was not met.

Other issues which angered students included discipline, consistency in rules and privileges, stereotyping, destreaming and sexism in athletics. Students felt strongly that discipline techniques should be fair and consistent. Rules should be consistent, not only within a class but between classes. Individuals felt that they had

been prejudged based on the peers that they associated with or the behaviour of older family members.

Students did not like being placed in destreamed grade nine classes. They felt that the spread of abilities in such classes discriminated against students with certain academic abilities. The students felt that this set them up for failure in upcoming grades. Those "academically-inclined" students who were not challenged in destreamed classes when the teacher focused more on general level students became bored and disenchanted with school. Those "less academically-inclined" felt left out when the teacher taught at a more advanced level. Because some students felt ignored by teachers who taught destreamed classes, students put forth less effort to do well in school, were not recognized for their ability and reported receiving little guidance at their levels of comprehension.

Both male and female students felt that teachers, staff members and students paid more attention to male sports teams than female teams and to senior teams. All of these issues can be interpreted in terms of evaluation techniques, teaching practices, power relationships, or equity.

Students had difficulty understanding how they responded to anger producing stimuli. The answers to the second question "What do you do when you get angry?" were minimal. While some reported acting out when they became angry, most dealt with frustration and anger by giving up and isolating themselves from class work. This included losing the desire to put forth an extra effort and hand material in on time. Some felt that they responded by becoming bored and not caring about school.

Others did not know how they responded to being angry even though they were aware of the stimuli which angered.

The specific incidents described in this study pointed to a variety of issues and sources of anger. Many of these were symptoms of more widespread issues that may be "erupting" in these specific incidents. These over-reaching issues can be broadly described in terms of: equity, power relationships, teaching practices, and evaluation procedures. These issues exist in schools in relation to each other. For example, when teachers implemented overly strict discipline techniques, they established an unbalanced power relationship between themselves and students. When this relationship continued over time, a sense of inequality developed. The imbalance became apparent in daily teaching practice and was reinforced through evaluation techniques. When the students identified sources of anger, they focused on teaching practices and evaluation techniques. All of these complaints were related in some way to basic power relationships within the classroom.

Figure 1 illustrates the link between each of these four areas of concern. In figure 1, the largest circle represents equity. Equity occurs when a balanced level of fairness occurs between each person or group(s) of persons in any given environment or situation. In schools, equality occurs when all persons associate with each other with mutual respect. This balance can only occur if power relationships are not intimidating to any participant.

Power is when a person "has the ability to influence the behaviour of other individuals or groups" (Hoy & Miskel, 1991, p. 82). The manner in which a person

who has power interacts with others and uses his or her influence is key to the establishment of equity in any environment. Power relationships are represented by the middle circle in figure 1.

Relationships between students and teachers develop and grow over time. The pattern of development and growth and thus the style of power that exists in the teacher student relationship is derived from a number of situational factors. The two factors which students defined as having the greatest effect on the type of relationship are teaching practices and evaluation techniques. These are represented by the inner circle in figure 1.

In summary, the style of teaching practices and evaluation techniques that are incorporated into daily classroom activities form the foundation to the type of power relationship that exists between students and teachers. The style of power that exists in the relationships between students and teachers dictates the level of equity which occurs.
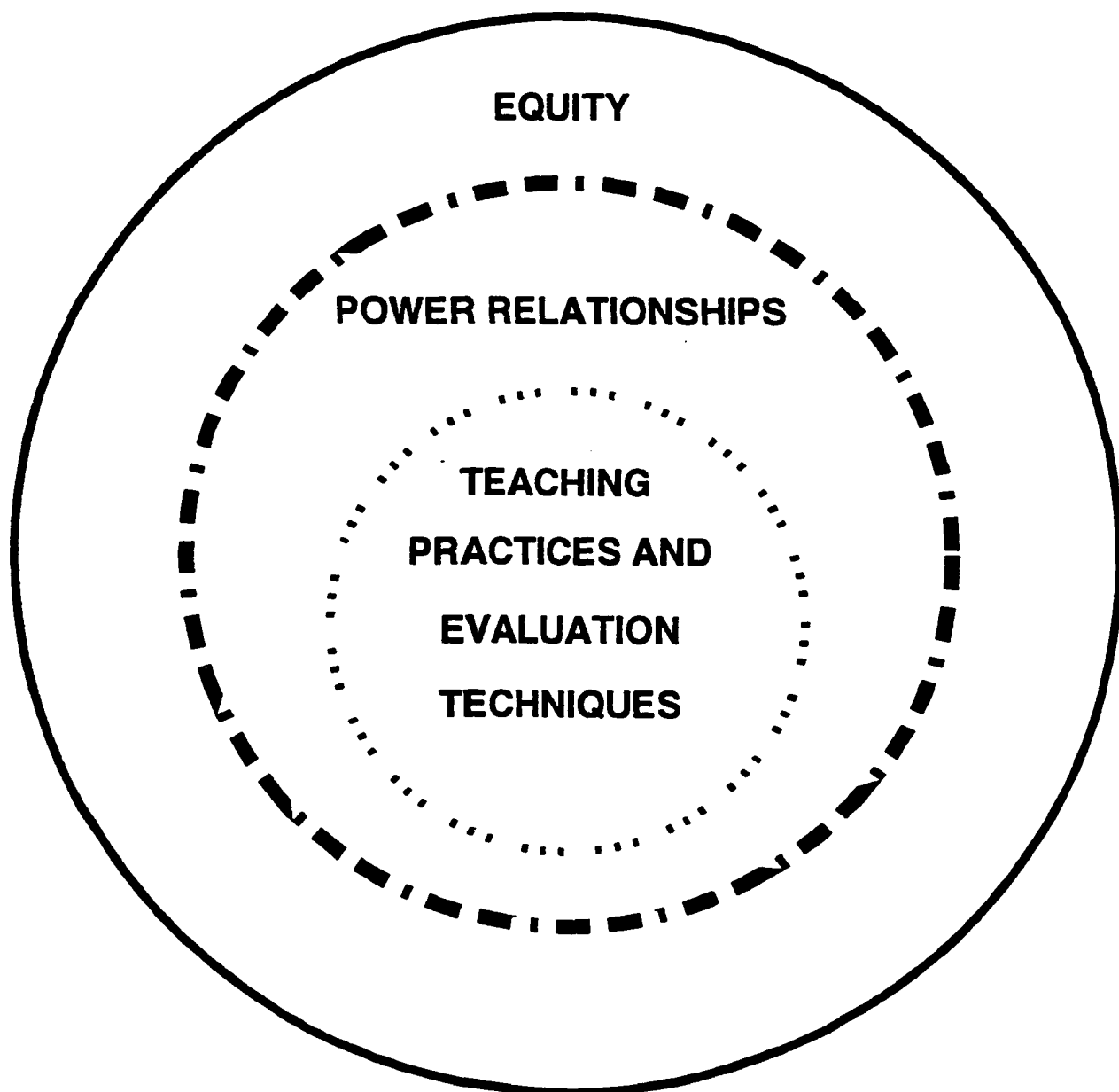
Figure 1: Relationships of Widespread Issues in Student Reports

The concerns raised by students varied considerably. However, each comment fell into one of the four categories included in Figure 1, that is, teaching practices, evaluation techniques, power relationships, and equity. Tables 4 through 7 summarize the specific concerns of students in this study in terms of these 4 issues. These tables are divided into 4 columns. In the first, the symptom of the source of anger is described. The symptom is a cause of anger. These are based on comments made by students which are reported as "research support" in column 2. The implications of these relationships are described in column 3. These are based on the comments provided by the students. Although these implications may not apply to every classroom in every school, these issues could all be connected to unbalanced power relations. In the 4th column, recommendations are presented which may help teachers and students deal with the symptoms of anger. Table 4, which follows, summarizes student concerns which pertain to the core issue of teaching practices. It is the first of 4 tables which summarize the terms in each of these areas.

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- inconsistent teaching practices	- different standards for other classes at same level and within same subject were implemented (p. 48)	- it was difficult for students to try to achieve and respect standards when standards are inconsistent	- teachers need adequate time to confer with others who teach the same subject in order to provide balance
- poor lesson delivery	- lessons paced too fast for most class members (p. 41, p. 70) - lessons were not taught in a creative manner (p. 42, p. 43) - teachers wasted time in class and had students make up for lost time with extra homework (p. 41) - poor organization of lesson material and evaluations (p. 41) - "group work" instructional techniques were overused (p. 45, p. 46) - students were asked to perform tasks not pertinent to the lesson i.e. marking tests from other classes and subjects (p. 49) - students did not receive sufficient information on course requirements (p. 52, p. 53) - teachers did not explain the purpose of assignments (p. 53)	- students were not given an appropriate time frame in which to learn and comprehend material - students did not developing a knowledge base·sufficient enough to add new more advanced knowledge to - when students were bored and not challenged, the goal of teaching the value of life-long learning was not achieved - students wanted sufficient time to work on assigned material - marking others work was considered a breach of confidentiality - teachers were perceived to be incapable of meeting the demands of their jobs - students got frustrated when given incomplete messages	- closely monitor the progress of all students during lesson delivery - ask frequent questions during lesson delivery to determine the level at which students comprehend new material - group students so that academically challenged students can be assisted by stronger students - do not use class time to have students mark others work - if it is necessary to place students in groups because of various restrictions, reduce the size of the group so that each student has an opportunity to learn and contribute

Table 4 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Teaching Practices

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- inability to challenge students	- teachers had students perform the same exercise an excessive number of times (p. 38, p. 51) - teachers gave old out-dated assignments (p. 43)	- boredom led to feelings of frustration, anger and a desire to give up and not put forth extra effort to learn - students felt that their needs were not being met with out-dated assignments	- communicate regularly with students to determining how they perceive certain activities in addition to assessing their progress
- teachers not teaching to all students of differing academic levels	- some teachers taught to level only suited to stronger students (p. 35, p. 36) - some teachers taught to level only suited to slower, less successful students (p. 36)	- the academic needs of certain groups of students were not being met	- teachers need more preparation time to allow them plan lessons suited to a wide variety of academic abilities and to assess the progress of individual students
- insufficient feedback to individual students	- teachers were not helping students determine where they erred in an assignment (p. 36)	- students failed to learn from their mistakes and failed to learn the value associated with correcting and learning from these mistakes	- take time to adequately go over student work by discussing difficulties with students or providing more written feedback on assignments
- insufficient teacher knowledge	- teachers did not know the subject material (p. 40) - teachers were not able to provide supporting examples (p. 40) - supply and student teachers were not familiar with subject material	- students felt that they can not learn from teachers which they feel cannot be trusted to provide accurate and complete information	- when knowledge is not readily available, provide an avenue for the teachers and students to work together to determine the information - help students understand that one individual cannot know everything but can seek new knowledge with effort and determination

Student frustration developed when teaching practices did not conform to their needs. Inconsistencies in standards and expectations from class to class, boring and incomplete lessons and insufficient teacher knowledge formed the basis of discussion in this area.

Students became bored when not challenged. They became angry when others seemed to get preferential treatment or when teachers spent more time with students of a particular academic level. When teachers did not know some of the subject material or did not seek to find information, students felt that they could not learn.

These difficulties can be alleviated by close monitoring of student progress and awareness of the differing needs of students. Every student needs opportunity to contribute to classroom activities.

The second core concern expressed by students pertained to evaluation techniques. This, combined with problems in teaching practices form the basis in which power relationships develop between teachers and students. Table 5 summarizes student concerns expressed which pertain to evaluation techniques.

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- lack of student knowledge of requirements and progress	- students had too few exams in relation to amount of material learned (p. 59, p. 60) - teachers failed to promptly return and discuss assignments and test results (p. 58) - teachers gave little information to students on how they could have received better grades (p. 59, p. 60) - teachers did not ensure that students understood the requirements of assignments or tests (p. 53)	- students felt that their achievement would be greater if the testing was set at intervals which allowed for appropriate feedback instead of being tested only once a term - when students were unaware of their progress, they became disenchanted - when feedback on assignments is insufficient, students failed to learn where they made mistakes and to correct those errors	- have formal tests distributed throughout the year which hold higher values in relation to the final grade - call an interim test an exam so that students feel less pressure to perform to high standards only once per term and so that students can understand test requirements and processes prior to high value final exams - add comments to assignments instead of handing back material with just a grade
- lack uniformity and balance in testing and evaluation	- insufficient balance in testing based on all work done in class existed (p. 57)	- students felt that some work is not considered in evaluations when much time had been spent on it in class - students felt that some work is worth more than it should be based on the time the teacher spent on it in relation to its worth on tests and exams	- balance evaluation with effort - if some components of class work is more important than other components, emphasize this by spending sufficient time on it or by communicating its true value to students

Table 5 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Evaluation Techniques

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- inconsistency in requirements and assessment of individual students	- teachers had inconsistent requirements for different students and did not explain the reason for this to students - teachers did not examine the work of high achievers	- inconsistent requirements confused students of all levels - students became disenchanted when they perceived evaluation techniques or standards as unfair and biased - high achievers did not receive appropriate amounts of feedback	- provide consistent and concise feedback to all students in order to meet the students need to comprehend their progress - if a student is to be graded based on different criteria, explain this to students
- inequality in testing and evaluation	- teachers did not mark group participants on individual contribution to group output (p. 46, p. 56) - marking standards varied greatly from grade to grade instead of following a natural order of progression (p. 57) - teachers used letter grades in grade nine and percentages in higher grades (p. 58, p. 59) - full marks were deducted for small errors in mathematics tests instead of basing marks on the entire process of answer deduction (p. 58)	- students learned that individual effort and achievement is of little or no value when compared to the success or failure of a group - inconsistent requirements and recognition led to frustration and confusion for some students - students felt that letter grades did not provide an accurate reflection of their progress and achievements - students learned that the end result is worth everything and the journey is worth nothing	- while it is absolutely essential that students learn the value associated with team efforts, students still need to feel that individual effort is important - the levels of academic achievement reached within a group will improve if each participant feels that his or her effort is accepted and praised - the key to teaching the value of lifelong learning is that each step to developing new knowledge is exciting and vital - giving credit to these steps is essential in instilling the value of life-long learning

Student anger at the core level of evaluation techniques was based on a lack of student knowledge and unfair testing procedures. Frustration and anger developed when inconsistencies occurred throughout the entire evaluation process. Students reported that they had too few tests, that tests did not accurately reflect effort, that teachers did not explain requirements and marks did not reflect individual contribution.

These inconsistencies resulted in students becoming disenchanted with tests and school, and giving up. For example, when students were not given clear instructions, they became frustrated and put little extra effort into completing work or doing well on tests.

Explicit directions and a balance between testing and the amount of time spent in class on certain activities and lessons would improve students' sense of fairness. Consistent and concise feedback will help students understand their progress. Teachers may not have to increase the one on one sessions they hold with each student. Great advances in communication can occur when written feedback on tests and assignments is positive and leads to further knowledge.

Teachers have much power over students. This power can be beneficial or detrimental. Table 6 provides a summary of the difficulties which pertain to this power relationship.

SYMPTOMS	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- lack of respect for rules and privileges	- teachers took smoke breaks during class but did not allow students to do so (p. 37) - teachers smoked on school grounds but did not allow students to do so (p. 64)	- students learned that they do not have rights when rules apply only to them and not to teachers	- keep rules consistent between teachers and students where possible - ensure all members of the school community abide by those rules
- inappropriate communication with students	- teachers often ignored students when they attempted to express concerns or ask for assistance p. 35, p. 37, p. 50) - teachers yelled at students for things that students stated they did not do (p. 51) - teachers did not admit that they made mistakes (p. 41) - teachers said one thing and did anothert (p. 50, p. 52) - teachers had administrators talk to students about grades instead of doing it themselves (p. 59)	- students learned that they cannot make a difference when they feel mistreated - students felt that trying to resolve a conflict by discussing the problem is not effective - students perceived that teachers were "better" than students - students were given the message that it is not alright to admit that an error has been made - frustration resulted when teachers failed to discuss important issues with students	- administration could examine the time pressures which may be interfering with a teacher's ability to converse with students when the student has difficulty - teachers could explain why they may not have the time to have an in-depth discussion with a particular student at any given time - if teachers are not able to deal with the problems immediately, they could schedule a time to hold such a discussion - establish a classroom environment which allows for mistakes without an element of punishment always being attached

Table 6 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Power Relationships

SYMPTOMS	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- lack of respect for students	- teachers forced shy people to speak in uncomfortable circumstances (p. 37) - teachers held up student work, having students mark the work of others, or reading student journals (p. 39, p. 45, p. 44) - teachers gave information to others that they had received from a student in a confidential conversation without student permission or knowledge (p. 43)	- students who felt that they were "different" in some way than others were being punished for those differences - students learned that being different is negative - students learned that sharing privileged information with a person in power only leads to negative repercussions and that rights to privacy are not respected	- respect both the teacher's and student's right to be different - emphasize the importance of diversity in lessons - respect confidentiality
- inappropriate expectations and use of motivational techniques	- teachers centred out students who performed below standards (p. 63) - teachers pointed out student weaknesses to other students (p. 63) - a teacher expected less from a student who lived in a different geographical area than other students (p. 40) - teachers predisposed new teachers to negative information about students (p. 44) - teachers punished students for making errors when expectations were not clearly given (p. 54)	- students who were centred out lost motivation instead of becoming more motivated - peer pressure and the embarrassment associated with being centred out meant more to students than the recognition that they received - students felt responsible for meeting standards that they had little understanding of	- awareness of the negative repercussions associated with centring out students and making "examples" of individuals - improved communication between students and teachers to ensure that students are aware of expected standards - both academically and with behaviours - reexamine the instructions given to students prior to implementing discipline methods

Table 6 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Power Relationships

SYMPTOMS	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- dictatorial style versus leadership	- teachers "blackmailed" students by manipulating grades following inappropriate behaviour (p. 57) - teachers demanded compliance from students (p. 61) - teachers made demands instead of requests (p. 62) - teachers demanded appropriate behaviour when the teacher was at fault for students getting out of hand (p. 63)	- students tended to give up in these situations instead of performing at higher levels - the technique of using negative reinforcers for inappropriate behaviour was ineffective and resulted in angry and frustrated students - teachers who demanded student conformity only ended up losing the much needed respect of students - students felt unjustly blamed which only lead to frustration and a lack of respect from the student	- develop the level of trust necessary for positive classroom interaction - understand that trust is not based on status - clearly communicate behaviour and academic requirements and consistently follow up on discipline strategies - ensure that students are aware of consequences for inappropriate behaviour

When teachers are perceived to lack respect for students, rules and privileges, to have little desire to communicate and understand students or teach using dictatorial methods, the power relationship which exists between teachers and students has a detrimental effect. In these cases, students lost motivation, became frustrated and angry, and had very little respect for teachers.

This led to a lack of trust between teachers and students. This is manifested in the concepts of Glasser's Control Theory. He stated that discipline problems existed when students were not getting needs met:

> It is this lack of power in the academic classes that is so frustrating to students because it comes just at the time when students are beginning to experience the increased need for power which is part of the normal biology of adolescence (Glasser, 1986, p. 63).

Positive praise could be more useful than negative praise. Rules should be followed and respected by both students and teachers and teachers could return the trust by maintaining confidentiality. When students are clearly given consistent messages regarding behaviours and academic requirements, teacher power is useful in increasing student knowledge and reducing anger producing stimuli.

The manner in which teachers exhibit power influences the students' perceptions of equal and fair treatment. Table 7 summarizes the difficulties associated with equity.

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- lack of equity for students at different skill levels	- teachers tended to pay less attention to gifted students (p. 35) - slow learners did not get help because teachers work with "smart kids" (p. 36) - teachers taught at a pace suitable for either the advanced or general level students and rarely taught to all levels in destreamed classes (p.42)	- students perceived that the academic needs of certain groups of students are not being met because they were overlooked - student feelings of alienation led to frustration and anger which sometimes led students to give up, suppress concerns and simply "slide through" or fail	- careful examination of the variety of abilities - when students put forth little effort, teachers could attempt to determine if students are feeling left out
- student to student inequality	- an individual hated being treated like a teacher's pet and being marked differently as a result (p. 56) - students did not like being marked "harder" if teachers thought that they were "good at something" (p. 56) - that deadlines for assignments did not apply to all students	- centring out students contributed to feelings of frustration - students learned that some students "get away with" not performing to certain standards	- avoid centring out students - use consistent marking systems for students of all academic levels - use praise to motivate students
- inequity in applying rules	- differences in classroom rules resulted in discipline being either too lenient or too strict (p. 61)	- students felt that they were receiving mixed messages and were not clear of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour - students learned that rules were not taken seriously and are often meant to be broken	- establish rules created with input from students, teachers and administrators

Table 7 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Equity

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- unequal treatment of students of different genders	- females got less gym time even though equal time had been allocated for male and female students (p. 38) - teachers preferred to coach male athletic teams than female teams (p. 71)	- female students received less attention and privilege because of their gender	- monitor the distribution of gym time
- unequal workload assignments	- students thought that they were given either too much or not enough homework (p. 47) - slow learners were not responsible for the same amount of material as average and above average students (p. 48)	- academically successful students felt punished for being "good" at something - slow learners felt that they were not expected to perform at the same level as more advanced students	- balance workloads both in class and between different classes
- inconsistency in treatment for single individual	- teachers treated a student well one time and "mean" the next for no known reason (p. 63)	- inconsistent treatment resulted in feelings of confusion - the desire to perform to certain standards decreased with inconsistent treatment	- explain behaviour to students so that they fully understand the reason behind the change in treatment
- unequal treatment of students of different ages	- senior athletes got more privileges and recognition than junior athletes (p. 65) - grade nine students did not have the same privileges as students in higher grades (p. 64)	- grade status was more important than the effort single individuals put forth in order to receive recognition - students felt punished simply for being younger than other students	- teach students that any period in the development of skill in as important as the final product - provide fair treatment to students of all ages

Table 7 (cont.): Symptoms Associated with Equity

SYMPTOM	RESEARCH SUPPORT	IMPLICATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
- unequal work contributions in group situations	- good students were forced to do the work for poorer students in groups and did not receive extra recognition (p. 46)	- students learned that putting forth an extra effort is valueless and not worth it	- give students the opportunity to evaluate their own and others efforts in a confidential manner - observe students' work in groups and include this in the grading
- unequal consideration when assessing reasons for absence	- students who were absent for attending extracurricular activities were treated the same as those absent for other reasons (p. 56)	- students learned that being socially active results in a loss in academics - students questioned whether being socially active should be a priority	- praise students who take interest in a wide variety of school activities - factor in the "reason for absence" in assessing a student's performance - teach students that diversity in interests is important and rewarding

107

Students felt that an imbalance in equity occurred frequently in schools. This inequity led to feelings of anger and frustration. The symptoms which were indicative of unequal or inappropriate use of equal treatment were widespread. Students felt that students at different skills and age were unfairly treated differently. On the other hand, students felt that differences in the reasons for absence or contributions to group work were not recognized.

Anger and frustration developed when students felt alienated from the system or when others seemingly received preferential treatment for no reason. The mixed messages given to students taught students that privileges were unfair and that those who received certain privileges were just lucky. When faced with unequal treatment, students gave up, were not taught consistent, acceptable behaviours and social skills, or withdrew from participating in extracurricular activities.

Teachers could communicate with all students on a less formal basis in order to understand why students were feeling left out, frustrated, or angry. Teachers could explain why differences occurred to students. When students fully understand why differences occur, the levels of frustration, anger and alienation may be reduced.

Students often expressed anger at having to work in group situations where one or more students were not contributing to the productivity of the group. Students did not mention that this altered the way that they interacted with peers. They reported becoming less motivated and reluctant to be the "one who does all the work".

Of the students who discussed group work, twenty agreed that group work was necessary and a good learning tool. However, they felt that this set up is overused.

According to the students interviewed, teachers need to reduce the amount of group work in their curriculum or evaluate group work with a component that assesses individual contributions. Open discussion with the teachers and providing an evaluation process which accurately reflects individual effort may reduce the tension which results in groups where all students are not contributing. It may place more pressure on individuals who do not contribute to add to the group effort. The output from groups where individual effort is a component of the assessment may be more diverse and intriguing than that of groups where only certain individuals do the work.

An area which angered many of the students interviewed pertained to the manner in which students of all academic abilities were grouped. Some students are feeling alienated and left out. For example, students of all academic levels reported being left out when teachers focused on either "the smart kids" or "the dumb kids". Students reported that they had lost faith in the high school system and put forth little effort into doing well. Students felt that individual student progress and levels of understanding were being ignored. It angered students that teachers moved on to new and more difficult topics when they did not understand the topic just covered.

Students became very frustrated when certain rules applied to some and not others and when the rules changed from class to class. The consequences of not complying with rules needs to be consistent. School personnel must allot consistent rules between junior and/or female athletes and senior and/or male athletes.

Students responded positively to skilled teachers and tended to withdraw when faced with teachers who lack certain skills. New teachers need to be trained in a

variety of areas. In order to develop, understand and implement a curriculum, teachers must be trained to have exceptional interpersonal and organizational skills. They must also understand the needs of individual students.

The students felt the lack of communication between themselves and teachers. This is backed up by the literature:

> Past research has shown that perceived teacher involvement and feelings of relatedness, mutual liking, and lack of alienation in relation to the teacher are all associated with student engagement, grades, and achievement test scores (Schunk & Meece,1992).

In this study, students reported feelings of alienation from teachers and administrators. To increase the motivation and academic achievement of students, it may be necessary to increase the level of communication between students and teachers. The students interviewed felt that if they knew more about the purpose behind certain activities and assignments, their tensions would disappear.

Schunk and Meece (1992) indicated that students' perceptions and interpretations of the evaluation process directly influences motivational levels in students (p. 340). In this study, students recommended that they become more informed of their progress as it happens as opposed to the end of the semester. If students receive marked assignments quickly, they may be more motivated to maintain the success rate that they have attained. They felt their frustration over the process of evaluation would be reduced if all students understood the components of the evaluation. Students want to be informed on how they can improve, why they

received certain grades and what specific portions of the curriculum weigh heavily in the evaluation process. Evaluation allows teachers to assess the progress of both the class and individuals and it relays information to the students. Since so much of a student's self esteem is derived from grades, they need to understand how that grade, be it a letter grade or percentage, is developed.

Students reported feeling anger towards teachers who were too strict or too lenient. In both cases, positive rewards were lacking. Teachers who were too strict reportedly "controlled students" and failed to remember that communication is most successful when both parties send and receive messages. Glasser (1990) reported that an "adversarial teacher-student relationship" (p. 28) can be destructive, especially when it focuses on the use of punishment instead of positive reward. Strict teachers tended to be senders and not receivers. Teachers who were too lenient tended to act more as receivers and did not send enough information back to the students. Discipline problems resulted in both situations. Students felt that teachers should provide leadership without being too controlling.

Other themes reported in this study occurred less frequently in discussion. Students would like to have teachers who display a genuine caring for them as individuals, be consistent, get to know them and not judge them on past achievements and respect their confidentiality.

Responding to Student Anger

Methodologies pertaining to current ways of dealing with student anger and non-conforming behaviour such as Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.), Systematic Training for Effective Teachers (S.T.E.T.) and the recommendations of Glasser, Colorosso emphasize changing inappropriate behaviours and teaching students that they are responsible for their actions. The results of this study support the use of these recommendations and emphasize the need to examine the precipitating events leading up to the need to implement such strategies.

The students in this study were aware of the need for appropriate levels of power in their relationships with teachers. They indicated that teachers gain respect and power when communication between teachers and students occurs at an appropriate level. Students reported that they attempted to talk with teachers but were not being listened to. For example, when students expressed concerns over the imbalance in the assessment of group work, teachers reportedly did nothing.

Students felt that the number of conflicts would be reduced if teachers communicated better and were aware of student feelings. For example, students expressed concern over the lack of notification of assignment requirements, evaluation procedures, and everyday classroom rules.

Teacher Effectiveness Training focuses on the need to examine the teacher and student relationship (Gordon, 1974). Teachers who implement T.E.T. strategies attempt to solve conflict by implementing "win-win" conflict resolution methods. The students who participated in this study felt that these strategies were not being

implemented. In order to have a conflict resolved in a "win-win" manner, both sides need to express their concerns and, more importantly, need to listen to the concern of the other party. Perhaps, teachers would not have to resort to T.E.T. techniques to solve conflicts if more information was given to students.

Systematic Training for Effective Teachers (S.T.E.T.) (Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer, 1980) is another classroom management technique discussed earlier. The key to the successful implementation of S.T.E.T. is that the behaviour of both the teacher and student should be assessed in order to reduce student misbehaviour. When teachers use this strategy, they :

1. Establish a climate of equality and mutual respect

2. Encourage students

3. Offer students a role in decision making

4. Develop students' self-discipline by offering consistent, logical, fully understood guidelines for behaviour. (Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer, 1980, p. 6)

According to students, situations existed in classrooms where they were not given respect, were not encouraged, did not play a role in decision making and had inconsistent guidelines and rules. For example, students did not feel respected when they were accused of doing something that they said they did not do or when guidance teachers did not respect confidentiality. When students had to repeat the same assignment several times, they felt that they were not encouraged to move on to more challenging work. When teachers smoked on school grounds and students were

not allowed to do so, students perceived inconsistencies and a lack of fairness in rules. These are all issues of equity in power relationships.

Glasser (1990) reported that the stimulus and response methods used to obtain student conformity do not work. He reported that discipline problems exist because students do not get their basic needs met. Student reports confirmed this. Some students reported acting out when they were bored, finished work ahead of others or felt that teachers stereotyped them based on family history. Students agreed with the principles provided by Glasser that state that success rates would be higher if these basic needs were met.

One of the major concerns expressed by students was the inconsistency of requirements and rules between classes. Students wanted to have input in the develop and implementation of school and classroom rules and be more informed of the requirements of each teacher. Colorosso (1983) recommended that this should be of primary importance in classrooms. The students interviewed felt that teachers and students should develop rules and consequences that are not only consistent for students within one class, but should be consistent in all classes.

Colorosso (1983) also emphasized the need to differentiate between punishment and discipline. She determined that it is essential that students can be taught to make good decisions when teachers "guide them through the process without passing judgement, and let them grow through the results of their decision" (Colorosso, 1989, p. 4).

According to the findings, teachers are not adhering to her recommendations.

They feel that there is a large imbalance in discipline strategies used by teachers. Some are considered too strict while others are too lenient. Students felt that they were not always aware of the consequences associated with their behaviour because discipline was inconsistent and unpredictable. Students interpreted many actions as punishment instead of positive discipline. For example, Dominique felt that he was being punished for completing work ahead of others and having to sit and do nothing. Others felt that they were being punished for completing work ahead of others when they were assigned extra work to fill time. The incidents reported by students in this study indicated that students do interpret discipline and punishment as two separate events.

Behaviour modification techniques emphasize the use of both positive and negative reinforcers. Techniques such as operant conditioning, social and cognitive learning theories focus on changing inappropriate behaviours. The results of this study indicated that the students believed that they would exhibit fewer inappropriate behaviours if the underlying reason for the behaviour was dealt with. For example, Mel stated that he acted out when he was forced to work with someone who contributed little to the assignment. He felt that the teacher would not have to deal with his inappropriate behaviour had he been listened to when he attempted to explain his concerns to the teacher. The inappropriate behaviour resulted when Mel felt he had been dealt with in an unfair manner. In this case, behaviour modification techniques which attempt to change inappropriate behaviour will not solve Mel's problem.

Another response to expressed anger was reported by Tavris (1989). She determined that individuals often walk away from angry individuals and ignore the problem. Students who felt that teachers ignored them acted this way. This supported Tavris's theory. Many students reported that teachers ignored problems. For example, students reported becoming angry and frustrated when teachers taught certain lessons too rapidly. When they expressed their frustration by speaking out, they felt ignored.

This study provides excellent support for the professionals who train new teachers. It provides several examples of items which limit student learning. Teachers need to know their students. Student teachers need to learn the behaviour modification techniques described by Gordon, Dinkmeyer, Glasser, and Colorosso as these techniques certainly play an important role in classroom management. However, in addition, student teachers need to be introduced to the many underlying reasons for nonconforming behaviour, student dropouts, poor effort, and failure.

Recommendations

The following list is a summary of recommendations based on information and specific recommendations made by the students during the interviews. The majority of these recommendations are directed to individual teachers. Others are addressed to administrators, other staff members and the students. Changes are recommended in the manner in which daily classroom activities are conducted, the methods of communication used by teachers, administrators and students, and the manner in which student achievement is evaluated.

Those recommendations based on analysis of the information attained from the students that pertain to the manner in which daily classroom activities are conducted included:

* deliver lessons in a fair and consistent manner

* teach using new, creative, and innovative teaching methods

* know subject material

* stay on topic

* pace lessons to ensure that all students understand the lesson prior to moving on

* when exhibiting student work in front of the class, use work from another class so as not to centre out individuals in that particular class

* determine if you are favouring students of a particular academic level and alter methods to include all students in classroom activities

* avoid assigning "busy work" that does not apply to current lessons

* ask student to work in groups only where group work enhances learning

* avoid using a large group format in mathematics

* be aware of the negative repercussions associated with centring out certain individuals

* balance the homework load by considering the amounts of homework assigned in other classes

* avoid excessive and unnecessary repetition of assignments and activities

* ensure that students are aware of and understand the need for all classroom

and school rules

* keep rules and privileges consistent for all students

* ensure that staff, teachers and students have to abide by the rules

* ensure that a student is "guilty" of breaking rules prior to disciplining an individual

Those recommendations based on analysis of the information attained from the students that pertain to the manner in which teachers communicate with students and other staff members included:

* ensure that it is absolutely necessary to transfer information which describes student behaviour to other teachers prior to doing so

* earn student trust instead of demanding it

* maintain control over the class and individuals without being too strict or "demanding"

* do not threaten students

* try not to interrupt students when they are trying to speak with you

* allow students to express their concerns in a manner conducive to finding a solution

* teach and implement positive conflict management strategies

* communicate regularly with supply and student teachers

* be consistent in the recognition of male or female and junior or senior athletes

* explain the purpose behind assignments along with the subject material

* ensure that students are aware of expectations

* do not force students to share their academic "successes" or "failures"

* attempt to understand the problems and challenges facing today's youth

* show interest in the personal lives of students

* get involved with students outside of the classroom

* respect students' rights to confidentiality and privacy

* don't ask students to share personal information with teachers and other staff members when the student does not know that teacher

* admit to students that you may have made a mistake and show them that you learn from your mistakes

Those recommendations based on analysis of the information attained from the students that pertain to the manner in which teachers evaluate students included:

* help students determine how they went wrong and provide guidance to help them understand how they can perform better

* avoid having students mark the work of others unless student input is necessary

* when evaluating group work, use grades pertaining to individual achievement and effort

* listen to student input regarding evaluation and levels of understanding

* have grading components for both behaviour and academic achievement that do not overlap

* ensure that the material presented on tests and assignments accurately

reflects work done in class

* promptly mark and return assignments

* ensure that all marked assignments and tests are considered in the final grading of individuals

* if using letter grades provide specific information to students on their levels of achievement

* do not stereotype students based on past performance, peer group association, style of dress, or family history

Recommendations for Future Research

There are situations that exist in school organizations which elicit anger in students and students at the grade eight through ten level have difficulty in knowing how they respond to this anger. The students in this study appreciated being given an opportunity to speak about their concerns. Future research should be directed to the students themselves. Students provide excellent input. Individual research projects could direct questions pertaining to any one of the themes noted in this study, particularly evaluation techniques, teaching practices, power relationships and equity. This would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the sources of student anger.

It would be beneficial to determine if the amount of anger generated is reduced if teachers make changes to the way they manage their classrooms. Students at higher levels may be able to provide more responses to the second part of the interview questions. If they were asked "How do you respond to this anger?" researchers may be able to obtain more specific data.

In Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was to determine if and what about school organizations triggered angry feelings in students and to determine how students reacted to this elicited anger. Several themes emerged which led to the following theory: evaluation techniques, teaching practices, power relationships, and equity. The style of teaching practices and evaluation techniques that are incorporated into daily classroom activities form the foundation to the type of power relationship that exists between students and teachers. The style of power that exists in the relationships between students and teachers dictates the level of equity which occurs.

There are several instances in school organization which elicit anger in students. Students at the ages of 14 to 16 have difficulty in identifying how they respond to this elicited anger. Students reported being bored, yelling at teachers, and not doing assigned work, but answers to the second interview question were minimal. Most students said that they did not know how they responded. Students who did respond to the second question gave up when needs were not met. They described many of their needs. This included: being listened to and respected, obtaining adequate information about assignments, rules, and evaluation procedures, having individual efforts recognized and rewarded, having skilled teachers, not being prejudged, and being challenged.

The school situations that elicited anger and frustration in students were not exclusively expressed by individual students. In fact, the opposite is true. Of the 25 students interviewed, all had reported feeling angry at some point in the past year of

schooling. Several, from different schools, reported similar circumstances. For example, poor teaching practices often led to boredom, or the feeling that a student would never be successful. Communication between those responsible for educating our youth and the youth themselves continues to be inappropriate. Without good communication, problems will not be solved and the magnitude of each concern will only increase. Perhaps as teachers, we need to communicate "purpose" as much as "content" in order to bridge the gap between ourselves and the adolescents with whom we deal with daily. This includes stating reasons for using certain evaluation techniques and lesson formats. Students feel strongly that teachers need to display a strong sense of caring for the students. This would reportedly result in increasing student motivation to succeed in class. Problem solving techniques should involve both teachers and students.

Several recommendations have been made in dealing with problems in each of the four themes, evaluation techniques, teaching practices, power relationships, and equity. Those pertaining to evaluation techniques include; providing consistent and concise feedback, explaining criteria to students, adding comments to assignments instead of handing back material with just a grade, and balancing evaluation with effort. Important aspects to consider when establishing teaching practices include; closely monitoring the progress of all students during lesson delivery, taking time to go over student work adequately by providing written feedback on assignments, planning lessons suited to a wide variety of academic abilities, reducing the size of the group so that each student has an opportunity to learn and contribute, and providing

an avenue for both teachers and students to build upon current knowledge.

Power can be established in a manner conducive to positive learning by; keeping rules consistent, establishing a classroom environment which allows for mistakes without an element of punishment always being attached, respecting both the teacher's and student's right to be different, understanding that trust is not based on status, being aware of the negative repercussions associated with centring out students, and improving communication between students and teachers to ensure that students are aware of expected standards - both academically and with behaviours.

To enhance the levels of equity between students and teachers, teachers need to balance workloads both in class and between different classes, and provide fair treatment to students of all ages. Teachers must teach students that diversity in interests is important and rewarding, use consistent marking systems, and carefully examine the variety of student abilities.

The research has indicated several key findings. The need to examine the underlying reasons for student tension is very clear. The need to assist students in understanding the process of educating students or to modify this process to have more successful students is great.

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Appendix: Interview Schedule

Group one: School one - interview conducted at school, May 10, 1995, 10 A.M.

Group two: School two - interview conducted at school, May 12, 1995, 10 A.M.
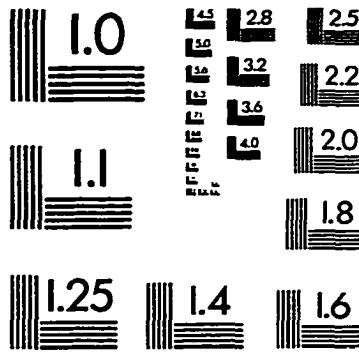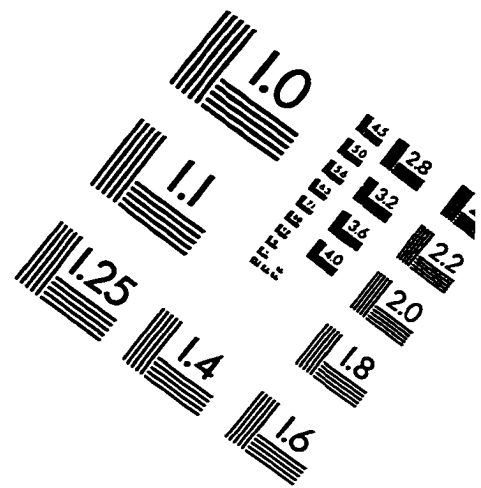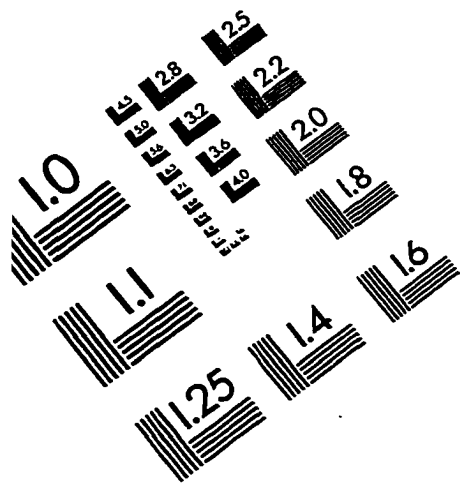
Group three: School two - interview conducted at school, May 14, 1995, 10 A.M.

Group four: School two - interview conducted at school, May 14, 1995, 1 P.M.

Group five: School three - interview conducted at parent's home, May 19, 3:30 P.M.

Group six: School four - interview conducted at parent's home, May 20, 3:30 P.M.

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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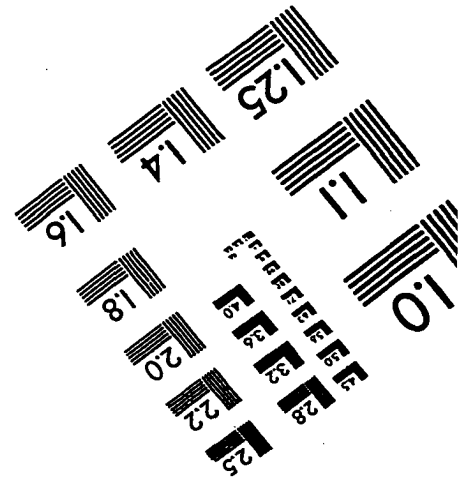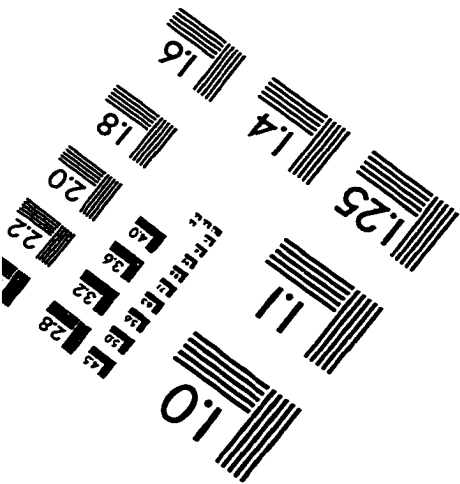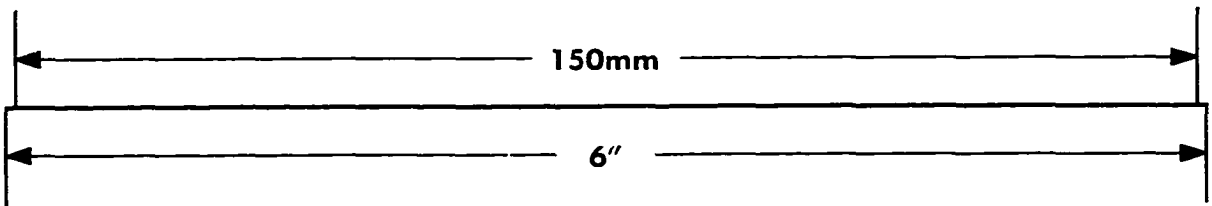
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