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Elementary School Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher

Anne Rose Acocella
Seton Hall University

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IDEAL TEACHER

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University

2002
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DEDICATION

To my husband, Christopher, who made this degree one of love, patience, and perseverance during our first year of marriage. To you I owe my deepest love and gratitude for all of your sacrifices during this eventful process.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES........................................................................................................vii

LIST OF FIGURES.....................................................................................................viii

I INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................1

  Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................11
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................12
  Research Question ...............................................................................................12
    Subsidiary Questions .........................................................................................12
  Definition of Terms .............................................................................................13
  Significance of the Study .....................................................................................14
  Limitations ...........................................................................................................17
  Organization of the Study ....................................................................................17

II LITERATURE REVIEW ..........................................................................................18

  Overview ..............................................................................................................18
  Overview of the SPOTS Survey ..........................................................................18
  The Need for Trained Teachers ..........................................................................19
  Students’ Preferred Teaching Style ...................................................................20
  Characteristics of the Ideal Teacher ..................................................................24
  Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher .......................................................26
  The Relation of Gender and Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher ..........30
  The Relation of Race and Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher ..............35
  The Relation of Grade Level and Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher ...36
  Summary ..............................................................................................................38

III METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................................40

  Introduction .........................................................................................................40
  Population ............................................................................................................40
  Instrument ...........................................................................................................44
  Procedure ............................................................................................................47
  Data Collection ..................................................................................................52
  Data Analysis .....................................................................................................53
IV RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research Question ........................................... 55
Analysis ......................................................... 55
Conclusion ...................................................... 57

Subsidiary Question No. 1 .................................. 57
Hypothesis ....................................................... 57
Level of significance .......................................... 57
Test statistic ................................................... 57
Assumptions .................................................... 60
Decision rule .................................................... 60
Computations ................................................... 60
Decision ......................................................... 61
Conclusion ....................................................... 61

Subsidiary Question No. 2 .................................. 62
Hypothesis ....................................................... 62
Level of significance .......................................... 62
Test statistic ................................................... 62
Assumptions .................................................... 62
Decision rule .................................................... 64
Computations ................................................... 64
Decision ......................................................... 64
Conclusion ....................................................... 65

Subsidiary Question No. 3 .................................. 65
Hypothesis ....................................................... 65
Level of significance .......................................... 65
Test statistic ................................................... 65
Assumptions .................................................... 67
Decision rule .................................................... 67
Computations ................................................... 67
Decision ......................................................... 67
Scheffé technique .............................................. 67
Conclusion ....................................................... 70

V CONCLUSION .................................................. 71

Summary of the Study ......................................... 71
Summary of the Findings ....................................... 74
Research question ............................................ 74
Subsidiary question no. 1 ................................... 74
Subsidiary question no. 2 ................................... 75
Subsidiary question no. 3 ................................... 75
Conclusions and Discussion ................................ 76
Recommendations for Future Research .................... 77
# REFERENCES

A SPOTS (Revised) Survey Instrument ........................................... 89
B IRB Approval Letter ................................................................. 94
C Request for Permission to Superintendent of Schools ................. 96
D Request for Permission to School Principal .............................. 99
E Permission to Conduct Study Granted by 
   School Principal ........................................................................ 102
F Permission to Conduct Study Granted by 
   Superintendent of Schools ....................................................... 104
G Letter of Solicitation and Informed Consent Form 
   for Parents ................................................................................ 106
H Letter of Solicitation and Student Assent Form 
   for Students .............................................................................. 111
I School Principal Letter of Endorsement ........................................ 116
J Survey Letter of Introduction to Teachers ................................... 118
K NIH Human Participant Protections Education 
   for Research Teams Certificates of Completion ......................... 120
L Demographic Information Sheet (DIS) ....................................... 124
M Sample SPOTS Example .............................................................. 126
N Approval to use SPOTS Survey Instrument ............................... 128
O Reliability Analysis of SPOTS Survey Instrument ....................... 131
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Descriptors of Teacher Behavior, Teacher Characteristics, and Teaching Style</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SPOTS Survey Participant Characteristics</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comparison of Directive and Non-directive Teacher Styles</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Gender</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Race</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Grade Level</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by gender</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by race</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by grade level</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Student perceptions of teacher quality evolve from their exposure to trained educators. A comprehensive review of the literature validates the concern of school districts that an overall need for trained and qualified teachers exists. Accordingly, information provided by students is important since it may offer potential and current educators insight into ideal teaching behaviors that are required for the teaching profession.

School districts in various parts of the country are currently facing a shortage of qualified teacher candidates to fill their vacant positions (O’Laughlin, 1999). Lemke (1994) reported that across the country, large and small school districts are experiencing very high teacher attrition rates. Twenty-six percent of new teachers leave the profession after their first two years. Sixty percent leave after their first five years of teaching. Frequently cited reasons for leaving the teaching profession include the promise of more lucrative positions and the inability to cope with the problems of teaching.

Teachers are not interchangeable blocks that can be placed in any vacant classroom regardless of their type of training. According to Ingersoll (1997), the survey data suggest that a host of recent incentives that were designed to entice professionals into a mid-life career change, such as alternative certification programs, do not adequately address the multivariate causes for teacher shortages. Invariably, personnel shortage issues must also
include a discussion of salary equity, student discipline problems, and faculty input in the school decision-making process. Licensing programs alone can not lure the best and the brightest into understaffed schools.

In their study, Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, and Terhanian (1998) found that teacher shortages are due to the insufficient pool of teachers having the qualities sought by school districts. Some of the qualities sought in teachers are formal credentials such as degrees earned, type of teacher preparation completed, field of academic major, amount of experience, certifications held, tested teaching ability, and excellence of teaching performance. Their findings confirm the need for trained and fully certified teachers in both special and general education.

Word, Achilles, Bain, Folger, Johnston, and Lintz (1990) conducted a four-year longitudinal class-size project entitled Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR). Project STAR followed students from kindergarten (K) through grade 3, starting in 1985-86 with kindergarten and ending in 1988-89 with third grade. The main focus of the study was on student achievement as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test (K-3), STAR’s Basic Skills Criterion Test (grades 1-2), and Tennessee’s Basic Skills Criterion Test (grade 3). The STAR project definitively concluded that small classes (13-17 students per teacher) have an advantage over larger classes (22-25 students per teacher) in reading and mathematics in the early primary grades. Similarly, Achilles (1990) reported that small classes produced the highest mean scores on all tests and in all locations. He found that minority students benefited far more from smaller-size classes than from larger ones. Additionally, he concluded that students who were in the smaller classes for three
years were about one-half year ahead of students of equal ability who had been in regular-sized classes.

Elementary school enrollment rose by 11% between 1990 and 1997, reflecting a continuation of enrollment growth that began in the mid-1980s. Further increases are expected for at least four more years before enrollments begin to stabilize. The average enrollment in an elementary school in the United States (U.S.) has risen from 449 students in 1990-1991 to 476 students in 1995-1996, the equivalent of at least one full classroom. The growth in enrollment has reduced the number of relatively small elementary schools (those with fewer than 200 students) by 12% while increasing the number of elementary schools with more than 800 students by 25% (Snyder, 1998). At the same time, school districts nationwide are fighting for smaller class size, especially at the primary level, thereby increasing the demand for certified school teachers.

Following a series of research projects conducted by Ingersoll (1997), it was reported that large numbers of U.S. public school classrooms are staffed with unqualified, untrained teachers. A substantial number of schools do report some degree of difficulty filling their teaching vacancies with qualified candidates. Data compiled in the Schools and Staffing Survey, which was fielded by the National Center for Education Statistics in the late 1980s, concluded that staffing inequities were precipitated by teacher shortages that occurred for several reasons. One reason is that not enough new teachers are entering the profession. Secondly, the shortage of trained teachers is due to student enrollments that have steadily risen while teacher retirements have proportionally increased. Literature extending from the Schools and Staffing Survey suggests that when school principals are faced with difficulties in obtaining suitable teaching candidates, they
most commonly respond in three ways: (a) They hire less-qualified teachers, (b) they assign teachers trained in another field or grade level to teach in the understaffed area, or (c) they make extensive use of substitute teachers. These particular coping strategies can result in the phenomenon called “out-of-field-teaching.” For all intents and purposes, these teachers are instructing in fields outside the scope of their training or qualifications.

Wood and Hoag (1993) reported an overall shortage of male teachers, especially at the elementary school level. Their study correlates dynamic changes in society and changing family patterns with a need for more male elementary school teachers to educate young children. However, principals’ responses to this study were specific with regard to teacher shortages. They emphasized that it mattered more to them to have qualified, effective teachers working for them than whether the teachers were male or female.

Regardless of gender or qualifications, excellent teachers are a rare commodity. For this reason, student perceptions of their ideal teacher, that is, one from whom they learn best, may be an important element of the educational learning process since perceptions contribute to, and detract from, the total learning experience. Mounting interest in the viewpoints of students as “interpreters of classroom dynamics” has arisen. Research has shown that not only are students constantly and actively interpreting their classroom environment, but they are also employing those interpretations to shape their actions within the classroom. Students’ thoughts and actions are directly related to their environment as they are continuously and unconsciously reassessing their environment in order to make decisions on behavior and attitude. Students who perceive agreement between what they expect from their teacher and what they actually receive are more likely to learn tasks confidently and straightforwardly. Conversely, students who
encounter teachers contrary to their ideal may be hindered by conflict and resistance (Peterson & Mayes, 1981). Available literature suggests that student perceptions of the ideal teacher have remained unchanged over time.

Students are always studying their teachers. They observe every move the teacher makes. Because teachers retain the primary role in the education process, it seems appropriate to investigate observable (verbal) behavioral responses and perceived (or non-verbal) teacher behaviors for patterns. The manner in which a teacher responds to a given situation (e.g., facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, and body language) offers important behavioral insights. Teacher behavior, as described by Whitfield (1976), includes how a teacher reacts, responds, and engages students in different instances, and how such encounters ultimately result in making students feel a certain way. Teacher behavior is influenced by various pedagogical factors such as instructional methods used and teacher knowledge of subject matter. In contrast, teaching style is measured by a combination of teacher behaviors and personality characteristics and is classified in terms of being directive or non-directive. Table 1 illustrates the mutual relationship between teacher behavior, teacher characteristics, and teaching style.

Another area of research related to teacher behavior is the examination of teacher behavior as perceived by students. Affecting and being affected by their teacher's behaviors, students must understand their teacher's actions if they are to be successful in the classroom. Since teachers are forever under the student's watchful eye, it is paramount for educators to recognize how students perceive their teachers and the influence those perceptions have on student-teacher interactions. Teacher behaviors, measured through observations, appear to influence student outcomes, attitudes, and
Table 1

Descriptors of Teacher Behavior, Teacher Characteristics, and Teaching Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher behavior</th>
<th>Teacher characteristics</th>
<th>Teaching style</th>
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<tr>
<td>How a teacher reacts, responds, and engages students.</td>
<td>A distinguishing trait.</td>
<td>A combination of teacher behaviors and teacher characteristics. Teaching style is classified as directive (authoritative) or non-directive (facilitative).</td>
</tr>
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<td>Rigidly structured course work, minimization of class activities, emphasis on factual knowledge, use of absolute punishment, minimization to make or learn from mistakes, maintenance of formal relationship with students, total grade responsibility, formal classroom atmosphere.</td>
<td>Fair vs. unfair, well groomed vs. unkempt, humorous vs. nonhumorous, courteous vs. discourteous, respectful vs. disrespectful, realness vs. superficial, connected vs. disconnected, active listener vs. passive listener, knowledgeable of subject matter vs. ill-prepared on subject matter</td>
<td>Directive</td>
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(Table continues)
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<tr>
<th>Teacher behavior</th>
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<td>A distinguishing trait.</td>
<td>A combination of teacher behaviors and teacher characteristics. Teaching style is classified as directive (authoritative) or non-directive (facilitative).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to make own decisions most of the time, encourages students to freely express their opinions, encourages holistic self-assessment, lets group members decide how a project should be handled, acts more like a friend than a teacher, lets the students do what they like as long as they complete their projects on-time.</td>
<td>Fair vs. unfair, well groomed vs. unkempt, humorous vs. nonhumorous, courteous vs. discourteous, respectful vs. disrespectful, realness vs. superficial, connected vs. disconnected, active listener vs. passive listener, knowledgeable of subject matter vs. ill-prepared on subject matter</td>
<td>Non-directive</td>
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achievement. Additionally, Whitfield (1976) reported that his most important finding suggests that students form very clear perceptions of their teachers and that these perceptions are identifiable and measurable using observable behaviors of teachers by students. Moreover, it is unlikely that all students perceive actions in the classroom in exactly the same way.

Overall, students are considered an excellent source of information with reference to what takes place inside the classroom. It is natural to draw upon student assessments for improvement of the educational process. Since student needs are diversified, it is natural to use this resource as a means toward improving the overall educational process. Student populations have also changed in the last decade in most public school districts in terms of ethnic diversity and the inclusion of special education students into the mainstream, yet teacher behaviors have not significantly changed with the times. Currently, students are more service-oriented and demanding, requiring the teacher’s role to become more facilitative.

Theall and Franklin (1991) reported that the most effective type of feedback for teacher improvement combines valid and concrete information with the assistance of a knowledgeable person in a nonthreatening environment. Student ratings of teacher instruction are readily available. They are a common source of feedback used for teacher evaluations and personnel decision-making. Interest in how students perceive teacher behavior has intensified in response to a growing awareness that student perceptions influence instruction and outcomes. In addition, by assessing student perceptions of the ideal teacher on the elementary school level, important information can be synthesized from the data and presented to school districts, thereby providing them with solid
direction in terms of designing relevant in-service and professional development programs uniquely predicated upon student perceptions of their ideal teachers.

Student perceptions of the ideal teacher can be an important part of the learning environment. Student perceptions may contribute to, or detract from, the learning process. Simple access to schooling does not necessarily guarantee that educational experiences will actually enhance learning opportunities for all students. Jules and Kutnick (1997) indicated that the likelihood of enhancing a quality education for pupils of either sex would obviously be mediated by pupils’ schooling experiences, which includes their perceived relationships of their teachers. Ames (as cited in Jules & Kutnick, 1997) discovered that teacher perceptions are shaped by student experiences and successes within the school environment.

Mathews (2000) observed that the notion of multi-level assessment, often called 360-degree evaluation, has become so popular in the business world that more and more school boards are demanding that students be part of the evaluation process. In his research, Mathews reported that students as young as kindergarten age were administered a questionnaire regarding teacher behavior with questions such as, “Does the teacher answer all of your questions?” The students responded by using a crayon to circle a happy face, a neutral face, or a sad face on their survey sheets. This interest reflects a growing consensus that students actively interpret the social worlds of the school and classroom and that the nature of these interpretations helps structure students’ actions within these social worlds. A thorough understanding of these perceptions is necessary if appropriate interventions are to be made in school organizations and classroom instruction (Mergendoller & Packer, 1985). In addition, teachers must be encouraged to make every
effort to solicit student perceptions and incorporate that feedback into a truly personalized teaching style.

The Student Perception of Teacher Style Revised (SPOTS) survey developed by Tuckman (1970) and used in this study measured ideal teacher behaviors that are indicative of either a directive or non-directive teaching style as perceived by students (see Appendix A). This researcher used the data from the SPOTS survey to address contemporary issues in education associated with student perceptions of their ideal teacher.

Tursman (1981) described six generalizations that are related to affective teacher behavior. First, the effective teacher believes that all students are capable of learning; as a result, the teacher assumes responsibility for assigning appropriate learning activities and developing strategies to ensure learning. Second, the teacher keeps students focused and on task by giving clear directions. Third, the teacher employs a variety of teaching methods determined by the ability level of the student, the subject being taught, and the goals of the instruction. Fourth, direct instruction is particularly effective for teaching basic foundation skills. Fifth, the effective teacher is a good manager of people and instruction, has clear rules, and eliminates disruptions and delays. Sixth, the teacher exercises a leadership style that is authoritatively democratic; in so doing, he or she allows students to demonstrate responsibility, self-direction, and maturity. Based on this researcher's review of Tuckman's SPOTS survey and the literature, Tursman's generalizations are congruent with items measured in the SPOTS survey.

Educators must be cognizant of the varied needs of students as well as student perceptions of the ideal teacher. A common theme in education circles these days is the
importance of approaching school reform by improving teacher performance in the classroom. From this initiative has come the concept of the school as a learning community, a concept rooted in the premise that when teachers teach more effectively, their pupils will learn more proficiently (MacGilchrist, 1996). School districts offer in-service programs that often do not address ways for teachers to remediate their own inadequacies or focus on meeting the individual needs of students.

Student perceptions of ideal teacher behavior have garnered more and more interest among administrators (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 1997). A growing movement among some school districts incorporates student input from questionnaires and surveys into the teacher evaluation process (Mathews, 2000). In addition, the state of New Jersey now requires a mandated number of hours that must be dedicated to professional development programs. Accordingly, the results of this study may assist school districts in developing relevant in-service programs for elementary teachers regarding elementary school students’ perceptions of their ideal teacher. In addition, potential teacher candidates may be evaluated in terms of these ideal behaviors, and prospective teachers may be encouraged or discouraged from teaching as a career based upon these perceptions.

Statement of the Problem

An increased demand to hire trained, competent teachers to serve in classrooms with students of various needs and abilities exists. Given the shortage of trained teachers at every level, elementary school students’ perception of their ideal teacher may offer current
and potential elementary educators insight into inherent or trainable behaviors that improve the quality of elementary school teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine elementary school students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher within a classroom environment in a New Jersey elementary public school. More specifically, select elementary school students with varied needs and abilities in grades 4 through 6 were asked to complete a questionnaire relating to teacher behaviors. The variables of gender, race, and grade level were then isolated to determine if these factors influenced their choice of an ideal teaching style. This study brings new information to the field with regard to the importance of elementary school students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher by offering potential and current educators insight into trainable behaviors required for the profession.

Research Question

Do elementary school students perceive a directive or non-directive teacher to be ideal?

Subsidiary Questions

1. Does elementary school students’ gender significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?
2. Does elementary school students' race significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?

3. Does elementary school students' grade level significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?

Definition of Terms

**Behavior.** Includes how a teacher reacts, responds, and engages students in different settings, and how these encounters ultimately result in making students feel a certain way (Whitfield, 1976).

**Directive.** A teaching style characterized as structured, absolute, and formal. The term is synonymous with a teacher-centered or autocratic style of teaching. This style is characterized by the minimization of informal work or small group work, rigid structuring of individual and class activities, emphasis on factual knowledge derived from sources of authority, use of absolute and justifiable punishment, maintenance of formal relationships with students, formal classroom atmosphere, minimization of the opportunity to make and to learn from mistakes, and assumption of total responsibility for grades (Tuckman, 1970).

**Ideal teacher.** The teacher who is thought of as perfect. He or she would be a perfect model if the student were to make a choice. Ideal teachers can be classified according to their degree of directiveness or non-directiveness (Tuckman, 1970).

**Non-directive.** A teaching style which is the opposite of directive, also called learner-centered or democratic (Tuckman, 1970).

**Perception.** The awareness of a process. The psychological ability to process or use the information received through the senses. The term applies to the recognition of
sensory information which is the intellect’s ability to extract meaning from the data
received by the senses (McLoughlin & Lewis, 1990).

**Teacher.** One who educates others for a living. The teachers in this study are
certified educators who serve in the public schools.

**Teaching Style.** A combination of teacher behaviors and personality characteristics.
Teaching style can be classified in terms of being directive or non-directive.

**Significance of the Study**

This research is one of the first to be published using the SPOTS instrument with an
elementary school student population. This study is based upon the following
assumptions: (a) The need for trained teachers exists, (b) schools are not fully cognizant
or caring of students’ perceptions or individual teaching style preferences, (c) student
perceptions of the ideal teacher will provide schools with useful information, and (d) the
data that emerge from this information will have positive implications for schools when
developing in-service programs to train teachers. For this study, this researcher will rely
on student opinion with regard to students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher.

A teacher’s classroom behavior is constantly under scrutiny by students. Students
learn a great deal from a teacher’s nonverbal behavior as well as from his or her verbal
behavior. On any given school day, a teacher’s facial expression, gaze, posture, and
mannerisms provide students with a composite of the teacher’s attitude toward the
students (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). These teacher behaviors have an impact on
students and their learning process.
The development of the field of social cognition has promoted interest in studying student thought. Social cognition is concerned with studying how people develop and evolve by interacting, engaging, and interfacing with their environment. It includes perception, thinking, and knowledge regarding the self, other people, social relations, social organizations, and institutions. The literature on social cognition suggests that children are active interpreters of classroom reality and that they draw inferences about the causes and effects of behavior (Weinstein, 1983). Student inferences may differ from those of adults; however, investigations of children’s understanding and perceptions of classroom occurrences can be informative about the role of the classroom context in influencing children’s thinking about schooling and, specifically, about teacher effectiveness.

With regard to teacher effectiveness, it was established that a link exists between the use of affinity-seeking strategies and student learning (Myers, 1995). Affinity-seeking has been defined as the process by which individuals attempt to get other people to like and feel positive toward them. As cited in Myers, Richmond and Roach separately concluded that a teacher’s use of affinity-seeking strategies positively influences a student’s perceived level of affective and cognitive learning. Roach explored the relationship between teacher use of affinity-seeking strategies and student perceptions of classroom climate. It was discovered that a positive and significant relationship exists between these two variables. Affinity-seeking is an area included in the SPOTS instrument that will be used in this study. Accordingly, it is possible that classroom climate is perceived more favorably when teachers engage in affinity-seeking behavior. Additionally, students prefer teachers who use affinity-seeking behaviors. In-service workshops and professional staff development
programs can promote teacher awareness of affinity-seeking behaviors and empower them 
to create educational climates that will most benefit the students who are entrusted to their 
care.

Student needs and abilities vary greatly. Research indicates that a positive 
relationship exists between student attitudes and academic achievement, and that 
exemplary programs that use more nontraditional and interactive classroom strategies 
where teachers are facilitators tend to produce positive results (Eichinger, 1997). This 
study will measure students’ preferred teaching styles in terms of directive or non-directive 
teacher behavior. The ideal teaching style for elementary school students will emerge 
from these data. For these reasons, the educational process can be actively directed 
toward the maximization of student interest and achievement in an effort to cultivate 
effective classroom learning environments. Teachers perceived as friendly, patient, 
creative, supportive, committed, and enthusiastic are more likely to engender student 
interest and involvement. These affective teacher qualities can be realized through teacher 
participation in meaningful in-service workshops based upon student input obtained from 
this study.

This study will bring new knowledge to the field of education. It will assist school 
districts in the development of in-service programs that are deliberately intended to meet 
the needs of the elementary school students entrusted to their care. It will also provide 
potential and current educators insight by identifying ideal teacher behaviors as described 
by elementary school students. Not only will this study offer potential teacher candidates 
confirmation of their career path, it will also provide current educators with ideas and
suggestions that will enhance their performance for the remainder of their years in education.

Limitations

1. This study is limited to students enrolled in one New Jersey public school setting.

2. This study does not take into account the I.Q. level or socioeconomic status of participating students.

3. This study does not take into account the number of students enrolled in a class.

4. This sample is limited to students at the elementary school level in grades 4 to 6.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I offers an introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research question, subsidiary questions, definition of terms, significance of the study, limitations, and organization of the study. Chapter II presents the literature review with an overview of the SPOTS survey, the need for trained teachers, students' preferred teaching style, characteristics of the ideal teacher, students' perceptions of the ideal teacher, the relation of gender, race, and grade level with students' perceptions of the ideal teacher, and a summary. Chapter III presents an introduction, population, instrument, procedure, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV presents the research findings and quantitative analysis. Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The review of the literature is divided into eight separate sections and a summary. The first section provides an overview of the SPOTS (revised) survey. The second section discusses the need for trained teachers. The third section presents the preferred style of teaching for students at the elementary school level. The fourth section describes characteristics of the ideal teacher. The fifth section examines student perceptions of the ideal teacher. The sixth and seventh sections report the relationship of gender and race to students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher. In section eight, the relationship of grade level to students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher is reported. A summary concludes the chapter.

Overview of the SPOTS Survey

The SPOTS survey was developed by Tuckman in 1970. It was designed to be completed by students. The survey consists of 17 line items or anchor phrases arranged in a complete-the-sentence format. To answer a question, subjects first had to choose from one of three given responses which relate to teacher behavior. Within that choice, respondents then had to choose a numerical level of intensity for that behavior. The first
form of behavior was scaled from one to three, the second form of behavior was scaled from four to six, and the third form of behavior was scaled seven to nine. Only one numerical response per line item was permitted. Tuckman successfully correlated the 17 behavioral responses into two gradations of teaching style, with a low score yielding a directive style of teaching while a high score represented a non-directive style of teaching.

Tuckman (1970) based the SPOTS descriptive questionnaire on the concept of directive teaching. He described directive teaching as formal planning and structuring of course work, minimization of informal work or small group work, rigid structuring of individual and small group work and class activities, emphasis on factual knowledge or knowledge derived from sources of authority, use of absolute and justifiable punishment, minimization of the opportunity to make and learn from mistakes, maintenance of formal relationship with students, assumption of total responsibility for grades, and maintaining a formal classroom atmosphere.

The Need for Trained Teachers

A growing need for trained teachers exists in public education. Nothing contributes more to a quality education than the teachers working in the schools. The process of recruiting, hiring, and maintaining highly trained teachers is crucial. A review of recent literature regarding teacher shortages indicates that around the country, school districts are experiencing high teacher attrition rates. Vacancies need to be filled with trained teachers.

Snyder (1998) reported that more children are expected to enter elementary schools than ever before. Enrollment in elementary schools rose by 11% between 1990 and 1997,
reflecting a continuation of enrollment growth that began in the mid-1980s. Further increases are expected for several more years before enrollments begin to stabilize. Students at the pre-school and kindergarten levels are attending full-day rather than abbreviated-day programs. Increasing numbers and proportions of children are expected to attend public and private elementary schools within the next several years. Projections suggest the need for additional elementary school teachers is expected to climb.

A review of the literature consistently points to a need for trained teachers. Ingersoll (1997) found that recent literature indicated that large numbers of classrooms throughout the nation are staffed with unqualified teachers. Ingersoll suggested that a host of recent programs designed to attract new candidates into teaching are misguided resulting in a corps of semi-skilled teachers. Such programs include (a) alternative certification programs whereby college graduates begin teaching immediately without obtaining a teaching license, (b) Peace Corps-like programs such as “Teach for America” that are designed to attract highly successful candidates into understaffed schools, (c) and emergency certification programs. This shortage ultimately impacts upon students as their perceptions of the ideal teacher shift from ideal to merely adequate.

Students’ Preferred Teaching Style

Hass and Parkay (1993) defined learning style as that consistent pattern of behavior and performance by which an individual approaches educational experiences. It is the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. Teaching styles correlate to student learning styles. Knowledge of learning
style differences among students opens the possibility of identifying teaching styles compatible with these differences, thus individualizing the teaching-learning process.

The teaching styles that students prefer are determined by a combination of hereditary and environmental influences. Students respond to different modalities of teaching. Some students prefer structure while others prefer working independently. Some students learn best through small group activities. Formal, silent classrooms as opposed to informal, active ones can influence the learning process for some students. The SPOTS instrument used in this study measured students' preferred teaching styles based on ideal teacher behaviors that were coalesced into an optimal teaching style defined as directive (authoritative) or non-directive (facilitative).

Students with diverse needs and abilities have varied learning styles. The environment in which a student is placed and the type of instruction received are critical to student success in school. Tuckman (1970) described a directive teacher as one for whom procedure, order, and organization are extremely important. Horowitz (1979) reported that indirect instruction produced a greater number of students having success in problem-solving than did direct instruction. He also noted that most research indicated that a non-directive style of teaching promoted a greater measure of creativity than direct instruction. The best example of indirect instruction was the promotion of open classroom buildings during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most teachers were not trained to use such a facility; consequently, the method was not as popular with veteran teachers and was ultimately discarded.

Griggs and Dunn (1996) compared groups of culturally diverse students in elementary school through college level using a measure that identified five categories of
preferred learning styles. The five preferred learning style categories included environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological. A cool, temperate classroom with desks organized in formal rows and columns described a preferred environmental learning style. Mexican-American elementary and middle school students showed a propensity for this learning style. An emotional learning style encompassed the elements of responsibility, structure, persistence, and motivation. Relative to Mexican-American students, third and fourth graders were least conforming to the emotional learning style while middle school students conformed to this style.

Sociological learning styles were concerned with the social patterns in which one learns. Research revealed that Caucasian students preferred studying individually. Conversely, Mexican-American and African-American students showed a preference for group work. The physiological learning style related to the time of day, food and drink intake, perception, and mobility. Caucasian and African-American students showed significant preference for auditory and visual learning cues than did their Mexican-American counterparts. The last category, a psychological learning style, related to global versus analytical processing. Global processors were more group-oriented and cooperative and less competitive than analytical processors. Research revealed that Hispanic middle and secondary school students were more global than Caucasian students. Elements from all five of the aforementioned categories correspond to the SPOTS instrument used in this study.

Jules and Kutnick (1997) found a significant difference among male and female pupils in their expectations of highly regarded teaching behaviors and style. Female students in this study expected the teacher to maintain good interpersonal relationships
and use teaching strategies to facilitate pupil participation. Males, on the other hand, emphasized that the good teacher should show assertiveness and control over pupil behavior. In his study of junior high students, Palmer (1999) found that students preferred teachers who used a variety of teaching methods to maintain interest, and who explained the material until everyone understood. Additionally, the teacher who generated dialogue among the students and encouraged them to think independently and ask questions was most preferred.

Humor and attempts at humor are used strategically in many daily interactions. Humor is used to increase cohesion and soften critical statements. In the classroom, students use humor as a means for social interaction with their teachers, while teachers use humor to help create an enjoyable classroom environment, clarify course material, and facilitate learning (Wanzer & Prymier, 1999). These authors reported that teacher use of humor in the classroom was perceived favorably by students and actually increased student motivation and enhanced learning. The SPOTS instrument used in this study specifically asked students whether the ideal teacher tells jokes, sometimes tells jokes, or never tells jokes as relates to teaching behaviors. The literature suggests that students consider a teacher’s use of some humor in the classroom to be an ideal characteristic.

Directive and non-directive teacher styles are of particular interest for the purpose of this study. In a study using male high school students, Tuckman concluded that overwhelming support exists for a non-directive teaching style. Since the role of the teacher is changing from authoritative to facilitative, it is important to measure whether students at the elementary school level in grades 4 through 6 prefer non-directive teacher instruction.
Characteristics of the Ideal Teacher

Gorham (1987) evaluated the comments of sixth-grade students regarding their perceptions of good teachers and tried to determine whether the students employed consistent, distinct criteria for evaluation. A sixth grade class of heterogeneously grouped students was used for this qualitative study. The students were individually interviewed with the following questions:

1. Tell me what you think a good teacher is. Think of good teachers you have had and tell me why you thought they were good teachers.

2. What do you expect from your teachers?

3. What advice would you have for someone who is going to be a teacher for the first time? What do they need to know or do in order to be a good teacher?

The students' responses were examined for consistent or discrepant themes in order to determine if students were employing common, distinct criteria for the evaluation of teachers. The most prevalent theme throughout the comments of the students was that regarding instruction. The students overwhelmingly indicated that good teachers do not assign a student an abundance of homework but rather one or two subjects a night. Many students indicated that good teachers allow study halls or time in the class to work on homework. According to the students, good teachers teach in exciting and interesting ways, often using games, simulations, field trips, experiments, and projects. Good teachers avoid reading or working out of a book. Activities which foster social interaction, physical movement, and working on projects represented a good teacher’s instructional method. Good teachers invest time and patience by spending additional time explaining information for those students who require it. Students defined "nice" with
personality characteristics such as patient, sweet, and understanding. Students viewed good teachers as those who developed relationships that were more interpersonal with them by spending time before or after school. With regard to classroom management, many students felt very strongly that good teachers did not punish the entire class for the misbehavior of one student and yelled only in an extreme situation.

Lewis (1982) reported that a study conducted by the Virginia Beach Program for the Gifted and Talented, involving groups of students in grades 3 through 7, revealed that students have essential characteristics that describe the ideal teacher. The final list they compiled of the qualities they most desired in an ideal teacher included such descriptors as creative, understanding, patient, knowledgeable, interesting, flexible, cooperative, interested, responsible, does things with the students, and is able to make decisions.

In a 1996 survey conducted by the NASSP, secondary students were asked about the characteristics describing the best teachers. The results indicated that teachers should have a sense of humor, make the class interesting, have knowledge of their subjects, explain things clearly, spend time helping students, and treat students fairly (NASSP, 1997).

In terms of building personal relationships, Saphier and Gower (1997) identified eight characteristics that were repeatedly mentioned as important by multi-level students. The traits that seemed most important are fairness, personal appearance including grooming and attire, humor, courtesy, respect, realness, reestablishing contact, and active listening. These traits appeared to foster a heightened degree of personal regard for a teacher and serve as a basis for good personal relationships and improved student perceptions of their teachers. The authors suggested the quality of relationships between
teachers and students is a deep and constant backdrop to all that is transpiring in classrooms.

Overall, based on the literature, the ideal teacher, as a person, must be friendly, enthusiastic, humorous, and easy to talk to. Fairness, flexibility, and organization must be exhibited by this ideal teacher in addition to being willing to spend time with students, showing an interest in them, and developing positive relationships with them. More specifically, the pedagogical skills of the ideal teacher such as knowledge of subject matter, giving appropriate feedback, using a variety of teaching methods, and maintaining motivation make up the composite of what students perceive as the ideal teacher.

Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher

Student perceptions of teachers are considered by many to represent relevant information regarding teacher effectiveness. Researchers have examined the role of teacher perspectives in student academic trajectories, but the students’ voices concerning experiences with teachers seldom have been heard (Peart & Campbell, 1999). In their study, Peart and Campbell selected and interviewed African-American students who experienced a range of academic success in the public school setting. The effective teacher characteristics that emerged from gathering these data included interpersonal skills, effective use of instructional techniques, the teacher as a motivational leader, and racial impartiality. When students felt the absence of any of these good teacher attributes, it diminished the students’ desire to achieve. Consequently, a teacher’s high expectations and beliefs in student abilities are key factors influencing student academic achievement.
A teacher’s willingness to spend time with students is another behavior that is highly rated by students in relation to the ideal teacher (Sweeting, Willower, & Helsel, 1978). Ideal teachers are always accessible and available whenever students need them. Ideal teachers are willing to develop positive relations with their students.

In their study of intermediate elementary school students who have made the transition to seventh grade, Mergendoller and Packer (1985) expounded upon the terms used by members of the seventh grade culture to describe categories students use to characterize teachers. Ideal teachers were described as being able to communicate clearly and help students to fully understand the assigned material. Additionally, good teachers maintained enjoyable and inviting classes, possessed appealing temperaments, and demonstrated sincere student interest.

Stuart and Rosenfeld (1994) conducted a study to examine the relationship between student perceptions of college teachers’ use of humor and the climate of those teachers’ classrooms. Humor may be classified according to its tone as well as its function. Humor can be tendentious (hostile or derogatory) or nontendentious (playful and nonthreatening). One humor instrument and two climate instruments were presented to students between the fourth and seventh week of the semester while teachers were still using relatively large amounts of humor. The results indicated that teachers who avoid using humor may risk leading classes perceived as boring and overly concerned with order, and forcing instruction to run according to a preset schedule. Exclusive use of either a small amount of hostile humor or a large amount of nonhostile humor appeared to be slightly better than no humor at all, creating a more interesting or engaging class. A lack of humor altogether led to perceptions of a class as highly formalistic. Although creating a perception of
formality may lend itself to a perceived increase in time spent exclusively on course material, this may be unrelated to increases in learning outcomes.

Based on their findings, Downs et al. (as cited in Stuart & Rosenfeld, 1994) suggested that effective teachers use significantly more humor than their less effective colleagues. The relevance of this information is twofold. First, educators at all grade levels use humor as part of the learning process. Secondly, for purposes of this study, the SPOTS instrument contains an item on humor and asks elementary students to choose from the following: "The ideal teacher (a) never tells jokes while he’s teaching and does not like it when the students joke around, (b) sometimes tells a joke or a humorous story to get a point across, or (c) always tells funny stories and encourages the students to tell about funny things that happened to them." The use of humor, especially at the elementary school level, facilitates dialogue among the students as youngsters frequently try to relate a humorous incident to part of a lesson.

The teaching ability of an instructor is another important area to students. They attach value to a teacher’s knowledge of subject matter. In a report completed by the New York State Education Department (1986) on student profiles of their ideal teacher, it was found that, in addition to subject knowledge, the ideal teacher gave fair warning before tests, used modern and diverse teaching methods, kept lessons within the time constraints of the class, and promptly graded and returned all materials that were submitted by the students.

Palmer (1999) identified the attributes of high quality junior high school teachers from the point of view of former students. The following descriptions emerged from this study. The best (science) teacher was one who allowed the students to do a lot of
interesting hands-on activities which clearly related to the theory that had been presented, tried to make the lessons fun and interesting, explained things clearly and at an appropriate instructional level, was enthusiastic with the subject matter, was friendly and approachable, had a sense of humor, made the subject relevant to everyday life, encouraged student discussions, allowed students to investigate their own ideas, had a good understanding of the content, was kind and helpful, was willing to give individual help when needed, was well organized, had good discipline skills, gave the students encouragement and praise when they try hard, and treated all students equally. However, as cited in Palmer, Tobin’s and Fraser’s observations of exemplary teacher classrooms showed that they were primarily characterized with efficient management (so that a maximum amount of class time was spent on-task), had high level verbal interactions (which allowed teachers to monitor student understanding of concepts), and created a favorable learning environment in the classroom (characterized by high levels of involvement, teacher support, and organization). This contrasted somewhat with the results found by Palmer in which the students, although clearly valuing management skills, clear explanations, and encouragement of student ideas, assistance to individuals, organization, and preparation, did not rate them as highly as the ability to provide integrated hands-on activities and the imagination to create fun and interesting activities.

In their study involving college students, Kramer and Pier (1999) identified descriptions of effective teachers in both small and large classes. Students perceived effective teachers as using a variety of teaching methods in a logical progression while ineffective ones presented material that did not make sense to students. Effective teachers were energetic and enthusiastic about teaching while ineffective ones generally created
mundane class periods. Effective teachers made clear connections between class activities, reading materials, and tests. They were also casual and approachable while ineffective teachers were arrogant and unapproachable. Effective teachers had frequent interactions with their students in and out of class and ineffective teachers avoided interactions.

To summarize, there is consensus among students that the ideal teacher encompasses a number of characteristics. The ideal teacher must be friendly, approachable, available, humorous, easy to talk to, and genuinely interested in the student. He or she should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter being taught and should facilitate dialogue among and with students.

The Relation of Gender and Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher

In relation to gender expectations, the research indicated that while most teachers believed they maintained an equitable classroom environment, gender-based differences existed in teacher-student interactions and communication patterns (Petersen, Kearney, Plax, & Waldeck, 1997). Furthermore, Petersen et al. discovered that gender-based interactions influenced, positively and negatively, a number of important student outcomes including student self-confidence and esteem, frequency and amount of classroom participation, motivation and achievement, and academic and career goals. The likelihood of enhancing the quality of educational experiences for pupils of either gender is mediated by pupils’ schooling experiences, which include their perceived relationships with teachers.

Rosenfeld and Jarrard (as cited in Petersen et al., 1997) conducted a study that revealed how teacher sexism negatively influences student perceptions of their classroom climate, and how supportive or defensive students perceive their teacher to be. Teachers’
differential treatment of students is often the result of teacher sex-role expectancies regarding what is appropriate behavior for both males and females. Nonexist teachers responded to their students independently of students' gender. They believed that gender should not determine student abilities or opportunities in or outside the classroom environment (Beere, King, Beere, & King, as cited in Petersen et al., 1997). However, other research indicated that male and female teachers hold narrowly defined, traditional sex-role expectations for their students. As cited in Petersen et al., Simmons reported that teachers expected males to be more aggressive, independent, and physically adept than females, while females were expected to be more emotional, empathetic, intuitive, creative, and intelligent than males.

In their study, Petersen et al. (1997) contended that if male or female students perceived their teachers to be nonexist, then students were also likely to hold positive attitudes toward the class and its content. Rodriguez, Plax, and Kearney (as cited in Petersen et al., 1997) maintained that affective learning outcomes focus on changes in student attitudes, beliefs, and values. These changes can be positive or negative depending on classroom climate. In addition, their study indicated that female students perceived their teachers to be more fair-minded than did male students. Male students may be more sensitive to teachers' inequitable behaviors than female students. Alternatively, female students may be more sensitive to teachers who are neutral and objective than male students. Rosenfeld and Jarrard (1985) reported that student perceptions of teacher sexism had a negative influence on classroom climate and student affectations. Overall, teachers who are perceived as nonexist will have a positive influence, whereas teachers who are perceived as sexist will have a negative influence.
Jules and Kutnick (1997) conducted a study using male and female students between the ages of 8 and 16. They found that female pupils across all age levels identified more positive teacher concepts than did the male students. The conceptual items used in this qualitative and quantitative analysis were grouped into the following categories: (a) physical and personal characteristics of a teacher, (b) qualities of relationship between teachers and students, (c) behavioral control by the teacher, (d) descriptions and explanations of the teaching process, and (e) attributes related to results of teacher work. In the youngest age group in this study, girls were more likely to cite “caring” and “nice” to describe the good teacher while boys at this age level were more likely to state that good teachers should be “sensitive” to individual needs. Boys were more likely to cite types of punishment to control classes while girls expected the good teacher to control classroom behavior through humor. With regard to understanding the teaching process (i.e., how teachers interact with pupils to enhance their learning and use of class activities), young males cited activities such as “explaining work” and “telling stories,” while 13-year-old girls described teacher-pupil interactions such as “encouragement” and “promoting discussion.” There was some commonality between the sexes in concepts regarding interpersonal relationships and inclusiveness among good teaching practices. No significant differences were found in the category of educational outcomes (curriculum based learning).

In relation to gender expectations, the research has shown that female students expected their teachers to be more attentive, to show a greater degree of sensitivity and interest in them, and to establish interpersonal relationships with students. Male students on the other hand expected a more dramatic communication style, to be criticized
negatively, and for the instructor to be impersonal and distant (McDowell & McDowell as cited in Garlick, 1990). In that same study, females were found to be more comfortable discussing personal matters than their male counterparts. Female students also expected the instructor to make them feel welcome, empathetic toward personal problems, and promote individual interaction outside of the classroom.

Goebel and Cashen’s (1979) research purported that elementary students are least affected by their teacher’s age. Furthermore, they found that the gender of the teacher played an important role among students in eighth grade and eleventh grade only. Additionally, Goebel and Cashen found that male teachers were perceived as better teachers by both male and female students. Male and female students also felt that female teacher expectations were not as high as those of male teachers.

Wood and Hoag (1993) surveyed small, medium, and large school districts and found a consistent shortage of male schoolteachers at the elementary grade levels. Due to the changing and demanding needs of students and family dynamics, they found that a critical need exists for male classroom teachers in elementary education. Wood and Hoag’s research suggested that students enjoy the balance a male teacher brings into the elementary classroom. Male students need to know that men are interested in academics and not just athletics.

Younger and Warrington, M. (1999) found that in some aspects of teaching, there was little difference between girls’ and boys’ perceptions of a good teacher. Good lessons were commonly characterized as enjoyable, fun, and interesting. In their study, students of both sexes appreciated enthusiasm, subject knowledge, and a willingness of teachers to
go beyond the syllabus. Younger, Warrington, A., and Williams found that these areas
were most valued by the students (as cited in Younger & Warrington, M., 1999).

Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) found that students in grades 1 through 6 do
perceive some differential treatment by the teacher toward high and low male achievers.
In their study, this awareness of differential treatment was shared by the students
regardless of their grade level, sex, or self-concept of academic attainment. In addition,
they also reported that teachers provide a shorter wait time following questions for low
achievers as compared to high achievers.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals conducted a survey of
1,000 students between the ages of 13 and 17 in 1996 to assess student perceptions of
what makes a good teacher. The survey results found that girls were more likely than
boys to state that top teachers explain things clearly, spend time helping students, and are
considerate of students' feelings. These data suggest that students are more demanding
and service-oriented than youngsters entering public schools in the early 1990s (Achilles,
Harman, & Egelson, 1995). Issues including poverty, linguistic differences, single-parent
homes, abuse, and other problems impede traditional educational processes. Society
changes, but often schools or their staffs do not change to accommodate the changing
clientele. The NASSP (1997) also reported that regardless of their age, their families’
income, or part of the country in which they live, students ascribed the same
aforementioned characteristics to their best teachers.
The Relation of Race and Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher

Research has been conducted to determine whether minority students prefer different characteristics in quality teachers from what White students prefer. In a study done by Wright and Alley (1977) to determine if there were significant attitudinal differences between Black and White sixth grade students, few differences were found between the groups. The analysis of academic characteristics that was collected on a Likert-scaled questionnaire revealed that the only significant difference was in the area of teacher intelligence with Black students rating this characteristic more important than White students. Overall, these sixth grade students perceived the ideal teacher to be someone who (a) graded fairly, (b) was intelligent, and (c) designed school work that was pleasurable.

Witty and DeBaryshe (1994) conducted a survey that used a factor analysis to explore the extent to which male students (grades 7 to 9) and their 14 teachers perceived differences in teachers' student-directed behaviors as a function of the children's achievement level and race. Braun (as cited in Witty & DeBaryshe, 1994) suggested the existence of a clear relationship between teacher expectations of individual students and a child's self-expectations and subsequent academic performance. According to Braun, data from a student's cumulative folder, gender, name, ethnic background, physical characteristics, and socioeconomic status all contributed to the development of teacher expectations about student academic performance. This model was supported by a considerable body of research including, but not limited to, Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) and Ritts, Patterson, and Tubbs (as cited in Peart & Campbell, 1999). Furthermore, the analysis of personal regard yielded significance. African-American
students reported more positive regard toward and from their teachers than did Caucasian students.

Sizemore (1981) conducted a study that focused on specific teacher behaviors that were preferred by high school students. His conclusions indicated that White students perceived well-organized, systematic, stimulating, and interesting teacher behaviors as more important than Black students at the same level. The Black students perceived warm teacher behaviors as important. Furthermore, White students perceived as important the teacher's control of the class and real attempts to teach. Black students more frequently identified as important the teacher being nice and helpful. All secondary White and Black students in this study looked for teachers who cared, who explained the material in a thorough and interesting way, and who helped students master the material after it was presented. To reiterate, the present study will focus only on teaching behavior as perceived by elementary school students.

The Relation of Grade Level and Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher

A considerable amount of research addressed student grade level and perceptions of the characteristics of good teachers. These characteristics have been found to vary across studies depending upon the criterion of "good teaching" and indicate some consistencies based on student grade level. Samuels and Griffore (1976) conducted a study using elementary school students, college undergraduate students, and college graduate students to determine whether young students' view of a good teacher differed significantly from the view of older students. The characteristic found to be most typical of good teachers at all grade levels (except grade 3) was the teacher's knowledge of the subject being taught.
In addition, the good teacher should help students understand the material and cite examples. It was found that all groups yielded similar findings in terms of least typical characteristics, including personal variables such as using humor in class, and having a good personal appearance. Least typical variables also included some instructional characteristics such as staying close to the text, giving hard but fair tests, and extolling praise often. However, Olsen and Moore (as cited in Garlick, 1990) found that elementary students were more concerned with the teacher's providing adequate feedback and less concerned with the teacher's subject knowledge than were secondary school students.

Weinstein (1983) indicated that despite age and grade differences, student views of a good teacher are quite similar (based on similar criteria); however, young children, when compared with college students, defined feedback about good performance as a more important quality of good teaching. Weinstein also reported evidence that young children are least affected by a teacher's age while secondary students feel that youthfulness is important.

Mergendoller and Packer (1985) maintained in their study that seventh graders perceived that "mean" teachers made it difficult for students to work successfully by failing to provide individual help needed to complete the assigned work. Seventh grade students described a good teacher as one who communicates clearly with students, and who helps students fully comprehend their assigned material. Good teachers maintained enjoyable and inviting classes, possessed appealing temperaments, and demonstrated interest in their students. Strict teachers were described as assigning a considerable amount of work, whereas fun and nice teachers were perceived as assigning little work.
Dorhout (1983) administered a scale which measured preferred teacher behavioral characteristics to determine student preferences and whether their teachers had accurate perceptions of what their students preferred in teacher performance. This scale was administered to 279 students in elementary and secondary school and to 110 of their teachers. The results showed that the students preferred a teacher with predominately personal-social characteristics. Some of these behavioral characteristics included the ability to establish rapport, understand the needs of the students, and fairness in assessment, testing, and grading.

Benninga's study (1980) found that the majority of first, second, and third grade students who were questioned rated their teachers positively. Benninga felt this was because young children tend to be egocentric, and because of their egocentricity, they tend to have unilateral respect for persons representing authority. As children progress through the developmental stages, this social orientation changes from one of unilateral respect to one of cooperation.

Summary

The SPOTS survey developed by Tuckman (1970) and used in this study measured ideal teacher behaviors that are indicative of either a directive or non-directive teaching style as perceived by students. This researcher used the data from the SPOTS survey to address contemporary issues in education associated with student perceptions of their ideal teacher.

A critical need for trained teachers exists in public education today. Current literature suggests that teacher shortages will result in an increased demand for trained
teachers and that large numbers of classrooms throughout the nation are presently staffed with unqualified teachers. The data suggest that recent programs designed to attract new candidates into teaching are misguided resulting in a semi-skilled teacher work force. This shortage impacts upon students and their perceptions of the ideal teacher.

According to students, the ideal teacher encompasses a number of descriptors including being friendly, approachable, available, humorous, easy to talk to, and genuinely interested in the student. He or she should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter being taught and should be able to facilitate an ongoing dialogue with and among the students. A teacher's behavior defines his or her teaching style and has an impact on student perceptions of the ideal teacher.

Students readily articulate specific behavioral characteristics to describe their perception of the ideal teacher. There appears to be a consensus among students that the preferable behaviors elicited by the ideal teacher involve teacher personality, instructional methods, personal relationships, and knowledge of subject matter. In relation to gender expectations, gender-based differences exist in teacher-student interactions and communication patterns. When male and female students perceive their teachers to be nonexistent, they are likely to hold positive attitudes toward the class and its content. Research has been conducted to determine whether minority students prefer different characteristics in quality teachers from those which White students prefer. Despite age, gender, race, and grade level differences, student perceptions of a good teacher are quite similar.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design of this study. It presents the population, instrument, procedure, data collection, and data analysis. This methodology was approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board on November 6, 2001 (Appendix B).

This researcher asked elementary school students to complete the SPOTS descriptive questionnaire using a rating scale designed to measure students’ perceptions of their ideal teacher based on a set of pre-established teaching behaviors. In turn, these preferred behaviors yielded a collective pattern which this researcher was able to translate into a generalized, preferred teaching style. The personal data acquired from this survey were also analyzed to determine whether gender, race, and grade level affected student perceptions of their ideal teacher.

Population

The population selected for this study was one public elementary school in New Jersey. All 256 students in grades 4 through 6 were solicited for this study based on their day-to-day availability and parental/guardian consent.
Figure 1. Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by gender

- Females = 71
- Males = 57
Figure 2. Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by race

- White = 69
- Asian = 38
- Hispanic = 17
- Black = 4
Figure 3. Proportional distribution chart of 128 SPOTS survey participants by grade level.

- 4th grade = 50
- 5th grade = 42
- 6th grade = 36
A total of 144 students responded to the solicitation and 128 actually participated in the study. Figures 1 through 3 illustrate the survey participants proportions. The student ages ranged from 9 to 13 years old. The population included 57 male and 71 female participants. Cultural descriptors were Hispanic, Black, White, and Asian (other). The 128 students participating in this study included 17 Hispanics, 4 Blacks, 69 Whites, and 38 Asians. To ensure that the selection of subjects was equitable, the study sample was open to mainstreamed students, special education students, students receiving English as a second language instruction, and students enrolled in gifted and talented programs, as well as to students with no special learning needs. Individual SPOTS participant characteristics are contained in Table 2.

Instrument

Each subject was administered Tuckman's SPOTS (revised) rating scale. The scale is a 17-item descriptive questionnaire designed to measure classroom behavior representative of a directive or non-directive teaching style. The word "ideal" was added to each question so that ideal, rather than actual, perceptions were surveyed. The SPOTS instrument with the word "ideal" was previously used in a study with emotionally disturbed students, ages 5 through 21, by Garlick. According to Garlick (1990), the instrument has been used primarily with regular education students, but it has also been used with gifted students and detained male youths.

Tuckman used a Likert-type scale from 1 to 9 to rate the intensity and/or frequency of specific ideal teacher behaviors. Each survey item contained three subsections with the first section numbered 1, 2, 3, the second section numbered 4, 5, 6, and the third
### Table 2

**SPOTS Survey Participant Characteristics**

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<th>Female</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
section numbered 7, 8, 9. Only one numerical response could be selected. Subjects who responded to an item without hesitation were instructed to code their response 2, 5, or 8 indicating a middle intensity of response. If a subject felt resolute with an answer, it was coded 1 or 9 indicating the strongest intensity. If a subject vacillated between two responses, he or she was told to choose only one answer. Those responses were coded 3, 4, 6, or 7 depending upon the behavioral response chosen.

According to the SPOTS directions, a rating of 1 indicates a directive teaching style; 9, a non-directive teaching style, resulting in a scoring range from 17 to 153. As cited by Garlick (1990), scoring ranges included the following: Directive 17-51, Middle directive 52-85, Middle non-directive 86-118, and Non-directive 119-153.

Tuckman rated scores with means from 1 to 4.99 as directive, and means from 5 to 9 as non-directive. The research question guiding this study asked whether elementary school students perceive a directive or non-directive teacher to be ideal. For purposes of this study, this researcher placed emphasis on only the terms "directive" and "non-directive," rather than delineating further degrees or gradations of each.

The reliability of the original SPOTS was found using a correlated means. Tests indicated that 78% of the item scores were significantly related to the total SPOTS score. Of those scores, 88% of the items correlated above .50 while 64% correlated above .60. In an earlier study conducted by Garlick (1990), an overall reliability analysis was performed on the 17 SPOTS items in order to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. The analysis yielded a satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha of .89, suggesting that the SPOTS instrument is internally consistent, that the 17-items are intercorrelated, and that the same concept is being measured throughout.
Validity of the SPOTS was based on a correlation of .53 (df = 21, p < .01) between the average SPOTS teacher rating and the best judgment rating on the Observer Rating Scale. This indicated that the trained observers showed significant agreement with students regarding the degree of teacher directiveness or non-directiveness.

Procedure

This researcher commenced preparation for this study on October 1, 2001, with a petition to the superintendent of schools of a large northeast school district for permission to enter the elementary school building premises during the fall of the 2001-2002 school year for the sole purpose of administering the SPOTS survey (Appendix C). A similar request was sent to the school principal (Appendix D). Permission was received from the school principal on October 9, 2001, and from the superintendent on October 16, 2001, to proceed unconditionally with the study (see Appendixes E and F, respectively).

Prior to commencing any survey activity, this researcher met with the designated school principal on November 16, 2001, to make introductions, discuss the significance of the survey, address issues of informed consent/assent and confidentiality, assess the pool and class schedule of students available on a given date for the survey, confirm the availability of classroom space, and confer about teacher involvement. This researcher asked the school principal for the total number of students in grades 4 to 6 eligible to participate in this study. The designated public school’s administrative database was used to identify parental/guardian/student relationships for obtaining bona fide adult consent for student participation. The researcher also asked permission to distribute to prospective subjects a Letter of Solicitation/Informed Consent Form for parents and a
corresponding Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form for students (see Appendixes G and H for complete sample copies). In addition, a personalized letter from the school principal to parents/guardians was affixed as a cover letter to the aforementioned solicitation and consent forms (see Appendix I).

In coordination with the school principal, this researcher met with the classroom teachers of the students involved in this survey on November 16, 2001. This researcher sought the teachers' cooperation in this study by (a) explaining the reason for this survey, (b) detailing the process for distributing, collecting, and forwarding the requisite consent forms, (c) fostering an awareness for confidentiality and anonymity, and (d) asking the teachers to sign a Letter of Permission form prepared by the researcher (Appendix J).

The researcher coordinated with the school principal to conduct 13 classroom presentations in all fourth through sixth grade classrooms on November 26, 2001. The researcher introduced herself by name, discussed the nature of the survey, and read the Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form verbatim. Students were informed during these presentations that parents' and students' consent and signatures were required to participate in this study. During the classroom presentation, and on the day of the study, the students were reminded that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, and that their identity would be kept confidential and anonymous. The survey was administered on December 10, 2001. Oral assent was established by returning the previously signed copies of the Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form to each student and re-reading it aloud to each group of participating students. Students were reminded that even if the parent/guardian agreed to their participation, that the
student did not have to participate and could withdraw at any time without prejudice. No students withdrew from the study following the oral assent disclosure.

Following the classroom presentations conducted by the researcher, a Letter of Solicitation/Informed Consent Form for parents, a Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form for students, and a return envelope were distributed to each student. There was a one-week turnaround for the students to return their signed forms to their classroom teachers using the accompanying sealed envelope addressed to this researcher. The classroom teachers collected the sealed envelopes and forwarded them to the school principal who kept them secured until the researcher collected them on the pre-designated pick-up dates. If a parent agreed to have their child participate in the study, the parent and child both signed their respective forms. If a parent did not wish to allow their child to participate in this study, they simply did not return either form. Likewise, if any student lost their form or did not return a signed parental consent form, they were excluded from this survey.

Before the administration of the survey, this researcher met with two professionals in the field of education who voluntarily agreed to assist the researcher with the administration of the SPOTS instrument. The purpose of this meeting was to (a) review the SPOTS survey, (b) train them to administer the survey to ensure consistent administration of the survey and collection of data in all classrooms, and (c) brief them in all aspects of student confidentiality and anonymity. In addition, the researcher and each assistant successfully completed the “Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams” on-line course sponsored by the National Institutes of Health at http://www.nih.gov. Each research team member earned a certificate of completion.
before the survey was administered (see Appendix K). The assistants were educators who had previous teaching experience and both held a minimum of a master's degree in the field of education.

On the day of the survey, the researcher and trained assistants arrived early at the school where the survey was to be conducted to prepare for the study. The research team met with the school principal to ensure access was available to the selected classrooms and to review the final list of participating students. The research team escorted the participating students from the lunch cafeteria in groups of 15 to the pre-designated classrooms and back again. The researcher coordinated with the school principal to ensure that all students participating in this survey had ample time to eat their lunch.

Once the students were seated, the research team members invoked the Oral Assent Procedure and read aloud the Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form which the subjects previously signed and reminded the students that their participation was voluntary, that their responses were confidential and anonymous, and that they could withdraw at any time during the survey. Envelope packets containing pencils, a Demographic Information Sheet (DIS), and the SPOTS survey were handed out (see Appendix L for a sample copy of the DIS). On the DIS, the students were instructed to circle their gender, race, grade level, and age. No other personal identifying information was required. The students then previewed the SPOTS survey.

All research team members read from a prepared script beginning with this introduction:

I will read you 17 questions one at a time. If I am reading too fast, please ask me to slow down. If you want me to repeat a question, please ask. You will be
responding to questions that talk about your ideal teacher. What is an “ideal”
teacher? An ideal teacher means the teacher you would choose if you could wish
for the most wonderful teacher. This person would be the best teacher you could
imagine. I will guide you through this survey. Each survey question is broken into
three parts. The first part is numbered 1, 2, 3, the second part is numbered 4, 5, 6,
and the last part is numbered 7, 8, 9. Only one number can be circled out of the
nine choices. You will circle 1 or 9 if you feel strongly about the teacher’s
behavior. Please circle 2, 5, or 8 if you feel you can respond easily to a question
without hesitation. Circle 3, 4, 6, or 7 if you cannot decide.

The research team wrote the matrix on the chalkboard and provided the students with a
relevant easy to understand sample statement to illustrate the survey rating scale
(Appendix M). The researcher and trained assistants read the 17 items contained in the
SPOTS survey out loud one at a time along with the corresponding responses and
allowed the students time to make their selections. The research team gladly addressed
student questions before, during, and after the survey.

If a student decided at any point during the survey that he or she did not want to
continue, they were instructed to leave the survey on the desk and remain seated until the
other students were finished. The students had reading material available to them in the
survey room in the event they chose not to participate. Each group took approximately
20 – 25 minutes to complete the DIS and the SPOTS survey. All work was accomplished
by students on an individual basis without talking to their peers. All students who
participated in the SPOTS survey completed the survey. No students asked to withdraw
either before or during administration of the survey.
At the conclusion of the survey administration, each student placed the DIS and SPOTS survey back into the accompanying individual envelope, sealed it, and returned it to the researcher or trained assistant assigned to the group. All sealed envelopes were returned to the researcher. Each group of students was ushered back to the lunchroom and the next group of students was escorted to the classrooms. The survey process was repeated until all students who agreed to participate had done so. An exit debriefing was held with the school principal.

Data Collection

This researcher contacted Tuckman for permission to use the SPOTS instrument developed by him. Written permission was provided via electronic mail on October 4, 2000 (Appendix N). A letter of solicitation describing the purpose of this study was sent home to each parent with a return date of one week. Parental/guardian consent and student assent were required for each student to participate in the study. The consent and assent forms stated that participation was voluntary and that a student could withdraw from the study at any time.

This researcher trained two assistants to help in the collection of the data. The researcher and trained assistants administered the questionnaire in small groups of approximately 15 students (this instrument may be administered individually or in small groups according to Tuckman). Students were escorted to empty classrooms free from interruptions and distractions during a portion of their lunch period for survey administration. A copy of the survey instrument was distributed to each student. The researcher and trained assistants read the questionnaire aloud to all subjects and had
students record their own responses by circling their personal responses directly on the instrument. The students were reminded to ask questions if they did not understand the directions, questions, or coding of responses. Personal, non-identifying, information was collected on the DIS. Only gender, race, and grade level were considered in the analysis.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the primary research question, an estimation of the proportion of elementary school students in grades 4 through 6 who prefer the directive teaching style and non-directive teaching style was calculated with a 95% confidence band.

The relationship between students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher and gender was accomplished by using a z-test to measure students’ preferred teaching style. A z-test was used because the sample of male ($n_M$) and female ($n_F$) subjects each exceeded 30.

The relationship between students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher and race was accomplished by using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether there was a significant difference among responses based upon students’ races. Due to unequal cell sizes, the Scheffé technique was used to determine if differences between respondent scores, based upon race, were significant.

The relationship between students’ perceptions of the ideal teacher and grade level was accomplished by using a one-way ANOVA to determine whether there was a significant difference among students’ grade levels. Due to unequal cell sizes, the Scheffé technique was again used to measure any differences among grade levels.

An overall SPOTS reliability analysis was previously performed by Garlick (1990) with a special education population ranging from five to 21 years of age in order to
establish the internal consistency of the SPOTS instrument. Garlick’s research yielded a Cronbach alpha of .89 suggesting that the instrument was internally consistent and that the 17 items on the SPOTS were intercorrelated and measured the same concept. This researcher performed a similar reliability analysis to validate the SPOTS instrument with the current sample of 128 students. The analysis yielded a satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha of .86 suggesting that these data are indeed solid and reliable (see Appendix O).
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter provides data analysis using the methodology described in Chapter III. One research question and three subsidiary questions were answered in this study.

Research Question

Do elementary school students perceive a directive or non-directive teacher to be ideal?

Analysis

Four students out of 128 students in the survey had a score of 51 or lower which means these students perceived the directive teacher style as an appropriate description for the ideal teacher. In other words, 3% of the students preferred the directive teacher style with the following 95% confidence interval:

\[ P\left[ \hat{p} - z_{\alpha/2} \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} < p < \hat{p} + z_{\alpha/2} \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right] = 1 - \alpha \]

\[ P \left[ .03 - 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{.03 \cdot .97}{128}} < p < .03 + 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{.03 \cdot .97}{128}} \right] = .95 \]
\[ P[0 < p < .06] = .95 \]

Based on these results, the researcher is 95% confident that between 0% and 6% of elementary school children in grades 4 through 6 perceived the directive teacher style as an appropriate description for the ideal teacher.

On the other hand, 32 students out of 128 had a score of 119 or higher which means these students perceived the non-directive teacher style as an appropriate description for the ideal teacher. In other words, 25% of the students preferred the non-directive style with the following 95% confidence interval:

\[
P \left[ \hat{p} - z_{\alpha/2} \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} < p < \hat{p} + z_{\alpha/2} \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right] = 1 - \alpha
\]

\[
P \left[ .25 - 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{(25)(.75)}{128}} < p < .25 + 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{(25)(.75)}{128}} \right] = .95
\]

\[ P[.17 < p < .33] = .95 \]
Based on these results, the researcher is 95% confident that between 17% to 33% of elementary school children in grades 4 through 6 perceive the non-directive teacher style as an appropriate description for the ideal teacher (see Table 3).

Conclusion

To answer the research question, elementary school students perceived the non-directive teacher style to be ideal. Twenty-five percent of the students surveyed preferred this style as opposed to 3% who preferred the directive teacher style.

Subsidiary Question No. 1

Does elementary school students’ gender significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?

Hypothesis. The researcher examined the null hypothesis that there is no difference between male and female elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_0 : \mu_M = \mu_F \).

The researcher compared the null hypothesis with the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between male and female elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_1 : \mu_M \neq \mu_F \).

Level of significance. The test was run at a level of significance of 0.05, or \( \alpha = 0.05 \).

Test statistic. The researcher used a z-statistic because both samples were well over 30 (see Table 4). Accordingly:

\[
z = \frac{\bar{x}_M - \bar{x}_F - \mu_\mu - \bar{x}_F}{\sqrt{\frac{S^2_M}{n_M} + \frac{S^2_F}{n_F}}}
\]
### Table 3

**Comparison of Directive and Non-directive Teacher Styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Teacher Style</th>
<th>No. of Students out of 128</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directive (17 - 51)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0% - 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-directive (119 - 153)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17% - 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Male Freq.</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Female Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** \(n_M = 57 \quad & \quad \bar{x}_M = 104.72\)  \(n_F = 71 \quad & \quad \bar{x}_F = 101.38\)
Assumptions.

1. Independent random samples

2. \( n_M > 30 \) and \( n_F > 30 \)

Decision rule. The researcher will reject the null hypothesis if the \( z \)-statistic is greater than 1.96 or less than \(-1.96\), or reject \( H_0 \) if \( z > 1.96 \) or if \( z < -1.96 \).

Computations. Data summary from Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>104.72</td>
<td>24.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>101.38</td>
<td>24.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
z = \frac{\bar{x}_M - \bar{x}_F - \mu_{\bar{x}_M - \bar{x}_F}}{\sqrt{\frac{s_M^2}{n_M} + \frac{s_F^2}{n_F}}} \]

\[
z = \frac{(104.72 - 101.38) - 0}{\sqrt{\frac{(24.60)^2}{57} + \frac{(24.63)^2}{71}}} \]

\[z = .76\]
**Decision.** Since $z$ is less than 1.96, we fail to reject $H_0$ and accept that there is no difference between male and female elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher. The best estimate of their perception regarding the ideal teacher as measured by SPOTS is:

$$
\bar{x}_o = \frac{n_M \bar{x}_M + n_F \bar{x}_F}{n_M + n_F}
$$

$$
\bar{x}_o = \frac{57(104.72) + 71(101.38)}{57 + 71}
$$

$$
\bar{x}_o = 102.87
$$

The average response for all male and female elementary school students in fourth through sixth grade is 102.87. Therefore, these elementary school students perceived the middle non-directive teaching style as the appropriate descriptor for the ideal teacher.

**Conclusion.** The answer to subsidiary question number one is no. Gender does not significantly impact student perceptions regarding the ideal teacher.
Subsidiary Question No. 2

Does elementary school students' race significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?

**Hypothesis.** The researcher examined the null hypothesis that there is no difference between Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_0 : \mu_H = \mu_W = \mu_A \).

The researcher compared the null hypothesis with the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_1 : H_0 \) is false.

**Level of significance.** The test was run at a level of significance of 0.05, or \( \alpha = 0.05 \).

**Test statistic.** The researcher conducted a one way analysis of variance using the \( F \)-test and survey data summarized in Table 5, such that:

\[
F = \frac{MS_H}{MS_W}
\]

**Assumptions.**

1. Independent random samples
2. Normality of populations
3. Homogeneity of variance
Table 5

Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic Score Freq.</th>
<th>69 2</th>
<th>76 1</th>
<th>77 1</th>
<th>87 1</th>
<th>94 1</th>
<th>101 1</th>
<th>103 1</th>
<th>107 2</th>
<th>108 1</th>
<th>109 1</th>
<th>111 1</th>
<th>112 1</th>
<th>114 1</th>
<th>125 1</th>
<th>127 1</th>
<th>88 3</th>
<th>90 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Score Freq.</td>
<td>39 1</td>
<td>47 1</td>
<td>49 1</td>
<td>54 1</td>
<td>62 1</td>
<td>63 1</td>
<td>69 1</td>
<td>70 1</td>
<td>74 2</td>
<td>80 1</td>
<td>81 1</td>
<td>82 1</td>
<td>84 2</td>
<td>86 2</td>
<td>87 1</td>
<td>88 3</td>
<td>90 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Freq.</td>
<td>92 2</td>
<td>97 3</td>
<td>100 1</td>
<td>101 1</td>
<td>102 1</td>
<td>104 2</td>
<td>105 1</td>
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<td>113 1</td>
<td>114 1</td>
<td>115 2</td>
<td>116 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Freq.</td>
<td>117 2</td>
<td>121 2</td>
<td>126 1</td>
<td>128 3</td>
<td>131 1</td>
<td>133 1</td>
<td>137 2</td>
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<td>148 1</td>
<td>149 2</td>
<td>153 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score Freq.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Score Freq.</td>
<td>47 1</td>
<td>61 1</td>
<td>70 1</td>
<td>72 1</td>
<td>73 2</td>
<td>75 1</td>
<td>79 1</td>
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<td>93 1</td>
<td>97 1</td>
<td>101 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score Freq.</td>
<td>102 3</td>
<td>105 2</td>
<td>106 1</td>
<td>108 1</td>
<td>113 2</td>
<td>115 1</td>
<td>118 1</td>
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<td>133 1</td>
<td>138 1</td>
<td>148 1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( n_H = 17 \) \& \( \bar{x}_H = 99.76 \)

\( n_W = 69 \) \& \( \bar{x}_W = 104.64 \)

\( n_A = 38 \) \& \( \bar{x}_A = 100.95 \)
Decision rule. The researcher will reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level if the $F$-value with two degrees of freedom in the numerator and 121 degrees of freedom in the denominator is greater than 3.07. Likewise, reject $H_0$ if $F > F_{2,121,.05} = 3.07$.

Computations. The analysis of variance follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>519.88</td>
<td>259.94</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>73,958.99</td>
<td>611.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>74,478.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision. Since $F$ is less than 3.07, we fail to reject $H_0$ and accept there is no difference between Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher. The best estimate of their perception regarding the ideal teacher as measured by SPOTS is:

$$
\bar{x}_0 = \frac{n_H \bar{x}_H + n_W \bar{x}_W + n_A \bar{x}_A}{n_H + n_W + n_A}
$$

$$
\bar{x}_0 = \frac{17(99.76) + 69(104.64) + 38(100.95)}{17 + 69 + 38} = 102.84
$$
The average response for all Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students in fourth through sixth grade is 102.84 which differs slightly from the gender mean of \( \bar{x}_g = 102.87 \) because four black students were not used in this analysis. These elementary school students perceived the middle non-directive teaching style as the appropriate descriptor for the ideal teacher.

**Conclusion.** The answer to subsidiary question number two is no. Race does not significantly impact student perceptions regarding the ideal teacher.

**Subsidiary Question No. 3**

Does elementary school students' grade level significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher?

**Hypothesis.** The researcher examined the null hypothesis that there is no difference between fourth, fifth, and sixth grade elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_0 : \mu_{4th} = \mu_{5th} = \mu_{6th} \).

The researcher compared the null hypothesis with the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between fourth, fifth, and sixth grade elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher, such that \( H_1 : H_0 \) is false.

**Level of significance.** The test was run at a level of significance of 0.05, or \( \alpha = 0.05 \).

**Test statistic.** The researcher conducted a one way analysis of variance using an \( F \)-test and survey data summarized in Table 6, such that:

\[
F = \frac{MS_B}{MS_W}
\]
### Table 6

Frequency Distribution of SPOTS Scores by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( (n_4 = 50 \ & \ \bar{x}_4 = 95.88) \)

\( (n_5 = 42 \ & \ \bar{x}_5 = 99.88) \)

\( (n_6 = 36 \ & \ \bar{x}_6 = 116.06) \)
Assumptions.
1. Independent random samples
2. Normality of populations
3. Homogeneity of variance

Decision rule. The researcher will reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level if the $F$-value with two degrees of freedom in the numerator and 125 degrees of freedom in the denominator is greater than 3.07. Likewise, reject $H_0$ if

$$F > F_{2,125,.05} = 3.07.$$ 

Computations. The analysis of variance follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,077.17</td>
<td>4,538.59</td>
<td>8.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>67,607.57</td>
<td>540.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>76,684.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision. Since $F$ is greater than 3.07, we must reject $H_0$ and accept $H_1$ that there is a difference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade elementary school students with respect to their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher.

Scheffé technique. This researcher used the Scheffé technique to determine where the significant differences exist between or among the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders.
Contrast 1. $\hat{\psi}_1 = \bar{x}_4 - \bar{x}_5 = 95.88 - 99.88 = -4.00$

Contrast 2. $\hat{\psi}_2 = \bar{x}_4 - \bar{x}_6 = 95.88 - 116.06 = -20.18$

Contrast 3. $\hat{\psi}_3 = \bar{x}_3 - \bar{x}_6 = 99.88 - 116.06 = -16.18$

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{(k-1)F_{k-1,n-k,\alpha}}{k}} = \sqrt{2(3.07)} = 2.48$$

Standard error for contrast 1:

$$SE_{\psi_1} = \sqrt{\frac{MS_w}{n_4} + \frac{MS_w}{n_5}} = \sqrt{\frac{540.86}{50} + \frac{540.86}{42}} = 4.87$$
Standard error for contrast 2:

\[ SE_{\phi_2} = \sqrt{\frac{MS_{w}}{n_a} + \frac{MS_{w}}{n_b}} = \sqrt{\frac{540.86}{50} + \frac{540.86}{36}} = 5.08 \]

Standard error for contrast 3:

\[ SE_{\phi_3} = \sqrt{\frac{MS_{w}}{n_5} + \frac{MS_{w}}{n_6}} = \sqrt{\frac{540.86}{42} + \frac{540.86}{36}} = 5.28 \]

\[
\begin{align*}
P \left[ \hat{\psi}_1 - S(SE_{\phi_1}) < \psi_1 < \hat{\psi}_1 + S(SE_{\phi_1}) \right] &= 1 - \alpha \\
P \left[ \hat{\psi}_2 - S(SE_{\phi_2}) < \psi_2 < \hat{\psi}_2 + S(SE_{\phi_2}) \right] &= 1 - \alpha \\
&= \frac{16.08}{5.28} = 3.07 \\
&= .95
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&= \frac{32.78}{5.28} = 6.23 \\
&= .95
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&= \frac{29.27}{5.28} = 5.54 \\
&= .95
\end{align*}
\]
Two simple contrasts are significant. Students in grade 6 scored significantly higher on SPOTS than did students in grade 4 or grade 5. Grade 6 students scored between 7.58 and 32.78 points higher than grade 4 students on SPOTS with a best-point estimate being 20.18 points higher.

Also, grade 6 students scored between 3.09 and 29.27 points higher than the grade 5 students on SPOTS with a best-point estimate being 16.18 points higher. Though all means fell in the middle non-directive teacher style classification of 86 to 118, the grade 6 student mean of 116.06 was less than three points from the non-directive teacher style classification of 119 to 153.

**Conclusion.** The answer to subsidiary question number three is yes. Grade level does significantly impact student perceptions regarding the ideal teacher. No significant difference was noted between the fourth and fifth grades, but in sixth grade students' perceptions changed with regard to the ideal teacher.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents conclusions based upon the findings resulting from this research and is divided into four sections. A summary of the study is discussed in section one. A summary of the findings is addressed in section two. Section three includes conclusions and discussion. Section four cites recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

A review of current literature indicated that students’ preferred teaching styles evolve during their formative elementary school years. Students are always studying their teachers while observing every move they make. Teacher behavior, as perceived by students, can provide a wealth of information regarding what actually occurs in a classroom. This research was premised upon the fact that student feedback is very important and may even offer educators insight into ideal teaching styles resulting in a more thorough and efficient education for our children.

Because teachers retain the primary role in the education process, it seemed appropriate to investigate observable teacher behavioral responses and perceived teacher behavioral responses and to quantify these patterns as non-directive (facilitative) or directive (authoritative). Both of these teaching styles represent a combination of teacher behaviors and teacher characteristics. A non-directive teacher is portrayed as one who allows students to make their own decisions most of the time, encourages students to
freely express their opinions, encourages holistic self-assessment, lets group members decide how a project should be handled, and participates with students. By comparison, a directive style of teaching is characterized as being rigidly structured, with minimal classroom activities, an emphasis on factual knowledge, few opportunities to learn from mistakes, maintenance of a formal relationship with students, and as having sole grading responsibility. Both teaching styles share common teacher characteristics such as fairness, grooming, courtesy, and respectfulness.

The purpose of this study was to determine elementary school students' perceptions of the ideal teacher within a classroom environment in a New Jersey elementary public school. Elementary school students with varied needs and abilities in grades 4 through 6 completed a 17-item questionnaire relating to ideal teacher behaviors. Each question was rated 1 through 9 using a Likert-type scale. The total score for each student translated into a preferred teaching style using the following scoring ranges: Directive 17-51, Middle directive 52-85, Middle non-directive 86-118, and Non-directive 119-153. The variables of gender, race, and grade level were then isolated to determine if these factors influenced their choice of an ideal teaching style. This research was one of the first to use the SPOTS instrument with a public elementary school mainstreamed student population.

A teacher's behavior defines his or her teaching style and has an impact on student perceptions of the ideal teacher. According to students, the ideal teacher embodies a number of characteristics including being friendly, approachable, available, humorous, easy to talk to, and genuinely interested in the student. Additionally, he or she should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter and be able to facilitate an ongoing
dialogue with and among students. There appears to be consensus among students that preferable ideal teacher behaviors involve teacher personality, positive personal relationships, honed instructional methods, and knowledge of subject matter.

Student perceptions of the ideal teacher can be an important part of the learning environment. Student perceptions may contribute to, or detract from, the learning process. By assessing student perceptions of the ideal teacher at the elementary school level, important information can be synthesized from the results and presented to school districts, thereby providing them with solid direction in terms of designing relevant in-service programs uniquely predicated upon student perceptions.

This study was conducted in December 2001 with 128 students in grades 4 through 6 who attended a public elementary school in New Jersey. These students completed the SPOTS descriptive questionnaire using a rating scale designed to measure students' perceptions of their ideal teacher based on a set of pre-established teacher behaviors. These preferred behaviors yielded a collective pattern which translated into a generalized, preferred teaching style. An estimation of the proportion of elementary school students in grades 4 through 6 who preferred the directive teaching style and non-directive teaching style was calculated with a 95% confidence band. A z-test was used to determine the relationship between students' perceptions of the ideal teacher and gender. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there was a significant difference among students by race and grade level. The Scheffé technique was applied to measure differences between grade levels.
Summary of the Findings

One research question and three subsidiary questions were investigated.

Research question. Do elementary school students perceive a directive or non-directive teacher to be ideal? Overall, elementary school students in grades 4 through 6 perceived a non-directive teacher to be ideal. Twenty-five percent of the students surveyed preferred this style as opposed to 3% who preferred the directive teacher style.

These findings are supported by the literature which reported that indirect instruction produced a greater number of students having success in problem-solving than did direct instruction. Furthermore, most research indicated that a non-directive style of teaching promoted a greater measure of creativity than did direct instruction. This research confirmed that students consistently described their ideal teacher as one who varies his or her teaching methods, is creative, understanding, patient, knowledgeable, friendly, interesting, flexible, cooperative, humorous, interested, responsible, participates with students, and fosters social interaction among the groups. These descriptors are illustrative of a non-directive teaching style as preferred by the students in this study.

Subsidiary question no. 1. Does elementary school students’ gender significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher? The findings of this study indicate that there is agreement between boys and girls in grades 4 through 6 regarding their perceptions of the ideal teacher. The average response for all male and female elementary school students in fourth through sixth grade was 102.87. These elementary school students perceived the middle non-directive teaching style as the appropriate descriptor for the ideal teacher.
The overall literature surrounding students' gender in relation to their perceptions of the ideal teacher indicated that female students cite characteristics of "nice" and "friendly" to describe their ideal teacher indicating a non-directive teacher preference. Likewise, males stated that ideal teachers should be "sensitive" to individual needs.

**Subsidiary question no. 2.** Does elementary school students' race significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher? The findings of this study indicated that there is agreement between Hispanic, White, and Asian students in grades 4 through 6 regarding their perceptions of the ideal teacher. The average response for all Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students in fourth through sixth grade was 102.84. These elementary school students perceived the middle non-directive teaching style as the appropriate descriptor for the ideal teacher.

These findings are supported by studies in which there were few differences found between Black and White students with regard to attitudinal differences. Overall, students of all races perceived the ideal teacher to be someone who graded fairly, was intelligent, and assigned pleasurable work. The findings of this study indicated that race does not significantly impact elementary school students' perceptions of the ideal teacher.

**Subsidiary question no. 3.** Does elementary school students' grade level significantly impact their perceptions regarding the ideal teacher? The findings of this study indicated that there is agreement among fourth and fifth grade students with regard to the ideal teacher; however, there is a significant difference with respect to sixth grade students and their perceptions of the ideal teacher. Students in grade 6 scored significantly higher on the SPOTS survey than did students in grades 4 or 5. Though all means fell in the middle non-directive teacher style classification of 86 to 118, the grade
6 student mean of 116.06 was less than three points from a non-directive teaching style
classification range of 119 to 153.

These findings are supported by other studies which stated that most elementary
school students preferred a more non-directive style of teaching. Students described an
ideal teacher as one who maintained an enjoyable class, had an appealing temperament,
demonstrated interest in their students, established rapport, understood student needs, and
was fair in testing and grading.

Conclusions and Discussion

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. Twenty-five percent of elementary school students in grades 4 through 6
considered a non-directive teaching style to be ideal when compared to a directive
teaching style. Students are more service-oriented today. A non-directive teaching style
and learning environment are more applicable and conducive for these students. The
research confirms that students use a common set of descriptors to describe their ideal
teacher including being creative, understanding, patient, knowledgeable, friendly,
interesting, flexible, cooperative, humorous, interested, responsible, and interactive.

2. Elementary school students of both genders have similar perceptions of the ideal
teacher. The average response for all male and female elementary school students in
fourth through sixth grade was 102.87. As a result, these elementary school students
perceived the middle non-directive teaching style to be the appropriate descriptor for the
ideal teacher.
3. Elementary school students of Hispanic, White, or Asian heritage have similar perceptions of the ideal teacher. The average response for all Hispanic, White, and Asian elementary school students in fourth through sixth grade was 102.84. As a result, these elementary school students perceived the middle non-directive teaching style to be the appropriate descriptor for the ideal teacher.

4. Elementary school students in grades 4 and 5 have similar perceptions of the ideal teacher. However, students in grade 6 have differing perceptions of the ideal teacher. Students in grade 6 scored significantly higher on the SPOTS survey than did students in grades 4 or 5. Though all means fell in the middle non-directive teacher style classification of 86 to 118, the grade 6 student mean of 116.06 was less than three points from a non-directive teacher classification of 119 to 153. As sixth grade students approach the middle school years, their preferred style of teaching is more compatible with that of a non-directive teacher. Student maturity and personal responsibility may impact on their perception of the ideal teacher at this grade level.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a direct result of this study, the following recommendations are put forth for those professionals in the field of education. The recommendations include academic recommendations for further research, policy implications, and practice implications:

1. The present study should be replicated with an elementary school population consisting of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students to verify these results. It would be informative to compare data with the results of this study.
2. Additional studies at the elementary school level should include a reliability analysis of the SPOTS instrument. As previously mentioned, this study is one of the first to be done on the elementary school level using the SPOTS instrument.

3. A limitation of this study is that it only looked at one public school district. One may want to investigate a more global sample. It would be interesting to expand the study to include students in other states to determine if the New Jersey students' perceptions of the ideal teacher are shared with students from other states.

4. Even though this research is limited to gender, race, and grade level, further studies may compare groups of students such as gifted and talented with other ability groupings.

5. The researcher used the z-test and one-way ANOVA to measure significant differences among gender, race, and grade level. Another researcher might want to look at the interaction effect between gender, race, and grade level.

6. The research only included Hispanic, White, and Asian students. Black students were excluded only because the sample size of four was so small. In another study, the researcher should include more Black students to see if any differences exist.

7. This study should be replicated for all K – 12 grade levels. As the findings of this study revealed, grade level does impact on student perceptions of the ideal teacher. Students in grade 6 in this study considered a non-directive teacher to be ideal. As one approaches the middle school years, their preference for a non-directive teacher may become stronger as they get older.

8. School Boards of Education should consider that when districts interview new teacher candidates on the elementary school level, the candidate should specifically
comment on their opinions of a directive versus a non-directive teaching style and the
types of characteristics and behaviors describing these styles. It would be interesting and
informative to the school district in determining whether there is a match between the
culture of the school and the prospective teacher.

9. Class size has an impact on student achievement at the elementary school level. Not only should this study be replicated using various class sizes to determine whether that has an impact on students' preferred ideal teaching style but it could also determine whether teachers are more directive when they are assigned large class sizes to teach. School districts may want to investigate whether they should create a policy limiting class size on the elementary school level other than the state mandate for kindergarten class size.

10. Another researcher may want to investigate whether the gender of a teacher has an impact on elementary school students' perceptions of the ideal teacher.

11. This study should be used by the school district where the research was conducted. The results are current, accurate, and representative of the population. The results would assist the teachers in developing a more non-directive classroom environment, especially in grade 6. The teachers of the students who participated in this study would also benefit from these results since their students were the ones surveyed.

12. Administrators, school principals, supervisors, and guidance counselors who are additionally responsible for class placement of students may benefit from knowledge of elementary school student perceptions of the ideal teacher. Attempting to make a better match between teacher style/behavior and student style/behavior may help create a more positive student attitude toward school.
13. School administrators and principals could assist teachers when writing their lesson plans to incorporate non-directive lessons and create a class climate that is reflective of a facilitative environment.

14. Since the purpose of this study was to identify elementary school student perceptions of the ideal teacher, it is believed that the results that emerge from this data will assist school districts in the development of relevant in-service programs that will focus on student needs based on their perceptions of the ideal teacher. Classroom teachers are facing new professional challenges as they encounter an increasingly diverse student population including students whose first language is not English, at risk students with a history of educational failure, and students identified with learning and physical disabilities that require modification of the general education curriculum. Professional development represents a critical vehicle for schools to support teachers in their ongoing acquisition of skills and strategies that enable them to expertly teach in this changing context.

15. Teachers' Professional Improvement Plans may include attendance at professional development activities or other classrooms which support non-directive teaching approaches. With the role of the teacher changing from authoritative to facilitative, school districts need to provide teachers with relevant development programs to assist teachers who are more directive into learning to create a more non-directive classroom environment which students consider ideal.

16. The New Jersey Department of Education developed a plan that outlines the criteria for required professional development for active teachers. The plan requires that each active teacher shall be required to complete 100 clock hours of state approved
continuing professional development and/or in-service every five years. The initial five-year period extends from September 2000 to September 2005. The content of each teacher’s continuing education shall be specified in a professional improvement plan. The 100-hour requirement may be satisfied through a combination of experiences including formal courses and conferences sponsored by colleges, district boards of education, professional associations, and training organizations. All or part of the 100-hour requirement may be satisfied through an in-service program which must be approved by the County Professional Development Board under standards established by the Commissioner of Education based on the recommendations of the Professional Teaching Standards Board. School districts may seek approval for providing an ongoing series of in-service workshops for elementary school teachers which focus on ideal teaching styles preferred by elementary school students.
REFERENCES


(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 393 607)


Younger, M., & Warrington, M. (1999). ‘He’s such a nice man, but he’s so boring, you have to really make a conscious effort to learn’: The views of Gemma, Daniel and
Appendix A

SPOTS (Revised) Survey Instrument
1. Your ideal teacher is mainly interested in

1  2  3  |
How many facts you know

4  5  6  |
If he gets an idea across to you

7  8  9  |
Whether you can "think" for yourself

2. The ideal teacher

1  2  3  |
Makes you do what he wants you to most of the time

4  5  6  |
Make you do what he wants you to sometimes

7  8  9  |
Lets you make your own decisions most of the time

3. The ideal teacher

1  2  3  |
Doesn't like to talk about any subject that isn't part of your course

4  5  6  |
Talks about your course subjects a lot but encourages the discussion of other matters

7  8  9  |
Likes to talk about different subjects and is interested in your personal opinions

4. The students in our class

1  2  3  |
Only speak when the teacher asks them a question

4  5  6  |
Feel free to ask the teacher questions

7  8  9  |
Feel free to speak up up at almost any time
5. When the ideal teacher or another student says something you don’t agree with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You try not to start an argument and feel that it’s not your job to tell him he’s wrong</td>
<td>You tell why you disagree when the teacher asks you to</td>
<td>You feel free to discuss and argue your point of view whether the teacher asks you or not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The ideal teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually bases his opinion on what the book says or what the principal says</td>
<td>Usually gives you another point of view in addition to what the book says</td>
<td>Tells you that books, teachers, principals, and customs are not always right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If you were to call your ideal teacher by his first name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He wouldn’t like it and would tell you not to do it</td>
<td>He would tell you that it’s alright to call him by his first name outside of school but that he would prefer you to call him by his last name while he is teaching</td>
<td>He wouldn’t mind at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The ideal teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never tell jokes while he’s teaching and does not like it when the students joke around</td>
<td>Sometimes tells a joke or a humorous story to get a point across</td>
<td>Always tells funny stories and encourages the students to tell about funny things that happened to them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. The ideal teacher spend a lot of time

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Telling you about tests,</td>
<td>Giving you an idea about</td>
<td>Asking you to make your own decisions about tests, grades, the course plan, or group projects</td>
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<td>grades, and about how the course is planned</td>
<td>courses but not too much time giving you the details</td>
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10. When we are working on a group project or in a committee, the ideal teacher

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<td>Tells us exactly what to do</td>
<td>Suggests ways the project might be handled</td>
<td>Lets the group members decide how the project should be handled</td>
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11. The ideal teacher usually

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<td>Makes all the students do the same thing in class (working, studying)</td>
<td>Makes some students work on projects and some students study depending on how far behind they are</td>
<td>Lets the students do what they like as long as they complete the number of projects by the end of the week</td>
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12. If you get angry at the ideal teacher

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<td>You usually hold it in because the teacher would punish any show of anger</td>
<td>You feel that you can tell the teacher why you're angry</td>
<td>You feel that you could show your anger without the teacher becoming angry</td>
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13. The ideal teacher

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<tr>
<td>Acts like a teacher all of the time</td>
<td>Acts like a teacher most of the time but sometimes seems more like a friend</td>
<td>Acts like a friend more than he acts like a teacher</td>
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14. The first thing the ideal teacher does when he comes into the room

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<tr>
<td>Is to tell you to be quiet so that he can take attendance</td>
<td>Is to take attendance and ask you why some students are absent (if they are sick, etc.)</td>
<td>Is to let you start your projects or studying and then takes attendance while you're working</td>
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15. In this class homework

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<td>Is assigned every day and must be handed in the next day</td>
<td>Is divided between work which is due every day and a few long-term projects</td>
<td>Usually consists of long-term projects each term</td>
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16. In our class pupils work together in groups or on a committee

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<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
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17. When there is work which has to be done with another student we are

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually told with whom to work</td>
<td>Can sometimes choose our own work partners</td>
<td>Can usually decide with whom we want to work</td>
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Appendix B

IRB Approval Letter
November 6, 2001

Anne R. Acocella  
16 Rita Drive  
Morris Plains, NJ 07950

Dear Ms. Acocella:

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns noted for your proposal entitled "Elementary School Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher." Your research protocol is hereby approved as amended. Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped Consent Form.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Charles Mitchell, Ed.D.
Appendix C

Request for Permission to Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Joseph Ciccone  
Superintendent  
Belleville Public Schools  
100 Passaic Avenue  
Belleville, NJ 07109

Dear Dr. Ciccone:

I am writing to request your permission to utilize the students enrolled in grades four through six at Belleville Public School Number Seven in my doctoral dissertation. My study will focus on “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher.”

Each student will be asked to complete a survey entitled Student Perceptions of Teacher Style and a Demographic Information Sheet that will include the student’s gender, grade, race, and age. It should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete the survey per 15 students. The students will be read aloud each of the 17 items on the survey and asked to circle their response which is based on a scale from one through nine. Student names will not be used on the survey or Demographic Information Sheet. I will keep all data in a secured locked box. I have enclosed copies of the Letter of Solicitation/Informed Consent Form for parents and a Letter of Solicitation/Student Assent Form for students for your review.

I will meet with the Principal of School No. Seven to discuss the nature of the study, its relevance, the procedures for administering the survey, and how student confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved. I will then schedule a day to make a brief presentation to the students to explain the nature of my study, answer any questions, and distribute the aforementioned forms for signature. Students who volunteer for this study will be asked to return the signed consent forms to their teacher within one week. Signatures must be obtained from a parent/guardian and student or the student will not be allowed to participate in the study.
Please incorporate the following passage on letterhead paper, sign, and return to me at your earliest convenience. All aggregate results will be shared with you. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins

c: attachments

I grant Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins permission to conduct a study entitled "Elementary School Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher" utilizing students in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville Public School Number Seven, Belleville, NJ, during the 2001 - 2002 school year.

Dr. Joseph Ciccone, Superintendent of Schools, Belleville, NJ
Appendix D

Request for Permission to School Principal
Ms. Marilyn Hawthorne
Principal
School No. Seven
20 Passaic Avenue
Belleville, NJ 07109

Dear Ms. Hawthorne:

I am writing to request your permission to utilize the students enrolled in grades four through six at Belleville Public School Number Seven in my doctoral dissertation. My study will focus on “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher.” Dr. Ciccone, Superintendent of Schools, is aware of my request to conduct this study.

Each student will be asked to complete a survey entitled Student Perceptions of Teacher Style and a Demographic Information Sheet that will include the student’s gender, grade, race, and age. It should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete the survey per 15 students during a portion of their lunch period. The students will be read aloud each of the 17 items on the survey and asked to circle their response which is based on a scale from one through nine. Student names will not be used on the survey or the Demographic Information Sheet. I will keep all data in a secured locked box.

I will gladly arrange to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the nature of my study, its relevance, the procedures for administering the survey, and how student confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved.

Please incorporate the following passage on letterhead paper, sign, and return to me at your earliest convenience. All aggregate results will be shared with you. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins
I grant Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins permission to conduct a study entitled “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher” utilizing students in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville Public School Number Seven, Belleville, NJ, during the 2001 – 2002 school year.

Ms. Marilyn Hawthorne, Principal,
School No. Seven, Belleville, NJ
Appendix E

Permission to Conduct Study Granted by School Principal
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I grant Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins permission to conduct a study entitled “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher” utilizing students in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville Public School Number Seven, Belleville, New Jersey during the 2001-2002 school year.

Marilyn Hawthorne, Principal
School Seven
Belleville School District

October 9, 2001
Appendix F

Permission to Conduct Study Granted by Superintendent of Schools
October 16, 2001

To whom it may concern:

Last evening during the Public Business Meeting of the Belleville Board of Education, the proposal to administer a survey to grades four through six at School Number Seven for a doctoral dissertation was presented to and approved by the Belleville Board of Education.

Joseph Ciccone, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Joseph Ciccone, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JC/jat
Appendix G

Letter of Solicitation and Informed Consent Form for Parents
Letter of Solicitation for Parents

November 26, 2001

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins and I am a doctoral student enrolled in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Administration and Supervision, at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. I am currently serving as a Learning Consultant for the Boonton Public Schools. My prior experience in education includes service as an elementary school teacher, special education teacher, Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant, and Assistant Principal.

As part of my doctoral dissertation research at Seton Hall University, I am conducting a study entitled "Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher." My study is specific to students enrolled in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville School Number Seven. Students can provide a great deal of information through their perceptions and opinions. The information that will evolve from this study will be extremely valuable to teachers, administrators, and ultimately, teacher training programs. The students will spend approximately 20-25 minutes of their lunchtime to participate in this research.

I am asking your permission to have your child participate in my study by completing a survey called Student Perceptions of Teacher Style. This is a 17-item questionnaire that will indicate his/her perceptions of the ideal teacher based on ideal teacher behaviors. The students will be read aloud each of the 17 items on the survey by myself or a trained assistant and asked to circle a number on a scale from one through nine which will indicate the strength of their response. The questionnaire will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete and will be done during their lunch period. Arrangements will be made so his/her lunch is not missed.

Please know that participation in this survey is voluntary and your child may withdraw at any time without penalty. This survey will not affect his/her academic grade in any way.

The identity of all students will be kept confidential and anonymous. Student names will not be used or recorded on any part of the survey. Students will also complete a demographic information sheet specifying their gender, race, grade level, and age.
Once all surveys and demographic information sheets are completed, all information and questionnaires will be safely secured in a locked cabinet.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that these research procedures adequately safeguard your child's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The IRB telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in my study, then I request that both you and your child sign and return the attached Informed Consent Form and Student Assent Form using the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Please return both of these forms to your child's classroom teacher no later than Monday, December 3, 2001.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration. I will be happy to share these results with the Belleville Public School District upon completion of this study. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Anne R. Acocella-Sroggins
Doctoral Candidate
Informed Consent Form

My name is Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins and I am a doctoral student enrolled in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Administration and Supervision, at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. I am currently serving as a Learning Consultant for the Boonton Public Schools. My prior experience in public education includes being an elementary school teacher, special education teacher, Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant, and Assistant Principal.

As part of my doctoral dissertation research at Seton Hall University, I have chosen to do a study entitled “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher.” My study is specific to students enrolled in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville School Number Seven. Students can provide a great deal of information through their perceptions and opinions. The information that will evolve from this study will be extremely valuable to teachers, administrators, and ultimately, teacher training programs. The students will spend approximately 20-25 minutes of their lunchtime to participate in this research.

I am asking your permission to have your child participate in my study by completing a survey called Student Perceptions of Teacher Style. This is a 17-item questionnaire that will indicate his/her perceptions of the ideal teacher relating to ideal teacher behaviors. The students will be read aloud each of the 17 items on the survey by myself or trained assistant and asked to circle a number on a scale from one through nine which will indicate the strength of their response. The questionnaire will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete and will be done during their lunch period. Arrangements will be made so his/her lunch is not missed.

Please know that participation in this survey is voluntary and your child may withdraw at any time before and during the course of the survey without penalty or retribution. This survey will not affect his/her academic grade in any way.

The identity of all students will be kept confidential and anonymous. Student names will not be used. Students will be recorded on a demographic information sheet according to gender, race, grade level, and age.

Once all surveys and demographic information sheets are completed on the day of the study, I will safely secure all information and questionnaires in a locked cabinet.

Only the researcher will have access to the research records including the survey instrument and Demographic Information Sheet. These records will be kept confidential at all times.

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Educational Administration and Supervision
Tel. 973.761.9332
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685
There are no anticipated risks for participation in this study.

The information that will evolve from this study may offer potential and current educators insight by identifying characteristics of the ideal teacher as described by elementary school students.

If a parent/guardian has any pertinent questions about the research or research subject's rights, please call the researcher, Mrs. Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins, at her office telephone (973) 316-9230 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily Monday through Friday.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard your child's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The IRB telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to allow my child to participate in this activity, realizing that he/she may withdraw without prejudice at any time. I understand that I will be provided a copy of this signed form prior to the survey.

Print Student Name

Parent/Guardian/Authorized Representative Signature Date

APPROVED
NOV 06 2001
IRB
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
Appendix H

Letter of Solicitation and Student Assent Form for Students
Letter of Solicitation for Students

November 26, 2001

Dear Student,

My name is Mrs. Acocella-Scroggins and I am a doctoral student enrolled in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Administration and Supervision, at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. I am a Learning Consultant working on the Child Study Team in the Boonton Public School district. I have also worked as a first and fifth grade elementary school teacher, and as a special education teacher and Assistant Principal.

As part of my doctoral dissertation research at Seton Hall University, I am conducting a study entitled “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher.” My study involves students in grades four through six enrolled at Belleville School Number Seven. We all know that students can provide a great deal of information through their opinions. By expressing your opinions in my study, you will be helping me to understand what students consider to be the ideal teacher. This study will take you about 20-25 minutes to complete.

I am asking you to volunteer to be a part of my study. A study is like an experiment. To do this experiment, all you will have to do is answer a list of 17 questions. We will meet in a classroom where one of my assistants or I will read the questions to you. All you will have to do to answer the questions is circle a number from one through nine. This is not a school test or quiz so don’t worry, this will not be graded.

This study is voluntary and I hope many of you will volunteer to help me. Because you are a volunteer, you can quit at any time either before or even during the study if you decide you do not want to finish the list of questions. You will not be penalized in any way. Remember, this is strictly voluntary.

In fact, if you volunteer for my study, I will not even ask you to write your name on anything. We call this privacy and it is meant to protect your rights. No papers you turn in to me will have your name or address on it. The only personal information I will ask you for is your gender, race, grade level, and age.
Because this is private information, I am going to keep all of the information you give me in a locked cabinet so no one else can read it.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that these research procedures adequately safeguard your privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The IRB telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

If you agree to volunteer for my study, then please sign the attached Student Assent Form and return it with the Informed Consent Form signed by your parent/guardian using the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Remember that I must have the permission of your parent/guardian before you are allowed to participate as a volunteer. Please return your form and the form signed by your parent/guardian to your classroom teacher no later than Monday, December 3, 2001.

I hope you decide to volunteer for my study and I look forward to this opportunity to hear what you think about the ideal teacher.

Sincerely,

Anne R. Acocella-Scroggins
Doctoral Candidate
Student Assent Form

My name is Mrs. Acocella-Scroggins and I am a part-time student enrolled at Seton Hall University which is in South Orange, New Jersey. I work as a Learning Consultant on the Child Study Team in Boonton. I have also worked as a first grade teacher, a fifth grade teacher, a special education teacher, and as an Assistant Principal.

I am writing a report for my teachers at Seton Hall University. The name of my report is called “Elementary School Students’ Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher.” The word perception means opinion. In other words, I want to know what you think an ideal teacher is like. In order to finish my report, I am asking the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at your school to help me. We all know that students can provide a great deal of information by expressing their opinions. By providing me with your opinion for my report, you will be helping me to understand what you consider to be the ideal teacher.

In order to finish my report, I need to collect information from you. So I am asking you to volunteer to be a part of my study. A study is like an experiment. To do this experiment, all you have to do is answer a list of 17 questions. This questionnaire is nicknamed SPOTS and is similar to a multiple-choice test. To answer each question, you will circle a number from one through nine. This is not a school test or quiz so don’t worry, this will not be graded! We will complete this questionnaire in a classroom where one of my assistants or I will read the questions to you. This study will take about 20-25 minutes for you to finish.

This study is voluntary so I hope many of you will volunteer to help me. Because you are a volunteer, you can quit at any time before or during the study if you decide you do not want to finish the list of questions. You will not be punished in any way. Remember, your participation is voluntary. Your help is greatly appreciated but I must remind you that your participation will not hurt or help your school grades no matter whether you volunteer or do not volunteer to be in my project.

In fact, if you volunteer to help me with my study, I will not even ask you to write your name on anything. We call this privacy and it is meant to protect your rights. No papers you turn in to me will have your name or address on it. The only personal information I will ask you for is your gender (boy or girl), race, grade level, and age.

Because this information is personal, I am going to keep all of the information you give me in a locked cabinet to keep it safe.
The information that you give me in the 17 item questionnaire and in the personal information form will be used to help finish my report. Since your names will not be used, neither I nor anyone else will ever know how you answered the questions. This way, you can answer the questions honestly without worrying about what someone might say. Remember, I will keep your forms in a locked safe.

Your principal and I will work together to help you finish the questionnaire as quickly as possible. You will not need to do anything else but sit in a classroom and answer some questions that I read to you.

Your help in my report is very important. Based on the answers you provide me, I will be able to help teachers become more aware of your needs.

If you have any questions, please have your parent/guardian call me. I can be reached at (973) 316-9230 between 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily Monday through Friday. I will be happy to answer your questions on the day we meet to complete the questionnaire.

My teachers at Seton Hall University, and your principal, have given me permission to do this report at your school and to ask you for your help. You can always talk to your principal if you have questions and your principal can call me, too. The person-in-charge at my school can be reached at (973) 275-2974.

If you want to be a volunteer and help me with my report by answering the questionnaire, then please print and sign your name below. Your signature is important. It means that you have read this form and that any questions you had have been answered. Your signature also means that you are not being forced to participate, and that you are volunteering on your own. Finally, your signature means that you know that you can withdraw or quit at any time from this activity without any penalty.

Please take your time to think about all of this. Talk it over with your family, friends, and teachers. By volunteering, you will be helping me finish my report. I will give you a copy of this signed form on the day we meet to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you very much.

Print Student Name

Student Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date
Appendix I

School Principal Letter of Endorsement
Dear Parents:

It has been requested that our fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students participate in a survey that is being conducted by a doctoral candidate. The attached materials introduce the doctoral candidate and describe the substance and purpose of the survey. Accompanying these materials is a permission slip that you are requested to sign and return to your child’s teacher if, after reviewing the materials, you choose to have him participate.

Please be advised that the survey has the approval of Dr. Joseph Ciccone, our Superintendent of Schools, and that it will be administered under optimal conditions.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, do not hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Hawthorne,
Principal
Appendix J

Survey Letter of Introduction to Teachers
November 30, 2001

Dear Teachers,

I am writing to introduce myself and to ask you for your assistance. I am currently serving as a Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant with the Boonton Public Schools. At the present time, I am also engaged in a doctoral study at Seton Hall University. As part of my research, I have chosen to do my study on \textit{Elementary School Students' Perceptions of the Ideal Teacher}. My study is specific to students enrolled in grades four through six. Students can provide a great deal of information through their perceptions and opinions. The information that will evolve from this study will be extremely valuable to teachers, administrators and ultimately, teacher training programs.

I would very much appreciate your help with my research project. Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to collect an Informed Consent Form from parents and a Student Assent Form from students before the study takes place and return them to your Principal. You will not have to proctor the survey nor be in attendance during the conduct of the survey.

The students who return a signed permission slip from their parents as well as themselves will participate by completing a survey and demographic information sheet that will take 20-25 minutes during a portion of their lunch period. On the day of the study, please make sure that the students who are participating bring a reading book with them in the event they finish the survey early or choose to withdraw from participating. The aggregate results will be available to you when the research is completed.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the students' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at work at (973) 316-9230.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne R. Acocella-Sruggins

---

I have read this letter and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction. I am willing to provide assistance with this research project.

Teacher Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Appendix K

NIH Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams

Certificates of Completion
Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

Anne Acoella

has completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 08/25/2001.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

National Institutes of Health
http://www.nih.gov
This is to certify that

Christopher Scroggins

has completed the Human Participant Protection Education for Research Teams online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 11/04/2001.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research,
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants,
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process,
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research,
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent,
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process,
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.
This is to certify that

Louis C. Acocella

has completed the Human Participant Protection Education for Research Teams online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 11/04/2001.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants

National Institutes of Health
http://www.nih.gov

http://consnet.nih.gov/cgi-bin/hsp/ctp-cert4.pl

11/4/01
Appendix L

Demographic Information Sheet (DIS)
Demographic Information Sheet

1. Circle your gender: Male Female

2. Circle your race: Hispanic Black White Other

3. Circle your grade level: 4th 5th 6th

4. Circle your age: 9 10 11 12 13

Thank you for your help with my research!!!
Appendix M

Sample SPOTS Example
SPOTS Example
(on chalkboard)

You've just earned $30.00 for helping to clean your bedroom. Would you

1 2 3          4 5 6          7 8 9
save all of    save half and  spend all of
your money     spend half    your money

Circle 1 or 9 if you feel absolutely, positively or definitely about your choice

Circle a 2, or 5, or 8 if you are sure of your choice and know your answer right away

Circle a 3, or 4, or 6, or 7 if you can't decide between two choices
Appendix N

Approval to use SPOTS Survey Instrument
Subject: Re: Request for Written Permission
Date: Wed, 04 Oct 2000 09:14:21 -0400
From: Bruce Tuckman <tuckman.5@osu.edu>
To: "Anne R. Acocella" <annerose@nac.net>

You have my permission to use the SPOTS. The best source of information about it is the following article:


Bruce W. Tuckman, PhD
Director, Academic Learning Lab
Professor, School of Educational Policy & Leadership
The Ohio State University
250B Younkin Success Center
1640 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201-2333
Phone: 614-688-8284
http://ALL.successcenter.ohio-state.edu
Subject: Request for Written Permission
Date: Tue, 03 Oct 2000 21:27:53 -0400
From: "Anne R. Acocella" <annerose@nac.net>
To: Tuckman.5@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Tuckman,

Good evening. I am thrilled that I have found you via the Internet. I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University (S. Orange, NJ) entitled, "Elementary Students Perception of the Ideal Teacher and its Implication on In-service Programs/Professional Development." After careful research, I found your SPOTS survey (revised) and would like to use it for my study. I believe I must apply for permission from you to use the survey. Also, I have no copy of a SPOTS manual to correspond to the survey regarding norming information, administration, etc., and would like to know how to locate a copy. I would appreciate your help and permission in this matter. Please advise as to how I should proceed with obtaining this.

Thank you very much for your consideration, time, and assistance. Please email me as soon as possible.

Very truly,

Anne R. Acocella
Appendix O

Reliability Analysis of SPOTS Survey Instrument
Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis

**RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)**

**Correlation Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
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Q17  .4883  .2685  .4528  .4316  .4516

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

Correlation Matrix

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N of Cases = 128.0

Reliability Coefficients 17 items

Alpha = .8587  Standardized item alpha = .8610