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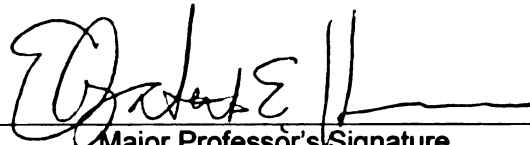
THE IMPACT OF ISTEP+ AND ACCOUNTABILITY POLICIES
ON TEACHERS IN A TITLE I SCHOOL: STORIES
TEACHERS TELL

presented by

CHRISTINE A. HUNT

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of the requirements for the

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**THE IMPACT OF ISTEP+ AND ACCOUNTABILITY POLICIES ON
TEACHERS IN A TITLE I SCHOOL: STORIES TEACHERS TELL**

By

Christine A. Hunt

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF ISTEP+ AND ACCOUNTABILITY POLICIES ON TEACHERS IN A TITLE I SCHOOL: STORIES TEACHERS TELL

By

Christine A. Hunt

This is an interpretative phenomenological case study of a Title I elementary school facing the sanctions of the federal (No Child Left Behind) and state (Public Law 221) accountability policies. The teachers in this school are negotiating the state mandated test, Indiana Statewide Test for Educational Progress + (ISTEP+) and how this is used to evaluate their teaching. Through this study, I want to tell the story of a recent event in school history- schools that serve a population of students that are typically labeled as high risk or disadvantaged based on the poverty level of the students in the school negotiating high-stakes testing and the accountability policies that drive them. Data collection employed a phenomenological approach to explore how teachers are making sense of their experiences (Patton, 2002). Taking an interpretive approach to data analysis, this study examines my interpretation of the meaning the teachers have of their experiences with ISTEP+ and accountability policies (Schwandt, 1998). The purposes of telling this story are to influence policy formation and implementation as well as inform public debate and discussion on the topic of education accountability.

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DEDICATION

To the teachers, students, and parents of Marvel Elementary School

I hope that I have done justice to your story.

To My God and Lord for guiding me through this process.

To my family and friends who prayed for and supported me in this journey.

To the students, staff, and family members of Niemann Elementary School who inspired
me to pursue my doctorate.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I give thanks to the members of Marvel Elementary School for allowing me to both hear and tell your stories. Your openness and honesty have made this dissertation possible. I hope that you find what I have said to be what you would want others to know about this school.

I also want to thank the Northville School District for opening up one of your elementary schools to this research. You have shown a dedication to the need for research about what is happening in schools and how accountability policies are being played out there. I deeply appreciate your trust.

Thanks to the faculty of the College of Education at Michigan State University for providing me with thought provoking courses and making me think about education in many different lights. You have helped me to grow as a teacher and a researcher. I am a different person today because of you.

Completing my doctorate would not have been possible without the invaluable support of and advice from Elizabeth Heilman. She played a significant role in my decision to pursue my doctorate and brought me to Michigan State University. She nurtured me in my scholarly pursuits in innumerable ways from providing me with summer research assistance work to mothering me at times when I was struggling with personal issues. She challenged me to think and to write more clearly. Through sacrifices of time and energy, she has been a guiding force in the completion of this dissertation. It is hard to express all that she has done for me and what she means to me.

A calm and steady presence, Dorteia Anagnostopoulos, has been instrumental in my research. She listened intently and critiqued my work in ways that made me feel

better about it. In her class on social policy, my mind was opened to new ways of thinking about the policy processes and workings. I appreciated her willingness to let us speak, and then asked probing questions to make us think more deeply about our convictions. The research she has done has also been a benefit in this dissertation.

In the summer of 2002, I came to visit Michigan State University to decide if this was the place I wanted to continue my doctoral work. Brian Delaney played a pivotal role in my decision when he asked, “Why not Michigan State?” In turning my thinking in a different direction I realized that this was the right place for me to study. He listened to me, challenged me to think more broadly, and directed me to a research fund so that I could attend a conference where I was able to gather information I have used in this dissertation. This quiet man has made a difference in how I think about teaching and schools.

Throughout my doctoral coursework, I was looking for some concept that I could use as my dissertation framework. Thankfully, Gary Sykes introduced me to Carols Weiss and her use of the four I’s in her examination of school reform. He skillfully organized and our class discussions and presented various aspects of the connections and disconnections between teaching and policy. His comments on my work as well as suggestions for further reading were influential in this dissertation. I appreciated his attentive ear, open door, and insightful feedback.

Finally, to my family and friends who gave me what I needed throughout this journey I give thanks. As the commercial states, this is priceless. When I think of all that you did to help me on this road from moving furniture in and out of more places than I want to think about to holding me accountable for completing chapters- there are no

words to describe all that you did. Your prayers, listening ears and compassion were what I needed.

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CHAPTER 1

PERSONAL CONTEXT: MY EXPERIENCE IN TITLE SCHOOLS AND MY PURPOSES FOR RESEARCH

My Teaching Experience in an Indiana School

The fall brings a number of things into the lives of teachers in Indiana. New students enter into their classrooms as a new academic year begins as well as the promise of units, new and old, to teach and ideas to encounter. However, third through tenth grade teachers also begin the year facing the responsibility of administering the state-mandated test, Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress + (ISTEP+) to their new students during the month of September. Instead of beginning the school year with the exciting anticipation of making new friends and learning new things, teachers and students across the state jump into the new school year with nerve wracking worries and concerns about the making the grade on ISTEP+. In other words, after approximately a month of meeting and working with these students, teachers in the state of Indiana are required by the state accountability law, Public Law 221 (PL 221) to administer this test that carries with it serious consequences for schools and teachers.

The state of Indiana began giving the ISTEP+ test in the spring of 1988. However, this test has changed in many ways over the years: (a) testing moved from spring to early fall, (b) consequences moved from students to the school, (c) test type moved from norm-referenced to criterion referenced, and (d) from a test of strictly multiple choice items to a combination of multiple choice and constructed response items. Currently, teachers and schools are held accountable according to how their students score on the test. According to PL 221, and the federal Title I law, No Child

Left Behind (NCLB), these scores demonstrate how well teachers in a school have taught their students the state academic standards. Local newspapers as well as television and radio stations across the state report the percentage of students who have passed and failed the test. These numbers are then used to label the schools and ultimately the teachers. Lisa Delpit (2003) shares an interesting thought about the role of laws such as this when she states, “we in education often allow politicians to push us to act as if the most important goal in our work is to raise test scores” (p. 14). The test is not validated for this purpose. The test is being used by policymakers to “prove” that schools and teachers are doing their job. As James Popham (2000) states, “Trying to measure educational quality with a standardized test is like trying to measure temperature with a tablespoon. It just won’t work” (p. 5).

Failing schools face a number of consequences beyond the embarrassment of the public label. PL 221 and NCLB bring the threat of the loss of students and/or monies, school reconstitution, or even closing the school. Schools and districts can be labeled “failing” because they serve a poor or minority population that generally does not score well on standardized tests. The laws also make it more likely to fail when a school serves a number of different subgroups such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability. The school faces consequences when any single subgroup does not make the state determined adequate yearly progress (AYP). The more subgroups a school serves, the more ways that it has to fail to make AYP each year. The assumption is that using tests with rewards and sanctions will lead to improved instruction and learning (Hamilton, Stecher, and Klein, 2002).

Schools that do not want to face the consequences of sanctions are doing all they can to raise the scores of their students. From after school programs in the fall, programs in the summer prior to the beginning of the school year, to test preparation activities throughout the grades and year, students and teachers are each focused on the single goal of raising the test scores in order to avoid the consequences of accountability laws. These are some of the costs associated with changes in school and classroom practices that occur as a result of testing. “The evidence is clear that testing and accountability lead teachers to reallocate their time away from some instructional activities and toward others” (Hamilton, Stecher, and Klein, 2002, p. 9).

As a classroom teacher, more and more teaching at the beginning of each school year revolved around preparing students for the test through the use of skill and drill practice sheets. Students were broken into small groups during a majority of the day in the weeks before the test to work with either one of the third grade or Title I teachers. An after school program extended the amount of time students practiced for the test for a two week period of time. The purpose of this concentration was to enable as many students as possible to receive a passing score on the test.

These are activities that I personally experienced as a third grade teacher in a Title I school. I strongly felt that the goal was merely to raise test scores in order to avoid negative consequences. These were not the types of activities and policies I imagined being involved with when I began my career or even when I become highly involved in Title I School Improvement.

My Story in Becoming a Teacher

My earliest recollection of wanting to become a teacher is when I was in second grade. I always enjoyed school and did well academically. I loved to read and solve math problems. Playing the role of teacher with my sisters and friends in the basement was another vivid childhood memory. Teaching and school are pleasant parts of my past.

While I did consider other career paths in passing, teaching was the one that stuck with me from second grade on. When asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, a teacher was nearly always my response. This choice became even more firmly engrained during my senior year of high school based on two relevant experiences. First, I rearranged my class schedule to include two hours of cadet teaching. I highly valued this first toe into the waters of public school education. I worked one hour each weekday afternoon in a fifth grade classroom. Grading papers, working with small groups and individuals, and even teaching the students to sing Jingle Bells in Spanish were just a few of the experiences I had during this time. On Sunday mornings, I taught a small group of five and six year olds in a first grade Sunday school class at my church. Reading the curriculum materials and the accompanying Bible stories, planning how best to get this information across, telling the stories and learning from these young children about how best to teach were some of the skills I began to use during this time. I went to college with a clear vision of what I wanted to do with the rest of my life- teaching.

My four years of undergraduate work at Grace College in rural northern Indiana helped me to know that I had made the right decision to become an elementary teacher. During my coursework, I worked in classrooms where I further grew in regards to my teaching abilities. Whether tutoring a student one on one in reading or implementing a science unit with my fourth grade students during student teaching, I blossomed as a

teacher. It seemed so very natural for me to take what I knew and guide young children into knowing this as well. I also encountered new experiences such as learning how to talk with parents about their child's school experiences.

The summer break began without a strong job prospect in sight. This was the early eighties when jobs were scarce in northern Indiana. However, I had determined that I would get a job no matter where I had to go. This is what led me to a teaching position in southern Louisiana. Through a friend, I learned that this school district was looking for teachers, so I applied, had a phone interview, and accepted a job over the phone. In August of 1981, I packed up my car and traveled to southern Louisiana. It was here that I had my first real encounters with poverty and the impacts it has on students. I taught in a third grade classroom in a school that had been the black school prior to desegregation. Cockroaches, a different language and lifestyle, new and unusual foods were just a few of my cultural shocks. I did enjoy the students and helping them to grow as people. They taught me to appreciate who they were and to stretch myself when my usual strategies did not meet with the desired results. I also learned what it means to be the minority. I was white in a predominantly African American community. I was from the north while the vast majority of the people around me had been born and raised in the area.

At the end of the school year, I packed up my things, all my memories, and moved back home. Over the next four years, I taught a split first and second grade class at a private school, substitute taught, worked on my Master's degree, and taught for two years in a gifted and talented position in Wisconsin. This was the time when I gained greater knowledge and understanding of differentiating instruction, ways to communicate with parents, use of research in teaching, and the strengths and weaknesses of testing.

After two years in Wisconsin, I was able to acquire a position teaching in a gifted and talented program close to home.

For five years I taught in this program. One of my responsibilities each spring and fall was to gather and evaluate the data sent to me by district teachers to choose the students who would be asked to be in the program. This meant examining their standardized test scores along with teacher ratings and other relevant information provided by the teachers. As would be expected, students from the schools with the lowest poverty rate had the greatest number of students with high scores. The other program teacher and I worked at creating as many opportunities as possible to include students with strong scores from the Title I schools as well. When these students came to the program there was a certain lack of prior knowledge, but there was still a desire to learn and a work ethic. The number of students from Title I schools was low, but they still were able to meet the expectations of the program.

Funding cuts in the district ended this program five years later. I found myself back in a third grade classroom in a Title I school. This was a position I chose. Culture shock awaited me in dealing with classroom management issues related to things that happened in the neighborhood or because of a perceived injustice based on a look. The various levels of learning were something I had not dealt with in several years. That spring I gave ISTEP for the first time. In May when the scores were returned, several of my students learned that they would spend part of their summer in school in order to be promoted to fourth grade.

Over my ten years at Niemann Elementary School, I served on a number of committees and had several opportunities to present at conferences. Research became a

highly valued commodity as the teachers at this school sought to improve the learning opportunities for our students. Title I status helped us to make some changes through allocation of resources. We piloted and implemented programs such as the Four Blocks Literacy Model, Connected Learning Assures Student Success, and Math Their Way/Math a Way of Thinking. Pushing into the classroom rather than pulling students out also came when we became a Title I schoolwide school. Another significant change we made in our reform efforts was to alter the school calendar to a year round one. These changes came after much study of the research and discussion among the staff and parents. The goal of each reform effort was an increase in student learning based on multiple indicators including ISTEP+ and quarterly performance assessments.

During this time, Indiana was altering its educational policy as well as ISTEP. I experienced first hand along with my colleagues and students these changes which greatly elevated the consequences of not passing the test. I recall with great clarity pouring over test results with colleagues and seeking to make sense of what this data had to say about what my students knew and what I needed to alter about my instruction. Reading these reports was not always easy as I tried to comprehend what some of the subtest headings meant and how they correlated to the standards. I became frustrated when these reports boldly stated that my students did not know how to edit their writing when each day I witnessed their use of these techniques. As the level of the sanctions increased and the scores meant more publicly, the more I railed at the perpetuation of misperceptions about Niemann students and teachers because this did not fit with what I knew to be true based on my ongoing daily interactions at the school.

I can also clearly remember the day the principal came to my fellow third grade teacher and me to ask if more students had passed ISTEP+ this year. This level of concern became more understandable when I learned that he had been castigated publicly by a board member when he presented the school's scores at a school board meeting. What I had learned from research as well as from coursework in my Master's program did not make sense with what was happening at the school when it came to ISTEP+. My daily assessments with my students were not always consistent with the test results. One such example is a student who was good in math but did not always check his work carefully. He understood how to do the computation and other math concepts, but his maturity level was such that he did not review his work without some prodding. When his math scores came back, he did not pass the math section. He missed the cut score by one point. Two things came immediately to mind. One was that some careless mistakes in computation gave him this designation because I knew he was more than capable of doing the math. The other was that the standard error of the measure could just as easily place him in the pass category. My frustration with the test and how it was used increased.

My happiest memories of teaching at Niemann are not related to ISTEP+. They are about my relationships and interactions with the students and staff. Lasting friendships were created in my years at this school. Today when I enter the building for any reason I feel as if I have come home. I can recall the relief I felt when ISTEP+ test booklets were placed in the principal's office for the last time, and I was able to leave testing behind in order to explore the learning interests of my students. Reading books together, modeling writing, conferencing with students, planning lessons and units with

my third grade colleague, and talking about family with other teachers at lunch are just a few of my fondest memories. Teaching to me is about relationships and learning- not about one test score or set of scores from a single test.

Reflection: Path from Policy Consumer to Policy Researcher

It was increasingly clear to me that high-stakes testing carries with it the potential for a narrowing of the curriculum and the instructional techniques that teachers use in their classrooms (Mc Neil, 2000; Popham, 2000). Professional organizations such as the International Reading Association (1999), National Education Association (2000), and American Federation of Teachers (2001) have all generated statements of concern about high-stakes testing and its impact on curriculum and instruction. Even the American Educational Research Association (2001) states that, “curriculum and instruction may be severely distorted if high test scores per se, rather than learning become the overriding goal of classroom instruction.”

The pressure continues to mount not only for teachers as these laws hold schools accountable for student learning based on a single set of test scores given at a single point in the school year. Schools are expected to make AYP which means that scores must go up every year by a percentage determined by the state or face consequences. Linn (2003) makes a valuable point about these consequences when he says, “schools that continue to fall into the improvement category may actually hinder educational excellence because they implicitly encourage states to water down their content and performance standards in order to reduce the risk of sanctions for their schools” (p. 8).

There were a number of specific aspects of this process that led me to my research on accountability laws. One was the misuse of the scores to label schools. This is not the

purpose of the test. In fact, standardized tests are not validated for this purpose (Hamilton, Stecher, and Klein, 2002; Thompson, 2001). This is information that seems to be ignored by legislators and policymakers. A second item that concerned me was related to how hard the students worked and how well they did based on other factors not reported in the paper. As the teacher, I received information that showed the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) that each student received as well as the Anticipated Normal Curve Equivalent (ANCE) based on the Cognitive Skills Index (CSI) test they took. The CSI is similar in nature to a group intelligence test. It was amazing to see the number of students who failed to make the passing mark for the test to be considered proficient, but who also had a higher NCE than their ANCE. For example, Susan had a total reading NCE of 72, yet her ANCE based on her CSI was only 65. This demonstrated to me that she was actually performing at a higher level than would be expected, yet she still did not meet the criteria to pass the test. Susan and several of her classmates were doing better on the test than would be expected; yet this information was not considered relevant. It all came down to whether or not they had filled in enough of the correct bubbles to be considered proficient.

I also became frustrated with test issues such as having questions about writing that were out of context. For example, I did not believe that the multiple choice questions about which if any of the punctuation choices were missing from a given sentence. This did not demonstrate that they were able to edit their own writing. There were also only four questions related to multiple meaning words. Missing one of these questions because of unfamiliarity with the way the word is used means that a student is considered not proficient. I believe that the test is unfair to some students, especially those who do

not come to school with the social and cultural capital necessary to pass these tests. The most frequently missed of these four words was the lap. While the students understood that a child would sit in mother's lap they did not understand that lap could also be used to describe how a kitten would drink its milk. These were often the students who did not do well on the test. This does not meet the criteria for the types of measures Linn (2003) describes when he states, "The measures that enter into the accountability system should be broadly conceived and provide information on a wide range of outcome, contextual, and process variables" (p. 3).

My Purposes in This Research

There are three main purposes of this study. First, I want to tell the story of a Title I school facing high stakes testing and accountability policies. Through this story I want to explore and make evident what is occurring in the lives of teachers in their practice under the auspices of both the federal and state accountability policies- NCLB and PL 221. What the teachers do and believe about these policies and how they influence their practice is examined through the use of qualitative research. In this work, I aim for multi-vocality not only because educators are different from each other but also because educators experience are diverse. Each educator has multiple experiences and even conflicting responses. Further, this research does not explore policy in a functional analytic manner alone but aims instead for a deeper, more contextualized understanding that considers a wide range of personal experiences as well as the broader history of the school and the nature of the city in which this is occurring. All policies are enacted in particular places with their own people, histories and challenges and I provide a window into these contexts. A second purpose for this study is for this multi-level and multi-

vocal portrayal to be used as a tool to influence policy formation at both the state and federal levels. It is necessary for policymakers to be given an insight into what their policy is doing at the school level. They need to be aware of the issues that teachers are experiencing and the reality of diverse experience so that they will be able to make better-informed and perhaps more nuanced policy decisions. This may include revisions to the current policies as they come to understand what is occurring in schools. Third, this study can also influence policy implementation. Teachers reading this story will have the opportunity to understand the purposes and impact of policy in different, perhaps more complex ways. A fuller and richer understanding of the high stakes testing that richly explores what is happening at one school can provide teachers with both a clearer picture and with validation of the many meanings policy has for their own teaching, their own school, and their own community.

This story is based on the overarching research question: What impact do ISTEP+ and the accountability policies of NCLB and PL 221 have on teachers in a school under the threat of sanctions? In order to answer this question, theories of educational policy and curriculum and instruction were used. Carol Weiss's (1995) educational policy theory of the four I's leads me to further questions. How are teachers' professional and personal **interests** influenced by accountability policies? What is the relationship between these policies and teachers' **ideology**? What role does **information** play as teachers negotiate these policies? How do **interests**, **ideology**, and/or **information** reinforce and/or conflict with one another? How does the school **institution** shape teachers' **interests**, **ideology** and **information**?

CHAPTER 2

SCHOLARLY CONTEXT: WHAT RESEARCH SUGGESTS ABOUT HIGH-STAKES TESTING

What We Know About High Stakes Testing and Its Impact

This chapter provides an overview of recent federal and state educational accountability policies, as well as a review of research on such policies. I explore what research suggests broadly about the effectiveness of these recent policies given its intentions, what research suggest about the range of effects across varied contexts, and finally what research has shown about the human dimension of how students, educators and communities experience policy. For all of these aspects of policy and questions for research, there exists diverse evidence and interpretation.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the reenactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which funds 10 federal programs, the largest of which is Title I. The purposes of this federal policy and the state policies it generates are to ensure a good education for all students, to improve education through the use of standards and objective testing data, and to focus on what works through the use of research (Hursh and Martina, 2003). The four guiding principles of this legislation are accountability, parental and student choice, flexibility, and scientifically based research (Corwin, 2003). These policies require states to put in place a set of standards of what students are to know, have a test that is aligned with these standards to evaluate student learning of them, and provide teachers with the capacity to meet the standards (Carnoy and Loeb, 2002; Heubert and Hauser, 1999). The standards are to be the knowledge and skills children will need for the future (Jacobs, 2003).

Students are then tested to evaluate how well they have learned these standards. Testing is perceived as both a means of increasing achievement (Hillocks, 2002) and as a method for gathering information (Hanson, 1993). Accountability policies then grant either rewards or sanctions based on the results (Stecher and Hamilton, 2003) which are a motivator to improve teaching and learning making these high-stakes tests (Hamilton, Stecher, and Klein, 2002).

NCLB mandates that all students in third through eighth grades will be tested in literacy and math, with testing in science added in 2005. The ultimate goal of this law is for 100% of American students to pass the state tests by 2014. In order to accomplish this goal, each state sets yearly benchmarks of improvement for schools. This is known as “adequate yearly progress” or AYP for short. Scores are not simply reported by school alone, but are also disaggregated into subgroups such as gender, ethnicity, free/reduced or paid lunch, special or general education, and English proficiency. Each subgroup has a set AYP each year. If one subgroup does not make their AYP, the school fails to make AYP. This means that each of these subgroups must each year make at least the set AYP in literacy, math, and science in order for the school to make AYP.

Schools that do not make AYP face a variety of sanctions. The first level of sanctions comes into play after two years of not making AYP. Parents may choose to send their children to another school in the district that has made AYP. This option is offered to all students in the school regardless of whether or not they are the students who did not pass the test. This also means that the school’s Title I funds are diverted to transportation of these students and not to the students still attending the school. After the third year of not meeting the required scores, parents who have children at the school are also offered the

opportunity to receive after school tutoring for their children. This is paid for out of the school's Title I funds. The next level of sanctions comes with five years of not making AYP and can result in a takeover of the school by the state, moving staff, or school reconstitution.

To summarize the major goals targeted by NCLB:

- To close the achievement gap by requiring that all students be proficient in reading, language arts, math and science by 2013-14
- Increase parental involvement and input
- Have highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals in all classrooms
- Insure effective use of resources
- Provide teachers with appropriate professional development
- Use both rewards and sanctions as tools to meet the goals of this law

In order to meet these goals, states, school districts, and schools must meet certain criteria which include:

- State requirements
 - An accountability system approved by the US Department of Education that includes sanctions and rewards
 - Academic standards and an aligned assessment
 - Set annual AYP benchmarks to meet the goal of all students to be proficient by 2013-14
 - Provide the US Department of Education with annual updates on the progress of each district and school
 - Generate a list of approved supplemental services providers

- Provide support for schools that are not making AYP
- Provide a list of acceptable accommodations for special education and limited English proficiency students
- District requirements
 - Create an improvement plan that utilizes scientifically based research
 - Publish accountability information
 - Notify parents about schools that do not meet AYP standards and teachers that are do not meet the highly qualified standards
- School requirements
 - Meet state AYP standards for each subgroup: ethnicity, socioeconomic level, special or general education, gender, and English language proficiency
 - Use disaggregated data to refine school improvement plan
 - Align instruction and curriculum with the state standards
 - Administer the state assessment

Evaluating NCLB Intentions and Effects

Accountability makes sense because the public has a right to know how its tax dollars are spent to educate its children (Corbett and Wilson, 1991; O'Day, 2004). If schools do well, they earn rewards for meeting the goals of the policy. If schools don't do well, they receive sanctions. While everyone agrees on the need for and the goal of accountability, not everyone agrees on how it should be accomplished (Linn, 2003). This is because accountability policies have had both positive and negative consequences (Linn, 2000; Madaus and Horn, 2000; Mehrens, 1998; Mathison and Freeman, 2003).

Schools are complex institutions nested within other complex institutions which can cause the policies to produce different outcomes at each school (Cohen and Ball, 1999). The interrelated pieces of the school organization each react to the policies and school reforms in differing ways. This makes evaluating the positive and negative consequences more difficult because there have been conflicting studies about them. What appears as a positive in one study can be a negative in another.

Positives.

Four positive consequences are covered in some literature on accountability policies including teacher professionalism, student achievement, district leadership, and public conversation. Teachers are perceived as increasing in professional status as they have a greater number of conversations about teaching and learning (Cimbricz, 2002; Jones and Whitford, 2000; National Governor's Association, 1999; Thompson, Sykes and Skrla, 2004). There is also a sense that through standards and tests aligned with them, teachers have increased in their understanding of and attention to issues of curriculum in their teaching (Corbett and Wilson, 1991; Firestone, Fitz and Broadfoot, 1999; Hirsch, 1996; Jennings and Rentner, 2006; National Governors' Association, 1999; Tyler, 1950). Some studies have also examined the ways that the policies have motivated teachers to make changes in their instruction (Hess, 2003; Jones and Whitford, 2000; Mathis, 2003). The use of test results to plan instruction and professional development has also been attributed to these policies in some studies (Carnoy and Loeb, 2002; Clotfelter and Ladd, 1996; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; National Governors' Association, 1999).

Braun (2004) and Carnoy and Loeb (2002) found strong correlations between rising state test scores with an increase in scores from the National Assessment of

Academic Progress in math for all students, including minority students in states with strong accountability policies leading them to the conclusion that student achievement is increasing. A study by Thompson, Sykes and Skrla (2004) has provided some information about the way accountability policies have clarified the purpose of the central office administrators as they support school administrators and teachers in meeting the goals of the policies in a variety of ways. Administrators perceive that the benefits of these policies outweigh the costs as increased leverage allows them to implement reform measures (Mabry and Margolis, 2006). Public conversation about the policies and tests was noted by Anagnostopolous (2003b) when she noted that teachers in Chicago openly shared their concerns about the disconnection between the tests and the curriculum. Democratic debate on the issues of accountability and testing is helpful to the work of schools.

Negatives.

There are also a number of studies that demonstrate several negative consequences related to curriculum and instruction, stress, the positioning of various stakeholders, performance measures, and the policies. Some researchers have noted a narrowing of the curriculum as teachers focus on what is on the test while ignoring other important areas (Anagnostopolous, 2003b, 2005; Clotfelter and Ladd, 1996; Hillocks, 2002; Jones and Whitford, 2000). The Council for Basic Education (Zastrow, 2004) sponsored a survey of 1,000 principals to gain understanding of how NCLB is influencing instruction time and professional development in key subject areas, and perhaps not surprisingly, they found that that schools are spending increased time on

reading, math, and science and much less time on literature, social studies, civics, geography, languages, and the arts.

Teachers' instruction also increasingly mirrors test format (Anagnostopolous, 2003b, 2005; Smith, 1991; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). In Chicago, Anagnostopolous (2005) found that teachers in an urban high school were failing to engage in discussions of issues about a novel because the ideas the students wanted to talk about were not covered on the test. She concludes that "efforts to raise standards through testing policies can result in limiting students' opportunities to construct understandings of curricular texts and of the social ideas at their core" (p. 35).

Along with these, teachers also spent an increasing amount of time on test preparation activities (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; Smith, 1991; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). In Kentucky, Hillocks (2002) observed that in some schools teachers focused on grammar and mechanics similar to the writing on state assessments rather than creative writing and analytic thinking. In a multi-year study of NCLB, Jennings and Rentner (2006) noted that "71% of districts are reducing time spent on other subjects in elementary schools- at least to some degree. The subject most affected is social studies while physical education is least effected" (p. 110-111).

Teacher stress is another negative consequence that has been shared in some research. They worry about the way these tests impact their students and the publication of the scores (Smith, 1991). Teachers in a study by Mabry and Margolis (2006) were highly concerned with the fear their students experienced because of the test. They also worry because of issues of professional judgment such as feeling tensions caused by teaching in ways that are counter to their professional judgment (McNeil, 2000;

Zancanella, 1992) or tension between differentiating instruction or preparing all students for the test (Anagnostopolous, 2003b; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; McNeil, 2000). This may lead to teachers leaving the profession or resorting to unethical behavior (Amerin and Berliner, 2002; McNeil, 2000; Mehrens, 1998; Popham, 2005).

Students are positioned in several ways by tests and how they are used especially those who are poor or minorities (Aleman, 2006; Madaus, 1988). Students learning styles and needs are not met when they are taught in a test format (Jones and Whitford, 2000) which can cause more and more students to quit school (Hursh and Martina, 2003). High standards are not based on the individual student when all students are held to the same set of standards (Linn, 2000). Test scores also position students in negative ways when they are used to make decisions about the curriculum and instruction they receive (Hanson, 1993, 2000; Smith, 1991). The low level thinking required by many of the tests also positions students as certain types of readers, writers, and thinkers, (Anagnostopolous, 2003b, 2005; Hillock, 2002). Aleman (2006) stated that “high-stakes testing is not a measure of individual cognitive, developmental, or sociocultural growth” (p. 28). Instead all students are made to be the same rather than to celebrate and appreciate their unique characteristics.

Teachers are also positioned by the policies and tests. The test becomes the authority rather than the teacher about matters of curriculum and instruction (Anagnostopolous, 2003b, 2005; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; McNeil, 2000). Policies become a form of surveillance through administrative mandates about teaching (Anagnostopolous, 2003b). They also contribute to how teachers view their students and themselves (Hanson, 2000).

Schools are also positioned as they receive failing labels (Amerin and Berliner, 2002; Mathis, 2003). There are concerns with the level of capacity some schools have to meet the goals of policies making the labels unfair (Lewis, 2002). There are also negative consequences related to competition among schools especially for those without the capacity to compete (Berliner and Biddle, 1995).

Policymakers have placed test experts in an uncomfortable position by requiring them to do a task that may be beyond their reach alone (Hunter and Bartee, 2003; Lewis, 2002; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). This is because testing cannot, by itself, provide all the information needed to understand the problems and solutions of the complex problems facing educators (Jones and Whitford, 2000). The accountability measurement promised by policymakers is not always easy for test experts to provide (Cohen and Hill, 2001).

There are also studies about issues with the measures used in accountability policies. A study by Amerin and Berliner (2002) called into question how well state tests were demonstrating student achievement when the results of these tests were compared with NAEP, SAT, ACT, and AP test results. “Test pollution” caused from teachers using instruction that is similar to the test is another issue discussed in the literature as a concern for the accuracy of the scores (Anagnostopolous, 2003b, 2005; Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Madaus, 1988; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; Popham, 2005; Smith, 1991; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). This instruction has led many test experts to question whether the results are valid (Allington, 2002; Amerin and Berliner, 2002; Linn, 2000; Mehrens, 1998; Popham, 2005; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). Other studies have questioned how well test can be aligned with state standards (Hursh and Martina, 2003),

if there are enough items on the test to represent them (Mathis, 2003), and how much an impact outside factors influence the results (Clotfelter and Ladd, 1996; Hursh and Martina, 2003). Finally, there are also concerns about teachers not being included in test construction and use (Madaus and Horn, 2000) and how this influences their use of the scores (Heubert and Hauser, 1999).

Some research studies have also presented negative consequences related to the policies themselves. One issue is that of bias; either through the standards (Berliner and Biddle, 1995, Hunter and Bartee, 2003) or the test (Clotfelter and Ladd, 1996).

Accountability policies also are not taking into account factors outside the school that make a difference in student achievement while making important decisions (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Covington, 1992; O' Day, 2002; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). Other researchers have discussed that a mismatch between the goals of the policy and the instrument used for it has yielded counterproductive measures when instruction does not meet the practice intended by the reform (Barnes, 2002; Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Corbett and Wilson, 1991; Firestone, Mayrowetz, and Fairman, 1998; Hillocks, 2002; Lewis, 2002).

The Inevitable Complexity and Ambiguity of Findings.

The research literature also includes a number of studies that result in a view of accountability and reform that is not quite clear. This results from the complexity of schools which makes accountability and reform less clearly defined. There have been numerous reform efforts in American education over the years (Cohen and Ball, 1999; Cuban, 1993; Kauchak and Eggen, 2005; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Some have become absorbed as part of the school culture while others have been either modified or

abandoned (Cuban, 1993, 2007). This seems to stem from the fact that schools are complex organizations with multiple factors at play which can either advance or hinder the reform efforts connected with accountability (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001). Assessing what happens in schools is difficult because what happens there is very complex (Jones and Whitford, 2000). Some of these factors include schools, resources, local community, and the American culture (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001; Cohen and Ball, 1999; O'Day, 2004; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Cohen and Ball (1999) examined the interconnection of teachers, students and resources and how this influences reform and accountability and noted how each needs to be considered individually as well as in connection with the others. With the assumption that accountability will improve teaching (O'Day, 2004), it is necessary to realize that it is easier said than done.

The diverse nature of teachers' philosophies and backgrounds and the highly diverse nature of their students and their communities is part of this complexity. Increased support for and implementation of a reform is typically connected to the degree it matches with teachers' educational philosophies (Bulkley, Fairman, and Martinez, 2004; Mathison and Freeman, 2003; Mintrop, 2004; Schorr and Firestone, 2004). The biographies of teachers also play a role in how they will respond to reform and accountability policies (Cimbricz, 2002; Cohen and Ball, 1999; Heubert and Hauser, 1999; Zancanella, 1992). Teachers have varied levels of willingness to adapt to these policies (O'Day, 2004). While most teachers seem to appreciate some aspects of accountability, there are nuances of the policies they do not understand (Corcoran and Christman, 2002). Some teachers, however, may perceive these policies as a lack of trust

from the government (Meier, 2004). Policies need to connect with how teachers understand teaching, students, and learning (Anagnostopolous and Rutledge, 2007). For example, teachers in a study expressed an appreciation for the state standards, but did not find the consequences attached to the test results to be helpful (Mabry and Margolis, 2006). Unfortunately, research demonstrates that teachers and policymakers often have different views and interpretations of policies (Cimbricz, 2002). Teachers and policymakers also have different ways of thinking about students and instruction (Elmore, 2002). Other factors that play a role in how teachers view and respond to these policies include stress and frustration resulting from the policies (Mintrop, 2004). Teachers also respond in different ways to the test based on their perceptions of the test (Mintrop, 2004) and the poverty level of the school (Monfils, Firestone, Hicks, Martinez, Schorr and Camilli, 2004).

Students are widely diverse as well, and this diversity also makes evaluating reforms and goals of accountability policies complex. Hunter and Bartee (2003) note that multiple factors influence a student's education. These factors include things that happen outside of schools (Camilli and Monfils, 2004). Baker and Linn (2004) have stated that student mobility needs to be considered when analyzing test results. Cohen and Ball (1999) noted that in poverty schools the "emotional and health problems of students" (p. 1) interfered with their learning. Schools with larger numbers of students coming from poverty backgrounds are presented with greater challenges (Berliner and Biddle, 1995). These are also students who are living with more health problems as well as issues with their home environment that makes learning more difficult (Berliner, 2005; Rothstein, 2004). Student biographies and life experiences have an impact on how they score on

tests (O'Day, 2004; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003). Cohen (1988) and Shulman (1987) refer to teaching as an “impossible profession” because success is dependent on the client rather than on the professional alone. Teachers are dependent on their students to be validated through testing and accountability policies, yet all students are not the same which is not taken into account in either the tests or the policies.

Schools themselves also bring complexity in the interactions of multiple stakeholders. The sustainability of reform efforts has been linked to the level of support school receives from the district (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001) as well as issues of teacher mobility (Baker and Linn, 2004; Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001; Mintrop, 2004). Schools also exist within a larger institution known as the district. Reform can become more difficult with multiple priorities from both these groups (Mintrop, 2004). Schools themselves also have particular needs based on the type of school, such elementary, middle or high school which increases complexity across a district (Corcoran and Christman, 2002). The level of poverty in the school also makes a difference in the focus of the school as well as how the teachers respond to the policies and use data (Camilli and Monfils, 2004; Diamond and Spillane, 2004; Monfils, et al, 2004; O'Day, 2004). Other outside factors impact schools that need to be considered when talking about reform include poverty, violence, drug abuse, and racism (Berliner and Biddle, 1995). The level of internal accountability as well as the school culture makes a difference in its reaction to accountability (Elmore, 2002).

Further, accountability policies themselves are complex. In order to meet their intended goals, they must work through issues of knowing and defending the plan, making it equitable, defining when and how rewards for improvement will be given,

provisions for professional development, and planning how to sustain the policy over time so that schools are not pushed and pulled about by the political winds (Elmore, Abelman and Fuhrman, 1996). Along with these factors, they also need to consider the connections between the test, school culture, and teaching (Anagnostopolous and Rutledge, 2007; Corcoran and Christman, 2002) as well as the factors that influence students outside the school (Berliner, 2005; Camilli and Monfils, 2004). Complexity is added to policies as they must address the challenges of including special education students in the accountability process (Thurlow, 2004). Policies use rewards and sanctions, but there is no clear evidence of the best combination for sustained change (Cohen and Ball, 1999) as well as how they will work in practice (Firestone, Monfils, Schorr, Hicks and Martinez, 2004). Competition results from the rewards and sanctions of the policies (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Covington, 1992; Hunter and Bartee, 2003; Hursh and Marina, 2003). O'Day (2004) has stated that for accountability policies to work teachers need to hold each other accountable as well as state agencies adding another layer to accountability. There must be careful consideration of multiple factors or the result may be that the policies end up working against their reform goals (Craig, 2004). Policies have both positive and negative consequences that need to be examined carefully in order to make better policy (Linn, 2000, 2003).

As was detailed above, recent federal accountability policies rely on tests as the measurement of whether the goals of the policies were achieved. It is however not that simple to make a worthy test and from it confidently make the decisions that are required in the policies. Baker and Linn (2004) share a number of factors that need to be considered such as whether or not the test has validity for each purpose for the test and is

able to meet all the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Several studies have also examined concerns about the connection between test results, instruction, and the goals of reform efforts (Amerin and Berliner, 2002; Baker and Linn, 2004; Corbett and Wilson, 1991). Rupp and Lesaux (2006) compared standardized tests with diagnostic tests and concluded that “standards-based tests are of limited use for diagnostic decision making at the level of the individual learner” (p. 331). Other questions have been raised about the ability of a test to meet the goals of the policies, how effective the results are in providing information for instructional purposes, and if the consequences of the test ends up distracting teachers from the goals of improvement (O’Day, 2004). This brings up concerns about misuse of test scores that may lead to mistakes in reform and other decisions (Heuebirt and Hauser, 1999). Along with this are concerns about scores that increase and then stagnate which may be caused by test pollution (Corcoran and Christman, 2002). Tests also need to allow for accommodations for special education students that mirror those they are receiving in the classrooms (Thurlow, 2004). Finally, the use of a single test score can lead to public misperception of a school and teachers (Madaus, 1988).

There is much written about NCLB and high-stakes testing with varying perspectives about them. Some see this as a leverage tool to motivate teachers and schools to work harder and smarter in order to lessen the achievement gap. Others find this is to be a further perpetuate the one size fits all model of school. Teachers have reacted to these policies as they have to others in the past, by making changes where they must and making things fit in the best way they can (Cuban, 2007; Mabry and Margolis, 2006). In this study, we will look more deeply into the life of one school that is currently

facing the consequences of accountability. Teachers' stories of what they are experiencing as well as how they are coping with these policies will be explored in depth. They will at times support as well as contradict some of what prior research had to say about accountability policies.

This is what has been documented in previous research about accountability and testing. The next chapter will outline in more detail this current study and what it will bring to the scholarly context about these policies by examining in greater depth one particular school that is living each day with the ramifications of the first level of sanction of this policy.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH CONTEXT: METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN

This chapter will provide detail about the various research methods employed in this study as well as the reasoning behind them. Choosing a research approach is based on the question(s) being asked in the study. This study explored one Indiana Title I school's experiences with high stakes testing and accountability including how the teachers, facing the imminent consequences of these laws, were doing their work. The teachers in this school were negotiating ISTEP+ as mandated by the state and how this was being used to evaluate the value of their teaching.

The nature of this inquiry allowed me to use two related qualitative approaches in conjunction with each other: phenomenology and case study research. Phenomenology is defined as a method used to understand how people experience their world (Creswell, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1990, 2002). It is concerned with understanding a given phenomena from the perspective of those who have experienced it. The goal of this type of study is to allow readers to see "the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). It involves "describing and clarifying" (Ray, 1994, p. 118) the lived experience so that readers can grasp the essence of the event. In this study, the event being examined was how teachers in an Indiana Title I school confronting the imminent consequences of accountability were going about their work. The goal is for readers to grasp what it means to teach in such a school.

Another approach used was case study research which is defined as "an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process,

an institution, or a social group. The bounded system, or case, might be selected because it is an instance of some concern, issue, or hypothesis” (Merriam, 1988, p. 9-10).

Learning in this methodology comes from being in the school context (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Merriam’s (1988) four characteristics of a case study further demonstrate the appropriateness of this methodology: (a) “particularistic” (p. 11): Title I school facing sanctions, (b) “descriptive” (p. 11): evidence presented in the narrative form, (c) “heuristic” (p. 13): yielding greater insight into what is experienced by these teachers, and (d) “inductive” (p. 13): conclusions and implications are drawn from the data. Three teachers and the principal were chosen for specific reasons to further explore the accountability phenomenon. These teachers became cases to provide information on what is happening because of accountability through the gathering of data in close proximity to them (Creswell, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Through the words of these educators, who are often not heard, more is known about a particular time and place- in this study a Title I school in the time of accountability sanctions (Quantz, 1992b).

Study Design

Using the interplay of phenomenology and case study methodologies, I conducted a three month inquiry of teachers as they went about their work in an Indiana Title I school. This inquiry included thirteen 30-90 minute interviews of teachers, including the principal; approximately 18 hours of direct observation in three teachers’ classrooms; multiple follow-up interviews of the four case study participants; and analysis of several school documents. I was also able to informally observe in the classrooms of case study participants as well as other teachers.

Research site.

I located my research at a Title I school in Indiana. I chose this as my research site because these schools face sanctions for not making AYP under the state and federal accountability laws and because I am familiar with the state standards, test, and accountability policy. Marvel Elementary School, the study site, is part of a large school district with several Title I schools. Marvel had not made AYP the previous year, and the staff was concerned about the consequences of not making it again a second year, which was during the study. In Indiana elementary schools, testing occurs in third through fifth grades, yet all teachers at the schools know that these scores reflect on their teaching. Elementary schools like Marvel that consist of kindergarten through fifth grades are also responsible for the scores of the sixth grade students who were enrolled at the school for a least 70% of the school days during the previous school year. All teachers are involved in creating the school's accreditation plan (PL 221/ SIP), participate in professional development related to this plan, and will be impacted by possible sanctions.

This site and sampling for this study was purposeful (Patton, 1990). In order to learn more about the impact of accountability on teachers, research needed to be done within a system where accountability was a very present entity. This brought me to a Title I school that had previously not made AYP and was concerned with impending sanctions if AYP was not met a second year in a row. It is in this place that the information needed to answer the research questions could be found. Teachers at the school volunteered to be interviewed.

Participants.

In total, 13 classroom, special education, and Title I teachers as well as the principal participated in the interview process of this study. Teachers volunteered to

participate in the interviews, but at least one teacher from each grade level and each program (special education and Title I) were involved. The table below shows the total number of teachers at each grade level or program along with the number who participated.

Grade/ Program	Total number in school	Participated in interviews
Kindergarten	1.5	1
First	3	2
Second	3	2
Third	3	2
Fourth	3	1
Fifth	3	2
Special Education	2	1
Title I	2	2

Table 3.1 Number of teachers by grade level or program

After analyzing the data collected from interviews, three classroom teachers were chosen for observations. Critical case sampling (Patton, 1990) was used which seeks to choose individuals that “make a point” (p. 174). These are teachers that had something significant to say about the accountability policies and ISTEP+. Through their words and actions, a portrait of the school is created. The voices of other teachers are also included as they both agree and disagree with what these teachers said and did. Further explanation of the reasoning for the teachers chosen as case study participants is detailed in chapter seven.

Interviews.

Weiss's (1995) four I's were used to generate the initial interview protocol. A copy of the interview protocol is found in Appendix C. There were some questions that reflected more than one of these concepts. The goal was to use these questions to determine teachers' thinking and understanding about these areas. Questions were constructed to provide us the opportunity to "develop deep meaning together" (Riesmann, 1993, p. 55) during the course of the interviews. The questions for the interview protocol were generated were based on the following list of ideas for interests, ideology, information, and institution.

Interests:

- Autonomy
- Professionalism
- Personal time
- Respect for self. From community, parents, administrators, other educators
- Professional growth
- Relevant professional development
- Salary, compensation
- Recognition, acknowledgement
- Balance
- Mental, emotional, physical health
- Support from teachers, parents, district
- Materials and/or access to money to purchase materials

Ideology

- Student learning

- Role of education
- Students
- Subject matter
- Developmentally appropriate instruction
- Role of district, state government, federal government
- Assessment
- Best practices

Information

- Professional development
- Professional organizations
- Professional literature
- Conferences, workshops
- Classes, coursework
- Professional goals

Institution

- Transactions with parents, students, teachers, staff
- Physical building
- Posters, bulletin boards
- Teacher's lounge, workroom
- Cafeteria
- Equipment
- Materials
- Supplies

- Mission statement

Interviews with teachers helped me to understand how they make instructional decisions, what they know and believe about assessment, how they use their knowledge and beliefs, and how accountability policies influence them. The interview process was conducted over the months of March and April. All interviews were done at the school at a time most convenient for the participant and took anywhere from 30-90 minutes. Teachers that have been at the school for several years and the principal were also asked to describe their recollections and understandings of the history of the school focusing on the Title I program.

I see this research as storytelling (Britzman, 2000; Fontana and Frey, 2000); the story of what it means to be an elementary school teacher at a Title I school in Indiana and working through the consequences and issues of the state-mandated high-stakes test, ISTEP+. The telling of this story comes from listening to the stories that these teachers told me in both structured and unstructured interviews (Fontana and Frey, 2000). Structured interviews were used at the beginning of my research in order to get to know each teacher, how they navigate the test, and their knowledge and attitudes about it. By getting to know each teacher's thoughts and beliefs about the test, I was able to begin unstructured interviews with this information. Teachers were able to have a conversation with me based on open-ended questions I prepared. These were not questions that I asked each participant, but used with discretion based on what I had learned from the structured interviews as well as from the conversation that we had during the unstructured interviews. These unstructured interviews allowed me to then move into what Fontana and Frey (2000) termed creative interviewing. During the course of our

conversations, I was “collecting oral reports” (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 657) from the participants about their teaching practice and how it is impacted by ISTEP+ and accountability policies. Specifically, I sought to learn more about interests, ideology, information, and institution.

Holstein and Gubrium (2002) also add to what it means to do creative interviewing when they state that part of this process is to share my own “feeling and deepest thoughts” (p. 117) in order to encourage the same from my participants. As part of the interview with the teachers, I also shared my feelings about the test and how it has impacted me. This was also part of the process of gaining their trust- that they know that I too have walked in their shoes. I was conscious, however, that what I shared could also influence what they choose to share with me. I carefully considered what I choose to share with them because of the impact on what they would tell me about their feelings and thoughts concerning the test.

Another interviewing strategy that Holstein and Gubrium (2002) contributed is the concept of the active interview. The interview is in a constant state of development as I tap into the “interpretive capabilities” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2002, p. 119) of the teachers during the course of the interview. In this way, the teachers I interviewed both created the information concerning their beliefs and attitudes about the test and its impact on their practice, but also collaborated with me in the interpretation of what they said.

Observations.

From these interviews, I chose three diverse teachers to observe as they taught in their classrooms as well as observing the principal at various times throughout his day. These were teachers who had different perspectives about the test and the policies.

Observations of the classroom teachers allowed me to understand the context in which they teach and how that influenced their perspectives. I used Angrosino and Mays de Perez's (2000) three levels of observation to guide how I did them. First, I my observation focused on description. How many students were in the class? How were the desks arranged? What resources and materials were available? What was the ethnic and gender makeup of the students? What time were subjects taught and for what length of time? Having described the classroom, I moved to the next phase, focused observation. Here I examined what instructional methods the teacher was using and how time was spent in the classroom. This included comparing the instruction to Bloom's taxonomy to examine levels of activities and assignments. Other items for observation included grouping patterns of students, and types of assessments that were used. Was the instruction teacher or student directed? How often did the teacher use skill sheets that mimic ISTEP+? What types of assessment did the teacher use and what do they tell the teacher? What resources did the teacher use the most/ the least? Finally, I did selective observations to compare the instruction in different content areas. How was the instruction different or the same in language arts and social studies? How did the instruction in math compare to that in science? Each level of observation provided me with information to guide my interpretation of what was happening in the classroom and how it connected with the four I's. It also allowed me to compare what the teacher told me in the interviews with what I saw during the observations.

Classroom observations allowed me to bring a context to the decisions that the teachers are making and allowed the teacher and me the opportunity to reflect together about how issues of assessment impact their teaching practice. In all, the three classroom

teachers were observed three times over a two and a half week time period. Each observation lasted anywhere from 60 minutes to 165 minutes. Each teacher was observed at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Table 3.3 shows the time of day, number of minutes, and activities observed for each of the teachers.

Teacher	Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3
Ms. Lambert	1:30- 2:50 PM (80 min) Lay out of room Junior Achievement Math Read aloud End of day	12:30-2:00 PM (90 min) Read aloud Math Silent reading	8:35-11:20 AM (165 min) Morning work Working With Words Writing Read aloud Reading
Mr. Wilson	8:45-11:00 AM (135 min) Lay of the room Spelling Community Circle Reading	8:55-11:20 AM (145 min) Morning work Reading Read aloud	12:10-2:40 PM (150 min) Read aloud Math
Mrs. Johnson	9:10- 11:40 (150 min.) Lay out of room Morning work Community circle Math	10:30- 12:00 (90 min.) Social studies Writing	12:40-1:45 (60 min.) Social studies

Table 3.2 Observations

Interviews were, as much as possible, done after observations. Post-observation interviews then focused on their reflection of the lesson and assessment(s) and how they perceived it was or wasn't related to ISTEP+. Other interviews also focused on their general knowledge and use of assessment as well as their perceptions of ISTEP+.

Observations of the principal were done at various times throughout the days I was in the school.

Field Notes.

Detailed field notes were compiled of classroom observations along with the transcripts of the interviews and memos of the conversations with all teachers. These allowed the teacher and me the opportunity to discuss together what happened in the classroom while we constructed our interpretations of them both together and separately. Conversations with the principal were conducted when possible to get insights into what had been observed. The notes provided greater opportunity for a more complete description and enabled us to analyze them through and with different foci in order to make more informed judgments (Erickson, 1986). Interpretations from these notes built the descriptions even further.

Documents.

Test data from the school and other documents related to instructional practice were also examined. One in particular is the PL 221/SIP document that schools complete in order to receive accreditation from the state, this is the same document that is used by the school as its Title I School Improvement Plan (SIP). Historical documents also examined were the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Plan and other Title I reports that were available. Other documents that were examined include the professional development logs; the district report card form; quarterly assessment forms for reading, writing, and math; and the Indiana Academic Standards. These provided a form of documentation of what teachers are expected to do in their teaching. Questions related to these documents also became part of the interviews and observations.

Role of Researcher

Creswell (2003) notes several issues that researchers need to address in their study. One of these is the method used to gain access to the research site. Prior to

beginning my site research, I gained permission from the Michigan State University Internal Review Board (IRB). Reviewers examined my interview questions and the steps I would take to maintain confidentiality. Once I had received IRB approval, I gained permission from the Northville School District by speaking with district administrators and presenting documentation from my dissertation chair, the IRB approval, and a letter from the principal of Marvel Elementary to the school board. After receiving school board approval, I then met with the Marvel teachers at a monthly staff meeting. I explained the nature of my research and what would be expected of them. A copy of the letter of permission with a list of possible questions was handed out to the teachers.

As an elementary teacher now in the researcher role, I recognize that I have a strong connection with the research site. The events that I record and how I see them are influenced by my past experiences as a teacher. This is something that can both help and harm my research. Marvel teachers were made aware that I had been a teacher facing the issues of accountability prior to my graduate work. They were told my story of what had led me to begin this study and my biases. I need to recognize and honor the fact that in telling me their experiences, they are “creating their own history” (Casey, 1995/96, p. 232). This means that I need to take great care with how I interpret and represent them in my writing.

Another role that I have as the researcher is to make the familiar strange to both the teachers and myself (Crapanzano, 1986). After having been a teacher in a Title I school for ten years, I am very familiar with what is involved in teaching at the school. However, as a researcher I needed to look at teaching with fresh and different eyes and provide the opportunity for the teachers I worked with to also generate a new view of

their teaching. As we both looked at this familiar place with new eyes we were able to construct different pictures of their classrooms and teaching practices.

Through this process of learning from the Marvel teachers, I was changed. As van Manen (1990) states, “phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness and tact, and so on” (p. 163). Not only am I changing the teachers through my interviews and observations, but what I learn throughout this process has and will continue to change how I view teaching and accountability.

Analysis

My analysis was done on three levels, including theory-based coding using Weiss’s four I’s, open coding to explore the data in greater detail without a theory in mind, and selective coding to deliberately code with particular concepts in mind. While the theory based coding was used to set up this study, I found that what the teachers had to say was more richly and accurately captured through the selective codes. These are the four genres of stories told by these teachers: (a) moral stories of what is good and right, (b) power stories about who has control, (c) interpersonal stories about how policies affect their relationships, and (d) technical stories about whether these policies were effective or not.

I began by examining the data with the theory-based coding using Weiss’s (1995) interests, ideology, information, and institution. A role-ordered matrix was used to organize the data along these variables. This matrix “sorts data in its rows and columns that have been gathered from or about a certain set of ‘role occupants’ - data reflecting their views” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 123). The rows reflect the role that the

teachers have in the school by grade level or area (i.e. Title I or Special Education).

Individual teachers were also be listed by initials in each row so that comparisons could be made both within and across roles. The columns were based on the key variables. The codes were included on the matrix along with key words and phrases.

Teacher/Principal	Interests	Ideology	Information	Institution
Kindergarten				
First Grade				
Second Grade				
Third Grade				
Fourth Grade				
Fifth Grade				
Special Education				
Title I				
Principal				

Table 3.3 Example of role-ordered matrix

Miles and Huberman (1994) have described some tactics that were used in the interpretation of the matrix. These include making comparisons and contrasts, noting relations among variables, and counting. Making comparisons and contrasts guided in making decisions on which teachers to observe as part of the study. It also highlighted what was happening across the grade levels and among the majority of the teachers as well as what was different. This provided information about the complexity of the school. Noting relations among variables provided insight into how the four variables

work with or against one another. Finally, counting gave a sense of concrete numbers to conclusions.

Open and selective coding.

Yet, through coding in this way and reading over what the teachers had to say, I noticed that there were important ideas that were not captured by the theory-based coding process. I then began a new open coding analysis. After repeatedly comparing and contrasting the ideas, I began to notice that there were distinctions not only about what was said about a topic such as the institution, but more powerfully there were distinctions in the discourse the teachers used in their responses. I then began a new open coding analysis. It seemed to me that the teachers were telling different types of stories about the accountability phenomenon. With the idea of stories in mind, I coded the data again, eventually arriving at four distinct genres of stories. Open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was used in the examination of interviews, observations, and documents. Multiple readings of the transcripts of interviews, field notes from observations, and documents provided evidence for patterns and themes that reoccur (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Codes for each of the case study participants were reexamined to determine the fit with the construct of each story genre based on the particular discourse used by the teachers. A list of words and phrases for each discourse was generated to facilitate coding. Responses were then categorized according to larger themes and ideas they represented. These became the sub-headings for each of the genre sections. Data from documents, observations, and interviews of other teachers were used as they reinforced or contradicted what was said by the case study teachers. In this way the reader is able to

learn not only about the case study participants, but the other teachers and school context also.

Validation

Validity questions whether the conclusions drawn in the study are legitimate. There are several strategies used in qualitative research to enhance the validity of the findings. For this study, four of these are used to address the issue of validity.

Triangulation of data was used with information gathered from interviews, observations, and documents (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1990). Interviewing teachers helped me to gain some insight into how they were or were not making sense of the test and policies in their teaching. Observations allowed me to see first-hand what was happening in their classrooms to connect with what we had discussed. Examination of documents also added to my understanding of what was happening at the school and with the teacher. Places where information from more than one source reinforced conclusions strengthened it. The presentation of contradictory information also allows the reader to realize that conclusions are more complex in some areas.

Interviewing and observing teachers provided the essence that I as the researcher had “been there” (Geertz, 1988, p. 5) with the teachers. The combination of “participant observation with sensitive interviewing” (Erickson, 1986, p. 123) allowed me to gain insights into the culture of each teacher’s classroom and the school culture also. It also provided me with the environment necessary to work with the teachers in making sense of, interpreting what was both seen and heard.

As I interviewed and observed the teachers, I was “noticing and describing everyday events in the field setting, and in attempting to identify the significance of actions in the events from the various points of view of the actors [teachers] themselves” (Erickson, 1986, p. 121). It is through the use of the details of what I saw and heard that allows the readers of the text to feel that they too have talked with this teacher and been a part of their classroom (Geertz, 1988).

Along with triangulation and thick description, “peer examination” (Merriam, 1988, p. 169) or “peer debriefing” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196) was used. Elizabeth Heilman, my dissertation chair, provided me with extensive feedback and assistance as I analyzed data and made interpretations. This allowed me to share my thoughts and questions with more knowledgeable others in the field of qualitative research. Their feedback was invaluable and made a difference in how data was used and presented.

A last strategy that was used in this study is the examination of researcher bias (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988) or “credibility of the researcher” (Patton, 1990, p. 472). This meant that as I was interpreting the data and writing my text, I had to closely and carefully ask how my beliefs and values were influencing what I was writing. This was discussed in the earlier section on the role of researcher. This is what also caused me to carefully listen to and heed to feedback given to me during the peer examination/debriefing.

Presentation of the data

The credibility of the written text rests in the “power of .. descriptions” (Crapanzano, 1986, p. 58) or what Geertz (1973) referred to as thick descriptions of the teachers. The interpretations of the data are the pictures of the classrooms that the

teachers and I are providing for the readers with the evidence of our interpretations coming from combining multiple narratives into the four stories about their experiences with accountability. These narratives provide “an analytic caricature” (Erickson, 1986, p. 150) of the classrooms and teachers. Readers will be able to feel as if they too have talked with the teachers and been in the classrooms as they read the text.

The use of stories added depth and richness to the presentation of information and findings about schools. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) note that the use of stories allows the readers to know about how time, context, and relationships in schools and how these interact in the stories of schools. There were four types or genres of stories: moral, power, interpersonal, and technical. The particular language that teachers used defined the stories. There were stories that were not as clearly defined and contained the language of more than one genre. This may have occurred because the teacher was telling more than one story or because of my perspective on what the teacher was saying or both. The telling of stories is a more compelling way to relate what these teachers had to say than simply relaying this information through the original four I topics. However, it is important to note that as teachers talked about their interests, ideology, information, and institution these stories were told. The four I’s are intertwined within the stories.

The text produced from this research is a bricolage in that I use pieces from observations, interviews, and documents to create an interpretation in collaboration with the teachers (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Those who have a positivist stance often look on research as the source of “truth”. This idea is being reemphasized in these days of “scientifically based research” (No Child Left Behind, 2002). However, there is no way to tell the whole story of what it means to in a Title I school during these times of

reliance on ISTEP+. My role is to provide an interpretation of this or what Maxine Greene (1994) refers to as “constructed reality” (p. 435). People, through the use of their values and experiences, construct reality. I used my values and experiences as a teacher in a Title I school to construct my interpretation of these teachers’ reality.

Where Does This Belong? Or Does it Belong?

I began with an examination of interests, ideology, information, and institution in generating the interview protocol for this study. Open coding of the transcripts guided me to recognize that from these four topics, stories were told about life in this school. Describing what is happening at this Title I school afforded the opportunity to use within case analysis of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The inner workings of the school were examined and described as they related to the accountability policies. The key variables of interests, information, ideology and institution guided this description.

While the school can be described as a whole, a fuller understanding of it can occur by examining some individual teachers also. Three teachers with diverse responses to the key variables were chosen for observations. Interviews with the principal added further detail to this understanding. Cross case analysis was used to understand this information. Analysis was done by locating comparable as well as contrasting views from other teachers with what was stated by case study participants. As Miles and Huberman (1994) note, “the aim is to see processes and outcomes across cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful conclusions” (p. 172).

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY CONTEXT: A RACIALLY DIVERSE POSTINDUSTRIAL MIDWESTERN TOWN

In examining what is happening at a particular place within a community, it is often worthwhile to learn more about the community itself. Schools are said to be a reflection of the community in which they reside, so an exploration of the community can provide other aspects to the picture of what is happening at this school. The students and their families as well as many of the teachers live here. In order to understand the school, you need to know something about the community as well. This chapter explores historical and current information about the community to provide a context for what is happening at the school.

A Brief History

Founded in the 1830s, this city has grown from a small trading route village into the largest community in the county. The earliest settlers came seeking opportunities for land and making a better life for themselves. Some came from the eastern parts of the United States while others arrived from several European as well as Middle Eastern nations. With them, they brought their religious beliefs including various Christian faiths, Jews, and Muslims. The ease of access to both land and water transportation was one of the greatest lures to this part of Indiana.

Over the years, Northville citizens engaged in numerous industries. Access to a wide variety of natural resources brought many industries and trades to the area over the years. From the hey day of many types of manufacturing to lumber mills, banking, tourism, as well as a wide variety of local businesses, Northville residents were able to

find work. While there were many job opportunities within the community, some also found well paying jobs in other nearby communities. These were mainly jobs that required little formal academic training.

The 1940's and 50's saw an increase in the number of manufacturing plants that opened in this area. As more people had money to spend, an increase in the places to use it came also. During the 1960's a mall opened in the southern part of the community. While this attracted shoppers from all over the county, it also drew people and business away from the downtown area. The result was a loss of foot traffic in this part of town while more of the former storefronts were either boarded up or became home to a wide array of offices.

Time has changed some of the work options across this part of the state. In the 1980's Northville, along with many other communities in this area of the Midwest, lost many of the good paying manufacturing jobs as companies either closed or moved to other areas. No longer were young men and women able to have easy access to jobs that afforded them the expected middle class lifestyle as the citizens of Northville experienced what it meant to be part of the "Rust Belt".

Other changes came to this community as well. In the years following the First World War, African Americans from the south moved to this community as well as others in this part of the state for the manufacturing jobs and a better life. Northville came to have the largest minority population in the county. While the rest of the county was mainly white, this community had both whites and blacks. Another migration occurred during World War Two as African Americans from the south filled positions at

defense plants. Over time, African Americans from larger nearby communities migrated to Northville in search of a different life.

Northville Today: Some Facts and Figures

This community has in recent years seen a slight decline in population yet it is geographically near several growing communities. The 2000 US Census Bureau Report showed that the population had a 3.2% decrease from 1990-2000. The number of males and females within the community are very close to one another with a difference of less than 300. The majority of the population, 68%, is white while 26% are black. Approximately 3% of the community is Hispanic and 2.5% are classified as other. The marital status statistics of the community include 63% married, 8% single males, and 29% single females.

Among the residents of this community, US Census data from 2000 reveals that 27% have an income under \$20,000 while only 2% have an income between \$100,000-\$125, 000. This means that over a quarter of the households in this community qualify for subsidized housing. According to the 2000 US Census Bureau, the poverty rate in Northville for 1999 was 13.3%. That means that more than one in ten people within Northville were living below the poverty line. This correlates with the unemployment statistics as well as the income statistics. Even though residents of this community were working, they were more likely to work at lower paying jobs that kept them below the poverty level.

The unemployment rate in this community hovers around 7%. The most recent information from an agency that gathers these statistics puts the December 2005

unemployment rate at 7.2%. This is the highest rate in the county. The county unemployment rate for the same time period was 6%.

Northville is governed by a mayor and city council. It offers its citizens a number of services that range from police and fire protection to government subsidized housing and bus service. The community also has a department that oversees civil rights issues so that all members of Northville can be fairly treated. The Northville housing department has a wait of over one year for the scattered site, single site, elderly, and handicapped housing.

Healthcare in Northville consists of a hospital, a number of doctors and medical clinics, and urgent care facilities. A local branch of the county health department is located in Northville. This is where parents may take their children to get their immunizations. It is located near one of the poor neighborhoods.

Education available to the citizens of Northville consists of the Northville Community Schools, several parochial schools, as well as vocational and professional institutions of higher education. There are also educational programs offered through community organizations offered at several sites throughout the community covering the range from technology to home repair.

A Journey Around Northville

On a clear late spring day, I take a drive around the Northville community. I notice a number of things during this exploration. One feature that particularly stands out to me is the large old homes that line the streets of the downtown area of the community. Some are well kept and beautiful making me think of a bygone era when families would have come home in horse drawn carriages and several children would have been running

through the halls playing games with one another. It was a time before the full intrusion of electronic devices that entertain our children more and more today rather than physical activity and imagination.

Further along the drive, I pass a shopping center filled with people out looking for what they feel is needed or maybe out just wishing. The parking lots are nearly full of cars, and their plates let me know that they have driven from locations near and not so near. Northville includes a number of such shopping districts and this place seems to have an energy all its own.

Yet, not too far down the road I come upon a neighborhood that has seen better days. There are homes desperately in need of some carpentry and painting. The cars parked along the streets are rusting and here and there a muffler is held on with wire. It is apparent that there are people here that may not be making ends meet.

I turn south in my drive and pass by several other neighborhoods that show a mixture of income levels. There are homes that are well kept with colorful ornamentation decorating the yards. However, scattered among these homes are those that remind me of the neighborhood that I just left. These are homes that look worn out and in need of a face lift, but money may be an issue and a new roof is not a priority at this time.

Winding along the road, I also come across another shopping center. This one does not have the number of cars in the parking lot that the other one did. Curious, I decide to go inside and visit this place. Inside I see the usual stores that appear to be doing well. Walking out of one of these stores however brings a different impression, as the interior of the center is far quieter. Continued investigation leads me to see several

store fronts with for lease signs. It seems that while this community has many retail shopping centers for visitors, and stores that support ordinary life are not as popular.

In my travel, I have also noticed several manufacturing, service and businesses of varying sizes. Observing the parking lots of some of these made it evident that there is no longer the number of employees there once were. Others, however, seemed to be bustling and doing well, reflecting the change from an industrial economy to a service based economy. Other places of employment are scattered in various places around the community including schools, offices, restaurants, services, and stores of many kinds.

I decided to travel outside the town limits to explore further. Surrounding the community were subdivisions with newer and nicer homes. Farm fields were here and there with their crops of corn and soybeans that are so prominent in Indiana. Yes, there were homes out of the town limits that reminded me of the worn out houses in the poor neighborhoods. Poverty is not limited to the town itself. However, I also saw many homes that were newer and larger than the ones I saw in town. Those who could afford it were moving out to the subdivisions outside the town limits.

This is a community that has evolved over the years. Today it is still changing from a center of manufacturing to one of tourism. Life for some has not altered much while for others the influx of new residents and retailers has made a difference in their lives. This is a community that is in many ways similar to others in the area that is coping with the changes that are part of our national history. America is also moving from being an industrial nation to a place in transition. There are those with highly skilled jobs with wages to match and then there are those who work in the service

industry. The declining middle class of Northville reflects what is happening in communities across America.

Within this changing community rests an elementary school that reflects some of what is happening in the larger community. Marvel Elementary School is in a state of change as a growing number of students come from homes at or below the poverty level. They come with less preparation for school and are changing in ethnicity as well.

CHAPTER 5

MARVEL SCHOOL: A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST AND PRESENT

In this chapter, I will provide a brief history of Marvel Elementary School as well as what it was like at the time of this study. Detailed descriptions of this school in forms of data as well as written accounts will allow the reader to have a glimpse into what it means to be a member of this school family. From this, a sense of how this school is changing will be understood and how these changes reflect what is happening in the larger community of Northville.

The original school structure, initially named Marshland School, was opened for students in 1925 in a small community of the same name. Several additions were constructed as the number of students attending the school grew. Sometime in the 1950's, Marshland merged with nearby Northville, and the school became part of NCS. Another change happened to this small school on the outskirts of Northville when the name of the school was changed to Marvel. It was named after a past superintendent of the NCS who had been instrumental in several advances to the district as well as being a former teacher at this school.

The next major change happened as the school grew in size- both in the number of students and the number of square feet. A major addition was built in the 1970's. It reflected a trend in education at the time- open concept buildings. The idea was that children would be less restricted by age and grade levels as they were able to freely move to appropriate groupings with other students at a similar level of learning. While the teachers at this school embraced this style of teaching at first, they eventually reverted to teaching in a traditional classroom fashion.

The most recent changes that have happened at this school are related to the students who attend the school. For many years this school housed grades kindergarten through sixth. However, in the 1990's, NCS followed the movement of many Indiana school districts and instituted middle schools taking the sixth graders out of the elementary buildings. Not long after that, the district Title I program began a preschool program and housed one of the classes at Marvel.

A Ten Year History of Title I at Marvel Elementary School

Teachers who have been at Marvel for over twenty years cannot remember a time when it was not a Title I school. However, the delivery of the program as well as the number of Title I staff have changed over the years. Previous to the 1994-95 school year, Marvel's Title I program was similar to that of programs at many other elementary schools throughout the district and state. Students were identified as being in need of assistance with reading through achievement testing and teacher recommendation. The students who met the program's criteria were then selected to receive services from the members of the Title I staff in a pull out situation. The students would leave the regular education classroom with a Title I staff member and receive one on one or small group help with reading that was targeted to their specific reading difficulties. The Title I staff at Marvel at that time consisted of two certified reading teachers and two assistants.

However, this program began to change a little bit at a time. In May of 1995, one Title I teacher and some of the first and second grade teachers went to North Carolina to visit schools using the Four Blocks Literacy Model that the Title I teacher had read about in *The Reading Teacher*. This program appeared to meet the needs of the students that had been identified by the teachers through analysis of assessment data. After observing

this program and receiving more information from teachers who helped to develop and implement this program, it was determined to pilot it at the school. In the fall of 1996, the first and second grade teachers along with one Title I teacher and two assistants began a trial run of Four Blocks at Marvel Elementary.

Another change also occurred in the Title I program during the 1996-1997 school year. Students were no longer identified and pulled out to receive services in the program. Instead all students in the school were able to interact with and receive instruction from the Title I staff as the schoolwide program was implemented. Rather than the Title I staff members coming into the classroom to pull select students out, now they came into the classroom to work with the general education teacher and all of the students. There were times when the Title I staff members would pull particular students out for more intensive services. With another teacher in the classroom, students were often broken up into smaller groups so that they could receive more attention.

The following year another change occurred in the Title I program. With an increase in funding it was possible to pay one of the kindergarten teachers a half day to teach what was labeled an extended day kindergarten class. Now students at the kindergarten level were able to receive more services based on need. At the beginning of the school year, all kindergarteners were given a series of tests. From analysis of this data, students who had the greatest needs were offered the opportunity to attend the new program. These students were part of a regular morning kindergarten program, but in the afternoon they received remedial services so that they would be better prepared for first grade. This program ended after the 2002-2003 school year because of funding issues.

The district also added another Title I program at the school. The district had decided to add preschool programs into some of the Title I schools. Marvel was chosen as one of the sites for this program. Preschool students who would one day attend one of the designated district schools could apply for this program. These students were then assessed and members of the preschool staff went to visit the home. Based on the assessment data and the home visit, students were chosen to attend this program. While this program was not part of Marvel's Title I program, it did impact some of the students who would one day come into the kindergarten program at this school.

Staffing changes also occurred during this time period. While the targeted assisted program consisted of two Title I reading teachers and two assistants, the program had expanded to include three reading teachers and three assistants as well as the extended day kindergarten teacher, the preschool teacher, and two preschool assistants. In other words, the Title I staff at Marvel Elementary School increased from four people to 9.5 people, an increase of 137.5%! It should be noted that the preschool teacher and two assistants were housed at Marvel but served students that would attend other school in the district as well.

Other program enhancements that occurred at Marvel included giving the responsibility of one of the Title I teachers to be the parent involvement coordinator. This teacher worked in the classroom part of the day, but also had time set aside to plan and run parent workshops as well as other activities that would bring parents into closer connection with the school. One of the efforts included reenergizing and renaming the parent group. This group worked with fund raising efforts as well as organizing events that brought parents into the schools.

Another change in the Title I program occurred when Marvel applied for and received a Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Grant in the 1999-2000 school year. This grant offered more opportunities for teachers to receive professional development and materials for instruction that were connected with the goals of the grant. Now teachers had time once a month to meet in grade level teams to plan and analyze data. Greater understanding and implementation of research based programs was possible because of shared language and focused professional development. Money was available for teachers to purchase items so that they could implement programs. For example, teachers were able to purchase bins and a wide variety of texts for students to use during the Self Selected Reading portion of the Four Blocks Literacy Model. A wide variety of math materials were also purchased so that students had what they needed for Math Their Way or Math A Way of Thinking lessons. Classrooms were transformed as teachers purchased lamps and other decorative items to make the rooms more inviting. Even though the funding ended in 2002, the many program changes exist still today.

A Glimpse Inside the Life of Marvel Elementary School Today

To get an understanding of a slice of life at Marvel today, let's follow Jamil as he begins his day as a second grader at this school. He arrives on the school bus that picked him up at his bus stop along with other children from the housing authority project. He and his friend Kareem are discussing what they plan to do at lunch recess. Kareem is in another second grade class. As the boys are on their way inside, James comes up behind them and shouts, "BOO!" The boys let James know in no uncertain terms that they do not appreciate his joke. Angry words are exchanged as they enter the building.

Mr. Koeslke, the principal, is greeting students as they come in and hears this exchange. He immediately steps in to calm this argument before it escalates to physical violence. There is a history of problems between them that often begins with something that happened in the neighborhood and finds its way to the school. In a calm voice, Mr. Koeslke asks, "What's the problem?" Immediately he is bombarded by three young voices.

"One at a time please," asks Mr. Koeslke, "I won't be able to help you resolve this issue if I don't hear what you each have to say. Jamil, would you please tell me what is happening."

One at a time the boys tell their story and through patient negotiation that has been perfected with practice, the boys are able to come to a peaceful resolution. Jamil and Kareem head toward the cafeteria for breakfast while James, who had breakfast at home, goes directly to the gym to wait for the morning bell.

Jamil decides to have cereal for breakfast while Kareem chooses to have Pop Tarts. They go through the line and say hello to Mrs. Jackson, the head of the school cafeteria. She punches their names on the computer to note that they have had breakfast. They are among the students who do not have to pay for their meals because of their parents' income levels. They head to an empty table where they sit next to each other and talk about the police raid on a neighboring apartment building the previous evening. When they are finished with their breakfast, they join many of the other students in the gym to wait for the morning bell.

At 8:30 the bell rings and teachers begin to come into the gym to retrieve their students. Voices bounce off the gym walls and ceiling as numerous conversations

continue. Mr. Koeslke and several assistants line the students up as the teachers enter the gym. The students are arranged in groups around the gym by grade level and teacher. Some sit on the bleachers, others sit on the floor, and some sit on benches that line one side of the gym. One by one the classes leave the gym. Jamil and Kareem share a nod as a reminder of their plans for recess as they each head off in their class lines- Jamil with Mr. Jones and Kareem with Mrs. Press.

On entering his classroom, Jamil notices that Anissa is absent again today. This makes three days in a row that she has missed school. She is famous for telling her mother that she doesn't want to go to school, and her mother gives in rather than arguing with her about attending school. Jamil wonders if she will miss so much school this year that she will be retained. He remembers hearing that this almost happened to her at the end of first grade. Of course, Anissa has also let it be known that her family may soon be moving out of state, so this may not happen after all.

The day begins, and the second graders move through math which is much more interesting this year with the new math program. They also spend time reading books of their own choosing. Jamil finds a book in his group's crate on basketball and wonders if Mr. Jones put it there for him because he knows how much Jamil loves reading about this sport. He really wants to make it to the NBA. He so wants to play for his favorite team, the Orlando Magic. He can just picture himself out there on the court!

Time passes slowly when the subject he is working on is not of interest, but more quickly when it is one he enjoys. Before long, recess arrives and Jamil rushes to get the basketball from the closet. Unfortunately, he is not fast enough and Karen gets the ball before he does. An argument erupts over the ball, and Mr. Jones intervenes to resolve the

situation. An angry Jamil joins Kareem outside and complains about the class having only one basketball. They had begun the year with three, but two had mysteriously disappeared leaving them with only one. Kareem tells Jamil it will be all right, and they soon join another group of boys who were able to claim one of the coveted basketballs.

The day continues with writing lessons, followed by lunch, another highly contested game of basketball at lunch recess, science, and a quick character education lesson complete the school day. Jamil has had the opportunity to work on his own and in a small group with other students. He has listened to his teacher lecture, although Mr. Jones does not do this often, as well as explore the content in various ways.

As the day ends, students in the second grade gather their materials. Loud voices are heard in the hallway as two students voice frustration with one another over who made an inappropriate comment first. Each vehemently asserts that the other said something bad first, and they are unwilling to let the matter go. Mr. Jones decides to send the students to the office to cool down before they go their separate ways. He hopes that Mr. Koeslke has more luck with them than he did. Finally, the second bell rings and students line the halls on their way to multiple locations. Kareem high-fives Jamil in the hall as he leaves to get on the bus. Other students go to another door to be picked up by their parents. Jamil is on his way to the cafeteria for the after school program. His mother won't be home until after five, so he stays at school and receives a snack, help with his homework, and more time to hone his basketball skills in the gym.

Students

As the snapshot story of Jamil suggests, many students at Marvel face difficult personal and academic challenges. In the year this research was conducted, students at

this school included 79% free and reduced lunch with a transience rate of 45%. Historical documents from 1999-00, 2002-03 and 2004-05 provide some history of changes in student demographics at this school. Table 5.1 provides information on the percent of students by ethnicity, mobility rate, and poverty rate as determined by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

	1999-2000	2002-03	2004-05
African American	41.3	47	56
Hispanic	2	2	1
White	54	46	42
Multiracial	2.7	5	1
Mobility	12	58	45
Free/reduced lunch	58.6	78	79

Table 5.1 Student demographics

Some facts that become apparent while examining this five year time period are that:

- The African American student population is increasing
- The white student population is decreasing
- The number of students receiving free and reduced lunch is increasing
- The mobility rate increased drastically and then slightly decreased.

The number of students in the school also changed as noted in each of the documents. There were 335 students in 1999-2000, 349 in 2002-03 and 372 in 2004-05. This means that more students are attending Marvel Elementary School. More of these students are African American and fewer are white. An increasing number of these

students come from homes below the poverty line, and almost half of them have either recently moved into or out of this school.

Another piece of student demographic data that was available on the Indiana Department of Education website has to do with school attendance rate. Information on the table represents the attendance rate as a percent.

Year	Marvel	State
1999-00	92.5	95.9
2000-01	93.2	95.7
2001-02	94.7	95.9
2002-03	94.4	95.8
2003-04	95.4	95.9
2004-05	95.1	95.9

Table 5.2 Student attendance percentages

While Marvel has not reached the same attendance rate as the state average, it has increased from the 1999-00 school year to the 2004-05 school year. It is interesting to note that while the state rate stays fairly steady, the Marvel attendance rate is more volatile.

Since the fall of 2003, elementary students at Marvel have taken ISTEP+ in third, fourth, and fifth grades. The 2004 test scores are the first to be used for accountability purposes in the areas of English/Language Arts and math. Prior to this the state law only required third, sixth, and eighth grade students to take the test. The current test is given in late September and covers the standards that were taught in the previous grade levels. In other words, the fifth grade ISTEP+ covers the English/Language Arts, math, and

science standards from first through fourth grades. Students at Marvel have scored below the state average on this test since it began as a norm-referenced test in the late 1980's.

The table below shows the percent of students at each grade level that passed the various sections of the 2004 ISTEP+. The state average is presented in the parentheses.

Grade	English/language arts	Math	Science
Third	58% (76%)	46% (74%)	
Fourth	47% (74%)	50% (74%)	
Fifth	54% (73%)	60% (73%)	33% (60%)

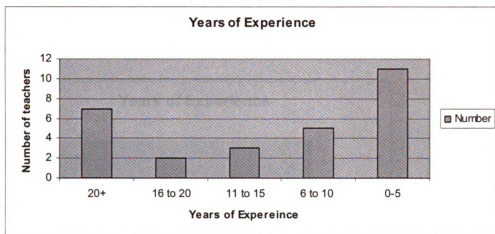
Table 5.3 Percentage of students passing ISTEP+

The Marvel students consistently score below the state average. This year the differences in math steadily decreased from third grade to fifth. The results are less clear in English/Language Arts where the differences are closer for third and fifth graders, yet are much greater for fourth graders. The difference for science is the greatest which would seem to indicate that this is an area that needs to be addressed by the Marvel teachers. However, this is only the second year the science test has been administered, so there may also be concerns with what is covered on the test. Appendix E contains test data for third grade from 1999-2003.

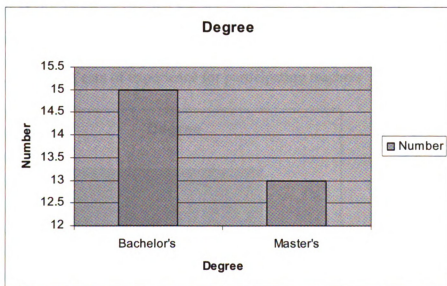
Teachers

During the 2004-05 school year there were a total of 28 teachers working at Marvel as listed by the Indiana Department of Education website. These include general education, special education, physical education, Title I, art, music, and speech teachers. Two of the teachers work a half-day at Marvel and the other half at another district school. One classroom teacher does not hold an Indiana license, but all the others hold

the correct license and would be considered highly qualified. Graphs 5.1 and 5.2 provide more information on the years of experience and degrees held by these teachers.



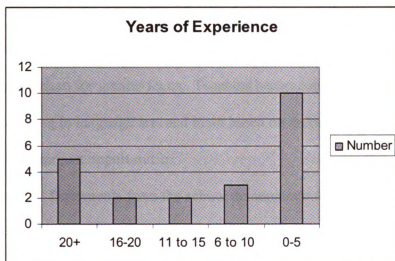
Graph 5.1 Years of Experience



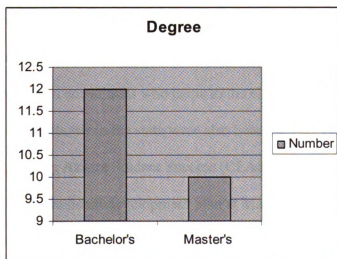
Graph 5.2 Degrees held

For the purposes of this study, I only interviewed and observed general education, special education, and Title I teachers because it is the work they do with students that is being tested. The demographics for this smaller group are very similar to the larger group when comparing percentages for the type of degree held by the teachers. The

greatest differences occur in the years of experience category, but they range from two through six percent difference. The greatest differences occur at the six to ten and zero to five year categories which have differences respectively of four percent and six percent. In raw numbers, these are differences of one or two teachers.



Graph 5.3 Years of experience for participating teachers



Graph 5.4 Degree for participating teachers

Teachers at Marvel Elementary School have participated in professional development for a number of years. Like most schools, this was at times hit or miss.

There were times when the teachers chose to attend workshops that were of interest to them but were not part of the overall school plan. Through my conversations with these teachers, I was able to determine that there came a point in time where professional development became more focused and schoolwide. In fact, Mr. Gobel recalled that this became more evident when the school became a Title I schoolwide school. By this time, through analysis of some data, the teachers at this school targeted particular areas of the curriculum for greater focus. Teachers became more deliberate on what they were teaching in language arts and math based on an examination of test data and professional development opportunities.

Documents from the school demonstrate that teachers in this building were focusing on particular areas for professional development. The Four Blocks Literacy Model was the object of professional development from teachers attending one day workshops to a consultant coming into the school to work with teachers in their classrooms. Math Their Way/Math a Way of Thinking was the program chosen to help teachers increase students' abilities in math. Week-long training, purchase of materials, and math consultants who came to the classrooms were all aspects for this program. Many schools in the state were also becoming part of a program called Connected Learning Assure Student Success (CLASS). This was another program that was part of the professional development plan at Marvel. A coach from the program came to the school as well as teachers observing the way the program worked at other schools and sharing this with the teachers. Two other areas that were strongly connected with this program were the use of portfolios and curriculum integration. Teachers at this school were all receiving training through attendance at workshops, consultants that came to the

school, reading of professional materials, or teachers becoming experts and sharing their expertise during school in-service days. Teachers had been part of the process of choosing these areas of focus and were working together to master these programs all with the goal of raising the level of their students.

The 2004-05 school professional development log provides data concerning the types of professional development that the teachers received during this school year. As would be expected when considering the data on years of experience, some of the teachers did not participate in the professional development when the focus began in the 1996-1997 school year. Therefore, newer teachers are continuously being trained in particular areas so that the staff has a common language and way of teaching. Mr. Koeslke, the principal, has stated that this has been a challenge. Rather than having a well-trained staff working to refine their teaching methods, he is constantly working to bring new staff members up to speed with the programs.

Examination of the professional development log yields the following information:

- (a) teachers were involved in a total of 57 professional development opportunities
- (b) the majority of these (70%) were offered by the district
- (c) three major areas of concentration for these were English/language arts, math, and technology
- (d) the focus for English/language arts was on the Four Blocks program (71%)
- (e) the focus for math was the new Everyday Math program that had been adopted by the district this year (94%)
- (f) all of the technology trainings were offered by the district

(g) forty percent of these were related to the new program on the computers that allowed teachers to assign learning activities to their students

(h) twelve other opportunities were placed in a miscellaneous category and ranged from discipline to report cards.

The table in Appendix D provides the data on these professional development opportunities.

As noted previously, both Marvel Elementary School and the Northville community are undergoing changes. These are not always easy to address and especially not during a time of increased accountability in education. While the staff members of this school have historically read and used research to continually refine their teaching practices in order to meet student learning needs, the demands of testing and making AYP have interfered with this process. What these teachers have to say in the coming chapters tells how they are impacted by accountability and testing and in many ways reflects what is happening in other schools as well because they share very similar characteristics.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS: STORIES TEACHERS TELL

The goals of this chapter are to: (a) discuss why the story format is used to communicate what these teachers shared in interviews, observations, and conversations about teaching in a Title I school under threat of accountability sanctions, (b) define the terms that will be used, and (c) define and delineate each story genre. Life can be conceived of as a series of stories that fit into a multitude of categories or genres, and this was the case for the teachers of Marvel Elementary School. Throughout our conversations, the teachers and I created a variety of stories as they discussed what was happening in their lives (Mishler, 1986) as it related to accountability. They had many different stories to tell about what it means to be a teacher in a Title I school serving students from less advantaged backgrounds while coping with the realities of accountability from local, state, and federal levels. These stories are “powerful modes of knowing” (Brody, Witherall, Donald, and Lundblad, 1991, p. 276) their daily experiences at this school. They also provide readers with a more “holistic view of the phenomena” (Craig, 1997) of accountability at a Title I school.

Why the Story Format

Through the process of telling stories, teachers make sense of and give meaning to what is occurring in their lives (Casey, 1993, 1995/96; Florio-Ruane, 1991; Heilman, 2005; Savolainen, 2004; Witherall and Noddings, 1991). It allows teachers to recognize that what they know and have to say has value and through them they are able to create information that is valuable to others as well (Gitlin, Bringham, Burns, Cooley, Myers, Price, Russell, and Tiess, 1992). Human beings have an intrinsic need to make sense of

what is happening in their lives. As teachers prepare students for the test, give the state test, analyze the data, or make instructional decisions based on data from a variety of resources; they are seeking to make sense of the information. Why is this information important? How do the data fit or don't fit with one another? How does this connect with my teaching experiences, life stories, and identities? As teachers are making sense of what is happening, they are also giving contextualized and personal meaning to it. Because teachers have different backgrounds and experiences, they have different ways to make sense of and give meaning to these events.

The use of the story format also “reveals or explores our humanity” (Taylor, 1996, p. 17). As we listen to what teachers are saying through these stories, we are able to recognize that they are humans struggling and coping with a variety of life experiences. Teachers are often viewed as an authority figure without a life outside the classroom or even as the voice that says “blah, blah blah” like in the Peanuts cartoons. These stories allow readers to gain some insight into the human and vulnerable side of teachers (Riesmann, 1993). Teachers are sharing pieces of their professional biographies with the goal of “making history become personal- of telling the story of another person's life for a purpose” (Kridel, 1998, p. 125). They allow us to know about frustrations, joys, concerns, hopes, and other experiences teachers go through in their daily lives. Stories are not only about who they are as teachers but also about their lives outside of the school walls. We come to see through the stories who teachers are as human beings and what they find of value and importance in life (Savolainen, 2004).

Teacher stories are also what Palmer (1998) refer to as the inner landscapes of a teacher's life. They are guiding students into becoming members of society, modeling

proper behavior, holding high expectations, comforting and caring for students, and making a difference in lives. There is value in using teacher stories to examine and work through the issues they face in their teaching and lives (Casey, 1995/96). Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) as cited in Schwarz (2001) note that each story “documents lived classroom experience” (p. 4) which has value to all who are interested in education and give an inside view of school culture (Riesmann, 1993). As Florio-Ruane (1991) states, “teachers’ stories are a largely untapped source of information about teaching” (p. 242). Using the story approach demonstrates respect for the teachers as “active critical beings” who are part of the research process (Gitlin, et al, 1992, p. 32). The stories of teaching in a Title I school grappling with accountability and sanctions allows the reader to recognize the “complexities and contradictions” (Flyvberg, 2006) of their professional lives.

The stories teachers tell are also a way to “create and bond together a community” (Taylor, 1996, p. 122). What the teachers told me are also things that they share with one another in a variety of contexts from the workroom, conversations on the phone, and with parents. They are generated as teachers and students spend five and a half hours a day together for 180 days of the year. Teachers, staff members, district administrators, parents, and students are all members of this community. Experiences and events that generate these stories occur at the school as well as in the community, state, and nation. In this way a variety of communities are created that includes the immediate school, district, state, and national communities. Accountability laws have bonded together these communities in a variety of ways and for differing purposes.

Witherall and Noddings (1991) note that stories are used to entertain, explain, motivate, and convince readers. They are a way that connects on many levels with

readers and can generate a variety of responses. In keeping with the three purposes I have for this research, the story format makes sense as I want to explain what is happening at this Title I school in the current era of accountability as well as to convince and motivate teachers, legislators, and members of the community to meet the purposes of policy formation and implementation.

The story format has many advantages in the presentation of what I have learned from these teachers. It is a way for teachers to make sense of and give meaning to their teaching. The humanity of teachers as well as the culture of schools is also presented to readers. The creation of community is another value to stories whether it is among teachers, between various members of the school, or amongst individuals in the district, state, or nation. Sharing what was learned as story also connects well with the three purposes of this study. It is my goal that by reading and carefully considering the stories will “lead to new insights, compassionate judgment, and the creation of shared knowledge and meanings that can inform professional practice” (Witherall and Noddings, 1991, p. 8).

These stories were told to me as a researcher trying to understand what was happening in their lives as teachers were facing high stakes accountability policies. As they tell me their stories, I placed my own interpretation on what they had to say based on my own “cultural understandings” (Mishler, 1986, p. 95). My understandings of their stories are colored by my experiences as a teacher in a Title I school in this state. These teachers were aware that in many respects I had walked in their shoes. This in turn influenced what and how they told me their stories. I also need to consider that as

teachers tell their stories and I write them, there is a “negotiation of power” (Grumet, 1991, p. 68 as cited in Casey, 1995/96, p. 219) occurring between us.

Defining Some Terms

There are several terms that are used when discussing stories and research about stories including the words story, narrative, and discourse. It is of value to examine how other research has defined and used these terms, and then to identify how these terms are being used in this particular research study.

Some authors describe particular aspects or characteristics of story in order to make known what it is. Miller (1998) has noted that the process of writing stories, like the ones in this study which are about the lived experiences of people, is fluid and ever evolving. Along the same lines, Murray (2003) stated that research is about telling a story that has a structure and a “social nature” (p. 98). Another quality of story research is that it touches both the mind and the heart of readers (Taylor, 1996). Sfard and Prusak (2005) state that stories are to be “reifying, endorsable, and significant” (p. 16).

Other authors delineate particular elements that are part of a story. As an elementary teacher, I would have my students use a story map to locate the characters, setting, problem, events, and solution in a story as well as examine their own story writings for these elements. Kainan (2002) noted that a story consists of events, plot and characters to convey a particular meaning. Chaitin (2003) adds to this list setting, climax, and solution. A story also needs to have order, a context, and make sense of events (Riesmann, 1993).

In some research, the terms story and narrative are used interchangeably (Chaitin, 2003; Sfard and Prusak, 2005; Witherall and Noddings, 1991). However, other authors

classify narrative in particular ways that make it different from the term story. Kristeva (2001) as quoted in Britzman (2003) defined narrative as “the ability to put biography into words” (p. 23). Narrative is also seen as the smaller segments or chapters of a longer life story (Juzwik, 2006). Riesmann (1993) referred to narrative as the “talk organized around consequential events” (p. 3). Elliott’s (2005) criteria for a narrative are that it is to be chronological, meaningful, and social.

In the creation and interpretation of a story or narrative, discourse is examined. There are multiple definitions for this term that at times stand in opposition to one another (Schreiber and Moring, 2001). Some authors have defined discourse as the language that is used, whether spoken or written, that gives meaning to what is under discussion through interpretation (Savolainen, 2004; Schreiber and Moring, 2001). It is also based on the context of the situation in which the language is being used and the relationship between the speaker and the listener (Stillar, 1998).

For this study, the terms story, narrative, and discourse are defined as follows:

- Story is a compilation or collection of connected narratives that provide a wider picture of the lived experience of teachers in a Title I school. Using a quilt metaphor, the story is the entire quilt that is made up of several pieces. It is in seeing all the pieces as a whole that the art of the quilt can be appreciated and understood.
- Narratives are the pieces and parts of a larger story that generate the events, characters, and plot of the larger story. They are a slice of life in the school as viewed by a particular character and move the story along. Following the quilt metaphor, narratives are the squares that make up the quilt. Each square provides

something that is necessary for the entire quilt. They are pieced together in a particular way to tell the story.

- Discourse consists of the particular words or actions that give meaning to what is said or seen in the narrative. The choice of words and the way they are organized give meaning and boundaries to what is said. Examination of discourse is a minute inspection of the narrative. On a quilt, the discourse consists of the fragments of fabrics used by the quilter for specific purposes. The way that the pieces are sewn together creates the individual squares.

Genres

As I reviewed, coded, and recoded my data numerous times, I realized that the narratives told by the teachers from Marvel Elementary School can be usefully placed into four story genres: moral, power, interpersonal, and technical. The language or discourse teachers used for each story genre have distinct characteristics (Casey, 1993). There are times when it was difficult to make these distinctions as multiple genre characteristics were evident in the narrative. Bakhtin, as cited in Casey (1993) and Quantz (1992b), referred to this as having multiple voices. His theorizing helps to recognize that these voices intersect at times and a narrative may appear to fit in more than one story genre. The deciding factor became what discourse was central to what was said in the narrative.

Moral Story Genre: Is it Good and Right?.

The moral story of Marvel teachers reflects their ethics and values or life principles (Taylor, 1996). These are what guide teachers as individuals to make judgments about what is right/good or wrong/bad. These are personal judgments based

on a variety of factors and therefore cannot be proven to be true or false. Instead they are a matter of individual beliefs rather than a set of absolute truths. C. S. Lewis (1972) referred to these principles when discussing moral rules that maintain order in society. They are what bring a sense of order and well-being to the community. Noddings (1998) notes that a central aspect to moral narratives is an individual being consciously concerned about the events and experiences of another's life. Catholic nuns who were teachers shared moral stories as they talked about "what ought to be" (Casey, 1993, p. 48).

Teacher identity is another part of their moral story. This is an ever-evolving, individual, and complex tool teachers use to make sense of what it means to be a good teacher (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004). Experiences and relationships in the lives of teachers create and re-create the teaching self (Kelchtermans, 1993). It is the push and pull of both the forces within the teacher as well as those from outside the teacher that make a difference in how teachers view themselves (Palmer, 1998). Included in their teacher identity is what they understand the purpose of education is to be such as the good of society (Carr, 1993), preparation for work and civic responsibilities (Heilman, in press), or to provide an opportunity for a better life (Nieto, 2003). Another aspect of teacher identity is the reason for choosing this profession such as being of service to others (Nieto, 2003), a calling (Schwarz, 1998), or because of the children (Casey and Apple, 1989). Teachers have strong beliefs and values related to their teaching creating their "professional selfhood" (Pomson, 2005, p. 795) which are often connected to children such as their belief that all children can learn (Nieto, 2003), they make a

difference (Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996), and meeting students' individual learning needs (Goodman and Lesnick, 2001).

Another aspect of teacher identity is the way teachers view themselves or how others have portrayed teachers in the media. Some of these archetypes are noble in character such as the priest (Mayes, 2002), elder (Fischer and Kiefer, 1994), hero (Ayers, 1994), or savior (Trier, 2001). Others are nurturing such as the parent (Kantor, 1994), mother (Hobson, 1994; Mayes, 2002; Newman, 2001), advocate (Fischer and Kiefer, 1994), gardener (Joseph and Burnaford, 1994), therapist (Fisher and Kiefer, 1994; Joseph and Burnaford, 1994), or role model (Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen, 1993). Still others are more cerebral as teachers see themselves as a scholar (Joseph, 1994; Nieto, 2003), philosopher (Mayes, 2002), or interpreter (Fischer and Kiefer, 1994).

The discourse used by teachers that defined narratives as part of the moral story included: make a difference, all can learn, believe, I am, fair, bias, demeaning, good people, contribute, and as professionals. The wording of some questions created a context to generate moral narratives as well. Why did you become a teacher? What do you like best about teaching? What aspects of your profession are most important to you? What are your rewards? What is the purpose of education? What is your teaching philosophy? What is the purpose of NCLB?

Power Story Genre: Who has Control?

This story is told as teachers talk about issues of authority and control. It is about who is making the decisions and how these decisions impact the professional lives of teachers as well as their students. Power stories also relate to how these decisions influence and reflect the reputation of teachers and schools through the use of labels that

are publicized in local media. There are sources of authority teachers' view as legitimate and illegitimate as well as places where teachers have no control.

Legitimate forms of control are those that value and support teachers in their work. This type of story "heals and empowers" (Palmer, 1998) the hearts of teachers as they feel a sense of respect for and from students, parents, administrators, and the community. When teachers determine what their work entails based on their professional wisdom, they have control over what they do. Professional autonomy is a dream for teachers in their work which is often created through loose coupling generated by the lack of connections between the various levels of governance in education (Shulman, 1983). The teacher experiences a respect for their professional knowledge and judgment as they are able to employ it to make decisions. In the daily lives of teachers, another source of legitimate control comes as the students demonstrate respect for teachers' authority (Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996). Educational policies that demonstrate respect for teachers as professionals are viewed as legitimate forms of control because they are working with teachers in their work.

Unfortunately, there are also illegitimate forms of control which teachers experience as a form of disrespect for their professional knowledge and abilities. As these forms of control influence what is happening in the school and classroom, teachers live with horror stories in which teachers become the victims of educational policies and the system (Heilman, 2005).

Not surprisingly, teachers harbor their own nightmares. These portray a besieged and beleaguered group of dedicated professional, inadequately appreciated or compensated, attempting to instruct responsibly and flexibly under impossible

conditions. They are subject to endless mandates and directives emanating from faceless bureaucrats pursuing patently political agendas. These policies not only dictate frequently absurd practices, they typically conflict with the policies transmitted from other agencies, the courts, or from other levels of government (Shulman, 1983, p. 485).

Teachers feel a loss of control over their work as they are told what to do by others that they believe do not know or understand what it means to teach (Altenbaugh, 1992b; Casey and Apple, 1989; Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996; Quantz, 1992a). Teachers become de-professionalized as they now become simply “managers of classroom procedures” (Casey and Apple, 1989, p. 178) rather than wise educators carefully utilizing a specialized body of knowledge in order to accomplish their teaching goals. Teachers are also experiencing an increasing lack of respect from students and parents as they fear being sued by parents as well as from administrators when they do not receive support in their work (Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996).

There are also areas where teachers feel they have no control such as homes and society. Cohen (2006) stated that there is “a growing awareness that students with significant social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs pose a great challenge to preK-12 educators” (p. 208). Students are coming to school with needs and issues that make the work of teaching more difficult due to things that are beyond the control of the teacher. Teachers become angry with how the injustices of society and educational policies are imposed on students and teachers (Nieto, 2003). Teachers who are evaluated by the policies as succeeding or failing are also working daily with students who are living in poverty, often without proper nutrition or health care. They feel that they are put into a

no-win situation as they are unable to control factors in the lives of their students that would be more conducive to learning, yet they are held accountable for their students' learning at the same level as children who are well-fed and whose health needs are attended to (Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996).

The discourse of power includes a wide range of words that reflect where teachers do and do not have control as well as their feelings about the legitimacy of the control. The words and phrases used for legitimate control included: we said, us saying, and we want. Those for illegitimate control included: should, supposed to, make sure, battle, sanction, restricted, forced, have to, drive, do what you're told, all about the scores, pressure, no choice, judged, dread, don't understand, monitoring, political, and everything. For the narratives about lack of control, the words and phrases included: problems, can't control, lack respect, baggage, and challenges.

Interpersonal Story Genre: How Does it Affect Relationships?.

School is a social institution where throughout the course of the day, teachers interact with students, teachers, other staff members, parents, and administrators. Their stories about life and work in schools also reflect these various relationships. Kelchtermans (1993) noted that these relationships were a source of "job satisfaction" (p. 212) for teachers. While listening to teachers' narratives, Casey (1993) heard about issues of relationships with families, connections with students, and writing curriculum with colleagues. Relationships are started and sustained through what Noddings (1991) refers to as interpersonal reasoning which consists of five significant features: "an attitude of solicitude or care, attention, flexibility, effort aimed at cultivating the relationship, and a search for an appropriate response" (p. 163).

Another major element of these relationships is that of trust. Bryk and Schneider (2002) noted that a higher level of trust amongst the various school stakeholders makes a difference in the implementation of reform efforts and school improvement. This means that for accountability policies to make the most impact in schools, high levels of trust needs to exist among those involved. This trust is built through interactions and relationships. They also noted four things that played a role in creating and increasing trust: being listened to, having concern for the well-being of another, the ability to obtain desired objectives, and walking the talk. Meier (1995) also noticed that trust was built both in and out of the school as the stakeholders related to one another in other contexts.

A significant relationship is formed between the teacher and students. As noted earlier, teachers often choose this profession because of the value they place on the relationships they are able to form with students (Casey and Apple, 1989; Green and Manke, 1994; Nieto, 2003; Schubert, 1991). This relationship often begins with students in the classroom but also extends past that time as well as students move through grade levels and beyond into adulthood. These relationships are a reward of teaching and include student learning as well as respect (Lortie, 1975). In his study of teachers, Jackson (1990) also noted that teachers make personal and at times deep connections with students. There is a bond that is formed between teacher and students.

Teachers also form relationships with parents. The strength of these relationships varies based on a number of factors. They may also continue on beyond the time that the teacher has a student in the classroom. Strong relationships are built as teachers demonstrate respect for parents' roles and abilities (Bryk and Schneider, 2002). Teachers have also noted that family circumstances can make a difference in parent support and

involvement in education (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001). This may result in either weaker relationships as teachers and parents are disconnected with one another or toward stronger ones if efforts are made to address these situations.

Finally, teachers have relationships with other teachers and members of the school staff as well as with a variety of administrators. Pomson (2005) examined a continuum of school community among teachers from cooperation to collegiality to collaboration. It is the area of collaboration that teachers are able to develop in ways that allow teachers to grow as professionals. In the area of school improvement, Bryk and Schneider (2002) noted that teachers need to have shared visions about curriculum, instruction, discipline and children in order to meet the goals of reform. There needs to be shared decision-making as well as the ability for teachers to agree to disagree at times (Meier, 1995). Principals play a role in teacher relationships when teachers perceive that they are all treated the same (Bryk and Schneider, 2002) and there is “trust and respect for the history and culture of a school or teacher community” (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 100).

Some of the words and phrases used most often by teachers that indicated interpersonal narratives included: interacting, we, us, relationships, collaboration, talk, communication, rapport, connection, together, love, and share. The focus of this discourse is on the relationships and bonds that exist or do not exist among the school’s stakeholders.

Technical Story Genre: Does It Work?

These are the stories of what does and doesn’t work in these classrooms. This is the type of discourse or story about high stakes testing that is often of most interest to policymakers. Teachers tell technical narratives as they discuss how reforms and the

accountability policies have or haven't helped their students to learn and their teaching to improve. These narratives join together to create the technical story of how teachers understand their "practical experiences" (Schubert, 1991, p. 208). Bruner (1996) would refer to this as "folk pedagogy" while Shulman (1987) would call it "knowledge base for teaching." Palmer (1998) refers to this as the "intellectual" aspect of teaching as it relates to what teachers know about students, how they learn, and the content that is being presented. Teachers are using their professional knowledge to create lessons and experiences that will guide their students' learning. Teachers seek to employ those strategies that work with their students and to assess this learning in ways that best suit the students. They also examine reform and policy efforts in light of what is best for their students based on their professional judgment. Teachers tell some technical stories through questions such as when one third grade teacher asks, "For No Child Left Behind- what is it actually doing? Is it actually working? Is it furthering education or is it hindering education? ISTEP- is it a valid measure of what students actually know?" This is the story of how accountability does or does not function in a Title I school.

Some of the discourse that caused the narratives to be labeled technical included: helps, helpful, focus, refocus, makes sense, you can see, good, practical, applicable, works, and useful. These demonstrate whether or not something does or doesn't function well for a teacher and how it makes their job easier or harder based on what teachers see in their work at this school.

CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: THE STORYTELLERS

This chapter introduces the case study participants who tell the moral, power, interpersonal, and technical stories of what it means to work in a school where the realities of accountability are ever present. Three teachers and the school principal agreed to be the main participants for this study. They were each chosen for a variety of reasons that relate to their knowledge of the policies and test, views and beliefs about accountability, and role in the school. Ms. Lambert, Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Koselke (all pseudonyms) each have some unique things to say while they also reflect many of the views and beliefs of their colleagues. Three of the teachers have personal connections with NCS schools in that Ms. Lambert is a NCS graduate, Mr. Wilson's children all graduated from these schools, and Mrs. Johnson's children are currently attending a school in the district. Each case study participant will be introduced first with a brief biographic description followed by a narrative portraying part of a day in their school experience. While the names of students are fictitious, the situations that are described are actual events that occurred while I was observing at the school.

Welcome to Ms. Lambert's First Grade Classroom

Ms. Lambert is a reserved middle-aged woman who loves to work with the younger children. She is especially close with her mother who often comes into the classroom to work with the students. She is an accomplished baker and often brings her creations to the school for all to enjoy. As a veteran first grade teacher with a Master's Degree in Elementary Education, Ms. Lambert has worked with students at Marvel School for over ten years. Ms. Lambert attended Northville Community Schools and was

pleased to get a teaching job in the district. She has never given ISTEP+, and what she knows about it is from things she has heard from her colleagues. She is unsure of how what she does as a first grade teacher makes a difference on the test, but she would like to know. Her views and beliefs about the test and accountability were mainly negative, but she also asked many questions throughout the interview and during observations which demonstrated some uncertainty about them. When discussing the connection between professional development and accountability she states with a level of frustration, "Doesn't it all come back to this?" She also refers to ISTEP+ as a "horrible monster" that "make schools look bad."

Organized chaos is the term that came to mind as I entered Ms. Lambert's first grade classroom on a bright spring morning. The room seemed to be full to overflowing with desks, books, containers of varied sizes, computers and even a piano. Further observation showed that there was an order to all this apparent clutter. The desks were in the shape of a large oblong while crates stood in front of the desks with items the students would need for some activities. On the walls were several different math posters and charts while a Word Wall lined another board.

As the first bell rang, children began to fill the hall outside the classroom. They hung up coats and backpacks, entered the room, and began their day with what appeared to be a routine as all knew what to do. In all, there are 19 students in the classroom- twelve males and seven females. They began by making corrections to the sentences on the board and then solving the math problem on the overhead. The morning routine also included turning in homework and placing a sticker on a chart. After about 20 minutes,

Ms. Lambert went over the day's agenda with the students, answered questions, and complimented them on the good work they are doing.

After a quick restroom break, students actively participated in a six minute Word Wall lesson. Ms. Lambert displayed the words which they said together and then spelled orally. As they were spelling the words, some were also laying on the floor making the letters with their bodies or making the letters using sign language.

The writing lesson that followed was the district mandated quarterly writing assessment. This very closely resembled the format of the ISTEP+ writing section. Students were given a tri-fold paper that included a writing prompt, pre-writing graphic organizer, blank lines for writing, and an editing checklist. Ms. Lambert encouraged the students to do their best and that this would be easy. This was followed by step-by-step directions of how to complete this assessment. Ten minutes after students began writing, one stated that he was finished and read his piece to Ms. Lambert. As other students finished, they took books from their desks and read. Thirty-five minutes after this assessment began; all but one student was done. While this student finished in the hall, the rest of the class listened to a short read aloud and then took another restroom break.

Soon Mr. Gobel and Mrs. Grabble appeared at the classroom door to pick up their small groups. As part of the school's Title I schoolwide plan, a Title I teacher, assistant and the classroom teacher each work with a small group of students. After the two groups left, Ms. Lambert began work with her group of six students. Today's goal was to complete the quarterly reading assessment with some of the students in the group. While she was assessing one on one, the other students were working on a subtraction packet. Two students were assessed for fluency and comprehension as they read aloud a grade

level text. When this was done, Ms. Lambert called the students to the rug and read them a little book.

The other groups began to return to the classroom at 11:15. Students worked in their small groups for approximately 40 minutes. It was now time for students to prepare for lunch. Coats were put on, students lined up quietly in the hall, and soon this group of first graders was on their way to the cafeteria for lunch followed by time on the playground to use up some of their energy. It has been almost three hours since the students had walked into their classroom earlier in the morning, and they needed some time to run and play.

Welcome to Mr. Wilson's Primary Special Education Classroom

A tall, distinguished looking older gentleman, Mr. Wilson probably has the longest tenure at Marvel and is nearing retirement. He is fast becoming a talented magician and will often amaze Marvel students with slight of hand tricks. He teaches primary special education students, but he also works with some upper grade children in his classroom because their learning levels are similar to his students. This teacher working with kindergarteners to fifth graders is a real parental figure to his students as he not only talks about how students learning is more than academics in school, but also teaches this as he feeds them and enforces the use of polite manners in simple activities such as saying "thank you" when receiving a snack and waiting for all students to be served before eating. During the interview it became apparent that Mr. Wilson is acting as a street level bureaucrat when it comes to the test and policies. With state and federal special education laws as well as documents in the form of IEPs, his priorities are different. He finds ISTEP+ "not too appropriate for my students," and his answers to

questions on the policies were more about the special education ones rather than the NCLB and PL 221. He finds IDEA and Article 7 to be of greater importance to what he does as a teacher than the other laws. His tenure at the school also brought an interesting note in that he believes the improvement inherent in the policies “would take place without those.” This knowledge comes from serving on numerous reform committees throughout his time at Marvel.

At first glance this room appeared to be like any other elementary classroom. There were 18 desks assembled in rows, four computers sat on tables along one wall waiting to be used, bookshelves were lined with children’s reading material, and bulletin boards adorned the walls with items ranging from math to a Word Wall. There were also some more homey items in the room. A rug with an upholstered chair was in one corner of the room, on the other side of the room stood a small refrigerator with a coffeepot atop it, and on the countertop under the windows were a microwave and a toaster.

The morning bell buzzed, but there were no students in the room because they were in their general education classrooms for morning announcements. As the sound of young voices over the PA system faded away, students of various ages and sizes began to trickle into the room. Their familiarity with the morning routine was evident as they began correcting the sentences on the board or completing the papers that are given to them by Mrs. Weaver, the assistant. Pencil on paper, the rustle of turning pages, and voices saying “Good morning” were heard during this time.

Five minutes later, Mr. Wilson began his lesson even as a few more students enter the room. He began by sharing with the class why he was gone the previous day, and that he had missed the students. The lesson for this morning was on listening comprehension

and following directions related to the book *Bread and Jam for Frances*. Occasionally, Mr. Wilson would ask a recall comprehension question as he was reading. He also asked for a prediction about what the morning snack would be as he was reading. It seemed as if some students sitting in the back of the room were not paying attention. Next, they were given a series of worksheets that were related to the book. Mr. Wilson read the directions to the class for each sheet and called on students to answer questions about the directions to be sure that they knew what to do.

Now the students were called to the rug in one corner of the room where they would do a lesson on a packet called *News to You*. The lesson began with students sharing important news in their lives. As one student shared, Mr. Wilson asked very specific questions and made comments that demonstrated he was well acquainted with this student's family. For ten minutes, the sounds of student and teacher voices could be heard as they read through the packet together. Interestingly, a student fell asleep during the reading, and Mr. Wilson seemed to accept this. Another student in the class was this girl's sibling and stated that she had not felt well. This girl was allowed to sleep at other times of observation and was even covered with a blanket.

Students were sent back to their seats to begin working on their various worksheets related to the book lesson as well as the *News to You*. Students were allowed to work on their own or in small groups. They were also given the choice of the order in which the sheets are completed. One student seemed to have a great need for adult assistance. Mr. Wilson later shared that he believed this student had "learned helplessness". He was so used to adult help with learning activities that he often did not even try on his own.

Fifteen minutes into this project, one student was chosen to pass out the day's snack of bread and jam. He was chosen because he enjoys hands on tasks and had demonstrated a level of responsibility for this task. Mr. Wilson was concerned not only with the students' academic learning, but their social and emotional well-being as well. This is borne out as the students politely responded to one another when asked if the day's snack is desired. "Please" and "thank you" were words that dropped naturally from their lips throughout this routine. After everyone had been served, seconds were offered and many accepted.

At 10:20, four students left while the others continued to work on the assignments. Again a comfortable routine was observed as students turned in their completed assignments to be checked. Work that was completed correctly would lead to points later turned in for classroom money to be used at the classroom store on Friday. At 11:00, another seven students left for lunch. The remaining two students left at 11:20. The room remained empty of students until more students began to trickle back in about an hour later.

Welcome to Mrs. Johnson's Fifth Grade Classroom

The youngest of the three teachers, Mrs. Johnson moves around her classroom with energy and enthusiasm in each step. She needs this to keep up with her two young children as well as the students in her class. She was moved to fifth grade a year and a half ago when the kindergarten enrollment at the school decreased. It was a difficult transition the first year, but now she loves working with the older students. She is currently completing her Master's coursework through an online program. Through the interview, conversations, and observations, her use of what she has learned during the

coursework on Multiple Intelligences became evident. Observations also demonstrated her emotional connection with her students. These are also seen in her beliefs about education in general, ISTEP+, and accountability. She has passionate views on the need to have un-graded schools that allow students to learn at their own pace. She has given the test twice and stated that “It’s not fair- biased. Most of the questions that I’ve ran across on that test in the past have not hit culture experiences of our classroom.” She also has a clear understanding of the purpose of the policies.

It is- the purpose of the state law is to make sure our school has goals set so that we are achieving actually No Child Left Behind. They kind of go hand in hand.

It’s a three year program that is for the betterment of the school so that we have a plan that we- it’s really goals- how we want our school to look.

Other comments from the interview and conversations revealed her favorable opinion of PL 221 while she has a negative opinion of NCLB. Recently she has also had experiences in teaching in the summer and after-school remediation programs offered by the district.

Above the classroom door a shimmering sign with silver fringe said “Welcome to Paradise.” Upon entering the room, I found an eclectic mix of typical and atypical classroom accouterments. There were the desks arranged in various groupings along with a lone desk directly next to the teacher’s. Both tall and shorter bookshelves as well as bins with books were around the room filled with a mix of books for students. Behind Mrs. Johnson’s desk was another bookshelf that held teacher’s manuals as well as other reading materials she would use. Computers were ready and waiting to be used while some of the walls had Word Walls or bulletin boards with motivational posters or

sayings. Near the entrance to the room was a whiteboard with the day's agenda written on one side.

Along with these were some less typical items that made this classroom unique in character. There were the pink and white flamingo lights lining the edges of the student mailboxes near the door with a glowing yellow lava lamp on top. In one corner of the room stood an inflated palm tree with pillows arranged in a haphazard fashion underneath it. A long table covered with a yellow cotton tablecloth held a variety of papers and paper trays where students placed completed work as well as picked up their assignments for the day. Near the chalkboard, a padded rocking chair invited someone to sit and read. There on the tile floor by the sink was a worn black and white Mickey Mouse rug.

As the students enter, it was apparent that they know and were comfortable with the routine. They came in, read both sides of the board, put things away and began the morning work. There was some movement in and out of the classroom as students used the restroom or retrieved a forgotten item in a backpack in the hall. A quick count showed that there were 19 students in this class- of these there are slightly more boys than girls and a fairly even distribution of black to white students.

During the course of the morning students were involved in three different activities. The day began with the students and teacher participating in a two minute community circle. As a stuffed pink flamingo was tossed from one person to another, students shared one fun thing done over the weekend in whispers or conversational tones. A feeling of trust among all in the room could be sensed as they shared pieces of their lives with one another.

Next, was an 80 minute math lesson comprised of multiple parts. Students first quickly and confidently reviewed Friday's math lesson while the sound of chalk on the board alerted students to the fact that Mrs. Johnson was drawing the student's response on the board for her visual learners. The day's lesson soon began on how to find the area of a quadrilateral beginning with 3 examples given verbally for auditory learners and written on the board for the visual learners. During independent practice, the sound of pencil to paper could be heard along with the soft voices of students and teacher as she asked questions about the strategies being used to solve a problem. "Give me five," requested Mrs. Johnson with her hand in the air. This was followed by more guided practice because several students were moving off track. Once again the sound of pencils on paper could be heard as they completed a few more problems on their own. With fifteen minutes left for math, students put away their books and quickly gathered materials to play one of the assigned math games. Voices were never above the level needed to have a conversation with the person across the desk while dice clinked across them.

After the math games materials were quickly put away, Mrs. Johnson began a 40 minute lesson on writing with a focus on using the Indiana Developmental Writing Rubric to revise and edit. While this was a teacher directed lesson, students shared their ideas for the edits needed on students' rough drafts. Each student had a copy as the class went over one piece sentence by sentence giving possible edits. Through consensus a decision was made on which edit was the best.

It had been a busy morning in Mrs. Johnson's fifth grade classroom. In the three and a half hours that I was able to observe this room, I saw students working individually

and in pairs. I saw teacher directed instruction that moved to more student directed instruction. The rapport and trust among the students and with the teacher became apparent as they interacted throughout the morning.

Welcome to Mr. Koselke's World

The final participant is the principal, Mr. Koselke, who has recently obtained his administrator's license and Master's degree. He is in his mid-thirties, married with three children who attend school in a neighboring district. Recently, he has used his athletic abilities to coach different sports teams in order to spend more time with his children. An avid mystery reader and writer, he is very involved with the local amateur writers group that meets once a month at the public library. In his first year as principal at Marvel, he is using the experiences he gained as a teacher at another NCS school. Each morning during announcements, he tells two jokes as a way to start the day for students and teachers with some humor. While teaching, he gave ISTEP+ and was a leader in the school's professional development program. He is also very adept at writing grants for various initiatives. His expertise with professional development, data analysis, and research are being put to use as Marvel principal. He is well respected by the members of the staff which became evident when several named him as a valued resource at the school and a source of support in their teaching. Many of the teachers at Marvel also served with him on committees when he was a teacher which has given him a level of trust with his staff that many new administrators do not have.

The sun was shining, the early morning spring air was fresh from the rain last night, and the road at this hour of the morning was fairly free of traffic. Mr. Koselke had the radio tuned to an oldies station, and he was singing along with the radio. He was

willing and eager to begin this new chapter in his career as an educator. He was someone who enjoyed a new challenge and was open to learning new things. Innovation and research were his passions. In fact, he had led some teacher discussion groups about some new programs that were being considered at the school where he had taught. Now he had an even greater opportunity to influence change for students as a school administrator. At this moment in time, life was good for Marvin Koselke.

At this point in the drive, his mind was in a happy place, yet at he neared Marvel Elementary School, a change came to the direction of his thoughts. On his desk were three bus reports turned in by the drivers after the afternoon routes. This was one part of his job that was not appealing to him. Why can't the students get along with one another long enough to get home at the end of the day? Why was it so hard for them to transfer what they had learned about friendship and caring for others beyond the classroom and onto the bus ride home? He knew one of the first things he would have to do this morning was to call in the students to have a chat. He had already talked with their parents on the phone the previous afternoon. It had delayed his departure for home causing him to miss the beginning of his son's baseball game. However, from experience he knew it was better to contact the parents as soon as he could rather than wait until the next morning.

As Marvin pulled into the school parking lot, he noticed that a few of the teachers were already at the school. They didn't need to be there for another hour, but these morning people used this quiet time to prepare for whatever they had planned for the day as well as considering several backup plans in case things don't go as expected. He smiled as he walked into the building thinking about the dedication so many of the staff

members had for their students. While these teachers were here early with more coming shortly, there were also several who were at the school well after their contractual day ended doing the same thing. He really couldn't ask for a better staff: a mix of veteran and new teachers who were devoted professionals.

His thoughts now carried him, as he walked into his office, to the professional development program that was scheduled for next week. In his head, he was making a mental list of what he needed to check on and have ready before that afternoon session. Professional development was one of his real passions and therefore this responsibility was no chore for him. In fact, he was eager to hear what the consultant would have to say after her morning observing some of the teachers. It was always useful to have a fresh perspective on how the teachers were implementing this research-based math program. What she had to say in the afternoon session to the teachers as well as the feedback she would give him personally would go a long way in making this program work well. The proof, as far as the state was concerned, was how well the students did on the math portion of the test next fall. For Mr. Koselke and his staff, this proof came from how well the students did on their performance assessments, daily assignments, and conversations about math. This they knew was what told the real story of what the students knew about math.

Marvin settled into his chair with the sunshine pouring in his windows. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and calmed his thoughts. He found that doing this in the morning helped him to focus better and not become carried helter-skelter with all the things that would come throughout the day. You never knew what would happen in the day. While he had a schedule for the day planned out, he knew that this could easily fly

out the window with any number of issues. At this moment he tried to remember if there had ever been a day since taking this position where his daily agenda had gone smoothly. Probably once in a while, but none in recent memory came to mind. Oh well, he did enjoy the challenge of dealing with some chaos although there were times when he could do with less.

Just as he was ready to send some emails to the appropriate teachers to send the bus referral students to his office after morning announcements, his phone rang. “Good morning, Marvel Elementary School. Mr. Koselke speaking.” It was the superintendent’s secretary letting him know that the administrator’s meeting was being changed to this afternoon at 1:00. Well, Marvin thought that really puts a wrench into the schedule, and he balled up the piece of paper so carefully written the previous afternoon. What else could happen? He grabbed a sheet of clean paper and made an alternate schedule that he hoped would last at least for another hour. After that he began to do some other necessary paperwork while he still had some time.

In no time at all, he looked at the clock and realized that the first bus would be coming at any moment. One thing he made a concerted effort to do each morning was to stand by the front doors either inside or outside the building to greet the students as they entered. This he found had been helpful in preparing teachers for any concerns that he noticed with students. The way they acted and talked as they walked in first thing in the morning had been a good barometer of how they were feeling. As he began to walk out of the building, the smell of breakfast pizza wafted down the hall. He would have to remember to grab one to have as a midmorning snack- if he had time for that or even remembered that he had one.

As he exited the building, the noise of the bus made its arrival known even before he saw it turn the corner. Soon it stopped at the front of the building and let its passengers off. There was the sound of young students talking to one another. Two young ladies deep in conversation almost bumped into Mr. Koselke as he greeted them with a warm, "Good morning. Are you ready for a great day?" The girls smiled brightly and in unison said, "Good morning Mr. Koselke. Yes, we are." More buses came to drop off their charges, and soon the noise of children talking took over the morning air. Mr. Koselke carefully eyed the students to get a read on how their morning had been so far. Two of the bus referral students walked by with heads down. He made a point of greeting them with a polite "Good morning." They gave a subdued response that let him know their parents had already had a talk with them. Their remorse may be short lived, but it was better than nothing. A young boy in Mr. Wilson's special education class grabbed his attention as Mr. Koselke heard his strident voice make a rude comment to another student. Another bad morning would ensue if he didn't intervene soon and then give Mr. Wilson a heads up. This he had learned from previous experience. A little time in the counselor's office coloring and having a calm conversation with an adult had always worked in the past.

The morning was just beginning for the students, but Mr. Koselke had been at school for the better part of two hours with many more ahead. There was the cafeteria to monitor as well as talking with the counselor and Mr. Wilson before he assisted the fourth grade students who were learning to take over morning announcements. Next would be his conversations with the bus referral students and then morning rounds. If all went well, two teacher observations were scheduled for the morning. This was his

favorite part of the day- being in the classroom with teachers and students. Lunch time monitoring with few if no discipline issues would be welcome before he would need to leave for the administrator's meeting. Oh, and he needed to remember to pick up that breakfast pizza. Another day at Marvel Elementary began with all its joys and challenges.

A Preview of the Next Four Chapters

In the next four chapters, the moral, power, interpersonal and power stories of the Marvel teachers will be shared. The case study participants' stories are fore-fronted while other teachers' voices are brought alongside to compare and contrast with their stories. In listening to what these teachers had to say, more can be learned about what is happening in their lives because of accountability policies.

The chapters are arranged according to the story genres. Each chapter begins with a brief review of what the story genre entails followed by the narratives of the case study teachers along with comparisons and contrasts with the other teachers in the building who were interviewed. As experiences from observations, further conversations, and documents interact with these narratives, they will be included to enrich them. This collection of narratives composes each of the stories. It is through this diverse and rich description that readers will have greater insights into what these teachers are experiencing at Marvel Elementary School.

CHAPTER 8

MORAL STORY: IS IT GOOD AND RIGHT?

The moral story of Marvel teachers relates what they believe to be good and right in life as well as in their teaching profession. The first set of narratives in this story tells about the life principle of what is fair. In these narratives, they explain what they believe to be fair and what is not fair. Another term that is sometimes used in their unfair narratives is bias. To these teachers, bias is a form of unfairness and is connected to their students. They talk less about what is unfair to them and more about what is unfair to their students. A second set of narratives defines and describes their teacher identity or what they believe a good teacher is like. Each set of narratives is also connected to accountability in some way. The teachers expressed ways that the laws and testing are unfair and biased as well as ways they do and do not sustain their teaching principles.

Moral discourse is characterized by the use of words that involve values and ethics. Words and phrases that are part of this include: make a difference, all can learn, believe, I am, fair, bias, demeaning, good people, contribute, and as professionals. In some cases, the words used within the question led to moral discourse that was implied in the response. Words or phrases from these questions included: why teach, like best, important aspects of profession, rewards, purpose of, and philosophy.

Fairness

Fairness is a life principle that teachers strongly believe in. Teachers instruct students through lessons and role modeling the importance of fairness. One aspect of the reform program the teachers are using, CLASS, enumerates several Life Skills that include elements of fairness such as respect, integrity, and caring. Posters about these

skills are found all over the building. This program was chosen to instill these values within the students which demonstrate how valuable this principle is to these teachers. Fairness has high regard.

Is ISTEP+ Fair?.

One place where teachers have concerns about the fairness of accountability is associated with their experiences with ISTEP+. Five teachers spoke frankly about their concerns about the fairness of this test. For Mrs. Johnson, this is based on her understanding of cultural bias and previous experiences with the test.

I don't like it. It's not fair- biased. Most of the questions that I've ran across on that test in the past have not hit culture experiences of our classroom. There are things on there that they are- they ask that I don't feel our students have had any past experiences of and so I don't feel they're fair.

There are questions her students are unable to answer, not because they do not know the standard, but because of the question used to assess their mastery of it. Mr. Koselke has the same opinion.

Is ISTEP fair for all children? Sometimes there are culturally biases in some of the test items although they say there're not, I believe they are. I think if you- you know reworded some of the questions in language my kids would relate more to they could answer and be more interested in it and what was going on.

The ways questions are worded make it less understandable for Marvel students. There is a concern that how the questions are posed interferes with the students' abilities to answer them. The impression then is that they do not know the standards when a question worded in a more culturally sensitive way would yield a different result.

Cultural bias has been an issue that has arisen in the past when it comes to standardized tests. As a classroom teacher, I had the same concerns when I gave ISTEP, and my students were asked to use lap in multiple ways. They understood lap as something a person had when they were seated but not as a way a cat would drink its milk. They were scored as not proficient in multiple meanings of words when the problem was with the particular word chosen.

The two third grade teachers also had concerns about the fairness of ISTEP+. Mr. Morgan stated his belief that the test is not fair and then gave an example of a past test question that shows bias.

CH: What are your feelings about ISTEP and why do you feel that way?

EM: See now this stems back to me being little. I hate it. I really hate it. I mean- I just was never a good test taker. I'm just really not myself so that's why I find it so important that I have other types of assessment. And I think that it's partially unfair to the children because they've left second grade. They're out there all summer not even thinking about school. They come in. We have like two weeks and then they have to take this big test and they don't even understand. You know and I don't impart to my children that I don't like it because if they knew I didn't like it they're not going to work hard to do it. But I just don't- I don't think it gives you an accurate assessment. I don't think it covers- I don't think it's culturally biased. I think they put some things on there

CH: You don't think it's culturally biased or you think it's culturally biased?

EM: I think it's culturally biased. I'm sorry. I think that they don't-let me explain. I don't think that they- you know they're talking about a vacation. Well,

some of our children may have not of gone on a vacation- you know- you never- you know and then they have this whole paragraph a vacation and they don't have a clue. It's not fair.

There are assumptions within test questions that children use particular words or have had certain experiences that help them to answer the question. Without this background knowledge, they are unable to answer the question. The question becomes more about their prior knowledge than about their understanding of the standard.

Mrs. Harding started off expressing the same concerns about the cultural bias of the test and then provided another fairness concern Mr. Morgan touched on briefly. This concern is based on an experience she had while giving the test in September.

It's biased. I've heard on some standardized testing- it may not be ISTEP in particular- but using certain terminologies that one subculture knows and another doesn't. I don't that it accurately portrays what a student knows because a lot of students don't take tests well or they tense up during a test if they don't know something. I had one student who almost had to stop altogether because he was so frustrated and he almost had to let him go out in the hall for a little bit and come back to it. But finally we got through it. I think it's a large stressor for students- weight put on it. And they know that whether someone has told them that before or if they have somehow figured it out on their own.

Not only are there concerns about the cultural fairness of the test but also how fair the test is to those students with test anxiety. Students who become frustrated with this type of test, especially those that are timed, are likely to not do well on the test. Mrs. Harding and Mr. Morgan both articulate their belief that it is not fair to state that a student has not

mastered a standard because they do not do well on standardized tests. It is unfair to make such determinations based solely on one form of assessment when another may produce different results.

Is NCLB Fair?.

Mrs. Johnson talked about a dilemma she is facing with a particular student in her class. This young man sits near her desk, and she often gives him one on one attention. She has found that he is often more engaged in his work after she has had time to work with him in this manner first. He has struggled this year, and it is nearing the time when Mrs. Johnson will need to decide if he will move on to middle school or spend another year in fifth grade. NCLB has made this decision even more difficult for her as the consequences of not passing the test in the next grade level will have ramifications for Marvel in making AYP.

I'm not going to flunk a kid that gives effort. If they are truly interested and it's kind of interesting- No Child Left Behind, but if they're showing me effort and they're working their little hearts out it is not fair to flunk them. Based because they can't do a fifth grade standard that they couldn't do- I mean they can't do a fifth grade standard yet they couldn't do the fourth grade standard or the third grade- you're building them up for failure because you're going to keep adding to them yet you're not letting them achieve what they need to achieve before they go on. So, in fifth grade I'm not going to- kind of a double standard- isn't it.

Her moral dilemma is whether or not to retain a student who is making a concerted effort to master the standards. To this student it becomes a stain on his reputation if he is kept in the fifth grade and may destroy his willingness to continue trying. Yet, with the advent

of standards and testing, this becomes a more difficult call to make. Her teacher identity narratives provide more insight into her concerns about the fairness of NCLB.

What is Fair for Special Education Students?.

NCLB requires that special education students are given the same test as general education students. Their IEP is to define what accommodations they will be given, but their score become a part of the total school's scores. Special education is also a subgroup used for determining AYP which means that they need to improve at the same rate as other subgroups in the school.

There are other issues that interfere with the learning of special education students as noted by Mr. Wilson, "My main concern is with putting all the disabilities together because it makes it difficult. There are seven disabilities here and these children cannot possibly get what they need when there are that many disabilities and class size." Mr. Wilson not only has a large number of disabilities represented in his classroom, he also has a large number of students, in some cases more than in general education classrooms. While all his students are rarely in the classroom at the same time, he is responsible for meeting the learning needs of 26 students from kindergarten to fifth grades.

While Mr. Wilson did not use the phrase "not fair" in his narrative about his class size, Mr. Morgan did use this when conveying his concerns about the number of students in this classroom.

I don't like that it's so overcrowded in special ed that I'm sending my children to an equivalent class size. I don't think it's fair. I don't think it's fair to the teacher. I don't think it's fair to the children. I don't think it's fair to me. I don't

think it's fair to everyone. I don't know really what we could do about that just as a school.

It is unfair for students with special learning needs to be in a classroom with so many students they are unable to receive the attention they need. It is also unfair to the special education teacher to be responsible for meeting the learning needs of so many students, and it is unfair to Mr. Morgan to send his students to a classroom where he knows they will not get their learning needs met due to circumstances beyond the control of the special education teacher. This unfairness is amplified in the current accountability climate. The stakes have been raised for Mr. Wilson to raise the scores of his students. However, neither teacher connected the unfairness of the class size to accountability. This is something that is not fair at any time.

Mr. Melville did connect testing special education students with his fairness principle. In his interview, he stated that he sees himself as a caring and sensitive person, and this trait is connected to his issues with testing special education students. It is unclear if the students he is referring to are Mr. Wilson's or are in the other special education teacher's class. He does believe that requiring students to take this test does not meet his criteria for fairness.

And it's not fair for some of the special ed kids who have to do the exact same test. It just doesn't seem fair to make those kids sit there and cry. Yeah, they might get to take it in another environment or certain parts are read to them but it's still- I don't know- I think they should invalidate a few more than what they do. It makes- plus our school looks bad because we have all the special ed kids here. So then we're considered bottom of the totem pole sometimes.

Teacher Identity: What is a Good Teacher

Teachers have definite beliefs about what a good teacher is based on their education and teaching experiences. Marvel teachers delineated four particular aspects of what makes a good teacher as well as how the accountability laws and testing impact these significant professional values.

Student Growth.

When teachers talked about the reasons they became a teacher or what they found most rewarding as a teacher, eleven of the thirteen teachers talked about the value of student growth. Teachers communicated this in three different ways. One shared by Mr. Koselke and Mr. Morgan is simply stating that growth is something they value.

Mr. Koselke: Growth- watching students grow and mature and staff too.

Mr. Morgan: Their growth- growth. Academic if you will or emotional. It doesn't necessarily have to be all academic growth.

Growth is important for students and teachers for the principal while Mr. Morgan valued both intellectual and emotional growth of his students.

Another group of teachers appreciate student growth from the perspective of the end of the school year. They are awed by how the students have changed over this ten month time span that is often overlooked in day to day classroom interactions.

Mrs. Archer: Rewards of teaching? Seeing the achievement of the kids, it's rewarding at the end of the year to know where these kids have come from to see where they are when they're leaving.

Mrs. Harding: Seeing the kids grow and change over the course of a year. It's amazing though this is my first year how much the kids have changed in a year. I

didn't think- it surprises me how much they've changed- I didn't think they would change so much throughout the course of the year. That out of anything is the best part.

Mr. Melville: Best-working with kids and maybe the kids that really seem to improve throughout the year. Like I just did report cards and I have a girl that was struggling. I was just about to put her through on GEI because she was reading at such a low level. But I paired her with other kids and she's most improved. She's honorable mention which is next to being on the honor roll. And that's my favorite part is when you see a kid that made progress.

This is a more reflective view of student growth.

The majority of teachers used the light bulb analogy to represent student growth. This often occurs in moments that happen when suddenly a student who has been struggling with a concept or skill grasps it and is able to put it to use.

Mrs. Lambert: I especially- I haven't taught that many different grades but especially first grade when that light bulb goes off. Like for instance, I have a couple of people in here that at the beginning of the year I was thinking about I might have to retain. And now all of a sudden they're getting it and it's so exciting. And I'm like "Wow!" That- I mean it- especially in first grade you see such a difference in some cases between when they walk in in the fall and leave in the spring. It's amazing.

Mrs. Kaiser: The children I think- my students. You know there's nothing like seeing a light bulb come on in a child's face when they finally get something. I mean you know when they understand something or at the beginning of the year

you see how they come in and then by the end of the year when we do our little program for our parents and kind of go through what we've done all year it's like "Wow, we really did get somewhere!"

Mr. Jones: The light bulbs that go off.

Mr. Gobel: Well I like the ah ha moments when you, when you can just really see kids- light bulb turn on and um I like doing hands on things with the kids.

Mrs. Gable: My reward is when they're sitting there looking at you like a deer in the headlights and all of a sudden a light in their own head goes on- something clicked after you said something 13 different ways- it finally- oh now I see.

Mrs. Gordon: I know that I'm reaching the kids. When it's making sense to them and I've found a way to make it make sense to them. And I see the light bulb go off. I'm quite sure that 125% of the other people will have said the same thing, but it's a wonderful feeling and therefore, when it happens- and not always does it happen- but when it happens it's a wonderful moment.

In whatever format, student growth is a significant aspect of teacher identity. Good teachers are those who appreciate and are rewarded by student growth.

All Can Learn.

Secondly, good teachers believe that all students can learn. This value was most often shared in their response to a question about their philosophy of education and named by eleven of the teachers. In these narratives, they also shared other aspects of this belief such as each student having particular learning strengths or that learning is more than academics. Ms. Lambert and Mrs. Johnson connected their beliefs about all students learning with the theory of Multiple Intelligences. Ms. Lambert stated it simply,

“All children can learn to a certain degree” and connected with this is her confidence in Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Part of the CLASS program when we’re talking about Multiple Intelligences trying to figure out how children learn best and I don’t always do it to the best- I know I could be doing it better- at least I hope I could be doing it better- but being able to find that niche that every child- you know what I’m saying. And that is part of what CLASS brought us- I mean it introduced it to us and I’ve tried to learn more about it as I’ve gone on.

Classroom observations showed that she does utilize this theory in her teaching to an extent. She has posters for each of the intelligences in her classroom and was using these as a tool when answering a question about how her students learn.

This is a real hands-on group. This is a group that needs lots of- is that what you mean? This is a group that needs lots of- for instance I’ve got one boy in here who is very art smart- he can do lots of things through that and several of the kids- they’re learning sign language really well. That’s a bad question because it’s a good question. It’s not a here do this paper all day long and I don’t think most can especially at this age. They’re not- they have to be more hands on.

They’re more movement, music- actually some of them are pretty nature smart too- a couple of them are really into science and that’s what we have been talking about- animals and plants and things like that. I’m looking at my smarts up there.

During a spelling lesson, some students were observed lying on the floor and using their bodies to make the letters to spell words while others used sign language to make the letters with their fingers. There were times when this teacher used alternate methods of

instruction that were most suited to her students' learning needs based on this theory. It is what she does as a good teacher.

Mrs. Johnson is another strong proponent of this theory and has taken a course on this theory in her Master's work along with attending special CLASS training on it as well.

My teaching philosophy is that I try very hard to incorporate every aspect of every intelligence throughout my teaching day because children do not learn the same, nor will they be on the same page when they leave this room at the end of the year. But if they have gained throughout the year from where they were when they first came in here - that is my biggest challenge and my biggest step and that is my goal. And it's evident in my teaching because I make sure I use all those intelligences even if it's moving around or I try to build activities around every learning style. I don't believe that all students should sit for half the day in their chairs doing paper and pencil activities when children nowadays don't learn like that- they haven't learned like that for a long time and I don't believe they learn like that now, so I try to incorporate all different learning styles into that- because I don't learn in the same way as everybody else in here. So, trying to build and strengthen other intelligences beyond their dominant one.

Mrs. Johnson knows that her students can learn but also recognizes that each has their own way to learn as well as their own rate of learning. As a good teacher, her obligation is to know the ways each student learns and use this information in her work. This means teaching and assessing students according to their learning strengths as well as helping students to become more adept at using strategies where they are weaker. Another

teacher who was at Marvel when they received CLASS training as part of the CSRD reform efforts also shared his faith in this theory.

Mr. Gobel: I feel like umm, I feel like everybody can learn, but that some kids have a potential. I mean you and you can cap that potential. You know this business that every child can learn period- I don't think there's a one size fits all. And I think- I do agree with the multiple intelligences. I do think that kids learn in different ways, at their own time and their own speed- all the active learning stuff. And I think it's up to the teacher to see those individual needs- to help them meet that potential.

Coupled with their belief that all children can learn is the belief that each student has certain learning strengths that need to influence how teachers work with them. A good teacher accepts learning differences and does not attempt to make all students learn in the same way.

Mr. Koselke's narrative demonstrates that his philosophy is grounded in his interactions with Marvel students. This is more than a response to an undergraduate question or an essay answer on a job application. This belief statement is firmly established in his work with students.

Philosophy of education- I guess you could say I'm a constructivist in a way. I think that's what that is when you believe that kids learn more by doing and by you know hands-on and having experiences which I feel our kids are very lacking in. I feel our kids are so far behind when they come to us that we have to go back and you know kind of try to help build some of that prior knowledge. And all children can learn but not at the same rate or at the same time. And I'm not a real

firm believer in you know sticking children in grade levels. If it was up to me I'd have multiage classrooms and no grades.

Students all learn. Most learn best through active participation which reflects what Ms. Lambert said about her students learn best. He says something further when he says that they also learn at their own rate and because of this he feels that grade levels are inappropriate. In this part of his narrative he reflects a belief statement Mrs. Johnson expressed when she said, "Grades are demeaning. If you multiage children, which I think is a great thing, if you multiage group them based on what they're ready to do I feel like they'll not only- I think they learn more." Both of these teachers have a strong belief in appreciating and accepting the rates at which each student learns.

Two other teachers also expressed their belief that students learn and develop at their own times. Mrs. Kaiser, as a kindergarten teacher, has noted the differences in her students when they come to her classroom- some are ready for school activities and others are not.

I believe that they're all capable of learning something. I think that some at this age have more- are more developmentally ready to do the academics of schoolwork and some aren't ready for that. I think that some even at this early age are more capable than others.

There are differences in learning rates as early as kindergarten. Five year old children are not all ready for kindergarten and the academic work they will encounter there. It is not that they are incapable of working, but that they are on a different clock. Mrs. Gable summed it up this way, "And- so yes we can all learn but I don't- we certainly don't learn at the same rate and we certainly can't learn all of the same things- some things just don't

click for some kids.” Good teachers know students can learn while also recognizing that each learns at their own speed. As Mrs. Harding stated, it is then the responsibility of the good teacher to ensure that each student has the opportunity to learn.

All children are capable of learning, no matter if they have learning disabilities, they maybe not catch on as well, but all students are able to learn. A teacher has to find a way to make the students learn the best that they can. So, I guess I would say all students are capable of learning. It just depends on the teacher to bring that out in them.

Mr. Wilson’s belief statement about all children learning took a slightly different path. He is concerned with more than his student’s academic needs which is evident when he said, “I think that all students can learn if they are given all of the optimal conditions. I also believe that it has a lot more to do- a lot more than just reading, writing and math.” What his students can and will learn in his classroom goes beyond reading, writing, and math as it encompasses manners, how to get along with one another, and self-respect. He does this through “a lot of the Life Skills, a lot of values, a lot of things that I really would like to see them get at home. I fill in the gaps.” Students learning to say “thank you” when receiving a snack or waiting until all students are served before eating were some of the skills I observed students using in his room. A good teacher is attuned to and instructs in the areas of values as well as the academic standards the state tests. For Mr. Wilson, these may be even more important.

Prepare for Life.

Another aspect of good teachers is the understanding of and responsibility for preparing students for life beyond the classroom. The work of teachers does not stop at

the school door but is part of the life of each student they touch. As teachers reflected on the purpose of education, they shared three different ways that good teachers prepare students for life.

Teaching as enabling students to be lifelong learners has been an education belief statement, and some teachers at Marvel strongly hold this in their conception of what it means to be a good teacher. In three responses, Ms. Lambert spoke about her goal of preparing students to be lifelong learners.

I'm going to be real redundant here- to become a lifelong learner. You need to learn how to think and that's part of what teachers are here for- to help them learn how to use their brains, learn how to think. Half of the things that they're going to be doing when they grow up haven't even been invented yet. They need to know how to do problem solving.

Mrs. Gordon also believes that the role of a good teacher is to teach students how to learn so that they are able to apply the skills and concepts as needed. They no longer depend on the teacher.

The other part is being- I hate to say this but being a lifelong learner. So that you can pick up- you know how to learn. You have the meta-cognition. You know when you're learning and when you're not and what you have to do in order to learn it.

Good teachers teach students how to think and apply what they have learned to other situations. They also support students in learning how to recognize when they don't know something and how to rectify the situation. Knowing how to learn is a skill that

students will need to use all during their lives and goes beyond the state standards. It is about preparing students for life beyond school.

While five other teachers did not use the term lifelong learners, they also believe that teachers prepare students by teaching them the skills and abilities they will need to know and be able to use throughout their lives. A straightforward statement from Mr. Koselke articulated it this way, “To give children tools that they need to be successful in life.” Teachers are ensuring that students have all the necessary equipment they will need to do well in their lives. Each teacher is adding a new tool or reinforcing an old tool so that students will be ready and able to meet the challenges and responsibilities of life. Mr. Jones’s agrees with Mr. Koselke, “I think education should give children the tools they need to have a happy life.”

In sharing her belief about the purpose of education, Mrs. Gable defined more specifically what these tools are and connected these to the concept of a lifelong learner.

I believe that you need to be educated enough that you can get out of your parents’ house. You can be self-supporting- depend on yourself- responsible enough for yourself that you don’t have to depend on the government for things- so that you don’t have to depend on your neighbor for things- so that you don’t have to- you need to be able to- you need to be able to know how to learn- to know where to go to look up things you don’t know because nobody can know everything- you need to be able to know how to find out information that you need to live.

In order to have a successful and happy life, students need to have the skills and abilities to meet their daily needs without financial support from their families or the government.

They have learned where to go for information they need and how to employ it. This also includes the values of responsibility and independence. Education is about preparing students with both the academics and the values they will need in their lives.

While Mr. Melville also believes that education prepares students for life, he sees it as something that helps them to have a better life than their parents.

Obviously to educate children so that they don't wind up- well I have 19 kids and out of those 19, 14 of them their parents are incarcerated. I know this because I've had them for two years, but gosh I hope that they can get educated- further their education- even go to college. I don't want to see them get in that same vicious cycle that their parents and their parents' parents came from. I may be living in a fantasy but I think that's the purpose- to just move kids up the ladder a little bit further than where their parents were.

Marvel students who have the skills and abilities to learn and become independent individuals are able to have a better life than their parents. This teacher has seen where the parents are, and she wants her students to do more with their lives. Having a happy and successful life is about staying out of jail, possibly going to college, and attaining or coming closer to attaining the American dream.

Mrs. Kaiser begins her narrative of the purpose of education with the concept that teachers provide students with what they need to lead contented lives but then adds the third view of contributing to society.

I think that the purpose of education is to give everybody the skills that they need to make themselves better and help live in the world and make it a better place. I think that the more that you can read the better you become as a person and the

more you learn you pass that on to other people by the way you act and what you do and what you become.

Students who have learned the skills and abilities to be successful and happy in life will in turn become contributing members of society. From learning to read, think, and question, students are able to comprehend how they are able to make a difference in this world in some way. They are also able to use these abilities to touch the lives of others also. Teachers are not only preparing their students for life but through them are touching the lives of others as well. A good teacher has a far reaching responsibility when this is considered and is something this teacher takes seriously in her work.

Education and teaching as a way to contribute to society was a central idea in the narratives of Mrs. Johnson and three other teachers.

The purpose of education again is to- let these- precisely in fifth grade to let the students feel valued so that they feel value enough in themselves to go on throughout life and hopefully to make something of themselves that again is positive. So that they're not making negative contributions to the society.

Her moral obligation is show her students that they have worth and to encourage a sense of self-respect so that they will be contributing members of the community. A good teacher does more than instruct students in the academic curriculum by meeting the students' social and emotional needs as well so they are ready for what lies ahead in their lives.

Mrs. Johnson is not alone in this belief as three other Marvel teachers also believe that the purpose of education is to prepare students to be good citizens locally and globally. Mrs. Harding: "To hold people for a society to move forward. Have future

leaders- training future leaders- and every part of society. They need to be ready to be out in the world.” Mr. Gobel: “The purpose of education is to be productive- for kids to become productive citizens. Umm, a sense of citizenship -to fit in an increasing global society.” Mr. Morgan: “The purpose of education- to impart and strengthen our society so that they can become educators and leaders of different professions. I think education is extremely important.” Teachers hold a sacred duty in preparing each student for what is ahead so that they can in turn prepare following generations, be leaders, and to make a positive impact in the world.

Touch the Lives of Students.

Nine of the thirteen teachers used very specific discourse to talk about their belief in touching the lives of students. This part of their teacher identity is intertwined with their belief about preparing them for the future in that what they do now will have an impact in the students’ lives in the future as well. It is about something they are able to do for the student to make their lives fuller and more meaningful. Mr. Koselke’s statements, “trying to help make a difference in some children’s lives” and “we might help make a difference for those kids” were echoed by other teachers. For Mr. Wilson it is, “not only the academic skills but to just become good people.” In their work with students who are from lives and homes that are in trouble, these teachers see themselves as someone that can meet their needs now to alter the path the students may take later.

Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Lambert touch the lives of their students by being a positive influence on them. Like Mr. Wilson, they see this as something that is beyond what is listed on the state standards.

Mrs. Johnson: The aspects of my profession that are most important to me would be making sure that every student in my room each year leaves out of here with something positive that they have taken away from me. Whether it be academic, social, behavior, whatever- I want to be remembered as a teacher that influenced them in some way-hopefully not negatively.

Ms. Lambert: They need more positive influences in their life. And hopefully I'm contributing to that.

Being a positive force in the students' lives now is their moral imperative because this influence will be something they will carry with them throughout their lives. Teachers see a need to be filled, and they take this obligation sincerely. It is their perception of what a good teacher does, especially those who work with students who have no or few constructive role models in their lives. They have a calling to serve children from less fortunate homes by touching their lives for the better.

Mr. Morgan: And so it's important to me to be a positive influence. That's probably my most important thing.

Mrs. Harding: I think being there for the students is probably the most important part of being a teacher. I know especially here the students are not- their home lives may not be the greatest. So, I'm here for them to lean on somewhat because they may not be getting that at home.

Mrs. Gable: I like making a difference in a kid's life which is why I'd much rather teach here than say at Westville where anybody can teach them.

Mrs. Gordon: I always I think-beginning of the career through now- the idea that you might possibly impact somebody positively. I mean-it's- you know there's a good chance that you will do that.

How Laws Support or Don't Support Teacher Identity

A good teacher is rewarded not by money but by seeing students grow and change academically, emotionally, and socially. Teachers have a deep-seated belief that all students can learn but not all in the same way that comes from their work experiences with students. They prepare students for life in many ways including being a good role model. The question is how accountability and testing supports these teacher identity beliefs.

Teachers understand the purpose of NCLB in ways that match its stated goal. Ms. Lambert said that this policy is to make sure each child receives "the full education that they deserve," yet she then wonder how "realistic" the law is when it implies that all children are "college bound" or have the same interests and abilities. Mrs. Johnson stated it as a way to ensure students receive "equal and opportune available resources for them to learn as best as we can provide." Yet later she emphatically states, "I don't feel like the students are benefiting from No Child Left Behind because I don't think that they- we're pushing them on without them really being ready to be pushed on." Both these teachers do not see how this law meets the intended purpose or supports their belief that students learn at their own rate and in their own way. Instead it seems to push students to be the same or what Mr. Gobel referred to as "one size fits all."

In his statement, Mr. Koselke sees the goal of this law as a tool "to help everyone focus on where we were not succeeding with kids." While he believes that more teachers

are paying attention to achievement gaps, the law “does not think about what schools are supposed to do- there again because yes, there are these gaps but there are reasons for these gaps because the kids are already disadvantaged in coming to us.” Mr. Koselke wants to make a difference and provide students with the tools they will need to be successful adults, but this law is not helping him to meet this goal. He knows that his students come to him without prior knowledge that makes learning more difficult, but this law does not provide what he needs to address these gaps.

In other stories, teachers talk more about the policies in ways that connect with their teacher identity. The power story is about the legitimate control policies have which can be connected to their goals in teaching. The technical story tells how the laws do or don't work for teaching and learning. How teachers view NCLB, PL 221, and ISTEP+ adds something to how they affect their teacher identity. In general, most of the teachers felt that these policies were of no value to anyone. These negative comments seemed directed more to NCLB and ISTEP+, as other comments about PL 221 were positive.

CHAPTER 9

POWER STORY: WHO HAS CONTROL?

The power story of Marvel teachers reveals what they experience in relation to issues of control and authority. In this story teachers talk about who has control over their teaching at this Title I school, the extent of the control, how it impacts the reputation of the school, and who gets to say what is real and true about teaching. Two forms of control or authority exist: legitimate and illegitimate. Legitimate control empowers and supports teachers in their work at a Title I school as teachers and the control source have formed an alliance to work together in order to meet the educational needs of students. Illegitimate control, on the other hand, is the antithesis of legitimate control as it disempowers teachers and works against what they are doing to improve the education their students receive. This often is the result of clashing ideologies between the teachers and the source of control, and teachers find themselves told what to do rather than having a voice in their work. They feel de-professionalized, irritated, and frustrated as they feel as if their hands are tied.

The discourse of legitimate authority included we said, us saying, and we want because these words imply that the teachers have some say in the reform and improvement process. Words and phrases that indicated illegitimate control included: should, supposed to, make sure, battle, sanction, restricted, forced, have to, drive, do what you're told, all about scores, pressure, no choice, judged, dread, don't understand, monitoring, political, and everything. Other discourse was about the lack of control teachers experienced such as: problems, can't control, lack respect, baggage, and challenges.

Teachers Define Legitimate Control

Teachers understand that there needs to be a control source that holds them accountable as is reflected in Mrs. Kaiser's comment:

And I guess there has to be certain standards and stuff for- to make sure we all do our jobs because if there aren't then there's going to be some people that might not. And I guess that we need to be held accountable.

They accept this as part of their responsibility for their work but also have some views about what this control should be. This control belongs in the hands of both the federal and state levels of government. There were two perspectives on what this control should comprise: general guidelines and financial support.

According to Ms. Lambert, the federal and state levels of government do have a responsibility to schools which is to "Well I suppose there have to be some guidelines. But they're- other than general guidelines." Both levels of government have a role to play in education, but this is to be one that provides direction for teachers in their work. Mrs. Gordon expands on what these guidelines are and how they differ at each level. The federal government should be:

a cheerleader and as a- and I would go along with the idea of a department of education that sets up a range of standards- an acceptable, general range of curricula that could exist within the states. So you know it has its place.

The appropriate form of control from the federal government is to provide a broad structure for education as well as options that states can choose from as they determine what education will be in their particular state. There is a place for involvement of the federal government in schools for Mrs. Gordon, however it is the role of the state to "set

the curriculum in general, can set standards in general, graduation requirements. There needs to be a governmental body at some point. So I- I don't you know really have a problem with state government being strongly involved." Each level of government has a role in education, but the state's role is greater in scope than the federal government for this teacher. However, she sees the control of both the federal and state governments is to provide schools with over-arching requirements and allow educators to use their professional knowledge to meet these in the way that is best for their students.

Another view of the legitimate authority of the state and/or federal levels of government described by four teachers was the responsibility to fund education. Mrs. Johnson said it this way:

Federal government is supposed to support education monetarily or whatever I guess. I feel like the federal government should help by providing us with the things, skills, whatever it is needed to make our students more successful. And I feel that same thing for the state.

Mr. Wilson, Mr. Gobel, and Mrs. Kaiser expressed the same thought that one or both governmental bodies are responsible for providing the necessary funding for education. This is then used by teachers to acquire the resources needed, including materials and professional training, to educate their students. These teachers accept the role of governmental authority in teaching as it provides the wherewithal to do their work in ways that best meets the needs of their students.

Mr. Jones agrees that funding is part of the role of these governmental bodies, but it also includes a responsibility for the federal government to "support legislation that allows teachers to teach and learners to learn according to individual needs," and the state

to “work with the educators and the administrators on the lower levels.” The federal government needs to pass legislation that works with teachers to improve the education their students are receiving. In this way they are working in cooperation and collaboration with educators across the nation to strengthen the education of all students. The state also works with teachers as they play a very active role in the education process. The emphasis of what Mr. Jones is saying has to do with a partnership between teachers and those in control at the federal and state levels of government. Improving schools is something teachers and legislators work on together in order to provide the best education possible for students.

One interesting view of the legitimate role of each level of government came from Mrs. Harding as she does not feel the federal government should have any control in the area of education because this role belongs to the states.

The state- the responsibility of education falls squarely on the shoulders of the state. They need to fund it. They need to monitor it, which they try to do with the ISTEP. Funded programs that were set forth. It is the responsibility of the state to provide a free and appropriate education.

It is the state that is to fund and hold schools accountable, but only the state has this responsibility to the citizens of the state. Her comment seems to reflect her understanding of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution which states limits on the authority of the federal government to those items specifically designated in the document. Since education is not a power designated to the national government in the Constitution, it belongs solely to the states and the people.

Teachers have defined what they feel to be the legitimate control of both the state and federal levels of government. Some teachers see this as government outlining in broad terms the responsibilities teachers have and expectations for schools. Along with this, some feel the state has greater authority to make finer decisions about curriculum and other standards for schools. Another legitimate area of control for government is to provide teachers with the funding needed to do their work.

How PL 221 has Legitimate Control

Together the Marvel teachers generated the PL 221 that also serves as the SIP necessary for Title I. This is a three year plan for improvement is something teachers have control over. They generated goals based on student data for made for improving student reading, writing, and math. Each one of these goals also included: (a) professional development, (b) parent involvement, and (c) benchmarks for monitoring improvement. Using the state framework as well as support from state consultants, teachers worked together to evaluate the current level of student learning to create a plan for improvement specific to the students at the school. Teachers also evaluate the progress on these goals and are able to revise it each year.

All four of the case study participants as well as another teacher think that PL 221 meets the criteria for legitimate authority. A reason for this is that the law sets out the guidelines schools need for accountability that the teachers then use to determine what are the most appropriate way to accomplish this at their school. Teachers are empowered by this legislation as they are given the authority from the state to determine what will enhance student learning at their school. This gives them a sense of ownership for the accountability goals.

Mrs. Lambert: Again, I know its guidelines. I know there- it's *us saying what we're going to do...*

Mr. Wilson: it gives people a feeling that they need to be accountable because we have it on paper- it's written- it's *what we said that we're going to do.*

Mrs. Johnson: It's a three year program that is for the betterment of the school so that we have a plan that we- it's really goals- *how we want our school to look.*

Mr. Koselke: we don't bring them up at every staff meeting but I mean usually everything that we do is focused on the goals. You know there's a reason- that's why *we built* our professional development and all that around it. And even at some of the staff meetings, we look at the goals and what *we're doing* to meet them or what things *we said we'd do* and haven't or *what are we still going to do* or *do we need to revise it.*

Mr. Morgan: My teacher improvement plan or whatever- it's directly impacts your School Improvement Plan or a specific area of it. And so I usually - usually I'm focusing more on the math School Improvement part but I you know make sure I'm doing all those things that are on that School Improvement Plan. Things *we said we'd do*, I want to make sure I've done them.

There is a sense of collaboration as the teachers are working with the state to improve teaching and learning at Marvel as they talk about what they have said they would do and what they are doing to meet their goals. The state law, PL 221, has legitimate authority because it consists of a set of guidelines that supports teachers in their work to make the education they provide to Marvel students better. It is something that they have ownership of, and they want to follow because it is what they said they would do.

Teachers are empowered by this plan to refine their practice so their students can receive the best possible education.

Teachers Define Illegitimate Control

Legitimate control is something that makes these teachers feel respected as professionals when they work with the state to improve their work. Unfortunately teachers are also experiencing forms of illegitimate authority. Mr. Koselke's narrative defines his experiences with illegitimate control and also offers a glimpse into the frustration and annoyance it engenders in him.

CH: What do you believe is the role of the federal government in education?

MK: You don't really want to know that.

CH: Okay.

MK: The federal government is- is becoming increasingly involved in education- more so than ever in the past and are making more decisions that are affecting us locally and within our states than ever before.

CH: What is the role of the state government in education?

MK: Same thing. They are being directed by the federal guidelines. They have some- you know play value- autonomy- whatever you want to call it- they have some- but they are restricted by those federal guidelines. And I feel that the federal guidelines are tied more and more to funding. You know there's more increased accountability and more sanctions for schools that get any type of federal funding.

Teachers feel that government has the authority to fund schools. However, the state is now being controlled by the federal government in a way that is illegitimate as they

manipulate federal money for schools to follow more specific guidelines for education.

This is a significant concern for Mr. Archer as she finds that the legislation is limiting her professional autonomy.

Loosing that control I suppose. With all of the standards and all of the tests that we're already having to do it- our report card is- I can see it getting worse and worse as far as *them telling us* what to do.

This teacher has lost control over her work as the federal and state governments are telling her what to do in her classroom. The role of government is no longer about general guidelines, funding schools, and working with teachers in providing a good education to students. It is now about the government taking more and more control away from the teachers who are the professionals in the classroom.

How Accountability Policies and Testing Have Illegitimate Control

NCLB, PL 221, and ISTEP+ are each exerting illegitimate control in teachers' classrooms. The politicians who enact these policies and make disparaging remarks about the poor state of education do not truly know what it is like to teach in a Title I schools and are damaging the work of teachers as well as their reputation. There is also a sense that someone is always watching them as they work with students because these policies become a form of surveillance to ensure that teachers are doing what they are supposed to do. Teachers spoke specifically of the impact AYP and the threat of sanctions imposed by NCLB has on their work and reputation which increases pressure to raise test scores. The instrument used to monitor teachers and determine AYP is ISTEP+ which then gains control over what and how teachers teach. Test results reported

publicly have taken control over the reputation of teachers and schools. Each of these illegitimate control issues were shared by these teachers.

Politicians and Politics.

The current accountability policies, especially NCLB, are viewed negatively by Marvel teachers as they become more intrusive in their work. When asked about the purpose of NCLB, Ms. Lambert answered, “I actually have it. I read a little bit of it and then I just thought. I just got irritated with it and stopped reading it. *To irritate us.*”

While PL 221 is experienced in ways as a legitimate form of control, there are also ways that it is illegitimate. As noted in an earlier quote by Mr. Koselke, this is because of the control the federal government has over the state through funding. Four different views on politicians and accountability convey how and why this control is illegitimate: (a) lack of understanding about teaching and schools, (b) no teacher input, (c), alternative agenda, (d) political rhetoric.

Three teachers stated their dissatisfaction by saying that the individuals responsible for these education laws do not understand what it means to teach at a Title I school. Mrs. Lambert said, “They’re not in our shoes and they’re acting like they know what we’re doing and *they don’t*. Neither of them does.” Mrs. Gable echoes this with her statement.

I think a lot of it is done by people that they make up the rules that *they’ve never been in a classroom*. And when they go visit, they tend to visit better schools.

They’re not down in the trenches I guess you could say. And so they’re making up these rules without the knowledge I think- the first hand knowledge- you know they’re not being a primary source shall we say.

The lack of presence in Title I schools is a key issue in the narrative that politicians are an illegitimate authority because they are missing a true understanding of what is happening at these schools. Politicians who do not take the time to understand what is involved in the work of teachers and the life of a Title I school are not the people who should be making such far reaching decisions about them. It takes individuals who have fuller concept of what is involved in teaching in these schools to make informed and reasonable decisions about how to improve education for the children in them. Without this knowledge, they are making poor and uniformed mandates.

Politicians seem to desire to address the gaps between students from different backgrounds. One of the goals of NCLB is:

closing the achievement gap between high- and low- performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers (SEC. 1001.3).

Marvel teachers agree that these need to be discussed and dealt with in a positive manner. However, as Mr. Koselke stated, there are reasons for these gaps that politicians either do not know about or are not addressing that have an impact on schools, teachers, and students.

And that's where I think No Child Left Behind *does not think about what schools are supposed to do-* there again because yes, there are these gaps but there are reasons for these gaps because the kids are already disadvantaged in coming to us. And if we're supposed to you know progress the same amount of time as everybody else, then *we need more resources* and *we need earlier programs* that

catch them before they come to school to help the family like social services and things. You know *we have to do that* if we expect to try to catch these kids up. To meet the goal of closing achievement gaps, the politicians first need to understand the root causes and factors for the gaps. It is not until these are addressed as well that Mr. Koselke will find the politicians as a legitimate source of control in the education of his students. As greater, earlier, and more appropriate resources are provided to schools and other agencies to meet the needs of poor families, Mr. Koselke believes these achievement gaps will lessen. Politicians need to show a commitment to a broader range of services to the children and their families even before they come to school to really make a difference in their future education.

In the process of generating these policies it seems that politicians do not seek input from the people closest to the situation- the teachers. Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Archer both questioned why those making the policies do not invite teacher participation in the process.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, why aren't there more educators involved in some of this decision making? I mean if they're going to make a decision about education why wouldn't you use people that have gotten that background- that use that background. There are a lot of people that I know that would be willing to put their two cents in.

Mrs. Archer: When are they going to get people who have been in the classroom to put their two cents in on these laws as they're coming down?

These teachers are voicing their frustration with politicians who are not seeking or receiving advice from teachers who are closest to the situation and therefore more

knowledgeable about school improvement in the law making process. They feel shut out from something that has a direct impact on what they do. There is a sense that teachers are not viewed as professionals when they are not consulted by politicians. Being denied access to this process causes them to see the control of these laws and the lawmakers as illegitimate.

In another narrative, Mr. Koselke also communicated his thinking that politicians are making ill informed pieces of legislation including issues related to how schools are funded and the sanctions that are a central force within the policies. While talking about his concerns with funding, he expressed the idea that these politicians have an alternative agenda in mind for public education.

Funding- funding is a concern right now. Politicians making decisions *who don't have a clue*- who haven't been in the classrooms or in the educational setting and I feel like a lot of the decisions are based on no prior knowledge and yeah that concerns me- that *really upsets me*- I don't like where we're going right now- I don't like where we're at with public education at all. I feel like public education is in peril, and I feel like everything is being promoted to charter and non-pubs. And you know they're getting increased funding and we're getting decreased funding. We're getting *sanctioned*- held to higher accountability with less funding. That's a big concern for me.

He is worried that there is a hidden goal in accountability policies which is to end public education in order to privatize it. He was the only teacher to make reference to privatization being an unspoken motive for accountability policies. This may be connected to the courses he had recently taken for his administrator's license. In other

conversations with this new principal it became apparent that these policies were a major topic of conversation in the courses.

When teachers feel that these laws are more about political rhetoric, they react negatively to the policies and the politicians. While some teachers find PL 221 to be a legitimate control, Mr. Jones views it and NCLB in the same manner. To him they are both ways that politicians can make teachers the scapegoats of the public outcry against the state of education in America. News reports that state as fact that American students are less prepared than other students in industrialized nations and government reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) create a public panic concerning education that politicians need to respond to. They do this by faulting the nation's teachers.

CH: What is the purpose of the federal law known as No Child Left Behind?

EJ: I think originally the purpose of No Child Left Behind was to- let me think for a minute- I think it was to create accountability for educators and school systems to explain the waning scores in the United States. I think they *passed the buck*.

CH: And what is the purpose of Public Law 221?

EJ: Educator accountability. *Placing blame*- I think it has to do with placing blame.

Mrs. Gordon similarly stated an idea that politicians are blaming teachers for the poor perception of American education.

It's probably a well-intentioned effort to help children who come from- especially from disadvantaged environments- to be able to function in this society. I believe that this is the pretty much the stated purpose. I believe that is the intended purpose. I believe there are other things that go along with that- because it made

for a *good campaign slogan* back in the year 2000. That's not to say that there aren't other people who have very good campaign slogans because there are.

That was- that was going to fill that part of the platform- that part of the approach.

And we were to look to the state of Texas in order to view just how successful that had been apparently. And even at the time we knew this was not perfection any more than any other program was.

While there may be a noble purpose behind this law, there is still the feeling that political rhetoric and politics played a major role in the creation of this policy. There was a need to make it publicly clear that George W. Bush was the right person to be president because he had a proven and successful plan ready to make America's schools the best in the world.

The authority of this president is not legitimate when his laws are more about rhetoric and less about the realities of schools, especially those serving at-risk and disadvantaged students. Mrs. Gordon alluded to George Bush in her comment above, but Mrs. Lambert explicitly singled him out when she said, "He should keep his nose out of it." Politicians, including President Bush, are seen as not supporting schools as they enact laws without teacher input and consideration for the larger social situations that are a part of the lives of students from less advantaged home lives. As they place sole responsibility for a seeming lack of student learning at the feet of teachers, they antagonize teachers. The control and authority of these politicians in the eyes of teachers becomes increasingly illegitimate.

Surveillance.

Another response to the policies is to view them as a form of surveillance that was put in place by politicians to keep an eye on teachers' work. This is similar in nature to Bentham's idea of a panopticon as described by Foucault (1955) which is an all-seeing eye or watchtower. This becomes a way to maintain order at all times through an invisible presence, a sense of being watched without knowing who is watching. Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Morgan consider accountability policies to be a form of control as it monitors teachers' work. It is like someone is always watching them without teachers knowing who is watching. The invisible yet real presence of accountability is ever present in the classrooms of Title I teachers.

Mrs. Lambert, in seeking to make sense of the purpose for PL 221, asked, "So why has that all of a sudden come into play? Because people weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing so they needed some sort of paper trail?" She doesn't understand why the current accountability system needed to exist except as a way to monitor or keep track of teachers who were not meeting their professional obligations. Mrs. Johnson, who finds some aspects of PL 221 to be legitimate, also questioned the need for both accountability policies.

All of them. Why- where did they come from? Why were they established?

What drove the decision for No Child Left Behind? Did they think that because children- they don't feel that children are working up to the standards that they had to put a law in place to *make sure that the teachers are doing their jobs*? I mean it's silly.

She seems to be saying that teachers are professionals and as such are responsible for doing their work. They do not need these policies to keep track of what they are doing.

Instead, they need to be treated as professionals. Mr. Morgan understood that one instrument used by the policies to monitor teachers' work was ISTEP+. "So that the state *knows if you're doing your job.*"

The teachers become the prisoners being controlled while the politicians are the guards maintaining order through surveillance. The panopticon takes on the form of ISTEP+ and other documentation used for accountability purposes. These teachers sense that someone else is forcing them to provide evidence that they are properly carrying out the duties of their work rather than working in partnership with governmental leaders to demonstrate what is happening at schools. There concern is not about being accountable but about how this is occurring. Being under surveillance by people that do not know about life in their school is an unacceptable source of control for these teachers.

AYP and Sanctions.

Under NCLB, sanctions are imposed based on AYP as determined by the state. ISTEP+ is the instrument chosen by the state legislature in PL 221 to determine AYP. The reason for AYP is to provide annual benchmarks for progress toward "narrowing the achievement gaps" (NCLB, 2002, Sec. 1111.b.2.B) for each subgroup of students in the areas of reading, writing, math, and science. These student groups include (a) low income homes, (b) minority populations, (c) special education, and (d) English language learners. AYP progress for each of these subgroups in each of the disciplines is then used to give sanctions or rewards "to hold local educational agencies and public elementary schools and secondary schools accountable for student achievement" (NCLB, 2002, Sec. 1111.b.2.A.iii).

When talking about the role NCLB and PL 221 have at the school, Mr. Koselke's narrative expressed his concerns about AYP and sanctions.

Well, they're there but we try not to focus on it as far as being *hung over our heads* because that is kind of how it is with us- is that- you know okay its *hung over our heads* and we know we can try different things- but trying different things, implementing new programs, a new strategy all takes time to show gain. And just like with Everyday Math, this is the implementation year, so we probably won't show you know real good gains maybe till next two, three years with that- because everybody's adjusting to the program, how to use it, you know people are at different stages, you know and some are behind where they're supposed to be because they struggled with you know different things and the kids have struggled with it because it's a whole new way. So, I think- I think that drives it. And I think- I think kind of that *dread* of did we meet AYP this year? You know did we not? What's everyone going to think if we didn't? And I think it's almost kind of a negative thing because we know if we didn't we're going to be *sanctioned* and *put into school improvement*. And even though your efforts are good and even though you can increase overall as a school, if you don't meet each subgroup category which includes your special education students- you're not going to make AYP. So, I think that part it plays in is that yes we do more probably collaboration, reflection, analyzing data but yet its kind of a you know- we've been *forced* to do it kind of thing, you know but we've always done it because it's Title I. It's helped improve some things but other things we would

have done anyway. And then again you've got the thing *hanging over you head* is a negative.

While the teachers try not to let these have control over what happens at the school, their presence is constantly felt. There are concerns about what will happen if AYP is not achieved, how others will view the school and teachers, and the lack of value placed on ways they have improved. The goal is not about how teachers are improving their work but at meeting the benchmark of AYP. This is also an unknown factor for these teachers even though they already had the test results. Teachers are unable to determine from them whether or not they have made this all important goal for each discipline and each subgroup. In my conversations with them, this was like an invisible ax hanging over their heads.

Achieving AYP becomes the goal when it "*drives*" what is happening at the school rather than student learning and professional knowledge. Responses from other teachers reflect the control AYP and sanctions has at Marvel. Mrs. Johnson stated that:

They have to *drive it*. We *don't want to fail*. And *if you don't play into it and do "what you're told"* then we're going to end up getting the short end of the stick. Next year if they don't feel- if there's a Title I school and the child doesn't feel like or the parent doesn't feel like the child is learning in that Title I school then they can switch them to another school. And the funding goes with them. The year after that it's *going to be even worse*, we were just talking about this. You *gotta do what you gotta do because it's the law*.

The fear of not making the grade when it comes to AYP is the ultimate force in teaching at this Title I school because of the threat of the sanctions the school could face if they

don't. Teachers do not feel they are respected as professionals or know what is real about their work. Test results and making AYP are now the authority of what is true about their teaching. As Mrs. Johnson later stated:

It's *all about scores*. How can we increase our scores? I can go off on a tangent on that too. We're *trying to increase test scores* when we know darn well that I've got 19 students in here and not all 19 are going to pass the test. It's not going to happen because not everybody learns the same way so how can they be assessed in one way. You're assessing 19 different learning styles on one way.

What Mrs. Johnson knows is true about student learning and assessment no longer is valued as a source of information because there is one authority authorized by NCLB which is ISTEP+, a paper and pencil test.

The fear of possible sanctions is in evidence from other teachers as well.

Mrs. Kaiser: Well yeah see when it starts saying that if you don't pass and you know you're *red flagged* and now your *kids can go to a different school* because you didn't- so many kids didn't- and that I don't know- you know. And I think you also have to look at the kinds of children you have you know.

Mrs. Archer: It's a big influence on the way that we teach- what we teach. We try to *do everything we can to get the kids to pass their tests* too so that we *can make grade as a school*.

Mrs. Harding: I think it plays a large role. If AYP isn't met, soon it may become a *choice school*. So, I think it plays a large role in that if we don't perform and make adequate yearly progress *the school won't be here*.

Teachers are afraid for the reputation of the school as AYP could cause them to be labeled as a failing school. Another sanction teachers are worried about is becoming a choice school and possibly losing students to other schools in the district that are making AYP. This is a very real possibility as Marvel had not made AYP the previous year. Along with the loss of students comes the loss of Title I funds that are used to transport these students to another school.

ISTEP+.

ISTEP+, a criterion-referenced test based on the Indiana Academic Standards, is given in third through tenth grades. It consists of a multiple choice section covering English/language arts and math as well as two constructed response sections for these same disciplines. A multiple choice science test has been added at fifth grade in recent years. The results of this test are used to determine whether or not the school has made AYP as mandated by NCLB and for school improvement based on criteria outlined in PL 221.

There were four forms of control teachers discussed in relation to this test (a) teaching to the test, (b) test preparation, (c) curriculum, and (d) comparisons. Through each of these, teachers shared how this test has control over what they do within their classrooms and their feelings of powerlessness when it comes to this test.

Three teachers openly shared that this test impacts how they teach in their classrooms as they want to teach in a way that will help students to be successful on the test. Mrs. Lambert, a first grade teacher who does not give the test, even feels the need to teach in ways that are similar to the test.

Well, we have to get them ready for the test. We have to get them ready to learn how to- I think it's stressed more now that *you have to teach them* test taking skills such as filling in the bubble, not scribbling- I mean at this level- filling in the bubble not scribbling all over the page, paying attention, being an active listener during directions, things like that. I think test taking skills are a bigger issue now than they were- not that they shouldn't have been before because anything helps at any young age. The sooner they learn the better. Teaching practice not testing. We have to teach the standards that they're going to end up being tested on. And unfortunately that's what *a lot of pressure is to do is to teach to the test* even though you're not supposed to.

First grade students are being prepared for success at testing. While the standards are what are taught, they are taught and assessed in ways that mimic the test so that students will be prepared for what lies in the future.

Mr. Melville, a fifth grade teacher who gives the test, noted that he has altered his teaching practice so that his students will be successful on the test.

Well, it's gotten more and more to where you're *teaching to the test*. I mean I'm going to be honest again you do- I do and I'm not the only one. I don't know how many people would answer that honestly but. Hey this is going to be on ISTEP, you have to know this. And the kids all say "If we fail the ISTEP do we fail fifth grade?" So they're concerned too. So you do want to make sure you are covering things that you happened to notice that were on there- like I was really watching close on the science this year because it was new. And science gets left behind so. It has changed my teaching practice, yeah.

There is a sense that teaching to the test is not what teachers would consider to be the professional thing to do, but it is what he does in his classroom. The test has control over his work, and this is something that other teachers may do but try to hide. This test not only controls Mr. Melville's work, but the emotions of his students as well as they worry about passing the test in order to move on to the next grade level.

Mrs. Gable, a fourth grade teacher, talked about teaching to the test in connection with test preparation.

I just think we spend a whole big chunk *teaching towards the test* or reviewing to get to the test. And then we spend a couple of weeks taking the test. There's a whole lot of time all on this test.

Teaching to the test, preparing for the test, and giving the test all effect the teaching and learning in her classroom. It has control over what she teaches and how she teaches until at least the test is completed in late September or early October.

Mrs. Gable and five other teachers discussed the role of test preparation in the school and classrooms. Through their narratives, it becomes clear that the first weeks of the school year are geared toward what will be covered on the test. However, it also reaches into what happens before school starts in the summer as well as after school once the year begins. Test preparation is pervasive in the lives of the teachers and students of Marvel. Mr. Koselke provided this overview of what this encompasses.

Okay, I let the staff know what resources are available to help with preparation like Department of Ed website and release test items- things like that that they can use for review or drill. Also collect information from the staff for like Jump Start program- you know what standards are we the lowest on, what materials do we

need to collect and then help collect materials and resources to be used for Jump Start programs and after school remediation programs. And then to prepare, I think giving them the information and help- and having them help analyze it as far as where our kids low and not meeting it and what do we need you know address it and make it better for the following year. I think you know doing that helping them kind of with preparation. And then the kids, we kind of hype it up on the announcements, and you know do your personal best, show what you know type thing you know- try to get them a little more motivated about it- a little more pride instilled in them. And then as a staff we do some focus groups, you know Title I teachers collaborate with the classroom teachers to do some small group instruction you know and focus groups on- on review and test skills- test taking skills. In the past we've done some after school groups as well. We didn't do that this year because we had Jump Start and we felt like both would be too much you know, but we did Jump Start and then we did the focus groups for a portion of the day. It's getting harder to do that though because of the other added grade levels- so now you have third, fourth, and fifth that you have to do small group work with. So you can't get to them all every day. We used to do it you know every day. Now it's you know a couple times a week that you do it grade level.

A massive amount of time and energy is spent even in preparing what students need to review in order to be successful on the test as well as the time spent in the actual classroom review. It even influences what is said on morning announcements as Mr. Koselke does what he can to give students a positive attitude about taking the test. From late August until the end of September, test preparation is in full swing.

Like Mrs. Gable, Mrs. Johnson also focuses on test preparation at the beginning of the school year.

Well, at the beginning of the year there's "remediation" to get the learners ready- the middle bubbles to push them up. The beginning of the year, we're reviewing. So rather than going straight into curriculum, we spend our time reviewing for a *test that the state weights but not anybody else.*

The goals of raising the test scores of some students and reviewing for the test have control over her curriculum at the start of the school year. This test is not as valuable to this teacher as it is to the state education powers.

Mr. Gobel has been involved in the summer program called Jump Start that is geared towards coaching struggling students with the goal of getting them to pass the test.

Well, I see where the needs are- I see what they're- I look at the data for the kids and for the class and I look at NWEA and ISTEP from the previous year and like if they're low in algebra or umm computation, problem solving give them various things. We pull the old ISTEP tests off the computer- the problems to show kids. The one big thing is to get them to try to use written communication to explain what they've done. I remember last year at the beginning of ISTEP I gave them or Jump Start rather I remember one math problem and I explained over and over now they- first we did a sample and wrote down how we solved it. And they- you know together we did it. Then I gave them- and I told them that on ISTEP you get several points- one's for the correct answer, one's for if you show how you did it, if you didn't do it you get no points, blah, blah, blah. So then I finally gave them a problem on their own- one child in ten or twelve wrote down how he

solved it. I said- and the rest of them got the right answer because it was fairly easy- I said he got 2 points, the rest of you got 1. They go oh, oh we got the right answer. I said yeah but you didn't write down how. So it was like an eye opener. I told them and told them and told them, but until they did it themselves they didn't get it. So, I you know I try to make-I guess I try to give them test taking skills and I try to let them know what's expected of them without teaching to the test and without you know saying you have to do this and let's write a script on it you know. Just give them a variety of situations that they have to write an answer for.

Mr. Gobel is teaching his students how to be successful on the test and meet the requirements to get a good score, especially for the constructed response section of the math test. The primary goal is not mastery of the grade level standards in math, but in explaining the reasoning used in generating the answer. Teaching is centered on the skills of successfully taking this particular test based on Mr. Gobel's previous experiences with it and is done repeatedly until the students understand what is expected.

Mrs. Gordon has also worked on test taking skills as part of the Jump Start program in the areas of reading and writing. She also shared more about the control ISTEP+ has over her Title I teaching responsibilities as the school year begins.

Then once the school year fully begins, Title I tends to work with- in that past it was all third grade- now of course we kind of spread out. We still have a big emphasis on third grade but we've gone and done more. I've taken small groups in here and again whatever we do is going to be seen and compared to previous ISTEP tests. So, we look at the writing section and the writing prompts. We look

at writing prompts that were used in the past. The same timing is used. So, we're *very ISTEP focused* until the ISTEP is finally given that's a *major part of what I do with kids*.

Title I teachers work almost exclusively with third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers and students until testing is completed in the fall. It has control over what the teachers teach as well as which students are serviced by this program. As these teachers work to prepare their students, they use activities that are comparable to previous tests and imitate the timing of the test as well. ISTEP+ is a controlling factor with both general education and Title I teachers.

Mr. Koselke also noted another way that this test has control over the work of Marvel teachers.

And I think too that some curriculum choices- I mean let's face it we're not going to focus as hard on social studies and science if they're not being tested on the ISTEP because you're not being judged on those. You're *being judged* on reading, writing and math.

Teachers are spending the majority of the day on the academic disciplines that are on the test at the expense of science and social studies. The emphasis on reading, writing and math is also reflected in the new district report card and professional development. Two thirds of the report card is devoted to these three areas. A grade level curriculum map is on the back of the card as well but only for reading, writing and math. Each of these disciplines is broken down further on the front of the card where teachers can note where students have and haven't mastered particular standards. This is not the case for science and social studies that have two lines: understands basic concepts and participation.

These are the same lines used for art, music, and physical education. ISTEP+ controls what and how teachers teach. Professional development is also geared towards them as well.

Another issue that teachers experience as illegitimate control based on test scores is their use to compare schools that results in making the school look bad. Both fifth grade teachers, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Melville, think that test scores are being used to make comparisons among schools.

There is no purpose. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what the purpose of ISTEP is. Being from Iowa, we had the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. I don't remember the Iowa Test of Basic Skills weighing as much as ISTEP. And I don't know if it's just because I'm a teacher now, but I don't know. I don't know what they use it for except that to *see who's ahead and behind*. And to me that's silly. In this teacher's experience, test results are used for the purpose of rating schools, and this is a wrong use of these scores. It is not proper to use the scores in this way.

Mr. Melville expanded more on how schools are compared through the use of test scores.

I think I feel like I said before about assessment why I feel kind of negatively towards it is just because the timing and the comparison of one school district versus another versus more student progress. I mean it's in the media- people look at that and *judge schools*. And it's not fair for some of the special ed kids who have to do the exact same test. It just doesn't seem fair to make those kids sit there and cry. Yeah, they might get to take it in another environment or certain parts are read to them but it's still- I don't know- I think they should invalidate a

few more than what they do. It makes- plus our school looks bad because we have all the special ed kids here. So then we're considered bottom of the totem pole sometimes.

Schools are judged by their scores as they are reported by the media. Schools like Marvel are labeled failing when they have a large population of special education students who take this test and are unable to meet the cut score standard. The test and results also has power over the emotions of the students when they cry because they feel they are unable to answer the questions. Test scores are used to make this school look bad which in the lived experience of these teachers it is not.

Ms. Lambert also noted that test scores are used to make the school look bad in a very public way which reflects poorly on the teachers.

Okay, then they said, "Well this isn't good enough. We need to be more specific and *we need to make schools look bad.*" So they created the ISTEP. Standardized tests by itself are not a bad idea- you find out where the kids are. That way you know what to work on and where they need help. To base every single thing on one test is ludicrous. To have it be front page news that five schools did not pass ISTEP so therefore you don't want your kids going there is ridiculous.

The test is not the culprit, but the powers that created the test seemed to have a sinister purpose in mind when they made it. In the paper, the scores take on an authority to label a school that is not appropriate in the eyes of this teacher. She feels they do not provide the information about a school on which to make the decision of whether or not parents should send their children there. These scores are not a legitimate authority in telling what is real and true about a particular school and its teachers. Mrs. Gable stated her

concerns over ISTEP+ this way, “Well I am concerned with it because it affects us financially and reputationally.” These scores have been given an authority that influences how other people outside the school view the school and the teachers in a way that does not reflect what is true about the school. This authority is not valid and reliable in the eyes of these teachers because it does not present what they know from their daily life at Marvel.

Pressure.

Along with a feeling of irritation a propos NCLB, teachers also experience pressure. “I think it puts more pressure in an unrealistic way without the funding,” stated Mr. Wilson. This piece of legislation pressures teachers with obligations but does not provide the resources to meet these obligations. This lack of organizational support makes this law illegitimate. There is a sense that the teachers have to accomplish the goals without any further resources to meet them which pressures teachers to do more in a way that does not match Mr. Wilson’s teaching reality.

Mr. Jones expanded on what this pressure does to teachers.

I think that they’re always *looming* over our heads. I think that- I think that we all *feel pressured* and that we all feel- we’re *not of value* sometimes- that our efforts are not recognized and that the children’s efforts are not recognized. I think we’re all very protective of these kids and I think that when someone says to us “Marvel scored lowest on the ISTEP”- I think it’s *very hurtful* for that reason.

The pressure of accountability, especially in regards to NCLB and ISTEP+, controls how teachers view their work at Marvel. Mrs. Gable further develops this point.

What is the purpose of No Child Left Behind? Is it to keep *teachers feeling bad* about themselves? Is it to feel kicked in the teeth daily because by golly everything that shows up- like we made huge gains last year from our fourth graders that we had last year to the fifth grade- they're fifth graders now- we've had compliments from the fifth grade teachers, we've had scores that show so much growth, but we still suck. But we've shown great growth. That's my point. If you're way down here in the toilet, you know well if you can get where your head's above water that's good but you still need to be way up here walking on water. Well we're not anywhere's near to walking on water and yet we're supposed to be.

The pressure has control over Mrs. Gable and her perception of what she does when it evaluates her work and tells her she is inadequate for this work. Teachers' worth is solely judged by making particular growth scores on a single test rather than by appreciating the growth made by students that have struggled with the test from the start. Accountability according to Mrs. Gable also:

It's always *breathing down our neck*. We're always being reminded about it. It's always- it's like you can't go a day without hearing something about it. "Oh we have to do that because otherwise they're going to get" you know. If I think about it too much I just get so *discouraged* and pissed off.

The control of this law reaches daily into the work of this teacher each day. There is a fear of what may happen at Marvel if they do not meet the AYP standards and what this will mean for the reputation and stability of the school. The fear of sanctions is what is causing this. It is not about empowering teachers but about making them afraid. This has

impacted the school as noted by Mr. Gobel, “changed the whole din of the school- the whole ambiance or whatever you want to call it. It’s like the accountability- it seems like there’s more pressure.”

Obedience

While teachers find the control and authority of accountability to be illegitimate, they still feel that as the current law their responsibility is to obey these laws. Ms. Lambert stated it this way, “Well I have to- we’re- *I don’t have choices* in many respects. It’s not a-I don’t think that- I don’t like the ISTEP so therefore I’m not going to- there are certain things *I have to* do as a teacher.” Four other teachers also expressed their view that as a teacher they needed to follow the laws even though they did not agree with them completely.

Mr. Morgan: Those rules-you know they’re laws or whatever so they *have to be* implemented in the school and being able to be seen by the state. So, I think we implement them and do our best with what we have.

Mrs. Harding: Actually, you *have to honor* No Child Left Behind and PL 221.

Mrs. Gable: You know there are *things we’re told we need to do* because of this law. Well, so then we have to change things so that we’re doing that now.

Mrs. Gordon: Ever since Arnold appeared many years ago now- it’s probably been at least 10 maybe even longer- it became extremely clear that there needed to be a closer relationship between how we taught and what was going to appear on that test. I think people fought that because they did not have the Arnold experience that I had which was *you don’t have a choice*- this is the way it is and

it's better for kids by the way, but *you don't have a choice* and this is the way it is.

As long as NCLB and PL 221 are the law, these teachers will obey them. Obedience to these laws they do not agree with is part of their responsibility as teachers. Disobedience and revolt did not seem to be on their agenda. They may participate in professional forums that speak out against these policies or even talk with governmental representatives about their concerns, but they will not simply ignore these policies. Whether or not they agree with them, they are currently the law of the land, and as such are to be followed.

A Lack of Control

In their time working with Marvel students, teachers have encountered some things over which they have no control because they happen at the students' homes. The topics teachers talked about included: (a) family problems, (b) lack of experiences prior to school, (c) student discipline, and (d) a respect for education. While teachers have no control over these, they are directly connected to student learning and accountability.

In his position as principal, Mr. Koselke has a wide understanding of what is happening in the homes of Marvel students. He hears things from them as they talk with him as well as what he learns from teachers, other parents, the school counselor, the social worker, and the local paper. From this, he has a glimpse into the daily life of his students

Solve everybody's problems- all the children would be well fed and have wonderful households and parents- loving, caring parents- not have to be home alone and be babysitters to their siblings and not have to have police come to their

home and arrest their you know parents and family members and I mean that is where our biggest problems lie- is *things we can't control*- things that are out of our control. If I could, I'd help change that stuff because that would cut down so much on the kids' attitudes.

Teachers have no control over what is happening at home while they have the students or what that home life was like prior to the students coming to Marvel. Yet, what happened at home, the values and experiences, has a tremendous impact on what students do at school. Accountability amplifies their concerns over these issues as they work hard to raise scores and implement programs so students can learn while knowing that there are some things they have no control over that have a significant influence over this work.

Mr. Gordon talked about how these problems enter into his work with students and how they disrupt what she is doing with her students.

I don't really mind unmotivated students, but I do mind students who had other problems in their personal and family lives that then bring that into my learning environment. And I see it as- when I'm in control which is almost always- it's my learning environment. And I feel upset and sad that awful things have to happen to kids, but if there were some way to compartmentalize, *I can't go* into their homes and try to straighten things out but they can certainly come into my learning environment and *sabotage it*. And that is disturbing to me.

What happens in the homes and neighborhoods is coming into the classrooms at Marvel and disrupting the learning and teaching. As much as Mrs. Gordon tries to prevent it from impacting what she does with her students, it seems to at times have a life of its own that even this veteran teacher has no way to control.

Mr. Wilson also is concerned with the home lives of his students as he described some of the issues he saw interfering with learning.

This is a tad negative, but I believe that they are extremely needy in many areas that have nothing to do with a classroom. And I think that that's what *makes learning very difficult* for them. The reason I believe that is I have several children this year with no mothers, I have many who come hungry and dirty and very emotionally hungry.

To be able to teach students and have them master the material, they need to feel safe and secure both at home and school. Until this security is met, learning is more difficult for students. They have physical needs such as clean clothes and nourishing food as well as emotional needs such as love and attention from family members. Mr. Wilson knows that many of his students are not receiving these at home which makes his work with the students even harder to do.

Mrs. Kaiser provided a more concrete example of this as she spoke about her concerns with the home life of one of her students.

My goodness, poor Willie, he lives in a house- in his own family there's seven boys- and he's the youngest and now I just found out because we went to GEI's for two cousins and there's seven in that family- and they all live in the same house. There are 14 children and two women in an apartment in Merrihill. Now come on! I have a book buddy- one of his brother's is a book buddy- and he was so tired he told his teacher he didn't sleep because they kept pulling the covers off of him. Poor kid! You can't come to school and learn if you're thinking- God only knows what's happening in some of these homes!

This teacher has no control over the living situation her students are in, but they do have a direct impact on their learning. While in a first grade classroom, I was able to spend time with one of Willie's brothers. Through our conversation I learned that he had a bad toothache which was interfering with his learning. These are just two examples of how family problems are impeding the learning of students, and teachers who are held accountable for this learning have no control over them.

Mr. Jones in speaking about his frustrations with family issues and accountability reiterates what Mr. Koselke said.

I'd like to know how they can put a time limit on- on raising scores when there is so much that *we don't have any control over-* for example, home life, chemical problems, physical problems, emotional problems, things like that.

Marvel teachers are much attuned to the family issues and problems that impact the lives of their students. They know from first-hand experience how this makes a difference in their learning. They do their very best to work to meet the needs of their students while teaching them the standards. When accountability policies put unrealistic time restrictions on this learning without acknowledging the problems children face, teachers become frustrated. They are being held responsible for something that is not completely in their control.

A second area where teachers have no control in homes is in the prior experiences the children have before they come to school. This is often connected with poverty. When talking about this issue, Mr. Koselke did not assign blame but simply stated:

I believe the students at this school have a lot of family problems and a lot of disadvantages. And that is not a racial or an ethnic thing. I believe that is a

poverty- that is a socioeconomic thing because they can't afford and can't experience a lot of the things that they need to do- *don't have the resources* to do a lot of the things that they need to do with their kids to further their education- progress them where they should to be. So I feel our kids are at risk. I feel the majority of our kids are *at risk and high poverty* you know kids. I feel they can learn just like other kids. But I feel like they are already disadvantaged you know many of them in coming in.

The children can learn, but there are experiences many other students have had prior to school that these students have not had. Teaching at the school becomes about filling in the missing pieces so that students can learn and use the standards. This means that Marvel students will need more time to master the material because of the time needed to bring them to where other students already are functioning.

As a Title I teacher, Mr. Gobel works with students from many classrooms in the school. In his years of experience with the students across the grade levels, he has witnessed how poverty impacts student learning as they lack both experiences and the resources to attain some experiences.

I think we're *limited* by our children's experiences. They know you know. Not only do these kids not have books in their houses a lot of them, they can't afford them. But it just- yeah it limits it because of their experiences and their prior knowledge and all that stuff.

What teachers are able to do with students connected to the standards is restricted by what students have been exposed to before school as well as the resources families have available to purchase items that support learning.

When comparing her former kindergarten students with the ones she has met and discussed with Mrs. Kaiser, Mrs. Johnson also noted that students are less prepared for school now than when she first began teaching at Marvel.

My concerns are that the children coming in are *lower and lower academically*.

They're not coming in with so much of the experiences or the you know anything as far as like what- even when I first started nine and a half years ago- you know the kids that came to me nine and a half years ago I feel had even a little bit more emotional security than they do now.

Students are lacking academic preparation as well as the emotional security that this teacher feels is need for students to be successful at school. Mrs. Kaiser gave more specifics to reinforce Mrs. Johnson's observation.

Well, I guess I believe that- because I teach the younger children, I really think that there are some things that are developmentally appropriate and that children come into kindergarten at all different stages of development. And a lot of it happens because of what has happened to them at home- like what kind of things that they've been exposed to at home in their own environment. If they've been exposed to you know being able to read a book or use a pencil and crayons and those kinds of things, then they're kind of ready for that. But I really do think that children come to school developmentally ready and you can't always rush that process. And I'm- that's what scares me the most- is that sometimes we're held accountable for things and *they might be beyond our control*.

Mrs. Kaiser afforded me the opportunity to work with her students on occasion. I noted that some of the students did not know how to spell their names, the letters of the

alphabet, or the sounds of the letters. I know that my niece went into kindergarten with many of these skills, yet some of these students were struggling with this. These are skills and concepts that they only seem to get at school and were not taught prior to school and rarely reinforced at home. It will take longer for these students to master the early literacy skills because of situations that are outside of Mrs. Kaiser's control.

CHAPTER 10

INTERPERSONAL STORY: HOW DOES ACCOUNTABILITY INFLUENCE RELATIONSHIPS?

This chapter examines the narratives teachers tell about their relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and the district administration as well as how these are impacted by ISTEP+ and accountability policies. Interpersonal narratives and the story that together they tell are about issues of trust, communication, connections, and collegiality. The narratives about relationships with students are upbeat in that the teachers value their bond with students. Parent relationships are a mixture of some positive and some negative narratives. For the most part, associations with colleagues are strong and congenial. There were two very distinct teacher narratives about district administrators that were exactly the opposite of one another. While these were told by only a few teachers, they are strongly related to accountability and testing.

The discourse of interpersonal narratives includes: interacting, we, us, relationships, collaboration, talk, communicate, rapport, connection, together, love, and share. These words signify an association of some type. In some cases these are positive relationships indicated by other words used in the narrative while in others they are negative.

Relationships with Students

Teacher narratives about relationships with their students are strongly connected to their moral narratives of teacher identity. As teachers touch the lives of students, they build strong and significant relationships with them. Mr. Wilson's narratives were mainly centered on his students and reflect their importance in his work.

CH: What aspects of your profession are most important to you and why?

DF: Rapport with my children because most of the kids I see really need an adult in their life that they know cares and that they can turn to.

CH: What are your rewards?

DF: Connection with the kids.

His connections with his students were also seen during the observations. Before a lesson on *News to You*, he asked the students to share news from their lives. As students shared something about family members, he would make comments that demonstrated he knew these people well. One morning a sentence on the board that students were to correct told the students he had missed them the day before. He also noted that he often provides snacks for his students in the morning because he worries that they do not get fed at home.

In his work as principal at Marvel, Mr. Koselke also talked about the rewards that come from “clicking with some of the students.” Mr. Koselke likes to spend his time with the students. He greets them in the morning as they get off the bus, he is in the cafeteria at breakfast and lunch monitoring behavior and talking with the students, and he ends each day by seeing the students off as they go to their buses. He knows that by building relationships with the students through conversations and being present in the school, he will have a sure foundation on which to work with the students for any purpose.

Two other teachers also find having relationships with their students to be of great value to their work and lives. Mr. Morgan’s close ties with his students are apparent in this narrative.

Even when I have a bad day, I'm glad to have a job, and I love these kids, and I would- and I'll miss these kids when this year ends too. I think that I have a very rewarding class and they've worked really hard and I think that that's a good reward in itself.

This response may be connected to the fact that this is his first classroom. Although he has worked in schools before, this is his first full-time teaching assignment and his first class. However, the bonds that he has with his students are important, and he values his students. In her position as a Title I teacher, Mrs. Gordon does not have a single group of students to work with all day. Nonetheless, she does find that connecting with students in her work is important. "So, you know interacting with the kids is a neat thing to do. I kind of- it always kind of surprises me- because I'm kind of a social isolate, but I actually enjoy working with the kids."

Some teacher narratives were specific about relationships with the types of students to which Marvel caters- students from poor homes. They have an understanding that these students need them more than other students might. Their connections with these students provide something that they may not get from anyone else. During the course of the interviews, three case study teachers talked about this. Mr. Wilson said, "I love working with this type of children- meaning special ed and as opposed to rich snobs." Mrs. Johnson stated, "I love the kids; I love the challenge of having these types of kids. I don't think I'd honestly be happy somewhere where they're Fruity Pebbles." When asked to explain what she meant by Fruity Pebbles, she defined it as meaning students who are well-behaved all the time and seemingly have no problems. It would seem Mr. Melville feels the same way as Mrs. Johnson, "I like the kids at this school.

I've been in Catholic school. I've student taught at a more affluent school- not really affluent but more than here. I guess I say I like the kids." Mr. Koselke put it this way, "With all their challenges and difficulties- baggage- I love the kids." Relationships with Marvel students are important, and this is increased because these are students who need these adults. Even though Marvel students are challenging and have some difficult needs to deal with, these teachers desire to build and maintain relationships with them. Their narratives about accountability and testing did not reflect any tensions in these relationships.

Relationships with Parents

Teachers recognize that they need to have a relationship with students' parents and how this makes a difference in their work with the students. Section 1118 of NCLB is dedicated to parent involvement in Title I schools. This has been something that Marvel has addressed in the past as can be seen in Marvel's School Improvement Plan and was also part of the CSRD plan. For several years, there was even a member of the Title I staff at this school who was responsible for coordinating parent involvement activities.

While parent involvement is something that is an important element in school improvement at Marvel, there is some concern that parents are not as involved as they need to be. Mr. Gobel shared his concerns about the lack of Marvel parents participating in activities designed for increasing connections between the school and parents.

If I could just wave a magic wand, I would have parents come in more and be more involved. We had an Everyday Math for parents seminar planned, and I

think 16 parents came and only 4 were Marvel. See, that's what the state wants us to do...

As a Title I teacher, Mr. Gobel is very much aware of the struggles the school will encounter with Title I officials because of a disappointing level of parent involvement in state approved activities. In another part of the interview, he made another comment about parent involvement.

Well, I remember years ago when Jane was at the ad building, I can't think of her last name, and we made these mats- it was for primary kids. And they had numbers on there and letters and they could write or draw or draw a picture and write about it with a grease pen because they were laminated and stuff like that. And the state said "No, that's not family involvement." And it was bringing learning into their houses you know. But it was more parent workshops on parenting skills; you know it kind of went to that and all the fun stuff went away. And really parent involvement dropped off because our parents do like the fun stuff. We have some very young, unskilled parents and they're just like the kids- they want the fun stuff.

Frustration with the state and parents is part of this narrative. Parent involvement in Title I activities is decreasing due in part to how the state is now defining what is and isn't parent involvement in the laws. The law, as directed by NCLB, is limiting what the school can count as worthwhile parent involvement. In this it is taking away the types of activities that are most meaningful for parents and that builds connections between home and school. He sees how the law is having a negative impact on the relationship between the school and parents which is counter to what the teachers and the law desire.

Along with the frustration at the law, there is also some with the parents as well. He refers to them as immature and not interested in activities that would be beneficial. As more and more parents do not come to workshops that are designed to strengthen education, this attitude about the immaturity of parents can build among the teachers. This has the potential to do great harm to the relationships teachers have with parents as the teachers see them as less capable. Mrs. Johnson seemed to think along these lines when she stated:

I think that the parents are younger and younger and they don't know how to- they don't know what to give to their kids that would benefit them in the best way. And a good example of this is when I grew up my parents gave to me emotional- I could tell they loved me. They gave me that love, they showed me love- not by buying me material goods but by sitting down with me and spending time with me. And I don't feel like a lot of the parents today do that.

Perceptions of parents are not positive which can harm the relationships teachers have with the parents of their students.

Parent involvement is not limited to participation in Title I activities but also includes parents being involved in what is happening in the classroom. Mrs. Harding shared that what she likes least about teaching at Marvel is "probably not enough parent involvement. I wish if I had more parents involved it would make my job a whole lot easier. And it would help my students be more successful." Parents working with their children influence what is occurring in the classroom. As parents are seen as not being involved in their child's education, teachers perceive that this makes their work more difficult. Parent involvement in classroom activities enhances what teachers are doing.

There is a sense that as teacher accountability increases, there will be an increase in the frustration that teachers feel about the lack of parent involvement in the day to day activities of the classroom. This could be seen in Mrs. Gable's questions: "Somewhere- you know it's always the school's fault- it's always the state's fault-it's always the- you know when is it the kid's fault? When is it the parent's fault?" and "You need to have standards, but by god where's the parental standards?" This teacher is concerned about the school's increasing accountability which in turn causes her to feel frustration with parents. Accountability is negatively affecting how these teachers perceive the parents.

Communication was another topic that was discussed by some teachers that resulted in mixed narratives. Some teachers had consistent and positive communication with parents.

Mrs. Johnson: What interactions do I have with parents? Consistent. I try to stay in contact with them as much as possible. Beginning of the year I called everyone and welcomed them to my room. I try not to just contact them with the negatives, but also with the positives because I want them to have a good experience as well as their children in room.

Mr. Jones: I have a positive relationship I think with most of my parents. My parents know they can call me at home. They and they do.

These two teachers have good communication with parents which promotes positive relationships. While Mrs. Johnson is concerned with the emotional stability the children receive from their parents, she does have good communication with them.

However, this is not the experience of all the teachers in the building. Mrs. Lambert finds that she reaches out to parents, but that they do not reciprocate.

I mean I write a note home this year- I've written a note home every Monday to them telling them if they have any questions or concerns to contact me and I give them my number and extension every week. Have I heard from them? No.

Other teachers are also having difficult in getting responses from parents. Mrs. Harding notes that her interactions with parents are "few and far between." Mrs. Gable noted that "And you send stuff home. You send it home with the brother or the sister or something like that too. You don't ever get any kind of a response." These teachers struggle to develop relationships with parents through communication. They do not feel that the parents are responding whether it is about behavior, classroom needs and events, or assignments. This lack of communication deepens their frustration with parents and their involvement in their children's education. In this time of accountability, this magnifies the communication breakdown.

A central aspect of the accountability laws is the state test, ISTEP+. Teachers were asked about how they discuss test results with parents. Mr. Koselke, the school's principal, noted that when the scores go home few parents call to discuss the meaning of the results and are more interested in what remediation opportunities are available to their children.

A few but not too many. We've had a few. Mostly wanting to know what opportunities they're going to have to go to you know remediation or summer school or you know things like that is their concerns. You know what they can do or how can they help improve the areas.

Mr. Wilson also noted, "I do only if it comes up at a case conference or an annual case review. There's really not much interest shown." It is not clear whether or not the

parents asked or were concerned about these scores or if they were brought up by a member of the case conference team. Mrs. Gable, a fourth grade teacher, also talked about the lack of parent interest in these scores.

You know I don't think I had any parent in here this year 'cause we don't have them when you have parent-teacher conferences. So, you send them home with the kid. I didn't have one that called to say anything about it. I spoke with one parent just yesterday. We're talking about possible retention and I told her, "if you noticed, if you remember back to when we sent the ISTEP results home she failed both of them." "Yeah, I saw that." That was it. So, parents aren't interested

If the teacher brought them up in regards to retention, then the scores were discussed. These are scores that have a major impact on the school, yet the parents do not seem concerned with them.

Mr. Koselke, as principal, has numerous interactions with parents in the day to day running of the school.

Positive and negative- I have both. I try to you know be involved in Marvel Parent Teacher Team and things that they're doing you know and help and I try to meet with them when they meet monthly. And I you know meet with Margie, the home-school coordinator on a regular basis to discuss things and she's kind of the liaison between me and the parent group. And that's positive you know that's all usually positive stuff. If they have a concern, you know they submit it to me or they come to me. I see what I can do or who I can find you know to address it if I can't. So you know I think most of that's positive. I've had other positive you

know parent contacts too. I've had a lot of parents you know tell me how good they think teachers are and you know really give positive feedback about some of the programs and some of the staff. And that's a good thing. The- you know case conferences always involve parents. And sometimes those are positive and sometimes they're negative, but for the most part it's good to have the parent there to have input you know on things. Negative- I've had parents that- you know the biggest negative things I have with parents are behavior issues. You know when I have to call home and say so and so is suspended because they got in a fight with Johnny and you know he shouldn't have done this and this is the rules. You know sometimes they take issue with that. They don't think it's fair. It's the other kids. It's not their child's fault. You know I've had a lot of that type of stuff. And then the well "What about the other kid" and that sort of stuff you know and you get into all that conversations and everything. And then I've had some parents call about little issues with teachers like they didn't send home a newsletter or they didn't send- you know what I mean- just little stuff- maybe with some communications issues with teachers. It's just mostly the things I've dealt with.

This has also been the experience of Mr. Morgan, a third grade teacher.

I have some really good interactions. I have like one mom that comes in every week and she wants to be here and be like the classroom mom if you will. And I have some that I've tried to get in various times and they just don't come. And I have some that call often to check on their children or I'll call them. I have some that are on behavior plans that I call here and there. And I call not because it's

always bad. Because if you call because it's always bad- how disheartening is that. I mean I would be discouraged as a parent too. So I think you know based on the child and their parents' will to want to be here, I think- I depend on them as much as they'll let me. I want them to be here. I want them to be involved. I want them to ask questions. I want them to bring me the report cards and question, "Why is this that way or this way?" You know I don't want it to just come back signed and never hear about it again.

Relationships with Colleagues

As the teachers talked about resources at Marvel and what they would keep about the school, the principal, Mr. Koselke was mentioned by seven of the twelve teachers. Throughout the course of his interview, Mr. Wilson shared how valuable Mr. Koslke is to his work. "I have an excellent principal who will help me find any resources I need" and "There's a good resource- my principal." During observations, I noted that Mr. Koselke came to Mr. Wilson's room to discuss student concerns. On one occasion, he alerted to Mr. Wilson to something that one student said in the cafeteria while eating lunch. This gave Mr. Wilson a heads up to how this student was feeling that day and how he should best approach her during class.

Openness and honesty are character traits that build trust and are important to Mrs. Johnson.

What else would I keep? I'd keep Marvin as principal- he's awesome. He gets frustrated, but he tells it how it is, and he doesn't play. He doesn't pretend that he's someone he's not. He's genuine.

Marvin Koselke is someone that these teachers trust which is a significant factor in school reform. The teachers respect and are willing to listen to what his ideas and suggestions. Mr. Jones noted that he “admires” the fact that Mr. Koselke sees things through teachers’ perspectives because he was a teacher before becoming an administrator. Other teachers used words and phrases such as “very confident”, “one of the best that I’ve seen anywhere”, and “supportive.” Mrs. Gordon’s comments about Mr. Koselke are interesting, “But through the years what I’ve seen is a sense of joy in what we’re doing, and I think with Marvin that’s increased again. Marvin has some charisma. He has a certain amount of homey comfortable charisma.” It is this encouraging and respectful relationship with the principal that will enable Marvel teachers to work together in addressing all the varied issues that arise from high-stakes testing and accountability.

As the principal of the school, Mr. Koselke has a more global perspective on the working relationships of the staff. In two separate narratives, he finds that:

we work very well together as a staff and that we are willing to take risks. We always have been and I still think we’re still this way. You know in a lot of cases we’re the first ones to pilot something or we’re the ones that will volunteer you know to have something at our school or you know whatever. I feel it’s more innovative. I really do. And I think that’s all part of who we are as a staff. We work well together and support each other well.

And I like my staff. I like the atmosphere here. We work well together and so I feel loyal to it you know.

In these responses he shared ways what he values about his staff. They a) take risks and are open and willing to try new things to benefit students, b) work well together and support each other, and c) generate a positive school climate.

Other teachers echo these as well. Two other teachers specifically talked about the willingness of the staff to try new things and be innovative.

Mrs. Kaiser: I mean this building is not at all afraid to take a risk. I mean I'll tell you what- we have gone and done more things to try to help our children learn than- because it used to just drive me nuts at some of the other things- some of the other schools and they could just sit in their seats and read the workbook.

Mr. Melville: Like I said before they do try a lot of new things. They really look at every angle right on how they can help right down to transportation. They're very accommodating.

Other teachers saw the benefit of teachers being open-minded which engenders a climate where it is safe to take risks. Mrs. Lambert stated, "as a staff we're really open-minded about things. I mean we will try anything to help these kids learn- you know" and Mr. Morgan said, "And our open mindedness- you know like to try things- report cards and things- everyone else is complaining- I think it's kind of- it's not a big deal." A staff that is willing to try new things is important to these teachers and something that they find in their professional relationships at Marvel.

They also work well together and support each other in their work. A significant way that they do this is in data analysis and collaboration. Six of the twelve teachers stated that they accomplish this as they can talk to and learn from one another. As Ms. Lambert notes, "Resources- the people here are the most beneficial." Others who agree

with this statement are Mrs. Gordon: "I feel free to talk to just almost anybody about anything that has to do with being a teacher and otherwise. So, that's all good"; Mrs. Archer: "I believe that the most beneficial resources are other staff members because they've had experience with whatever they're passing on to you- whether it worked or whether it didn't"; Mr. Jones: "they've taught and they've experienced so much more than I have. And quite often in a situation where I have no idea how to handle it, they've already had to handle that 10 times so they're able to guide me"; Mrs. Harding: "Other teachers I think would be the most beneficial resources because any issue that you have, any problem you have, any assistance you need in teaching- they've done it- a lot of them. They have the experience to assist in about any facet of teaching in the classroom"; and Mr. Melville: "I will say that I do get- I've got an experienced person on each side of me. I do go to my- I ask for peer- my other teachers to help me sometimes."

While several of the teachers feel that they can approach any teacher for advice, this is not true for all. Mrs. Gable also finds the other Marvel teachers a great resource but adds a caveat:

I would say probably being comfortable enough to be able to go to another teacher directly and say, "What would you do?" I mean there's teachers in here I wouldn't ask them anything for god for- you know. God forbid I you know not the right person to talk to them, but then there's- like Luann that was down here. I feel very comfortable I could go to her and ask her, "What do you think? Should I do this? Should I do that?" And that I think is probably- because then she has the experience that I don't have. I mean she's been in elementary as far as I know her whole career. And so you know that I find to be beneficial- to be able

to go to certain teachers that you're comfortable to ask advice and what they know.

The level of trust and respect for what they can learn from one another is limited by those with whom they have a positive working relationship. Not all the teachers at this building feel like they can go to any other teacher to get advice. Mr. Gobel also talked about this in his comfort level in sharing his professional thoughts and ideas with other teachers in this building.

I think it's a pretty good rapport. I think at times I have to bite my tongue because I do a lot of research and I see people doing things that I think could be done a better way or not at all or- I'm patting myself on the back. But when you do know things and I think you do too Chris because of your education- you see things that you just want to throw stuff out and say that's (inaudible). And you just have to hold back. But you know, I think sometimes I'll make a suggestion- some teachers are receptive to it. I'll say "Oh, I have some material for that. Would you like to use it if you're doing a lesson on that?" Its how you approach them you know. And some teachers are welcome to it and others aren't so. But with Title I we try to make available different resources you know if we see a teacher doing that- and some teachers, some people ask and some people seem to appreciate help or your comments or constructive criticism and others you know- it's just human nature- leave me alone, I'll do it my way.

Some teachers are open and appreciate what others have to say while others are not. This may depend on the level of trust and respect that is built among the teachers. While not

all teachers seem to listen to all others, it does seem that all teachers do have other teachers in the building that they feel they can go to and discuss their work.

Another contrasting comment from Mrs. Johnson was, “we talk about school but we don’t talk about our techniques per se.” She seems to have a concern over what the teachers talk about with one another. It may be that they talk some about the instructional strategies they use but do not go into enough depth and critique to be as meaningful as she believes these professional conversations could be.

The third thing that Mr. Koselke mentioned was the positive atmosphere in the building which contributes to the working relationships. Two other teachers also talked about this during the interviews. Mrs. Archer said, “It’s a friendly place to come in to- to work for. We try to make it as comfortable a place as we can for the kids and parents.” Mrs. Gordon noted, “there’s always been a positive spirit generally associated with this school. Now often that’s found in any elementary school. I feel a bit more like its home and that it’s positive generally.” The climate of this building makes it conducive for teachers to do their work with one another and their students.

As a Title I school and with the current state of accountability, these teachers meet often for data analysis and collaboration. Once a month each grade level team meets for about two and a half hour. During this time they analyze data, discuss instructional units, and student behavior. Each time the grade level teams meet for collaboration, they complete a Rubric for Collaboration. The items included on it include discussion of strategies, analysis of assessment data, and interpersonal dynamics. Mr. Koselke also is part of these meetings on occasion, “sometimes I meet with them in collaboration- I go to their collaboration meetings sometimes and sit in and answer

questions or you know talk to them.” Mr. Gobel shared what the basic goal of these meetings.

Well, part of that is with collaboration with the classroom teachers- we have that monthly collaboration at all grade levels, half day. Which I think is a neat thing. Analyze data. Look at the trends and patterns of what they- of their strengths and weaknesses. Umm, I kind of- in my group, you know, I know what they’re doing in the classroom, you know what their- where they’re at and kind of go along with that. And state standards of course.

These monthly meetings afford these teachers an opportunity to look at the data as well as draw conclusions about their teaching and student learning based on this data.

A part of the collaboration includes discussion of ISTEP+ results. Mr. Morgan provided a glimpse into the third grade meeting when they were being discussed.

EM: Like I said, I take it and I go to Mrs. Harding and we have like those coordination days and we look at like how our children did in specific areas and maybe sometimes it’s because I’m weaker in that area and you know that person’s stronger in that area. It just helps to kind of compare and kind of contrast what’s going on with other students and other schools too in the district. I mean I don’t have very specific data like I have my own. But we all do and it kind of helps to see

CH: So you learn by just looking at them and talking about it with your colleagues.

EM: Right, with my colleagues. Then we figure out ways that we’re going to attack it so that next year they are prepared for it.

These teachers work together to make sense of the reports and use this information to help them to know how to work with their students in the year to come. Mrs. Harding, one of Mr. Morgan's grade level colleagues made this statement about ISTEP+ discussions that agrees with Mr. Morgan's: "For the teachers, its comparing data, seeing what maybe as a grade level needs to be furthered, what else needs to be taught, what else we need to do to really teach our students."

Another area of concern connected to ISTEP+ is how other teachers perceive one another based on the test results. In a narrative on AYP, Mr. Koselke posed this question, "What's everyone going to think if we didn't?" He has some concerns about what people across the community as well as in the district will think about Marvel if they do not meet the AYP criteria. This same concern was expressed by three teachers. Mrs. Kaiser is concerned with how the school is perceived by other teachers in the district because of the scores former Marvel students are receiving while at other schools in the district.

Then those ones where you know you have the lowest- the students' that have the most lowest scores are probably you know the ones you know that everybody kind of looks down on and thinks, "Oh, you know they don't know anything. And nobody's doing anything in their buildings." But I think that this building has always been one of the hardest working buildings in the system. But then how would I know, I've never been in anywhere else. And that's just what I think, but from hearsay and from things I know about as to where my children have gone, I do believe that this is one of the hardest working buildings in town.

Mr. Jones, as a second grade teacher, seems to be concerned with what his fellow Marvel teachers in the upper grades think about his teaching. There is also a sense that this is inevitable based on the nature of the accountability laws.

And I think that- as far as adult relationships- I think that it- it causes- I think it causes a little bit of resentment- like “Well if you’d have gotten your kids to second grade level before they got to second grade level then I would have an easier time.” They’re probably thinking if Mr. Jones would have gotten those kids to third grade level before- you know what I mean? It causes us to have a bit of resentment toward each other as teachers, especially grade level to grade level- without us wanting it to- I just think that it’s there.

Mrs. Harding sees how the laws put a strain on relationships among educators, especially classroom teachers.

Actually, you have to honor No Child Left Behind and PL 221. I would say somewhat it puts a stress on professional relationships because if you’re not performing at an adequate level, you may not be doing as well as it should and then it comes back on the teacher.

Accountability can have a negative impact on the professional relationships Marvel teachers have with one another as well as with those from other schools. At times this may be simply the perception of the teachers based on how they may think other teachers are seeing them as professionals, but it may also be based on things that they experience in their interactions with other teachers.

Data analysis of ISTEP+ results and quarterly assessment results has been part of three of the eight staff meetings including. It may be part of other meetings when they

scrutinize the SIP. This happened at five meetings as well as at two professional development workshops.

When Mr. Wilson talked about the impact of accountability laws on his professional relationships, he noted that they try to make light of the pressure they experience from one law in particular, NCLB. “It just- it has such a negative ring throughout any professional relationships that I have that it’s almost- we almost have to just joke about it.” One way that the teachers are dealing with NCLB is to joke about it. This seems to be a way teachers are coping with the law so that it does not have a negative impact on their relationships.

Mrs. Gordon connected accountability with the professional relationships the Marvel teachers have. “I’d say that to the degree that we do have a professional collegiality- that can go back to 221- a professional as opposed to social and emotional collegiality. That- I have to give credit there.” What is interesting is that during her reflection on her statement, she singled out PL 221 as the law deserving of credit for collegiality. This reflects what many teachers feel; that PL 221 is more worthwhile than NCLB. This may be because PL 221 was already in effect when NCLB was enacted. In this way, one of the accountability laws is seen as a support to professional relationships.

Relationships with District Administration

There were two conflicting narratives told by some of the teachers about their relationship with the district administrators. One case study participant, Mrs. Johnson, was very vocal in her negative feeling toward them in responses to three different questions.

CH: Okay, what do you like least about teaching?

JJ: I don't care for the administration umm and I'm talking the administration building people that are telling us things that we need to do that have never come into our classrooms to see what we do on a day to day basis. Not saying teaching, but some of the things we have to deal with and that they expect out of us without umm actually knowing what it is that we're doing in the first place, you know. Giving us extra things to do that they think is going to help you know like even behavior of the children or whatever the case may be and then never- never stepping a foot in here to see what we deal with.

CH: How do you feel this school is similar to other schools and then how is it different?

JJ: I feel like this school has- I don't think we're the only school that has a lot of needs. I don't feel like we're the lowest income school. There are a couple of schools in Michigan City that have the needs that we have. It's different because it's an old building with bad heating. It's- I feel like we get some unfair treatment because of- I feel like it's a dumping ground sometimes. When they feel like they don't-they can't put students anywhere else they'll put the students at Niemann because we have a couple of special ed teachers that are phenomenal.

JJ: What do you like the least? I like the least that- again I feel like sometimes Niemann gets ignored through some of the administration building because I think they feel like we're low achievers at times and we're not. We were right up there this year. And I feel like they sometimes- well they're not going to get any better so why give them any extra help or whatever.

Mrs. Johnson has strong negative feelings about the district administrators based on what she has seen and heard from them. She believes that because the school has not done as well on ISTEP+ as other schools, it has become the “dumping ground” for the district. Accountability and ISTEP+ play a significant role in her relationship with these administrators.

However, an opposite narrative is told by other teachers. As some teachers talked about resources, something that helps and supports teachers in their work, two teachers noted that the district administrators fall into the category for them. Mr. Morgan stated, “I feel pretty confident in our administrative staff at the ad building. I mean I think that they try to look out for us as much as they can.” Mr. Gobel also finds these administrators to be helpful.

I have a question about curriculum or well- information’s just there if you have a question about something or whether it’s curriculum or umm instructional practice or an idea for something. And I think our ad building’s a good resource. I consider that a resource- our ad building. I think the people there- if you have a real question about something- you know we call and ask or stuff like that.

He also is not pleased with teachers who make the types of comments made by Mrs. Johnson about them.

Well really or you know they’ll say “Let someone from the ad building come here and do this with these kids” or something. Well, no this is what you have to do. I mean this is my thought- you have to find a way to do it. This is your job- you find a way to do it. But I don’t say that out loud.

These competing relationships with district administrators can have a toll on the relationships of some Marvel teachers. As some teachers complain that district leaders are putting undo pressure on them, others may not respond openly but harbor concerns about the way these teachers are viewing these administrators. As negative consequences from accountability come into play, these may have a more visible influence on the relationships of teachers in the building.

In this time of accountability, the relationship these two teachers have with the district administrators is a positive one. Mrs. Gordon, a Title I teacher has had positive experiences in gaining needed information from these individuals. Mr. Morgan finds that rather than being against Marvel teachers, they do what they can to support the teachers in their work. They have a contrasting narrative about their relationship with the district administrators. As the pressure mounts and sanctions come into play, these narratives may change.

CHAPTER 11

TECHNICAL STORY: WHAT DOES AND DOES NOT WORK?

In this chapter, the technical story is told about what these teachers find does and doesn't work about high-stakes testing and accountability when it comes to the day to day life of a Title I school. This story is based on the experiences these teachers have related to how ISTEP+ and the policies support or impede their teaching and student learning. Technical narratives that compose this story involve the overall judgments about policies as well as specifics about assessment and ISTEP+, professional development, and standards.

The discourse teachers use when telling technical narratives centers on professional judgment about whether or not policies and related activities properly function. The words and phrases used by teachers included helps, focus, make sense, good, practical, applicable, and useful.

Overall Judgments About the Policies

Two accountability policies, NCLB and PL 221, are the focus of what these teachers discussed in their technical narratives. There are aspects of each policy that teachers find to be worthwhile, but it is PL 221 that teachers found to have value as it helped them to do their work. Even as they recognized and agreed with the intent of NCLB, their opinion is that it is not meeting this all important goal.

PL 221.

PL 221 works for Marvel teachers as they perceive that it supports them by providing the direction and focus needed for school reform and improvement. Mr. Koselke noted that his understanding of the purpose of the law is "to increase

accountability. Focus schools more on school improvement. Really looking at what you're doing and what's working and what's not." For Mr. Wilson, this law meets the intended purpose, "Well, I think it- it gives direction to where we're heading and where we're trying to get- like I think Public Law does." This law works as the teachers determine what needs to be accomplished and then are allowed to decide how to meet these goals. It works as teachers have ownership in the school reform process because they are accountable to themselves first.

Other teachers also consider that this law works in the school as they were called upon to use their professional wisdom to analyze data, read research, set goals, learn about and implement programs, and evaluate progress made towards their goals. Mrs. Kaiser found that this law enabled the teachers to examine what was and wasn't working at the school so that they could then make the appropriate adjustments in what they were doing to meet the school's goals.

Well that helps each school kind of be more site based management. You know kind of figure out for their students, for their teachers, for their parents and you know what they need to do at that school to help those students in that school learn. And I think that it's probably good for us to look at those kinds of things and be more conscious and really try to do the right things for the kind of kids you have in each particular school.

Mrs. Gordon, a Title I teacher who is very involved in writing the SIP that is also used for PL 221, also had noted that this law assists Marvel teachers.

As opposed to the stated purpose, my understanding of the purpose is to develop an understanding of what has happened as a result of this is to develop a sense of

collegiality so that the school is consistent in what it is offering to children- not only in terms of the stated subject matter but in terms of methods of teaching, methods of assessment and agreed upon goals. No problem with the idea at all or the intent of its predecessors. I think at Marvel I get the feeling that there is a certain amount of success to it. So, that rather pleases me.

Consistency, which this law supports, is a valued asset for this teacher. In her experience at Marvel, she has witnessed how this has assisted teachers to improve teaching practices and students' learning. Goal setting and common language has been the foundation for previous reform efforts such as the CSRD work that aided teachers in becoming more adept at their work, and PL 221 has sustained these efforts.

While teachers appreciate how PL 221 works in their judgment, there are still questions about what role NCLB has and how it will impact the benefits they experience from the state law. Mrs. Johnson provided an example of how PL 221 has refined her instruction to increase student learning, yet at the end she questions the role of NCLB in the schools' reform efforts.

The Public Law 221 really does drive what we are working on from year to year. For instance, math being one of the areas that we needed to look at to increase our students' scores. I really feel like we're going to do that. The year before- the prior time we did the 3 year plan was it was language arts driven and we did- we improved our scores one year by 11%. So, I think its working-Public Law 221. I still don't know about the No Child Left Behind.

These same ideas are reflected in these observations from Mrs. Gordon.

It's pretty intimately connected to Public Law 221. Again, no problem really with Public Law 221. It gives you some structure. It gives you some goals within your own school and that you have some chance of being able to talk to someone else- you know language that they might well understand in terms of where we are going as a faculty, as a staff. So, there's a pretty strong connection with Public Law 221. I guess my view on No Child Left Behind on the other hand is that this too shall pass.

PL 221 has been in place long enough for these teachers to know through experience that there are aspects of it that work, but the federal law has not been in place long enough for them to make a definitive judgment. Questions still exist when it comes to how beneficial NCLB will be to the work of teachers and students. These teachers are also concerned with the label their school will receive based on the AYP requirement of this law which may account for their reservations.

Mr. Koselke was able to find some advantage in NCLB as well, but it was almost as a last resort in his thinking.

And I think the only thing that No Child Left Behind and Public Law 221 have done is to help focus schools on improvement. You know help focus them as a whole on what can we do to make this better or make all kids meet these requirements.

There is some value to both policies as they each ask teachers to keep school improvement as a central aspect of their work because this will in turn facilitate greater student learning. Mrs. Kaiser also finds some benefit in these policies with her comment, "Well, I think that they're like a guidepost for us." They do serve a beneficial purpose

for what the teachers and students do at Marvel. In the same vein, Mr. Gobel noted, “I see we’re more focused in our goals and our professional development. You know instead of each teacher having a separate goal and this teacher doing this. You know, there’s more consistency in the curriculum.” Consistency for Mr. Gobel goes beyond PL 221 as another teacher stated and is part of NCLB as well. These laws are a unifying force when it comes to curriculum, goals for improvement, and the professional development needed to accomplish these goals.

NCLB.

The narratives of NCLB explicate the reservations teachers have about this policy as they express their concerns and questions about it. At the time of these interviews, the teachers were unsure whether the school would or would not suffer the sanctions of this policy. Mrs. Lambert asked, “Okay, No Child Left Behind- is it designed so that they believe every child is college bound? Or are they more realistic? I’m under the impression they’re not very realistic about it.” Mr. Wilson and Mr. Koselke both have concerns about the highly qualified section of the policy. Mr. Wilson’s concern had to do with how this impacts special education teachers and the current shortage of licensed teachers in this area.

DW: Part of No Child Left Behind- I’m vague- it’s something about special ed teachers like if they teach math they have to have a math degree- do you know about that?

CH: It’s the highly qualified section of the

DW: And is that just for past elementary? Do you know the answer? And the shortage- because there's already a shortage and if people are expected to fulfill that- actually on all those areas I'd like to know where they're headed.

Mr. Wilson is unclear into how the highly qualified section will work. There could be a concern about special education classroom sizes increasing because of a decrease in the number of available teachers. Mr. Wilson is already dealing with more students than he believes is workable. Increasing the number of students he is responsible for because of NCLB does not work for him or his students.

Mr. Koselke's quandary is with the way this impacts paraprofessionals at the school. It does not work for him when individuals who he knows from first-hand observation are effective in working with students are now expected to pass a test.

least for teachers as far as highly trained- which is questionable to me in some cases because I have paras who have worked for you know 13 years who have to now all of a sudden pass the test in order to be highly qualified when their experience that they've had and all the training that they've had counts for nothing. So I have an issue with that- that someone could come- walk right in, pass this test and be deemed highly qualified who may have never spent any time in a classroom or had any professional development. So yeah I kind of have an issue with that.

For this principal, a law that deems a paraprofessional worthy of working at a Title I school based solely on a test does not work. It also does not work to require well-qualified people to pass a test when they are currently performing in an exemplary fashion with the students under the auspices of the principal and Title I teachers.

Another concern raised in teacher responses was that there was either no benefit to the policies or that the benefit was questionable at best. This is reflected in Mrs. Johnson's earlier quote when she was unclear about the benefits of NCLB while there was a benefit to PL 221. Mr. Wilson's concern about this law rests in a significant flaw in it. "Great ideas on paper with not enough funding. That's my opinion of it." Other teachers were unable to identify any benefits or stated that no one benefited from the policy. Mrs. Lambert's thinking was that, "We don't. I'm trying to think who does. Even the- I would think even the schools that don't have to worry about it; I don't know how they benefit from it." Mr. Jones agreed with the thought that no one benefits and expands on that by telling why this does not work for any teacher or student.

EJ: Nobody. I don't think it's good for anybody.

CH: Alright, then who is- then who is not privileged would be?

EJ: Everyone.

CH: Everyone.

EJ: I think low functioning- functioning is not the right word. I think schools that are perceived to be low don't benefit. I think schools and children who are perceived to be high do not benefit. I don't think anybody benefits.

CH: And why do you believe that?

EJ: Because there are just not provisions made for enrichment. It's kind of like making everyone the same and I don't think trying to make everyone the same- I know it's impossible and I don't think it's healthy. I don't think that we should in this world where they keep preaching individualism and acceptance but yet you know we're all supposed to be the same. I don't think that's good for anybody-

anybody- any student, any educator, any school system. It might be temporarily nice for the school systems that are growing- that are getting the funding. But I think in the long run, it's just not going to be good for anybody.

Mandating that all students learn at the same rate does not work for Mr. Jones- not even for students from schools that have done well on ISTEP+ in the past. His comment reflects back to what Ms. Lambert asked about how realistic this law was when it came to student learning. Other teachers, based on their years of teaching experience, know that requiring the same level of learning from all students at the same time does not work. NCLB seems to be doing just that as it requires all students to pass the same test at the same time. This is a law that with time will be seen to not function in the best interests of teaching and learning at any school or for any student. In the judgment of these teachers, this law has several flaws that cause them concern for how it will impact their work as well as the ones they work with, their students.

Assessment

Assessment is a customary part of teachers' work. Marvel teachers know that assessments are useful in guiding their instruction as it demonstrates students' strengths and weaknesses over particular material. Ms. Lambert, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Koselke, three of the case study participants each spoke about how they use assessment.

CH: What do you believe is the purpose of assessment?

ML: To see where they are- to see where they need improvement- to see what you can maybe not push so much because they're getting it or they've gotten it and you can work on more things they need help on.

CH: How do you use assessment in your classroom?

ML: Anywhere paperwork, tests, observation, all kinds, actual tests of sorts.

CH: And then when you have that information from those assessments, what do you do with it?

ML: Cry. You see what you still need to work on. Or if it's only one or two are that are having problems, then maybe you can buddy them up or group them up differently, so that the whole class doesn't need to work on something they already know how to do.

Ms. Lambert uses a wide array of assessments in her work to direct her instruction whether it is moving on to a new topic because students have demonstrated mastery or partnering students in an effort that students who know the material will be able to present it in a way that other students will grasp more readily. Mr. Wilson uses it in similar ways but relies more on informal observations to direct his teaching.

CH: What do you believe is the purpose of assessment?

DW: So that you can be a diagnostic teacher. So that you can see where the strengths and weaknesses are and try to strengthen the areas that need to be strengthened.

CH: How do you use assessment in your classroom?

DW: This is probably this year my weakest area. I would like to use the same pieces that the other- that general ed uses and haven't had a chance. Its more- in my case this year especially- it's been more observation.

CH: How do you use- then from your observation then how do you use what you've learned?

DW: To try to create lessons then that will hit the areas where that particular student needs help. This is my areas that I would like to firm up.

As a former classroom teacher, Mr. Koselke also used assessment to guide his teaching.

As a principal, he also understands and uses assessment to make schoolwide decisions such as professional development. It becomes not only a tool for student learning but for teacher learning also.

CH: And what do you believe is the purpose of assessment?

MK: I think assessment shows them and us where they're at. It helps kids set goals for themselves. And it helps us adjust our instruction to meet the needs of the kids. And you know it shows what areas we're weak and strong in- not only that individual student but the teachers and the school in general. I mean you can look for trends and patterns.

CH: How- how is assessment used here at this school?

MK: Just for some of those things. We analyze quarterly performance assessments in reading writing and math- look for individual student needs and then we find the areas that are challenges- considered to be challenges and adjust or make instructional strategies to meet those. And it's a continuous assessment of where you're at. Like with writing they can be strong in one area but weak in another area, so you have to adjust your instruction to address that. And then we also use it for professional development to see what areas we need you know more help in as a staff. You know where do we need to focus our professional development?

Mr. Koselke's views on the functions of assessment are a reflection of how it is used in school reform documents, the current PL 221/SIP and the old CSRD plan. The teachers in this school take assessment seriously and use it in their classrooms. It is also a central part of what teachers discuss in their monthly collaboration meetings as could be seen in the two of the documents they complete each time they meet. On these forms, which are turned in to Mr. Koselke, teachers include issues of data based on assessment. The Rubric for Collaboration lists some possible data sources such as running records, performance assessment, and rubrics aligned with state standards. They then need to determine what instructional practices will be used based on the information gathered from data analysis.

Five of the other teachers; Mrs. Archer, Mr. Jones, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Harding, and Mr. Gobel; also talked about the use of assessment to guide their instruction in ways that are similar to what the case study participants related. The varied day to day forms of assessment these teachers use are effective in directing their work with students. From them, they are able to discern what students know and don't know so that they are able to tailor their instruction appropriately as well as evaluate their own work. One thing, according to Mr. Jones, they are able to learn from it is "whether or not your instruction is good." It also helps Mr. Morgan to either "re-tweak the way that I've taught something" or "gauge my lessons."

Another way teachers successfully utilize assessment is in differentiating and individualizing instruction based on their students' needs.

Mr. Gobel: Well, I kind of level some of the lessons I do. You know and I can see if there's a student that really struggles and won't embarrass them cause if I

know they're trying and I might have something on the computer or else in a lower level book or something or an activity for them to do to work on- I have magnets all over you know they can make words with. If I know there are kids that work ahead real quickly I also do the same thing. I try to have vocabulary activities they can do or word games to keep them challenged.

Mrs. Harding: I use it as a tool to monitor progress. Not all students master everything that they come across, so assessments are a way to see what needs to be done next- what to move forward with- if I need to stay back and re-teach something or if they've all got it move on to the next.

Assessment is used by these teachers to know what the learning needs are of particular students so that they are able to work smarter. They are able to know what each student has and has not mastered as well as plan ways to match instruction to the their student. In this way students are receiving the instruction that is right for them.

Mrs. Johnson talked about a particular format of assessment that works effectively for her to understand what students know and are able to do connected to the standards. During the interview she talked about the use of rubrics twice, and I was able to observe a lesson where she used a rubric with her students.

CH: How do you use assessment in your classroom?

JJ: In that way- what I just said. I use assessment by seeing exactly the growth of each individual student. The math program this year is awesome with that. It does an individual basis- you can see by use of checklists just where people are- where students are from page to page. Even as simple as a game that they've

learned and if they understand how to play the game and they're playing it the right way- assessment through games- math games.

CH: What else do you use assessment for? So, you use it to see

JJ: For growth

CH: For growth- is there anything else you use assessment for?

JJ: I like to know where each individual student is and I like them to see where they're at. So, I rubric- they know rubrics in here- they see me- I show them the rubrics before we do something- whether it's a writing rubric or a math rubric or a book rubric on what books they like- whatever it is- they see it- they know it and then when after I rubric or assess it then they get to see their scores.

She uses rubrics when her students complete performance assessments. She finds that these are a source of the most accurate information about what her students know on a given topic or standard.

As far as like assessment, the paper and pencil thing, I just don't do as much of because I grew into teaching with rubrics. I'm familiar with rubrics. I'm most comfortable with that level of assessment. To see gain and growth, I think those are more accurate than pencil and paper.

Rubrics are an effective form of assessment for Mrs. Johnson because they provide her the information to see how each student is growing and progressing on an individual basis. Their use is flexible so that she can assess students in a variety of ways which is very important to her. She wants something that allows her to evaluate student learning in a wide array of contexts, and rubrics meet this need.

During one observation, Mrs. Johnson used the Indiana Developmental Writing Rubric with her students to evaluate particular pieces of writing. A holistic version of this rubric is used to score constructed response items on the writing portion of ISTEP+. Mrs. Johnson typed and printed pieces of student writing but did not include names. As a group, the class read a piece and then critiqued it one line at a time. Students offered their critiques and suggestions for revising and improving each piece presented based on some aspect of the rubric. Students appeared to have good command of the rubric and what the benchmarks referred to. This was an example of Mrs. Johnson using the rubric to guide student learning.

ISTEP+

Indiana teachers have been using ISTEP since the late 1980's, but it has changed over time. What began as a norm referenced version of the California Achievement Test evolved into a criterion referenced test based on the Indiana State Academic Standards. This test meets the requirement of NCLB:

a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments that include at a minimum, academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science that will be used as the primary means of determining the yearly performance of the State and of each local education agency and school in the state in enabling all children to meet the State's challenging academic standards (Sec. 1111.b.3.A).

One requirement for these state level tests is that they "produce individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports, consistent with clause (iii) that allow

parents, teachers, and principals to understand and address the specific academic needs of students” (Sec. 111.b.3.A.xii).

Teachers’ responses to questions about ISTEP+ demonstrated that in their judgment this test does not meet the criteria of the law. While they find the assessments they use in their classroom worthwhile in making instructional decisions, the state test that is to be used for accountability purposes provides very limited useful information.

Mr. Wilson seems to want ISTEP+ to have the value the law states:

I think in philosophy it’s a good idea in that the purpose is a good idea in that you know it would be an assessment piece to show what kids need and to more or less gauge how well the teacher is doing in the school and the system is doing- in theory.

Yet for him this good theory does not materialize into a workable piece of assessment as he stated that it has no connection to his teaching. “Almost none. Wrong answer. It’s not too appropriate for my students.” For Mr. Wilson, this test is not the appropriate piece to evaluate his students’ learning because they are not functioning at their grade level and is therefore not useful to him. It does not help him to do his work to know what the learning needs of his students are. He stated his evaluation of how ISTEP+ helps him in a succinct response, “I can’t say that it is.”

Mrs. Johnson also finds that this test is not appropriate for her students. Her reasoning is based on her belief that not all students are able to demonstrate what they know and are able to do on a paper and pencil test. “Well, not everybody takes a test with paper and pencil and is successful. Even growing up when I was a child, I was horrible at test taking.” Her strongly held belief in Gardner’s theory of Multiple

Intelligences is such that she does not find a single type of test to be useful and that the most useful form of testing is based on each student's particular learning strength as well as how the material was presented during instruction. The one seemingly useful aspect of this test is that scores for some students are helpful when they coincide with her own assessments and opinions of student learning.

If it is- it's good to see- you can see where your students are individually. I had a lot that did pass plus this year, so it reconfirms that in a way that pretty much what they're doing on ISTEP- no I can't even say that. I was going to say- pretty much what they do on ISTEP is what they're doing in the room. The pass pluses are, but when they say that they haven't passed, you know did not pass and they show a score, it's not really that helpful.

Two sets of scores are useful in her work as they provide further evidence that they are knowledgeable about certain material. However, there is not enough information given for the students who failed the test because she does not have specifics about what caused this failure. "Unless I get their individual tests back and see exactly what they missed. How is that helpful or not helpful?" Mrs. Gable agreed with the need to get the student work back.

When you get it back it's a- I would like to see what my kids wrote down and what it is they want and it's like you know don't really get all that. And you do get samples of a question that was- an open-ended question that is worth so many points and this one is worth only that many points. But I'd like to have our kids' stuff back- here's what they wrote- because we don't grade them, so I don't know

what they wrote. I don't go stare over the tops of their backs because that just makes them paranoid. I'm not seeing what they're putting in there.

A score alone without the piece is not helpful to the teachers. Without the pieces in front of them along with the scores, teachers are unable to use them to make adjustments to writing instruction for individual students. Their needs are less clear and the score becomes simply a number without a real value to the teacher it was meant to assist.

Mrs. Johnson is not the only teacher with strong beliefs about Multiple Intelligences and proper assessment. Mr. Morgan also talked about the value of using a variety of assessments to evaluate student learning based on this theory. From ISTEP+ he comes to know which students will do well on paper and pencil forms of assessment and which will not. It seems that for this teacher ISTEP+ is effective with academic needs when it comes to gauging the types of assessments he will use in his classroom for each student.

Well, it helped me to see who were really strong test takers and who were weaker test takers. And it helped me gear my other assessments. So if I know that Cindy over here doesn't know how to take a test, she's not going to be a real successful test taker. But that doesn't mean that she can't you know do really good at other types of assessments. So, it helped me just learn how to figure out each child's level of taking tests is. How they feel about it, what kind of anxiety does it produce, you know different things that would go along with tests.

Mr. Jones is also of the opinion that a single paper and pencil test is not an appropriate instrument to evaluate student learning.

I think a lot the kids just are not properly assessed in that way. I think that if ISTEP had a written version, an oral version, a kinesthetic version- I think that our kids would do much, much better. I just don't think that this is the way that everyone can present what they have learned.

The uses of ISTEP+ are limited for these teachers as they do not meet the criteria teachers have for valuable assessment information or when scores are meaningless because not enough information is given to teachers to make informed instructional decisions for students.

The ISTEP+ reports are not useful to the teachers as is reflected in Mrs. Johnson's response, "I can't make sense of the ISTEP reports. I've gotten a book and its taking the time to sit down and do it. Like I said, I need an in-service on how to interpret all that." While the teachers at this school have received several workshops about data analysis and even some on ISTEP+, there is still uncertainty about how to interpret and use the scores in the reports. Mrs. Harding provided some further insight into this dilemma about reports.

EH: Through the numbers and the heading that are- go along with the printout.

It's hard because the heading they give you are kind of vague of the topics that were covered. So, you kind of have to figure out exactly what they're hitting on.

CH: What does this mean?

EH: Correct, it's here but- what's it actually telling you?

The reports contain scores but what these mean is not clear to teachers which makes them less than useful understanding what particular aspects of the standards students haven't mastered.

For Mrs. Gable trying to make sense of these reports becomes an imposition on her time which is a precious commodity for most teachers.

It's a lot of time for the teachers because then to- in order to- you know then they want you to look at the data you got. Well when do we do that? On our own time. Okay now you do that and you've got to figure out what the booklet that they do give you back- well know here's how they're doing this- here's how we're doing that. Well again when do we do that?

A later response demonstrated that she has taken her time to make sense of these reports.

I read through the stuff that they have. I you know I take my own time and I do that. But then as for- as it's all broken down, I can't remember what's broken down into what- nor do I care to. That's just stuff that I flush you know.

Once she gets some sense of the scores, they are forgotten. This would imply that what she has discovered from the scores was not useful to her work with students. They become something that she promptly forgets.

Teachers have a variety of concerns about ISTEP+ that seem to interfere with any usefulness of the test. Questions about the scoring of the constructed response portion of the test were something that caused apprehension in five teachers. Twice Mrs. Johnson expressed her uncertainty about this as she asked about whom is scoring the tests.

"General question is I'd like to know why they aren't picking educators to come up with- to grade the ISTEP." While later she asked, "Who grades them? Honestly, how do they hire the people to grade them? What kind of degree do they have? I'm not talking about the bubbles. I'm talking about the writing part." Mr. Jones expressed similar concerns, "I'd like to know more about the people that score it and their credentials and how

they're chosen and who decided how they're chosen." There is a concern that the people who are scoring this part of the test are not qualified as teachers. This diminished the value of the scores to this teacher. As a teacher, I had heard rumors of Kelly Girls being hired to score this part of the test which caused me unease as well in believing that these scores were in any way a true reflection of my students' writing abilities. Mr. Melville's query seems to show that my trepidation about these scores continues.

I guess you hear so many rumors of who's actually on the parts that aren't scantron- who's really grading those? Because you hear stories of who they are and it makes a huge difference as to who is doing some of that grading.

As long as teachers are not informed about who is scoring the constructed response items, these scores will be questioned and possibly found as unusable.

Another concern about scoring was expressed by Mr. Gobel which came from his attendance at scoring workshops conducted by people from the Indiana Department of Education who are responsible for ISTEP+.

And, umm, it's been awhile. But see when I went to the ISTEP training a year ago, the ISTEP scoring training that Marvin went to this year, I there was and I did the- I don't know if I did math or reading now- maybe both- at the third grade level- it was math- and I came up with a question that nobody could give me an answer on and they said they would ask Bruce Wesley and they got him involved and they, "Well, we really didn't know." And you know and I mean we left the place and there was not an answer on that. Because I do that, I delve into that and I say, "But now, if this is what they want, this is how they asked it, and this is how it's answered, why is it wrong?" You know, and they couldn't give me an

answer on that. And the whole group you know got, “Well, yeah, yeah.” So, I- the scoring- the scoring I think is a problem. I think it’s subjective..

Mrs. Harding had also voiced concerns about the subjectivity of the scoring process which also makes these scores less important for teachers in their work with students.

And also how some things are scored because with writing it seemed like there was a variety of scores that could have been possible for certain writing pieces and you know different scorers score different ways. How can the state so that all the scorers are on the same page?

Mr. Koselke has tried to inform Marvel teachers more about this scoring process by conducting a workshop that included scoring practice. Instead this seemed to add to the confusion as Mrs. Gordon noted:

There are things that pop up on occasion such as the famous writing rubric questions where local teachers would be given the same anchor papers and asked to evaluate them and we were inevitably far more critical of the students’ work than the people in Indianapolis or wherever they were. So that’s- that I’m a little uncomfortable at times when I think about that.

As long as teachers have concerns about the qualifications of the scorers and the process, these scores will continue to be suspect and of little value to their work in teaching students to write.

There are several reasons the state test does not work for these teachers in doing their job: (a) not the correct form of assessment for particular students because of their learning level or style, (b) lack of information on student work, (c) lack of clarity in

reports, and (d) questions and concerns about scoring constructed response items. Mrs. Gordon seemed to summarize the teachers' central issue with this test.

I think- I think that I'd really like to have a deep inner sense or belief or knowledge that it was really valid- that it actually is- that what I'm really finding from it- really tells me what it says it's telling me. That's my intention or way of saying it at least. For the most part, I kind of trust it. I have reservations.

There is a nagging doubt as to whether or not this test, including the multiple choice sections, is really a demonstration of what students know. There is a lack of trust in these scores which makes them less practical and effective for teachers to use in their work.

One way that test results can be useful to Marvel teachers was pointed out by Mr. Koselke. In his experience, when scores are examined longitudinally, patterns and trends can be seen which provides information about student learning that he and the teachers are able to address.

You can look for some like patterns of things that the kids are low at overall across the school and at different grade levels as far as what areas we need to focus in. Like we know that we're low in vocabulary. That's something that we're low in consistently in ISTEP so that's probably something we need to you know try to focus on and boost with our kids. We're also low in communication in math- written you know math communication- which is their reasoning of how they did something on paper. You know they always struggle with that when they have to show or tell how they got the solution. So we've been working on ways to develop that.

Examination of data over time is effective in highlighting areas of weakness. Once these areas have been identified, teachers at Marvel are able to set goals so they can make changes in their instruction while receiving focused professional development to meet these goals. Future test results as well as other forms of data are used as benchmarks to evaluate their progress in meeting their goals.

ISTEP+ still remains for these teachers one tool in their assessment repertoire, but one that is not of the highest significance. As Mr. Koselke noted, “Another thing is why do we base everything you know on ISTEP when there are other measures of performance that are done more frequently throughout the year? That would seem to make more sense.” A similar response from Mr. Wilson was, “I just feel like there’s a lot more that teachers see every day go on. I’m not sure how accurate the picture can always be of how they’re doing.” It makes more sense for these teachers to use other forms of assessment to make accountability decisions and evaluate school performance. The reason for this according to Mr. Koselke is:

I feel that ISTEP is a snapshot on a given day of a student’s performance. I don’t feel that it’s a compilation. I don’t feel that it’s the be all to end all. You know I just- I don’t feel that we should base everything we do in education and in government on one standardized test. And the reason I feel that way is because kids have many disadvantages as far as like our kids- with testing anxiety, testing vocabulary and you know just testing situations. And it’s- it’s just really difficult I think for our kids. I think we can get more by their performance assessments and portfolios.

ISTEP+ results are a piece, but only a limited piece, in the overall picture of what Marvel students know and are able to do related to Indiana State Academic Standards. Other forms of assessment that teachers do with students present richer, greater, and more immediate information that needs to be included when making evaluative decisions on student learning and progress by teachers in school improvement efforts. One set of test results does not work as an instrument for accountability for these teachers who are savvy consumers of data.

Standards

Both accountability policies call for the use of standards for students. NCLB refers to them as “challenging State academic standards” (Sec. 1001). In the state of Indiana, teachers have been required to use Proficiencies, Essential Skills, and now Indiana State Academic Standards in their teaching. The concept of grade level standards is nothing new to Marvel teachers. These same standards are the basis for each grade level ISTEP+. Since the students take the test in the fall, the standards that are tested are the ones from the previous grade levels.

Predominantly the teachers’ responses to the standards were positive. The standards are helpful to teachers in their work as they provide a guide and framework for what they need to accomplish with their students during the course of the school year.

Mrs. Lambert: Well you need guidelines. I shouldn’t say you need- guidelines are helpful. If you know what to teach them, I guess you don’t need the guidelines. They’re helpful and they do keep it consistent from classroom to, I mean if children move from school to school which is what our clientele tends to do, at

least they'll be learning the same types of things no matter where they go if they stay in the system.

Mrs. Johnson: So, it's a guidance tool. It's an instructional tool for me.

Standards are useful in two ways for these teachers: guide for instruction and consistent instruction. In a school where the mobility rate has increased over the last several years, the standards are a tool that helps teachers to have some idea of what students have been exposed to in previous grade levels. They also provide a framework of what that they can use to plan their curriculum for the year as they know what they are expected to teach and what their students are expected to learn.

Two other Marvel teachers expressed similar appreciation for the standards as they provide the basis for their work with students.

Mrs. Archer: Those are the categories of- fundamentals that will get them through life. Standards are broken down into grade levels to make it appropriate for the age of the child- to make it manageable to teach.

Mrs. Kaiser: Well then I think the state then comes down with the standards that they want us- every- the students in that state to meet per grade level. And I don't mind those standards. But then I'm at a whole different place with being at kindergarten being at the very beginning. I don't have as many- you know I've seen you know first grade, second grade- they just keep getting more and more. But it helps me to stay on task to know what it is I need to cover for these kids to have a good background so that they can go on to first grade and do what they need to do there. And I think it's kind of nice to have a building- it's almost though like we don't need textbooks anymore. Those state standards should be

our textbooks. And then we just put those into our programs like Four Block and you know what I mean.

The state standards are an effective tool teachers use in their work with students. It is a map or outline of what concepts and ideas need to be covered during that grade level. They detail what students need to know and be able to know from year to year. Now instead of strictly relying on textbooks, teachers have a more functional tool for their work. From kindergarten to fifth grade, the teachers find the standards to be a constructive element of accountability.

While many comments regarding standards were positive, some were mixed. Mr. Wilson, as a special education teacher, makes his instructional decisions “based on the state standards and where the student is functioning at that time which leads into the IEP.” His concern also is connected with the issue of standards assigned to particular grade levels. When it comes time for him to complete the district report card for each student, he encounters problems: “the way the general ed report cards don’t fit special ed. I have a fifth grader that is working at a kindergarten level, so of course when you mark all the areas it’s no progress.” Each grade level report card reflects that grade level’s standards for the areas of reading, writing, and math. On the back of the report is the district curriculum map for these areas. This format is new and reflects the importance the district is giving to these standards as well as keeping parents informed about student progress based on these standards. Mr. Wilson has students with a wide array of academic levels that do not match their assigned grade levels. Having the standards as a prominent element of the report cards does not provide him the necessary tool to report how students are progressing what they are learning in class. They are functioning on

and learning other grade level standards that are not part of the report card they are given. Having grade level standards on the report card does not work for Mr. Wilson in reporting student progress to parents on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Koselke's narrative on standards spoke of his concerns with standards, yet it begins with thoughts that are similar to the previous teacher as he talked about how they are useful in giving a focus and letting teachers know what they are responsible for teaching. As he continued, he voiced two concerns: retention and the number of standards required at each grade level.

Standards I think- I think it's important to have some standards across you know the level because you have to kind of focus in on what they should and need to know for each level. The problem in that is that if they don't know them at that grade level then you have to make the decision if you're going to retain them or pass them on knowing that they don't know the standards that they need to know for the grade level before. If we really held back all the kids that didn't master all the standards that they were supposed to at that grade level you know we'd have major chaos because of our grade level system. That's why I'm not you know for that. I'd rather have multi-age- you know no grades- and just they progress through when they learn standards that they need for each level. But I think it's a good thing to have a guide- you know kind of a curriculum map for teachers so they know what they're responsible for and what the kids are supposed to be learning at their level. And subject areas you know go right along with that. We have standards for all of them now. The problem is where do you fit them in?

You know the standards have expanded really what has to be taught but nothing has been dropped.

The current grade level system in place in American education does not work for Mr. Koselke, and standards required by accountability not only reinforce this system but make it even worse. Teachers and principals now face the dilemma of placing students in the next grade level when they have not yet mastered all the standards or retaining students with the hope that another year at a particular grade level will “catch them up” to their academic peers in the years to come. In his professional opinion, retention does not work for Mr. Koselke, and grade level standards aggravate and magnify this situation.

Mrs. Gable also voiced some concern over standards and retention that is somewhat different from the principal’s.

They’re huge in the way that we have to teach to the standards. The thing I don’t understand though is why Northville is still, “We have to teach to the standard for Indiana,” but if this kid is not meeting that standard we’re not allowed to hold them back more than once. And if we’re teaching to the standard and that kid can’t do that standard well then that kid shouldn’t be going on.

Her concern is that at some point the district retention policy interferes with a teacher’s decision about the best grade level placement for the student. The effectiveness of the standards for student learning is seemingly negated by this policy.

The other concern Mr. Koselke conveyed in his earlier quote has to do with the number of standards teachers need to teach and students need to master on a yearly basis. There are standards for the four core academic areas: English/Language Arts, math, science, and social studies, as well as for art, music, and physical education. Each

succeeding grade level has a greater number of standards that students are required to master. Teachers and students become overwhelmed with the number of standards that does not allow all students to master them. While standards provide a guide for what teachers are to do, this guide can become ineffective when the number goes above a saturation point. Teachers become frustrated in their work and students are less able to learn when there are too many standards to master before moving on to the next grade level.

Professional Development

Section 1001.10 of NCLB states that one way to accomplish the goal of the law is by “significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing the staff with substantial opportunities for professional development.” This is another aspect of the accountability policy that has worked for Marvel educators. However, this did not begin with these accountability policies. During the 1990’s, this school received a CSRD grant under the previous ESEA law which focused professional development on school reform efforts. Examination of the CSRD document included the school’s goals as well as professional development provided in order to meet these goals. Marvel teachers are accustomed to receiving training that is directly connected to school improvement.

Marvel teachers articulated their appreciation for the professional development program at the school. Whether it was consultants brought in to assist teachers in meeting their PL 221 goals or workshops they attended on educating African males, these teachers found that professional development worked because it helped them in their daily classroom work. Ms. Lambert said:

Well, generally speaking you get something out of every time. So, whether it was something you learned before and just reminded of and you say oh, yeah that's a good idea and I want to do that again or I want to do that now and I wasn't ready before. That type of thing. No, do they need to be as long as they are necessarily any workshop you go to- no. You know it seems you can fit in a couple of hours what it takes. You know what I'm saying. But you generally get something out any workshop.

These workshops help her to do her job as they refresh her skills as well as add new and effective instructional techniques to her teaching repertoire. Her only concern is about the time length of these workshops, but even the long ones are worthwhile to her work. Mr. Wilson has also found these workshops and trainings to be of value to his work.

I've actually gained some real practical ideas that I can use readily. Reinforced things that I should be doing and clarification I think. Like with the math, it has really probably told me a lot of things that I just didn't catch or didn't read in the material.

As these opportunities focus on what teachers are doing in their classrooms and support their work in meeting the improvement goals, they qualify as a valuable resource for teachers.

Mr. Koselke described how professional development is focused on the school's improvement goals and is practical as consultants come into the classrooms to work with teachers. He also finds the professional library to sustain what teachers have learned as they have access to materials that help them to apply what they learned into their

classrooms. He is able to be a more effective principal through what he receives, and he has seen teachers become more effective also.

Resources- professional development we have a- each school has allotted you know professional development funds to use building based as you want- you know which we tie those to our School Improvement goals which are based on improving achievement in reading, writing and math. And so our programs to help do that are Everyday Math and Four Blocks and then we have also tried to help address the climate and discipline issues with some professional development based on CLASS and we've been to some other things like dealing with tough students, positive discipline, educating African American male, some of those different things. So, those are some resources and then we also have books, book study groups- you know together with the principals we do- did one on the achievement gap and good principal techniques. And then this year we've done classroom walk through training- we've done 2 days of that- which is to help us be more effective in what we're looking for when we go into a classroom and to be able to identify the instructional strategies and standards being taught in a more concise manner.

What would I keep? Professional development- it's excellent. We have a highly focused professional development program.

The most beneficial resources- I would say there again the professional development opportunities that we have- the speakers, the consultants, people that we have come in to work with the staff you know I think has been really

beneficial. And we have an excellent professional library that we keep updated- you know and current materials. I think that's really beneficial too.

Other teachers also told about how they are able to translate what they learn in professional development into their teaching.

Mrs. Kaiser: Well, I think learning about things that- learning about different ideas or strategies that will help you then when we have somebody come in and actually show you and you take them back to the classroom and try them. Then you find out if they work or they don't work or you tweak them so that they work best for you and for what you're trying to get across to the kids. Is that what you kind of mean? Yeah, okay. It's kind of what I try to do. Oh, you see something at a workshop- at one of the banked days or whatever and you go, "Okay I think I'll try that." And then you try it and if it works- yeah and if it doesn't you might fix it a little so it'll work better or else you drop it and you try something else.

Mr. Jones: they give me fresh ideas. They give me more- like the autism training and the CLASS training- they give me more insight into how to keep my instruction positive and how to understand why certain children act the way they do. I just think- I just think they keep you fresh. I think with our population the kids get bored very, very, very easily and I think that with having to address all the different intelligences and learning styles, I think that we need that input all the time because- to keep every child with every learning style from getting bored is a huge deal as you know.

Mr. Gobel: they've given me new, fresh ideas on how to reach different kids- you know different learning styles, umm different personalities, different umm the different needs of kids.

Mrs. Archer: They've given me more ideas- different management ideas for setting up Four Blocks- different ways to teach each block and the same with Everyday Math.

Mrs. Gable: It changes me a little- it's like "Oh that sounds so good!" I try that and that it's like dang that was really hard to do. You know it's a little at a time. You can do little. You know if you change too much it's like you bite off more than you can chew and you just feel overwhelmed and it's like, "Criminy, how am I ever going to?" But it changes it a little at a time. You bring in a little from here, a little from there and see what works you keep and what doesn't you toss. You might try something that didn't work with one class, say the next year and try that and see and if it doesn't work a couple times- say I won't bother with that again. But you know you listen to that and you start weighing things on what you know from your own experiences or from other things that you read about or whatever. And you know you're balancing them out trying to figure out what would - "Well yeah I could see that point." Well let's see how that goes. And what you can change about it. You're always trying to make- if you're a teacher worth your spit at all- you're always trying to do what's better for the kids.

Mrs. Harding: it gives me more different ways to teach in other ways it validates what I am already doing.

Mrs. Gordon: They were relatively informal but were well planned and well presented and took me back to things that were presented earlier that I don't do as much as I should. And tended to force me a little bit out of my rut or made me more comfortable in forcing myself to get out of a rut. So, those are useful.

Mr. Morgan: Because if I'm not learning then you know I'm not going to grow as a teacher either. I think it's important that I learn as much as they learn. And I think that Marsha really is supportive about that and wants you to learn and wants you to go to these things so it helps- because it directly impacts your teaching.

You know I go to a really great session on Four Blocks, I come back and I'm re-energized about the Words Block you know. I just think it's important. It directly impacts it.

Teachers are able to take pragmatic ideas from their professional development to use in whatever way works for them with their students. They also gain new ideas to try that refine and improve their teaching skills. New approaches are given that make it possible for their students to learn the standards. As these things occur, teachers deem professional development to be worthwhile.

CHAPTER 12

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research was to explore what was happening at an Indiana Title I school due to accountability and high-stakes testing. In this research, I wanted readers to understand accountability from the perspective of the teachers and how it impacts their work on multiple levels. The previous chapters shared the moral, power, interpersonal, and technical stories of teachers as they live and work with the realities of NCLB, PL 221, and ISTEP+. Teachers and schools are complex, and how they respond to policies and testing is complex as well.

In this chapter, I will share some key findings of my research. These are the narratives that were talked about by a majority of the teachers, especially the four diverse case study participants. With their differing perspectives and knowledge of the policies and testing, issues that are of significance to all or many of them are of value to this research. Next, I will discuss how my research contributes to current literature on teaching and policy. The teaching literature includes teacher stress, instruction, assessment, teaching, and social factors. The policy literature includes social factors, professional development, and incentives. Implications for policymakers, teachers, researchers, and community will be delineated in the following section. Then, I will discuss my study's limitations including the short time span under which it was conducted, only a single school was studied, and the interpretation of the researcher. Finally, I will present some thoughts about future research to develop more understanding of teacher stories related to accountability.

Key Findings

This research examined the interactions of teachers' work, accountability policies, and high-stakes testing. While ESEA has been in existence and a part of teachers' work for four decades, the most recent legislation which states its purpose as "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education" (Sec. 1001) has increased the responsibility of teachers to provide proof that their work is meeting this goal. Standards and high-stakes testing are the instruments used by the policy to evaluate how well this goal is being met by teachers. Sanctions and rewards are the levers used to ensure compliance with the law. Under this legislation, each state is also required to enact an accountability policy, generate standards, and create a test of the standards. In Indiana, NCLB, PL 221, and ISTEP+ each play a role in the work of teachers throughout the state. The key findings for these influences include teachers and students, teachers and policy, and teachers and ISTEP+.

Issues that two or more case study participants shared in their narratives became part of the key findings. Since these teachers were chosen because of their diverse knowledge about the policies and test, those issues that were discussed by at least two of them suggests that it is an issue for most teachers. These issues were often also talked about by other teachers as well.

Teachers and Students.

Teaching is a profession that allows those who work in it to touch the lives of students in many positive ways. In their moral narratives, all four case study participants along with other teachers shared the value they place on making a difference or being a positive influence on the lives of their students. As they see ways that they have influenced their students academically, socially, or emotionally; these teachers are

rewarded in their work. In another moral narrative, teachers described how they are able to see the impact they are having in the students' lives through student learning and growth. They have a deep belief that all students can learn which they know is true in their daily interactions with students. Connected to this belief is that students learn in a variety of ways. It is the teacher's obligation to know how each one learns and teach accordingly such as through projects that involve hands-on activities and experiences according to three case study participants.

In order to evaluate student learning, teachers employ a variety of assessment tools. In their technical narratives, the teachers in this study noted that observation and performance assessment were most preferred because they allow them to see what concepts and skills the students have and haven't mastered. They are also able to use a variety of types of assessments in order to assess in ways that are closer to the students' learning styles. These forms of assessment are what provide the necessary information to plan instruction for the class as a whole as well as for individual students. Other observations also provide information about student growth. Teachers talked about seeing the "light bulb" go on when students were able to grasp something that had been previously out of reach. This is a valued reward for teachers which they see in their interactions with students around content.

Relationships with students, told in interpersonal narratives, are an important aspect of making a difference. Each teacher shared something about the value they place on making and sustaining connections with students, parents, and colleagues. They love the students even though they are at times described as "challenging" or "at risk". Teachers find value in having strong bonds with the students they work with.

Relationships with parents are something these teachers desire as well but are harder to maintain. Some teachers discussed how strong their connections are with parents while others struggled in making these bonds even though they did things to create them. Yet, these teachers recognize that part of teaching students, helping them to learn and grow, and to make a difference in their lives requires partnering with parents in order to accomplish these important goals. Relationships with colleagues are of great worth to the teachers as they find one another to be the best resource in the school in their work with students. Whether they vent about their reservations and worries related to accountability, ask how best to deal with a frustrating situation, or collaborate with one another regarding instruction; Marvel teachers rely on each other for support to do what is “best for kids.”

Teachers acknowledge that influences from outside the school walls make a difference in the lives of their students and their work with them. Issues of poverty were spoken of by several teachers and how this impacts their students when they come to school. Even as they know all students can learn, there are concerns about prior knowledge that students do not have which means that their students start at a different level than students in other schools. Yet, these are the children with whom they want to work. Students are exposed to and experience life issues that make the work of teaching and learning more difficult. There are things about students that are outside the control of the teachers. They understand and accept this while working hard to counteract these influences on the lives of their students. Before learning can begin, there are times when teachers need to attend to other student needs.

Teachers and Policy.

PL 221 and NCLB were the accountability policies teachers talked about in their narratives. Each has an influence on this school, and teachers have opinions of them based on their experiences as well as things they have read and heard. Teachers had differing reactions to these two accountability policies.

PL 221 was considered by many teachers to be a positive policy in many ways. There were some teachers who expressed reservations, but most teachers found particular aspects of this policy to be positive. It should be noted that this policy was in place two years before NCLB. One requirement of this policy is that the teachers and other stakeholders generate a design for improvement known as the PL 221 Plan. In this three year plan, teachers set goals based on data, chose programs that will help them meet these goals, determine benchmarks to evaluate growth as well as the instruments to be used for this, and plans for professional development and parent involvement. Teachers, in power and technical narratives, found that this policy gives them authority over their work and opportunities to collaborate. Professional development that is practical and meaningful to their classrooms in meeting the goals they set enhances their sense of professionalism. The standards mandated by this policy have also helped these teachers to know what they need to do in their work with students. They provide a roadmap and bring consistency at grade levels which helps them to deal with the high mobility rate of students.

NCLB had very severe negative narratives from these teachers. While a few teachers acknowledged the connection between these two policies, this made little difference in the way they judged this current reenactment of ESEA. Viewing this policy as having no benefit was a reaction based on the belief that it does not support their work. Several teachers were able to state that the purpose of the law was to provide all students

with a good education, but they feel that this will not be the outcome of this law. Two aspects of it were part of what teachers talked about the most: reliance on a single test and sanctions for not making AYP. For the PL 221 plan, schools use multiple forms of data to evaluate the reform efforts. However, NCLB uses a single indicator, ISTEP+ for Indiana schools, to determine AYP. In their professional judgment this does not reflect what students know and are able to do in connection with the standards. Teachers also spoke of “fear” and “dread” in association with this law. This comes from the sanctions that could be imposed on schools that do not make AYP. These teachers have seen their students grow, but feel that AYP will not reflect this growth and lead to sanctions against this school, most imminently the loss of some funds. They are also concerned with the public reputation of the school as test results and labels are communicated in the media and loss of students.

Another view teachers have of NCLB is that it is too political. They question how pragmatic this policy is and think that it is more about making the right political statements rather than seriously attending to the needs of schools that serve poor and minority students. While Mr. Koselke found some value in the law in calling public attention to achievement gaps, he finds other parts of the law, specifically sanctions based on a single test, to be counterproductive. Teachers are wary of a law that seems to make the teachers to be the scapegoat without acknowledging the social factors that play a powerful role in student achievement.

Teachers and ISTEP+.

Their narratives on valuable assessments were centered on teacher made forms of assessment or informal student observations, not on ISTEP+. Narratives about this test

were negative in nature. Mr. Koselke thinks that this test does help in making some long term school-wide decisions, but agrees with the other teachers that this is not the instrument that guides teachers in making instructional decisions or evaluating school progress in meeting accountability goals. The vast majority of teachers rarely if ever use data from the reports to make instructional decisions.

Several teachers voiced concerns about the test and these doubts make them even more skeptical of the usefulness of the results. Teachers who have given the test find some questions to be culturally biased. There were also misgivings about using a paper and pencil test to evaluate student learning when not all students performed well on these tests. Teachers' beliefs about student learning and assessment do not correspond to this test. ISTEP+ as a measure of student mastery of the Indiana State Academic Standards is not the right tool in the professional reasoning of these teachers.

Yet, teachers also discussed at length the activities that happen at the school connected to test preparation. While ISTEP+ is not considered a valuable form of assessment for these teachers in their work with students, they do spend a significant amount of time on preparing their students at all levels for the test. From the kindergarten teacher laying a "foundation"; to first grade teachers teaching test taking skills; to the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers with the assistance of the Title I teachers doing small group review and remediation; test preparation is a significant part of the curriculum at the beginning of the school year whether the teachers use the results or not for instructional purposes.

My Findings and the Research Literature

There are many studies that are concerned with the accountability and schools. These studies relate to: teachers' views of and responses to accountability and high-stakes testing, influences on instruction, connection to assessment, and policy issues. Other education literature connects with other aspects of my research as well: why choose to teach and the influences of poverty on education.

My research covers a gamut of what life is like in one school dealing with the realities of accountability and high-stakes testing. It is an in-depth look that opens the reader to the ways teachers are working with students while negotiating these policies. It also demonstrates the interactions of various aspects of teachers' lives. Just like schools, teachers' lives are complex including moral, power, interpersonal, and technical aspects. This research presents the complexities of a school and the teachers who work there. To examine how they are reacting, it is necessary to study each of these aspects of teachers to get a broader image of what how they are dealing with accountability. As we understand more about teachers' moral narratives, we can see how accountability does and does not match their beliefs and values. Further insight is gained from knowing how they define legitimate control and what this looks like in practice. The way accountability has impacted relationships is an area where my research adds something to the literature. Teachers live in a world of relationships that are pushed and pulled in certain ways because of accountability. The technical story adds more to the literature about how they react to accountability. It is in not only reading these four stories separately but in perceiving how they interact with one another that this research presents more to the literature.

In doing this study, I sought to give teachers, like the ones I had worked with for ten years, an opportunity to make their voice heard about teaching and accountability. It is a look at a school from a teacher's perspective because I feel that I have walked in their shoes. I understand what they are confronting in their work at an Indiana Title I school. This feeling has been reinforced as I have had the opportunity to discuss my research with other teachers in the state, and they tell me similar narratives.

Teachers and Stress.

The stress teachers experience due to accountability has been documented in several studies (Craig, 2004; Mathison and Freeman, 2006; McCarty and Lambert, 2006; McNeil, 2000; Mintrop, 2004; Schorr and Firestone, 2004; Smith, 1991; Zancanella, 1992). Teacher stress was part of several different aspects of teaching in a Title I school coping with accountability. Stress is a result of the publication of scores in the local media and how this impacts the school's reputation. Mathison and Freeman (2006) and Mintrop (2004) have documented this in teachers from New York, Maryland, and Kentucky. Teachers in Indiana are concerned with this as well demonstrating that stress is not a localized reaction but is something teachers from many states are experiencing no matter which type of test is used or the state accountability policy. My research does add how this stress impacts other aspects of a teacher's life such as their relationships with other teachers and how it compromises their professional ethics through test preparation.

District administrators, because of concerns over accountability, are adding to the stress of teachers. Teachers in two Kentucky schools (Mintrop, 2004) expressed similar concerns about these administrators as they make decisions that teachers perceive as a negative reaction to the school because of their status. Mrs. Johnson made this clear

when she understood the district to use Marvel as the “dumping ground” and that they place a larger number of special education students at this school. In contrast to Mathison and Freeman (2006) and Mabry and Margolis (2006), this study did not find there to be stress between the principal and the teachers. Instead, my research showed how they were both experiencing stress which seemed to draw them together. Mr. Koselke, the principal, did not see NCLB as a law that supported school improvement but as a detriment to ways the teachers at this school had been making progress in the past. In this study, the principal and teachers were working in cooperation to meet the demands of accountability and cope with the decisions of the district administrators.

Mintrop (2004) noted that stress and accountability were causing teachers to leave their schools. In contrast, the participants in my study did not choose to leave Marvel but were placed in other schools because of a reduction in force across the district. Marvel teachers were still committed to teaching at this school which may be due to the nature of their relationship with the principal. Teachers in this study also noted the importance they placed on working with these students which is another factor that contributed to their willingness to stay. There was something about their need to work with students from low socioeconomic homes that helped them endure the stress of accountability.

This study does provide some of the information that McCarthy and Lambert (2006) call for, “Nevertheless, future research is needed to document the demanding conditions under which teachers perform, understand the resources they find most helpful, and evaluate interventions that can bring new resources to them in an effective manner” (p. 222). In all four stories, teachers provided details about the conditions under which they work in this Indiana Title I school as well as what resources they do and do

not find useful in doing their work. Teachers talk about the factors they do not have control over and how these impact their work with students. Their views on professional development and relationships with colleagues tell some about which interventions they found useful as well as the resources that have enabled them to refine their practice in ways that impact student learning.

Teachers and Instruction.

Other literature is concerned with how teachers react to accountability in terms of instruction. There have been studies of how teachers move into survival mode in their teaching and do all they can to make the grade through intensive test preparation (Bulkley, Fairman, and Martinez, 2004; Camilli and Monfils, 2004; Corcoran and Christman, 2002; Diamond and Spillane, 2004; Mintrop, 2004; Monfils, et al, 2004; Wood, 2004). Marvel teachers talked in some detail about the test preparation that happens at this school. Like teachers in previous studies (Camilli and Monfils, 2004; Mintrop, 2004), the reason for all they do is connected to their desire to get as many students as possible to pass the test so that they do not get labeled as a failing school and face sanctions. What they do does not match their professional wisdom, but they do it out of a sense of survival as a school.

In some cases, Marvel teachers use both instructional techniques that are reform oriented as well as those similar to the test. In contrast to other studies that found teachers focusing more on test preparation than reform efforts (Bulkley, Fairman, and Martinez, 2004; Diamond and Spillane, 2004; Monfils, et al, 2004), they are attempting to use both the “quick fixes” of test preparation and the “in-depth strategies” connected to reform programs (Bulkley, Fairman, and Martinez, 2004, p. 126) that connect with their

professional judgment. However, the beginning of the school year for third, fourth, and fifth grades is focused on preparing students for the test while other times of the year they employ reform instructional techniques.

Marvel teachers appreciate standards that provide both guidance and consistency which seems to demonstrate that they would meet Corcoran and Christman's (2002) label of "competent teachers" (p. 12). Yet, these same teachers also use test preparation activities that they found less competent teachers using instead of the standards. This is seen even as the teachers pay attention to particular items on the test so that they can use these to know what to focus on. Prior tests become the guidance tool in teaching students rather than the standards. They do this as a defense against the failing label. While they have worked hard and have strong professional beliefs that are reform-oriented, they find themselves being "defensive" teachers.

Teachers have employed ways to work or cope with educational policies and Marvel teachers are no different. Webb (2006) found teachers who negotiated policies by making determinations of what they would honor of the policies in light of their students' learning needs. When the policy negatively impacted this, they chose to ignore the policy. Their primary goal was student learning. One Marvel teacher's narratives reflected this. Mr. Wilson often set aside ISTEP+ and NCLB as he focused his attention on special education laws and students' IEPs to guide his instruction. These were policies that supported his students' learning. Other teachers felt a desire to do this but were unable to for some reason. An example of this would be the narrative Mr. Koselke and Mrs. Johnson told about non-graded schools which they both felt would be more beneficial to students, yet they felt that this was outside their power. While teachers want

to pick and choose what they pay attention to in the policy, they still are controlled by it unless there are other competing policies that make this possible.

Teachers and Assessment.

Marvel teachers found little use for ISTEP+ in making instructional decisions. In a study comparing the Texas state test with a test that is under the control of the teacher, Yeh (2006) found that the test teachers had greater control of provided more useful results in making instructional decisions. Like these teachers, Marvel teachers found that ISTEP+ scores were of little use because they came to the teachers so long after the test was given. The speed of the feedback to the teachers makes a great difference. Other forms of assessment were useful to teachers, such as the computer based assessment information after students took a Northwest Education Assessment test. Another issue that Marvel teachers had with ISTEP+ was the lack of clarity about what concepts were and were not mastered. Teachers are able to use assessment data that is quick and meaningful, however ISTEP+ data does not meet these criteria.

ISTEP+ is a criterion-referenced test that includes multiple choice tests in English/language arts and math as well as constructed response test in these two areas. At the elementary level, fifth graders take a science test also. In contrast, Mintrop's (2004) study of Maryland and Kentucky was based on other types of tests. Maryland's test was performance-based where students used "critical thinking, problem-solving, and the integration of knowledge from multiple fields of study" (p. 7). The test in Kentucky was made up of multiple parts including ones that were similar to ISTEP+ but also included writing portfolios. The New Jersey study test in the study by Firestone, Schorr, Monfils and colleagues (2004) is made up of performance-based tasks that mimic the

instruction required by the state law. Comparing and contrasting the ways these different types of high-stakes tests impact teachers is important as policymakers, teachers, and test experts look for more information about the consequences of testing on classrooms.

Marvel teachers value the use of multiple indicators in making their instructional decisions. Using formats that meet the learning strengths of their students or using data from varied assessments are what works for these teachers. Their stories reinforce what other studies have concluded about the benefit of multiple indicators to make instructional decisions and evaluate student learning as well as the work of teachers (Herman, 2004; Popham, 2005).

Teachers and Teaching.

Teachers choose this profession because of the children and the ways they are able to influence their lives in multiple ways (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Gerstl-Pepin, 2006; Mintrop, 2004; Provenzo and McCloskey, 1996). Through their stories, Marvel teachers also stated that touching the lives of their students was an important part of their teaching. From Mr. Wilson's need to have "rapport" with his students to Ms. Lambert's desire to be a "positive influence" on her students, teachers find one of the basic elements of their profession is to be able to impact the lives of their students. In schools like Marvel, where so many students live in poverty, this becomes even more essential as these teachers see themselves as someone who can guide their students into a happy and productive life through education. This research makes clear how pivotal connecting with students and having a positive effect on their lives is to teachers. It colors how teachers do their work and experience accountability and high-stakes testing.

Teachers and Social Factors.

Marvel teachers work with a majority of students who live in poverty and this has made a difference in how they view accountability and testing. As Mr. Koselke said, teachers recognize the reason for the academic gaps accountability policies seek to eliminate. They are not ignoring them. In their narratives about the lives of their students, teachers echoed Gerstl-Pepin (2006), “lower income children and those living in poverty are the ones that are most likely to come to school unprepared, and this adds a layer of complexity to the work that teachers do” (p. 157). Specific examples of this are told in the narratives of what teachers have no control of when it comes to students. Teachers are struggling with the fairness of accountability policies that hold them responsible for factors that are outside of their control (Corcoran and Christman, 2002; Gerstl-Pepin, 2006).

Policy and Social Factors.

Berliner (2006) and Rothstein (2004) have clearly presented the facts and issues of how social factors play a significant role in schools. They have also connected these to concerns about reform and accountability. My research has provided readers with names of students and teachers who exemplify these facts and issues. Mrs. Kaiser shared how Willie is living in a two bedroom home with thirteen other people and how this is impacting the sleep the children get before coming to school. Mr. Koselke shared how he wanted to solve students’ problems and gave examples of arrests in the homes and being home alone. Other teachers talked about the lack of prior knowledge students have which they connected to a lack of resources to purchase books and other materials. Teachers find that their students are not read to at home by adults. While reading

Berliner and Rothstein, I was able to connect the issues they were discussing with students and teachers at Marvel.

Policy and Professional Development.

Organizational capacity is an essential element in school reform and improvement (Corcoran and Christman, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Firestone, Monfils, Schorr, Hicks, and Martinez, 2004; Newmann, et al., 1997). Professional development that is practical and meets the goals of reform has great value to teachers as it enhances their professional skills. Many Marvel teachers told of the value they received from professional development. In my research, some of these were determined by the district while others were based on the school's PL 221/SIP which was written by the teachers. Teachers find value in capacity building activities that are immediate to what they are doing in their classrooms, and those that they were able to choose based on their professional judgment of what they needed to know in order to meet the goals of their improvement plan. Professional development empowers teachers and is more likely to change their instruction when it meets these criteria. This research not only shows the value of professional development but what teachers are looking for in it.

Policy and Incentives.

Current accountability policies employ particular policy levers to ensure that the desired changes will occur in schools (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987). The levers of sanctions and rewards used in NCLB and PL 221 are based on whether schools met their particular AYP goals based on ISTEP+. Diamond and Spillane (2004) noted that teachers from low performing schools react differently to sanctions and rewards than teachers from high performing schools. Marvel teachers demonstrated a mixture of these

responses to the levers. Like teachers from low performing schools, they concentrated on ways to meet AYP by spending time in test preparation activities in an effort to get more students to pass the test. They also spent more time on the subject areas that were tested at the expense of science and social studies. However, when it came to data analysis, these teachers spent time examining information they gathered on their students as they collaborated with one another. Marvel teachers had received professional development in the area of data analysis and were honing their skills in this area, focusing more on performance assessments rather than ISTEP+. This research reveals the role that specified time for data analysis in collaboration and professional development has when it comes to the response of teachers from low performing schools to policy sanctions and rewards.

Implications

Policymakers, teachers, researchers, and community members can each take something from the stories of Marvel teachers. They help all to understand teachers and their work as well as how they understand the current accountability policies. This research contributes some very personal knowledge about teachers that was obtained from an in-depth small scale study. It allows for the voices of teachers to come through rather than to be covered up in statistics and other forms of “hard data.”

Policymakers.

Something teachers want from policymakers is respect for their profession. There are several ways that they can show this respect for them that will make a difference in the implementation of school reform policies. These include things as simple as making

teachers an essential part of the policymaking process to providing the necessary financial support to sustain reform in school.

One question asked by two Marvel teachers was why teachers were not asked their ideas and opinions of the policies. They were frustrated about being shut out of the process of designing their profession's accountability process. As policymakers pay attention to what teachers have to say, they are demonstrating respect for teachers and their expertise in their work (Altenbaugh, 1992a; Casey, 1993). Carefully choosing some influential teachers to be responsible for monitoring the work of teachers can cause diffusion to occur as these teachers impact other teachers with the need to meet the requirements of accountability (Gladwell, 2000). Connecting with teachers in this way gives them ownership and control over their work which has led to greater changes in schools (Cohen and Ball, 1999; Corcoran and Christman, 2002; Mintrop, 2004). As Tronto (1993) noted, conflicts arise when those who take care of and those who give care have different views about what needs to be done in the work of caring which can be resolved through the contact and connection of these two distinct groups. For education, this means that the federal and state policymakers, the ones who take care of education, must make deliberate efforts to build dynamic relationships with educators, the ones who give care, in order to generate powerful and significant policies that will positively influence school reform.

PL 221 was viewed by Marvel teachers in a positive light because this law gave teachers ownership of the improvement plan and allowed teachers to use their professional judgment to make decisions. Professional development was another key factor for these teachers as it increased the organizational capacity of teachers to meet the

reform goals (Elmore, 2002; Mintrop, 2004, Newmann, et al., 1997; Popham, 2005).

Teachers determined in their plan what workshops they needed to meet the goals of this plan. The vast majority of Marvel teachers found that there was something they could learn from these workshops. This was further enhanced as teachers were afforded time to collaborate with one another (Nieto, 2003; O'Day, 2004). Marvel teachers talked about the need to be "lifelong learners" which they were able to do through professional development. They knew the purpose for their learning and how this would allow them to be better teachers. The direct connection to student learning made this a highly valued commodity. These are not teachers resting on their laurels but ones who want to refine their abilities to address the needs of their students. Policies that provide support and time for changes in practice are more successful (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001; Elmore, 2002; Schorr and Firestone, 2004).

Respect for teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning is also necessary. It is important that policymakers understand that teachers see teaching as a service to the students (Cochran-Smith, 2003). In the stories, teachers shared some of their beliefs about teaching such as making a difference, students learn at their own pace and ways, assessment needs to match instruction and done in multiple ways, and students' backgrounds play a role in their learning. Policies that support these beliefs are more likely to be sustained while policies that do not are less likely to have a positive impact on schools. Marvel teachers have very negative reactions to NCLB and ISTEP+ because they do not match these beliefs. One example of this is the use of a single test to evaluate the school. Teachers believe that one paper and pencil test is not the appropriate way to evaluate student learning because some students will not do well on this type of test.

Other teachers are concerned about cultural bias in the test which means that some students are not afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the standards. Policies that make use of multiple forms of assessment data are more in line with teachers' beliefs.

The work of teachers can be considered as giving care of students, and the role of policymakers is then to make a plan to take care of schools so teachers can be successful in their work (Tronto, 1993). There is reciprocity in accountability when looking at policies this way. Just as teachers are accountable for meeting the learning needs of their students, policymakers are responsible for providing the necessary structures in place for them to meet this significant responsibility. Policymakers need to set standards for teachers and themselves, delineate responsibilities at all levels from the legislature to the classroom, and provide the appropriate measures for the policies (Oakes, Blasi, and Rogers, 2004). Reciprocity also should extend to parents and students as policymakers attend to what they have to say about the needs of education in their communities (Oakes, Blasi, and Rogers, 2004).

The work of teaching does not occur in a vacuum but is influenced greatly by the backgrounds and home lives of students. Policymakers need to respect that teachers are working within the larger social situations of their students and policy needs to reflect this (Berliner, 2005; Camilli and Monfils, 2004; Gerstl-Pepin, 2006; Rothstein, 2004). Daily the Marvel teachers were coping with what this means as they do their work. This may mean that they need to take extra time preparing students with particular background knowledge so they can understand a new concept, or it may mean that teachers need to conduct a community circle so they can work out a neighborhood problem in a civil way.

Policymakers need to recognize that all students do not come to school with the same sets of skills and prior knowledge. Mr. Gobel noted that some students have a good understanding of bootlegging and how to play Grand Theft Auto, but these same students struggle with the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Some students in Mrs. Kaiser's kindergarten class had never written their name or been read to before coming to kindergarten. They are not on the same timetable to learning as students from more privileged backgrounds. Policies that lump all students together into a "one size fits all" are demonstrating a lack of respect for students and the teachers who are doing all they can to teach them. Schools and the work of teachers is one part of a larger and more complex social policy.

Teachers.

There are three important ideas teachers can acquire from this research: learn about policies and testing, speak to others, and honor your profession. The first is the need for teachers to learn about and understand education policies and testing. Marvel teachers had many questions and misperceptions about both the policies and the test. Before teachers can be a valued part of the discussion, they need to be well-informed about the policies and test. Some of the questions that teachers asked were ones I had myself before I began my doctoral studies such as the history of ESEA, the validity of ISTEP+ and the use of results to evaluate a school, and how the constructed response items were scored. Being better informed about both these entities is essential as they each have an impact on the work of teachers. Teachers need to critically read the policies, test manuals, and current education research with the goal of having a strong grounding in what is happening in their profession as well as to create and articulate

reasoned arguments about educational reform. Taking the time to learn more about policies and testing prepares teachers to speak intelligently and convincingly to policymakers, parents, community members, and other education stakeholders about them.

Armed with information, teachers are now able to talk with various interested parties about their concerns and ideas about accountability and testing. It is important that teachers make their voices heard on these issues (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Gitlin, et al, 1992; Kohn, 2004; Schwarz, 2001). This discussion includes teachers talking with one another (Gunzenhauser, 2003; Wasserman, 2001), others in the educational community, and the broader community. Marvel teachers seemed to discuss these policies on a more limited basis. They learned about them during staff meetings when Mr. Koselke gave them particular information, but the discussion among teachers was more limited to venting and complaining about them. While speaking about accountability and testing, teachers are also able to be an activist working in the interests of their students (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gerstl-Pepin, 2006). Carefully crafting arguments with concrete examples based on the students they work with can give strength to what teachers have to say. Marvel teachers' stories provide some of the evidence for their arguments about the unfairness and bias of ISTEP+ that others need to hear. The impact of poverty on student learning is another narrative that can be used by teachers in advocating for greater social services for students at this school.

In today's accountability climate, it can be hard for teachers to feel good about their chosen profession. Marvel teachers are dealing with multiple forms of stress in their work. As some noted, their students can be "challenging" to work with as they bring

their “baggage” to school and it disrupts learning. A student falling asleep in class, students hitting each other on the playground because their parents have told them it is okay to hit someone back, or needing to review a concept once again that students should have mastered the previous year are all struggles these teachers talked about in their work. In these days of labeling and accountability, it can become disheartening to be a teacher in a school that is struggling to make AYP. Reading these stories can cause teachers to reflect on their own stories as well. Teachers who make a difference, respect student learning, and make use of professional development are a few examples of how they can recognize their professionalism and not be discouraged by negative labels and talk. Hollingsworth (1998) learned through the works of Maxine Greene of the need for teachers to pay attention to their stories so they gain and keep control over their teacher selves. Teachers also honor their profession as they learn from and skillfully use professional development for purposes of reform (Cohen and Ball, 1999; Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001, Elmore, 2002; Schorr and Firestone, 2004). Two Marvel teachers shared that they did not think that the accountability policies were needed at this school because the teachers at this school were already committed to improving student learning. Creating and sustaining this form of internal accountability is another way teachers honor their profession as they hold one another accountable.

Teachers also honor their profession as their moral stories about students include both caring and competence. It is not enough to just care for their physical and emotional needs but to also meet their intellectual needs as well. It is the responsibility of teachers to be competent in their profession so that they can ensure that all the students are provided with the best education possible. They must recognize this responsibility and

follow through on it with professional knowledge and skill. Teachers honor their profession as they draw on “professional ethics” (Tronto, 1993, p. 134) daily in their interactions with their students. The focus is on all the needs of the student and providing these needs with competence.

This reading of teacher stories needs to be done from a critical viewpoint. It is to be done with the intent to discover what they are doing well as well as where they need to improve. An example of this from some of the stories from Marvel teachers was the way they talked about parents in very negative terms. Through reading and reflecting on these, teachers can make a conscious choice to alter their opinion of parents.

Researchers.

With testing as a central component to accountability, there is a need for further research on issues in Marvel teachers’ stories. These include test preparation, the uses and misuses of standardized test scores, testing and learning styles, grading and accuracy of constructed response items, and cultural bias. Research that addresses these specific concerns about ISTEP+ is something Marvel teachers want. Broader questions also exist that are connected to these stories. Research on the best and most appropriate accommodations for special education students (Thurlow, 2004) may allay many of Mr. Wilson’s reservations about the test. How well does the test measure the impact of instruction is another significant question in light of the purpose of accountability (Popham, 2005). Examination of ISTEP+ and how well the standards are covered (Popham, 2005) would also be meaningful to these teachers who have doubts about this. Mrs. Gordon asked a question about the validity of the test, while other teachers expressed doubts about this test being used to make evaluative decisions. In seeking to

answer these questions, I was unable to locate consequential validity studies for this test which presents a need for this research. Baker and Linn (2004) are concerned with “the capacity of users to understand and interpret information” (p. 48). There were varied responses from Marvel teachers about this issue. Further research on teachers’ abilities to use test data is needed. Research on the impact of consequences (Cohen and Ball, 1999; Elmore, 2004; Stecher and Hamilton, 2003) as well their connection with testing and teaching (Cimbricz, 2002) needs to be done so teachers have more information.

Teachers have particular beliefs about and uses of assessment in their work, but current accountability policies seem show a distrust of their competence in this area. Members of the research community could make a difference when it comes to this disconnect between teachers and policymakers by more closely examining what teachers know about and how they use assessment in their work. This would help teachers to hone their assessment skills as well as provide policymakers with greater insights into teachers’ assessment abilities. Testing experts, teachers, and policymakers need to build and maintain a constructive dialogue about assessment issues (Madaus and Horn, 2000).

Community Members

Reading or listening to this research can offer these individuals with greater insights into what is happening at this school as well as other schools like it. They can see what teachers do each day as they address the needs of their students. The complexity of the lives of teachers can be understood as they read the various stories. They can learn what is important to teachers, their joys and fears, and what their work requires of them each day. This information enables community members to make their own judgments about the value of teachers at schools. They should come to understand

that what happens at a school cannot be summed up with a single test score. Their views on accountability and testing are widened by gaining the perspectives of a group of teachers. Equipped with information and their judgments, community members are better able to participate in open and honest discussions about testing and accountability. Members of the school, local, state, and national communities need to be part of this conversation with teachers, researchers, and policymakers as the issues are far ranging. Public debate among all members of the community is needed to remind us that a good education is at the core of accountability (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2001; Pignatelli, 1998).

Limitations

This is a study done in a single school over the course of a three month period. There are issues that may not be present in this study because of being in one school for a short amount of time. For example, I have a record of what was done at the beginning of the year in preparing the students for the test, but this is recall information rather than experienced by the researcher in this case. However, as a teacher before going to the university, I was involved in similar activities so I feel that I have some understanding of what occurred. A yearlong study of a school would yield a greater amount of data that could add richer flavor and texture to the teachers' stories. This would also allow for participation in professional development teachers received as well as more observations. Unfortunately, the end of the school year was fast approaching when I was able to do my observations. Having more flexibility in time to observe and notice what was happening at the school would have been helpful.

What I have found interesting, however, is that when I have shared my research with other educators, it has resonated with them. One such instance was in talking about my data with a close friend who is a principal in a community located near Northville. Even though the students at her school have historically done well on ISTEP+, many of the issues I shared with her from my data were things that she saw happening at her school. My findings seem to fit other Indiana schools. I noticed this also when I shared this information as part of a job interview at a university in another state. The teacher educators I was talking with stated that what I was finding among the Marvel teachers in Indiana were very similar to what the teachers in their state were experiencing.

Another limitation to my study is that it presents my interpretation of the data. Even with the efforts I made to limit researcher bias, I realize that my teacher self is very much invested in what I am saying and how I understand what is happening at this school. It may well be that someone without my strong connections with Title I elementary schools and with strong feelings about ISTEP+ may interpret what teachers had to say in a different way. However, my background also means that there are things Marvel teachers said that I have prior knowledge of which enhances my understanding of what was happening there. I also became close to some of the teachers as well as invested in the school. These also color how I understand and write about accountability at Marvel.

Future research

One area for future research would be to take the story theory to learn about what students are experiencing in relation to accountability policies. A central aspect of the teachers' stories in this research was about students which initiates the question of what

students believe, where they feel control or a loss of it, how this influences their relationships, and what does and doesn't help them to learn. Teachers are one part of the school that is being held accountable. A fuller picture, or a larger quilt, could be seen by asking questions about students' views and understandings of school. This research could include not only what happens at school, but also aspects such as homework, early literacy experiences, how they define right from wrong, healthcare, family issues, and many other questions that come from some of the stories teachers about students. This research could also look at what happens to the students as they prepare for and take the test as well as what happens when they receive their scores. In Indiana, remediation programs have become a major response to accountability. Focusing on how students experience these programs provides more information about students and accountability.

This study focused on one school in an Indiana district, yet as I discussed my research with other educators what I said seemed to resonate with them. This has led me to an informal assumption that teachers in schools of all kinds across the country have very similar stories to tell about the impact of accountability on their teaching. An inquiry that takes into account various differences such as location of the school, socioeconomic levels of the students, level of parent involvement, size of the school, ages and grade levels, and other school demographic features could provide a richer picture of the influence of accountability and how teachers are responding to it. Exploring similarities as well as differences can be useful to a wide array of education stakeholders as they plan, enact, and implement legislation as well as school reform.

Another way to conduct a research study about how teachers are experiencing accountability would be through the lens of the different types of policies and their

consequences. Stecher and Hamilton (2003) noted that there is not enough research on the positive and negative consequences of high stakes testing. Comparing teacher stories about the consequences of their state's accountability policy can be used to inform policymakers about the best and most effective forms of sanctions and incentives from the perspective of those who are closest to them.

Marvel teachers talked at length about their views about assessment and ISTEP+. They talked about what they thought was good and bad about the test as well as what they have done in response to AYP. There are several ways that the teachers of this school are working to raise the scores through test preparation. Questions remain about how teachers instructional responses to the sanctions of accountability based on a single test score are improving student learning (Cimbricz, 2002). More research on how teachers are responding as well as how this connects with student learning is needed.

CHAPTER 13

EPILOGUE: MARVEL SCHOOL TODAY

It was the spring semester of 2005 when I had the opportunity to interview and observe the teachers of Marvel Elementary School. At that time the school was completing the first year knowing that they had not made AYP. During the time I was there, the teachers and principal were still waiting to hear from the Indiana Department of Education whether or not they had made AYP for the 2004-05 school year based on the results of ISTEP+ given during September. While waiting to hear their fate, other things occurred to change the dynamics of this school.

Changes at the School

First, reduction in force notices went out to many teachers across the district including four at Marvel. One of the interviewed teachers received one of these notices that she would not have a job the next year. As time went on though, three of these teachers received positions in the district. Two of them each went to a different middle school as they had the proper licensure for those positions, and that is where there were open jobs while another went to another elementary school in the district. Two elementary teachers from other district schools who had been let go were called back also but to the positions at Marvel.

This meant that there were open positions at kindergarten, third grade, and fourth grade. A fifth grade teacher decided to move to one of the open third grade positions and a new teacher took the fifth grade position. The other third grade position went to one of the new teachers. The fourth grade position was filled by a teacher who had been at Marvel previously and therefore knew about most of the reform efforts in the School

Improvement Plan. It was, however, not her wish to come back to this school that she had worked so hard to leave. The kindergarten position was filled by another teacher from the district. This meant that only the teachers at the first and second grade levels would be the same for the 2005-06 school year. Every other grade level was experiencing some change in teaching staff.

AYP News

On May 27, 2005, Mr. Koselke sent a letter home to parents letting them know that the school had not made AYP for the second year in a row. In this letter, the parents were informed that the school's overall English/Language Arts scores missed the required goal by 0.9% and the African American English/Language Arts scores missed their goal also. An appeal for a waiver had been sent to the Indiana Department of Education, and the school was waiting for their decision. This waiver presented evidence of student learning based on other assessment data the school had collected throughout the year. The consequences for the school if the waiver was not granted were included as well.

Shortly after the school year ended, Mr. Koselke received the state's denial of Marvel's waiver. He then wrote a letter to the parents informing of this and what their options were. Parents had the opportunity to apply to send their children to one of two neighboring schools that had some space and had made AYP with transportation costs coming out of Marvel's Title I budget. All applications were to be picked up and dropped off at the administration building. Parents were also given the option to call Mr. Koselke for further information. The cost for mailing all the letters also came from Marvel's Title I budget.

During the summer of 2005, Northville Community Schools conducted both summer school and a special program known as Jump Start. Summer school was a required four week program for the students who did not pass both the math and the English/Language Arts sections of ISTEP+. However, there were no consequences for the students who did not choose to attend. Thirty-four students from Marvel attended this program. The two week Jump Start program was offered to students who failed one of the sections of the test but with no consequences for not attending. Forty Marvel students attended this program.

Consequences

As the 2005-06 school year was about to begin, Mr. Koselke learned several things that would make even more changes occur at the school for the year to come. First, a total of 32 students would not be attending the school as a consequence of not making AYP. These students' parents had chosen to send them to one of the neighboring elementary schools. This included a number of kindergarten students whose parents chose not to send their students to Marvel. In phone conversations with some of these parents, Mr. Koselke learned that some of them had heard rumors about the students at the school, and they did not want their children to go to the same school with them. Most of the students that left went to Parkside Elementary. Parkside's building was built during the 1990's and is the newest in the district. The vast majority of the students that left were white.

With the loss of these students, Marvel also lost two teachers- one third and one fifth. This now meant that the school had lost a section in both these grade levels. These teachers were assigned to other schools with larger than expected enrollment. The third

grade teacher learned shortly before school started that she was being reassigned to another school. The fifth grade teacher however was reassigned a few days after the school year had begun. This meant that the students who were in her class were divided and placed into one of the other two fifth grade classrooms.

Student demographics also changed at Marvel.

	2004-2005	2005-2006
Total students	373	332
Black	209	188
White	157	116
Multiracial	4	19
Hispanic	3	6
Native American	0	2
Free/Reduced Lunch	283	292
Paid Lunch	90	40

Table 13.1 Current student demographics

There were 40 fewer students at Marvel during the last school year. The greatest ethnic group drop was for white students. Yet, at the same time the total number of students fell, the number of students on free or reduced lunch rose. An increasing percentage of students at the school are from homes in poverty.

Shortly after the school year began, test preparation got under way at Marvel. For four weeks the Title I staff members worked with small groups of third, fourth and fifth grade students with activities that were similar to the test including reading, writing and

math. The activities covered those areas where the students had scored poorly on the previous year's test. Test preparation became a central focus in the early days of the school year.

Three times throughout the course of the year Marvel also offered a one hour after school remediation program to students. In the fall and spring it was open to first through fifth graders while in the winter it was open to second through fifth graders. Students in this program had either failed one or both sections of ISTEP+ for third through fifth graders and NWEA scores for second graders. In total the program covered 20 weeks of the 36 week school year. Sixty students came to the fall program while there were forty in each of the winter and spring sessions.

Some curriculum changes crept into Marvel during the course of the year as well. Teachers had less and less time to teach using the Four Blocks Literacy Model that is in the School Improvement Plan as the district began pushing the use of other programs, Making Meaning and Wilson Reading. Because teachers were required by the district to try out these programs, there was not time to accomplish the Four Blocks program. It also made it more difficult for teachers to plan and implement thematic units which are another part of the School Improvement Plan. Mr. Koselke stated that the plan the teachers had put together was becoming fragmented. What is interesting is that the current School Improvement Plan is in many respects an extension of the CSRD plan the school had implemented previously. Scores had improved during that time, but teacher and student mobility as well as district influence has diminished this plan.

Professional development continued at the school. Marvel sponsored professional development focused on math and data analysis. The math consultant worked with

teachers for multiple days twice during the year in their classrooms, as a whole staff, with grade level teams, and with individual teachers before and after school. The training was focused on how to connect the Everyday Math program to the math assessment program the teachers are using for quarterly assessments. The data analysis consultant came twice. The first time, teachers worked with her to analyze student mistakes on constructed response items on ISTEP+. The second time teachers analyzed quarterly assessment, NWEA, and ISTEP+ results and used this to set goals for the following year. Eight teachers also attended a Four Blocks writing workshop. Mr. Koselke also asked each grade level to present something they were doing that connected with a School Improvement Plan goal at a staff meeting. Some examples were first grade presenting on Wilson Reading and second grade presenting on integrating science and language arts.

The district also sponsored professional development. All teachers went to a series of three workshops on reading comprehension. All special education as well as first and second grade teachers went to Wilson Reading training, 40 Developmental Assets workshop, and each school had someone come in to work with teachers in connection with Compass Odyssey, an educational software program used throughout the district. The district also had a full day workshop on collaboration. Mr. Koselke commented that what was presented was much the same as what the teachers at Marvel were already doing. In fact, a teacher that had been at Marvel and is currently at another school in the district made a comment that the teachers at Marvel were doing this in the past.

Monthly coordination meetings continued at Marvel. Each month the grade level teams were released from their classrooms for a half day to analyze data and plan

together. Substitute teachers were hired with Title I money to teach the classes while the teachers reflected on student learning and planned what to cover next in the curriculum in grade level teams.

More Bad News

The arrival of bad news came to Marvel when it was learned that for the third year in a row they did not make AYP. This year the out of the 10 areas where it is computed, the students did not make AYP in overall English/Language Arts, White English/Language Arts, Free/Reduced English/Language Arts, Special Education English/Language Arts and Special Education Math. They were moved to the Supplemental Services level of PL 221 sanctions because of failing to make AYP in overall English/Language Arts again. However, they did make AYP for Black English/Language Arts which had not happened the previous year.

The result of not making AYP is that Mr. Koselke had to send letters home to all parents to offer them one of two options: school choice or supplemental services. This fall 46 students will be attending one of the neighboring schools. Of these students, 19 of them have never attended Marvel because of either attending private school or through babysitter transfers. Again the majority of the parents chose to send their children to Parkside even though this school did not make AYP in three areas the previous year. No parents who chose to keep their children at Marvel took advantage of the supplemental services that were also offered.

Another change occurred at Marvel and in the Northville Community Schools. The central office decided that Title I services would be redistributed in the 2006-07 school year. One of the closed elementary schools was refurbished and made into an

early childhood center to serve the students. This school is located in one of the poorer areas of the city. Title I schools are also all offering all day kindergarten. This will be offered to students who are the lowest on the district screening. There will be two full day kindergarten classrooms at Marvel. However, this also meant a change in the school's Title I staff. The two Title I teachers were both assigned to regular classrooms; one at Marvel and the other at the high school because of licensing. The preschool teacher and aid were moved to the early childhood school. The home school coordinator position was eliminated and the two instructional assistants were sent to other buildings.

The school also no longer had control of their Title I budget as they had in the past. With the loss of teachers, the only students who would receive Title I services at the school would be the full day kindergarten students. Teachers also no longer had monthly coordination meetings, but now met once a quarter to analyze data and plan. What the teachers had been doing eight months of the year was now reduced to four times a year.

Several teachers were also be shuffled around for the 2006-07 school year. A kindergarten teacher who had been at Marvel previously joined the veteran kindergarten teacher in the two full day classrooms. One first grade teacher moved to second to join a veteran second grade teacher and one of the Title I teachers. A second grade teacher was moved to the open first grade while another second grade teacher looped with his class and moved to third grade with one of the fourth grade teachers. One third grade teacher moved to fifth grade while another was moved to another building involuntarily. The fourth grade retained two teachers at this grade level. In all, one teacher was coming into

the school, two teachers were leaving (one involuntarily and the other through retirement), and five teachers were moving to different grade levels.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANTS

Teacher's Name	Grade Level
Mrs. Kaiser	Kindergarten
Ms. Lambert	First Grade
Mrs. Archer	First Grade
Mr. Jones	Second Grade
Mr. Morgan	Third Grade
Mrs. Harding	Third Grade
Mrs. Gable	Fourth Grade
Mrs. Johnson	Fifth Grade
Mr. Melville	Fifth Grade
Mr. Wilson	Primary Special Education
Mr. Gobel	Title I
Mrs. Gordon	Title I
Mr. Koselke	Principal

APPENDIX B

LETTERS OF CONSENT

Christine A. Hunt
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Dear Teacher,

Three years ago I left my classroom at Niemann to pursue a doctorate in education. I am at the dissertation stage in this journey and am seeking to learn more about how ISTEP+ and accountability policies are affecting teachers in their daily practice. To accomplish this goal, I have chosen to do a case study of a Title I School in the Michigan City Area Schools through structured and unstructured interviews, observations and examination of relevant documents.

The first step in this process is to interview as many teachers in the building as I can. You give your consent to be interviewed by signing and returning this letter to me. To help you make an informed decision about your participation, I have included the list of structured interview questions. Please read them over prior to making a decision about your participation. This interview should take approximately 30-45 minutes. If you choose to participate, please sign the letter and give to the secretary in the office. She will get these letters to me. I will then call you to set up a date and time to do this interview. Unstructured interviews may be necessary to follow-up on the first interview or to get deeper understanding of your responses. The time of these interviews will be varied, but will be at your consent and at the best possible time for you.

The structured interview will be audio-taped and some unstructured ones may also be taped. These tapes will be transcribed, and all tapes, transcripts and notes will be kept locked up in my home. This information will not be shared with anyone else other than the members of my dissertation committee. All names and identifying information will be kept confidential, and no participant will be identifiable in the dissertation. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Participation in these interviews is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate at all. If you choose to participate, you may still choose to withdraw at any time without

any penalty. During the interview, you may also choose to not answer any questions without any penalty also.

If you have any questions or concerns about these interviews, please contact either Christine Hunt (phone: 219-325-3828; email huntchr5@msu.edu) or Elizabeth Heilman (phone: 517-432-4860; email ehailman@msu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact- anonymously, if you wish- Peter Vasilenko, Ph. D., Chair of eh University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517-355-2180), fax (517-432-4503) or email (ucrihs@msu.edu) or regular mail (202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824).

Sincerely,

Christine A. Hunt

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing and returning this letter.

Signature

Date

Christine A. Hunt
Doctoral Student
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Educational Policy
College of Education
Michigan State University
Study Title: The Impact of ISTEP+ and Accountability Policies on Teachers in a Title I School
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Dear Teacher,

I have enjoyed the opportunity to discuss with you the way ISTEP+ and accountability policies have affected you in your teaching practice. It is from these conversations that I have chosen three teachers, each with a differing type of experience with the test and policies, to observe in their classrooms. This letter is to seek your consent to observe you in your classroom.

Observing in the classroom will allow me to get to know something about the context in which you teach and how this influences what you shared in the interviews. There are

three levels of observation; description of your classroom, instructional methods and time use, and selective observation of content areas. Observations allow me to connect what we discussed in our interviews with your daily teaching practice.

I will take notes of what I observe in your classroom. These notes will be shared with you as we work together to make sense of them. However, no one else will have access to these notes, and they will be kept under lock and key at my home. Observations will be arranged at your convenience and will last the length of time that we agree upon based on what will be observed as well as the purpose of the observation.

Participation in these observations is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. If you choose to participate, please sign this letter and give it to the secretary in the office. I will contact you to set up a time for an initial observation. You may still choose to withdraw at any time without any penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns about these interviews, please contact either Christine Hunt (phone: 219-325-3828; email: huntchr5@msu.edu) or Elizabeth Heilman (phone: 517-432-4860; email: ehailman@msu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact- anonymously, if you wish- Peter Vasilenko, Ph. D., Chair of eh University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517-355-2180), fax (517-432-4503) or email (ucrihs@msu.edu) or regular mail (202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824).

Sincerely,

Christine A. Hunt

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing and returning this letter to me.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interests

1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. What do you like best about teaching?
3. What do you like least about teaching?
4. What resources do you have available to you in your teaching?
5. What are your feelings about your salary and benefits?
6. What aspects of your profession are the most important to you? Why?
7. What are your concerns? What are your rewards?

Ideology

1. What is your teaching philosophy? How is it evident in your teaching?
2. What do you believe is the purpose of education?
3. What do you believe is the purpose of assessment?
4. How do you assessment in your classroom?
5. What are your feelings about ISTEP+? Why do you feel this way?
6. What do you believe is the role of the federal government in education? What do you believe is the role of the state government in education?
7. How do your students learn?
8. How can you tell if your students are or aren't learning?
9. How do you make your instructional decisions?
10. What do you believe about your students? Why do you believe that?
11. What is the role of subject matter in teaching and learning?

Information

1. What is the purpose of the federal law known as No Child Left Behind?
2. What is the purpose of the state law known as Public Law 221?
3. What is the purpose of ISTEP+?
4. How have you learned about the policies? How have you learned about the test?
5. What are your questions about No Child Left Behind? About Public Law 221? About ISTEP+?
6. What connection, if any, do you see between the test and your teaching practice?
7. How do you learn about issues of instruction, curriculum and assessment?
8. How has this refined your teaching practice?
9. How is this refinement connected to the accountability policies No Child Left Behind and/or Public Law 221?
10. What classes have you taken recently? How have they helped you grow as a professional?
11. Why did you choose those classes?

12. What workshops or conferences have you attended recently? How have they helped you? If not, why were they unhelpful?
13. How do you discuss ISTEP test scores with parents? How do you discuss them with other teachers?
14. What do you do in your classroom to prepare your students for the ISTEP test?
15. What do you do in your classroom to prepare yourself for giving the ISTEP test?
16. What would you like to know about the ISTEP test?
17. How is the ISTEP test helpful to you?
18. How have you learned to make sense of the ISTEP reports?
19. How confident are you in understanding these reports?
20. How do you make sense of the various ISTEP reports?

Institution

1. Who do you believe is privileged by these accountability policies? Who is not privileged by them? Why do you believe this?
2. How does this shape your practice?
3. How does this influence your professional and/or personal relationships?
4. What role do the policies play in your school?
5. What happens in the school because of the policies?
6. How would you describe your school?
7. How do you feel this school is similar to other schools? How is it different?
8. What do you like best about this school? What do you like the least?
9. How often do you consider or focus on the goals of the school's School Improvement Plan?
10. What would you change about this school? What would you keep?
11. What interactions do you have with parents? What interactions do you have with other teachers in this school? What interactions do you have with the staff?
12. What resources available at this school are the most beneficial? Which are the least beneficial? Why?

APPENDIX D

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2005-2006

D- District sponsored workshop

M- Marvel sponsored workshop

O- Other organization sponsored workshop

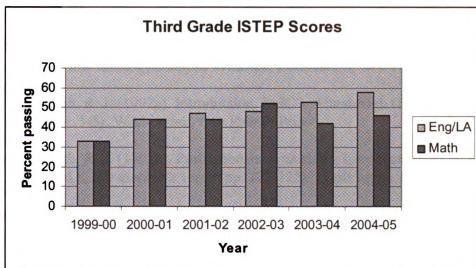
(n)- Number of times offered

English/Language Arts	Math	Technology	Miscellaneous
3 Blocks D (1)	Everyday Math D (12)	Kidspiration D (1)	Report Cards D (1)
Building Blocks D (1)	Math Exemplars M (3)	Project Indiana D (1)	ISTEP+ Science Improvements D (1)
Four Blocks D (4) M (3) O (1)	Data Analysis M (1)	Webquest D (1)	ISTAR D (1)
Wilson Reading D (1)	DOE Math Rubric O (1)	Web Page D (3)	Autism D (1)
Writing M (1)		Digital Images D (1)	Building Developmental Assets D (1)
Data Analysis M (1)		Classroom News D (1)	Safe Physical Interventions D (1)
Guided Reading O (1)		Compass Odyssey D (5)	CLASS M (1) O (1)
			Lexile O (1)
			Poverty O (1)
			Achievement Gap O (1)
			New Teacher Training Academy D (1)
			Discipline with Dignity O (1)

Table Appendix D.1

APPENDIX E

THIRD GRADE ISTEP+ SCORES FOR SIX YEARS



Graph Appendix E.1

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