

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TACTILE COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND
TEACHERS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TACTILE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

George L. McMahon

Statement of the Problem

Within the field of education, investigation into the potential significance of the phenomenon of human touching has generally been avoided. This exploratory study was undertaken in an effort to generate some initial hypotheses regarding the significance of touch between teachers and students and the behavior's potential utility as a form of interpersonal communication.

Design of the Study

The study included two major research components. The first was an extensive review of the literature for information pertaining to the potential importance of tactile communication between teachers and students. Previous research and theoretical writing from the fields of psychology, anthropology, communications, medicine and education were reviewed in order to establish the importance of the human touch. The second component was a survey of 222 elementary school, classroom, teachers conducted in an effort to identify the nature and extent of the touch phenomenon

between themselves and their students. The instrument utilized was the self designed "Survey of Touching Behavior and Attitudes."

The survey instrument was administered to the teaching staffs of sixteen different elementary schools in four different school districts within a metropolitan county in Michigan. Data generated were analyzed using frequency distributions, modes, means and ranges.

Cross tabulations were computed for seven variables:

1. Sex of the teacher
2. Marital Status
3. Age of the teacher
4. Educational degree
5. Teaching experience
6. Tenure status
7. Teaching assignment

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings from the literature indicated that the phenomenon of touch behavior is of potentially high importance for the growth and development of human beings. Although research in education is extremely limited, the findings of researchers in other disciplines support the significance of physical contact.

The survey of touching behavior and attitudes indicated that elementary school teachers engage in a wide range of touching behavior. The more frequent contact is of the teacher hand to student body types of touch. Teachers attributed a high degree of importance to touch behavior and seventy-eight percent felt that more research was needed.

Some of the additional findings were:

1. Seldom do either teachers (5.5%) or students (4.1%) request not to be touched.
2. More than 87% of the teachers had never received a complaint and complaints received usually were in regard to punitive touch.
3. In regard to sex differences and touch, 27% of the teachers felt that girls desired more touching as opposed to one teacher (.5%) who thought boys desired more (primarily female teachers held this view).
4. A higher percentage of male teachers attributed greater importance to touch than did females, however, females engaged in touching behavior more frequently than males.
5. Teachers of kindergarten through third grade believed and engaged in touching more frequently than teachers of older students; although they (uppergrade teachers) indicated recognition of the importance of touching.

It is reiterated that the intent of this study was inquiry and that relationships identified are presented for their potential heuristic value for others who may wish to pursue the phenomenon of human tactile communication.

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TEACHERS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By
George Lyman McMahon

A DISSERTATION

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1977

TO MY SON MICHAEL
WITH LOVE

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Sincere appreciation is extended to the chairman of my committee, Charles Blackman for his guidance and for his concern for me as a human being. Appreciation is also extended to the other members of the committee from Michigan State University, Lawrence Sarbaugh and Dale Alam for their interest in me, their constructive questioning and their support for this project. A special thanks to the fourth member of the committee, Allen Menlo of the University of Michigan who represented the work done as a C.I.C. Traveling Scholar.

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"Knowledge is a matter of degree. There are some who will insist that 'scientific' knowledge is and must be clear, lucid, unequivocally defined, unmistakable, demonstrable, repeatable, communicable, logical, rational, verbalizable, conscious. If it is not these, then it is not 'scientific'; it is something else. But what shall we say, then, about the first stages of knowledge, the precursor of these final forms, the beginnings that each of us can easily enough experience in himself? It is both useful and correct to consider as falling within the definition of knowledge all 'protoknowledge,' so long as its probability of being correct is greater than chance...knowledge is then seen as more reliable or less reliable but still knowledge so long as its probability is greater than chance."

Abraham Maslow

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Educators and educational researchers have regularly sought improvement in the process whereby people learn. We continually develop new materials and new procedures for delivery of those materials. During recent years, the importance of human interpersonal relationships has been recognized by a growing number of educators. These relationships and the concomitant emotions which are affected, fit into the learning domain we commonly refer to as the affective.

Amid the affective domain, which emphasizes interpersonal communication skills, research on the impact of nonverbal communication in general and more specifically the significance of tactile communication has been avoided.

In an effort to provide some data pertaining to tactile communication and generate some initial hypotheses regarding its significance in elementary classroom settings, this study was undertaken. Because of the relative absence of research in the area of human tactile behavior, a seminal study such as this will hopefully initiate additional work of a more empirical nature.

This study was a combination of historical and descriptive research. It was descriptive in that it examined the existence or nonexistence of physical behavioral phenomena in elementary classrooms. The study was also historical due to the extensive review and analysis of virtually all of the existing research and information on the subject of touching behavior and/or tactile communication.*

Because of the miniscule amount of investigation into the subject within the field of education, the bulk of the supportive, historical information was derived from the literature of sociology, anthropology, psychology, medicine and communications. This material was synthesized and contributed, in part, to the formulation of the seminal hypotheses previously mentioned.

The additional contributing component, which was descriptive in nature, was data gathered via a survey of elementary classroom teachers which examined their attitudes and behaviors regarding touching between teachers and students. The instrument utilized to gather these data was the self-designed "SURVEY OF TOUCHING BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES" (appendix A).

(The intent of this study was, therefore, initially to establish through historical analysis the potential significance of the touching phenomenon for educators and subsequently to

*There is some disagreement as to whether all touching behavior is communication. Definitions of the terms are forthcoming.

identify via descriptive research the extent to which the behavior exists in classrooms and the attitudes of teachers toward it.)

Statement of the Problem

Although physical contact is a fairly common occurrence between human beings, the nature and the extent as well as the intention or effect of the behavior is only beginning to be investigated. Within the field of education, research is nearly non-existent. This fact is more unfortunate considering the apparent importance of the behavior to human beings. Educational research into the phenomenon of physical contact and touch is long overdue.

The primary purpose of this study was to establish a theoretical base and to generate hypotheses regarding the significance of tactile communication in elementary classrooms.

Observations made in elementary schools reveal a wide range of touching behavior between teachers and students. In some classrooms there is seldom any contact between people; in others there is considerable physical contact. (In nearly all classrooms, the effects of touching or withholding the human touch and the messages transmitted and received are little understood.)

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is that it examines an area that has previously been almost totally overlooked by researchers in education. It deals with a basically important human need, the use or misuse of which can have a profound effect upon human development and behavior. As educators we cannot afford to overlook anything that may contribute to our understanding of the learning process. For the classroom teacher, knowledge about the effect of communicating through touching may open the door to warmer and more effective classroom climates. For the school administrator, more information may legitimize the overt expression of positive feelings and thereby dispel the fear of public reprisal. For parents, increased knowledge of the intent and effects of tactile communication may draw back the curtains of ignorance as to the importance and merit of physical contact for all human beings and particularly for the positive development of children.

(Everyone who is concerned about children needs to be better informed regarding the significance of touching.) Tactile communication and its judicious use in classrooms may significantly contribute to the formation of atmospheres more conducive to positive growth and learning in the affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains.

Assumptions on which the Study is Based

The following assumptions underlie this research:

1. There exists insufficient knowledge of the significance of tactile communications between elementary teachers and students.
2. It was important to provide a theoretical foundation preparatory to generating initial hypotheses regarding the touching phenomenon.
3. The expression of positive feelings via touching is an important behavior for elementary school teachers to possess.
4. Many elementary school teachers are uncomfortable with tactile communications.
5. Tactile communication may be a factor in the affective development of children.
6. Tactile communication may be a factor in the cognitive development of children.
7. Tactile communication may be a factor in the psychomotor development of children.
8. Information regarding the significance of touching is desired by classroom teachers.

Generalizability of the Study

In addition to the teachers and others who work in schools from pre-kindergarten through the university level, this study has important implications for all human beings.

Because the human being is a social animal we cannot avoid, barring tragedy, the association interpersonally with our fellow human beings. Knowledge gained regarding the importance of tactile communications will be valuable to everyone. To this date, we experience varying degrees and types of physical contact with people and have some considerable awareness and recognition of "what" we touch, "when" and "whom" we touch, but very little understanding of "why" and "how" we touch. In addition, there is almost nothing to provide us with the answers to the questions below:

WHAT IF WE DO TOUCH?

WHAT IF WE DO NOT TOUCH?

Answers to these questions may aid people in their efforts to improve interpersonal relationships.

More specifically, the study sheds valuable light on an underexamined behavioral issue that has the potential of revolutionizing the instructional process.

The accumulated results of the study will hopefully be utilized by subsequent, interested researchers who will follow up and expand upon this initial effort which provides a foundation for them.

The phenomenon of human touching in institutions for human learning raises a large number of questions. The following list represents the major questions of the study.

1. Can the messages conveyed through touching contribute to the positive development of elementary school children?
2. Can the messages conveyed through the withholding of touch contribute to the lack of positive development of elementary school children?
3. Do elementary school teachers believe that tactile communication is important?
4. To what extent does tactile communication exist between elementary teachers and students?
5. What is the nature of tactile communication in schools?
6. Is further research warranted?

Limitations of the Study

This study may be limited for the following reasons:

1. When seeking the opinions of classroom teachers only limited effort was extended to isolate touch from other variables that might affect their opinions. In addition the instrument itself may have precipitated a perceived "appropriate" response.
2. The survey instrument utilized was self-designed and field tested with a rather small group of twelve selected teachers. The survey

instrument also could reflect some bias on the part of the researcher.

3. Conclusions drawn from the supportive literature are necessarily limited due to the limited amount and unscientific nature of some of the research.
4. A lack of participation from teachers in urban schools provides insufficient data to generalize regarding geographical, socioeconomic, and cross cultural differences.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

1. Physical contact--Any bodily contact which is generally unintentional and no particular message is intended to be communicated.
2. Touching--Intentional physical contact by which a specific message may or may not consciously be attempted to be communicated.
3. Tactile Communication--Intentional physical contact by which a specific message is intended to be communicated.
4. Growth--Positive development of the individual in any and/or all of the three recognized domains of learning; the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter includes an introduction to the remaining chapters of the study. It outlines briefly what the intent of the study is, provides a sense of support and justification for the work done and also some insight into the limitations of the effort. In addition, the definition of terms clarifies that all physical contact or touching is not necessarily communication. Inherent in this definition of tactile communication is the notion of intention, that a particular message is intended to be communicated.

The chapter makes clear that the study is exploratory in nature; attempting to provide a theoretical foundation and generate some initial hypotheses regarding the significance of tactile communication.

In the following pages, Chapter Two is an extensive review of most of the existing literature available on the phenomenon of touch. Chapter Three includes the research procedures of the survey of teacher behavior and attitudes. Chapter Four includes the presentation and analysis of the data and Chapter Five a summary including final recommendations and conclusions regarding tactile communication and the touching phenomenon between elementary school teachers and students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

It is the intention within this chapter to establish the significance of tactile communication for educators and to establish that it is an important phenomenon; meriting additional investigation and consideration as a legitimate force in the development of human beings.

Included in chapter two is the background support from research and the writings of theoreticians that contribute to the formulation of hypotheses regarding tactile communication in education. By synthesizing the work of others from different disciplines and projecting their research conclusions and theories into the field of education, the rationale for surveying teacher attitudes regarding the behavior is established. It should be pointed out that within the field of education very little research or information exists and within other fields, the research into the phenomenon of touch is comparatively limited. The majority of the background literature is derived from the fields of anthropology, psychology, sociology, communication and medicine. Only two books have been published related to the issue of human physical

contact; both written by anthropologists, Morris¹ and Montagu.²

The chapter is subdivided into sections in an effort to provide some organization to the broad spectrum of material utilized. The sections represent the various disciplines from which the pertinent literature has been derived.

¹Desmond Morris, Intimate Behavior (New York: Bantam Books ed. Random House, Inc., 1971).

²Ashely Montagu, Touching: The Human Significance of The Skin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

Psychology

The field of psychology, strange as it seems, has generally avoided study of the touching phenomenon between human beings. Psychologists have evidently concluded that it is either too difficult to study or is of insignificant importance for the study of human behavior. In fact, the entire emotion, love, seems to have been avoided (with the exception of sex) and left to the poets, and those who feel it, to ruminate upon its importance. The study and investigation of love and the manner in which it is communicated is long overdue.

From time to time psychiatrists, psychologists and other professionals in the behavioral sciences have alluded to an apparent significance of touching. The noted child psychiatrist Bettelheim, has written in regard to childhood anxieties:

"They go back to the period of earliest infancy when the children first experienced inadequate handling in the way they were held when they were fed, changed, or bathed. For one thing, parental anxiety about the relationship to the child, and the mechanisms a parent may have used in trying to compensate for it, may have expressed themselves in little or no stimulation of the child's skin, or in a rigid and hence painful way of holding the child's body."³

The anxieties that Bettelheim relates to early experiences of handling are often reported by experimental psychologists, zoologists and others engaged in animal studies. It has been observed by many of these researchers that animals that receive greater handling demonstrate faster weight gain, improved general health and less anxiety.

³Bruno Bettelheim, Love is not Enough (New York: The Free Press, 1950) p. 330.

The early work in this area was carried out on rats by Bernstein⁴ and Weininger.⁵

The most popular among the animal studies and one which has direct implications for this study of tactual significance was reported in 1958 by Harlow⁶, then at the University of Wisconsin. His well-known experimentation with macaque monkeys and mother surrogates is often included in basic psychology textbooks. His work represents the first effort to assess experimentally the significance of love as communicated through tactual contact.

Briefly, Harlow exposed infant monkeys to contact with an assortment of "mother surrogates," in a laboratory setting. The surrogates, constructed of wood and wire, were able to nurse via a functional nipple attached and thereby provide nourishment to the infant monkeys. In some cases the surrogates were additionally covered with sponge rubber and terry cloth in order to provide greater contact comfort. The monkeys were exposed to both a surrogate that was designed for contact comfort but gave no milk and a surrogate that was equipped to give milk but offered little in the way of contact comfort. From observation and records kept of time spent with both surrogates, it was discovered that the monkeys overwhelmingly preferred the surrogate that was designed for contact comfort.

⁴L. Bernstein "A Note on Christie's 'Experimental Naivete and Experiential Naivete.'" Psychological Bulletin, vol. 49 (1952), pp. 38-40.

⁵O. Weininger, "Mortality of Albino Rats Under Stress as a Function of Early Handling", Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 7 (1953), pp. 111-114.

⁶Harry F. Harlow, "The Nature of Love", The American Psychologist, Volume 13 (1958), pp. 673-685.

Subsequent testing in which both surrogates gave milk and monkeys were exposed only to one or the other, yielded additional significant results. The two groups of monkeys demonstrated no difference in the amount of milk consumed or in the amount of weight gained. The difference as evidenced by the composition of the monkeys' feces indicated that the monkeys deprived of contact comfort suffered psychologically. Harlow states:

"We were not surprised to discover that contact comfort was an important basic affectional or love variable, but we did not expect it to overshadow so completely the variable of nursing; indeed, the disparity is so great as to suggest that the primary function of nursing as an affectional variable is that of insuring frequent and intimate body contact of the infant with the mother. Certainly, man cannot live by milk alone. Love is an emotion that does not need to be bottle-or spoon-fed, and we may be sure that there is nothing to be gained by giving lip service to love."⁷

Although Harlow's work was done with monkeys he postulated that there is so much similarity in the mother-child relationship that the results can be readily generalized to the human species. In fact, much of the animal research was a direct result of Ribble⁸ whose observations of 600 infants seemed to indicate that regular "mothering" including apparently essential physical contact was necessary to prevent marasmus. The term, marasmus, collectively describes a variety of undesirable and often fatal symptoms.

⁷Ibid., p. 677

⁸Margaret A. Ribble, "Infantile Experience in Relation to Personality Development", J. Hunt (Ed.) Personality and the Behavior Disorders. New York, Ronald Press (1944) pp. 621-651.

It is noteworthy that the animal studies of Bernstein⁹ and Weininger¹⁰ indicate that not only can marasmus be prevented by cutaneous stimulation but that development can be enhanced. Their young rats and mice when given additional tactile stimulation turned out to be healthier, less emotional, better motivated, and faster learners than the control group.

Subsequent research with human infants gives support. Rice, states:

"Now we know that the cuddling, stroking, holding and rocking that mothers give may be the most important influence on their baby's future physical mental health. Babies who receive a lot of touching and fondling, babies who are held and rocked, may be less subject to risk of the handicaps of cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, and many physical and neurological defects and deficiencies. And mothers who comfort, cuddle, hold and rock their newborns are also following the path to greater emotional health, since they are forming an attachment to their infant which cannot be achieved in any other way."¹¹

Rice, in supporting her viewpoint cites research that she has conducted with premature babies. She used fifteen premature babies as a control group. The mothers of the control babies received the usual doctor's instructions on caring for the babies after they left the hospital. An experimental group of fifteen babies received a specific program of physical stimulation according to instructions given the mothers.

⁹Bernstein, loc. cit.

¹⁰Weininger, loc. cit.

¹¹Ruth D. Rice, "The Golden Touch," American Baby, Volume 37, Number 12, (1975), p. 24.

The experimental group received a systematic, four times daily, sequence of massage and rocking for a period of thirty days. When the infants were four months old, they were tested by a psychologist, a pediatrician and a pediatric nurse. None of the examiners knew whether the babies had been in the experimental or control groups. This is what they found:

- "1) The infants who received daily stimulation treatments for thirty days made significant gains over the control group in weight gain, neurological development, and mental development.
- 2) The stimulated babies even surpassed the neurological growth standards for normal full-term infants when age adjustment was applied."¹²

Although it is apparent that little care was taken to restrict additional variables from contaminating this research, the fact that the results so overwhelmingly indicate a positive correlation demands serious consideration of the effects of tactile stimulation.

Additional human studies, supporting the previously mentioned work of Ribble and thereby demanding additional work such as that conducted by Rice, have been conducted over the past thirty years.

The first major study of institutionalized infants was conducted by Spitz.¹³ He compared the development of babies reared in two distinctly

¹²Ibid., p. 38.

¹³Renee A. Spitz, "Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood" Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (1945), Vol. 1. pp. 53-74.

different types of institutions. In one "Nursery" the infants were fed and cared for by their own mothers* or by full-time mother substitutes. The other institution, "Foundling Home", provided very little in the way of stimulation for the babies. It was discovered that the babies in "Foundling Home" suffered from severe developmental retardation and were more highly susceptible to infection and illness.

More recently, another study of a similar nature lends support to an understanding of the debilitating effects of inadequate tactile contact. Provence and Lipton¹⁴ upon studying the occupants of a nursery where there was only minimal contact between the caretakers and the children made some unfortunate observations. They noted substantial impairment in social responsiveness, language development, body awareness and pain avoidance. In addition they observed a deficiency in motor skills.

Although additional supporting studies are available and included as additional references later, let it suffice here to say that the research overwhelmingly recognizes the importance of tactile stimulation on the early development of human beings. Examination of the literature on older children and adults is far less conclusive.

Generally, among psychologists, the importance of such affectional issues as human touching tends to be more readily recognized by those classified as the "third force" in psychology. These people often being in sharp contrast to the "first force" (psychoanalysis) and the "second force" (behaviorism).

*"Nursery" was a home for delinquent girls.

¹⁴ Sally Provence, Rose C. Lipton, Infants in Institutions: A Comparison of Their Development During the First Year of Life with Family-Reared Infants. International Universities Press, 1967.

Probably the first person to recognize the importance of early experience upon later behavior was Sigmund Freud. Although Freud theorized about early behavior and child development, his actual contact with children was very limited. Most of the theory regarding psychosexual stages of development was based upon his interaction with his adult patients. In regard to his therapeutic work it is quite apparent that the man remained considerably aloof in all of his human relationships. It is evident that all of Freud's writings suffer from a surprisingly light treatment of touching behavior. What there is, of course, deals specifically with its association with sexuality. Freud was apparently unable to recognize touching as it relates to affection and to its potential for enhancing human development.

The behaviorists, on the other hand, do recognize touching as a potential reinforcer. Although it is noted that little research has to date been conducted on the impact of physical contact on human beings, the need for such research has been acknowledged,

"Tactual stimulation could prove extremely important to an understanding of infant development. If such stimulation is reinforcing, then the opportunities for behavioral elaborations through such tactual contingencies are correspondingly great. This is another reason why research in this area seems to have considerable potential."¹⁵

Admittedly, the research that has been conducted related to taction has, for the most part, dealt with babies and with infant animals. It

¹⁵ Sidney W. Bijou, and Donald M. Baer, Child Development II, Universal Stage of Infancy, (Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York 1965) p. 91.

is generally felt that tactile communication is a form decreasingly needed as people mature. There are, however, some third force psychologists who are recognizing the importance and the potential of the human touch for adults. Among these are Eric Berne whose transactional analysis recognizes the importance of "stroking." Stroking and the recognition that it gives is a need that has been acknowledged by James and Jongeward¹⁶ who state:

"Every person has the need to be touched and to be recognized by other people...these are biological and psychological needs that Berne calls 'hungers'."¹⁷

The development of the encounter movement and its ever increasing acceptance is indicative of the universality of the need and acceptance of the human touch. Note this account by William Schutz:

"Methods involving touch and physical closeness help clarify affectional feelings....Leo Litwak, a reporter for the New York Times, recognized this phenomenon in his excellent story about an open encounter workshop. He noted how uncomfortable he felt when he arrived at Esalen. 'I was somewhat put off by what I considered to be an excessive show of affection. Men hugged men, Men hugged women. Women hugged women. These were not hippies but older folks like myself who had come for the workshop. People fell into one another's arms, and it wasn't my style at all. At the end of his five-day workshop he wrote: Our group gathered in a tight circle, hugging and kissing, and I found myself hugging everyone, behaving like the idiots I had noticed on first

¹⁶ Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward, Born to Win: Transactional Analysis with Gestalt Experiments, (Reading Mass. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. 1971).

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 44

arriving at Esalen.' This is a typical response. In the affection phase, the desire for total body contact flows easily, while in the earlier phases it is stiff and forced. Not being aware of this evolution, passing observers often get a distorted view of workshop behavior."¹⁸

During the late 1960's nude marathon groups were conducted in an effort to satisfy what some have identified as "skin hunger."* Here is what one facilitator reported:

"The tentative conclusions that I reached from this first nude marathon were encouraging. I reasoned that just as a lack of tender tactile contact seems to be responsible in certain cases for infant deaths, the same deprivation may produce a nonlethal but chronic tension and anxiety among adults. That is, controlled skin contact might be therapeutic in and of itself. Perhaps the social world is such a jungle of polite estrangement that sensory isolation may create a famine in the heart that cannot be relieved by any one person, even one's mate. If purely physical contact (particularly between males who are most strongly inhibited in this respect) remains tenderly sensual yet takes place within an environment in which goals of a purely sexual nature have been deconditioned, then perhaps genuine mental and emotional exposure and acceptance can flower more naturally and more beautifully."¹⁹

(It seems unfortunate that researchers have recognized the importance of touching during the first two years of life and then arbitrarily believe that the need for physical affective support can be adequately replaced with the acquisition of verbal skills.)

¹⁸ William C. Schutz, Here Comes Everybody, (Evanston, Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 128-9.

*This has no sexual connotation.

¹⁹ Paul Bindrim, "Nudity: as a quick grab for group intimacy" Psychology Today, vol. 3 no. 1 June 1969, p. 28.

There is a strong probability that the socialization process which moves children from tactual expression to verbal expression is rooted in cultural taboos regarding sexuality. These taboos and cultural factors will be discussed later but it is appropriate to point at this time to the research conducted by Lewis.²⁰ He observed and recorded the movement and interaction of mother-infant dyads. He observed that during the first six months of life male babies received more tactual contact than females but that after six months decidedly less. For both male and female the period from six months to two years was a steady socialization process moving from tactual to verbal expression.

This cultural socialization process no doubt contributes to the creation of the stereotyped male and female roles in our society. In addition there may be relationships between this process of separation and differences in passive and aggressive behavior as well as the incidence of anxiety and stress.

Summary

Although not exhaustive, this section provides a representational review of the research and thinking among psychologists. It is apparent that although substantial evidence exists supporting the importance of tactual stimulation for infants, there remain many unanswered questions regarding the behavior's significance after the first two years of life.

²⁰ Michael Lewis, "Culture and Gender Roles: There's No Unisex in the Nursery" Psychology Today, vol. 5, no. 12, May 1972, pp. 54-57.

(The fact that more touching behavior is not observed in our society, including schools which play a major role in the enculturation process, indicates that we are, in fact, out of touch with touch.) The answers to this limited display of physical affection can probably best be answered by the anthropologists.

Anthropology

In man, the fact that we have language sets us off from the other animals. In our continuing strides for sophistication we have made use of verbal language more frequently; and less frequently the non-verbal language with which we and the other animals began.

Our language is filled with verbal metaphors that indicate intentions or that have supplanted actual physical contact. We are touched by various scenes and events. We tell others that we will keep in touch with them. Sometimes we touch a nerve. We read touching stories. On occasion we rub people the wrong way. We give people positive strokes. Some people must be handled carefully. There are days when we need a hand. We like a pat on the back.

In addition we verbally recognize the importance of the largest of the human organs, the skin. We know people who are thick-skinned and some who are thin skinned. Sometimes people get under our skin. We all know students who just skinned by. Our language, indeed seems to indicate a certain degree of fascination with the skin and contact with it. In fact we have developed words to take the place of the behavior. Why do we talk so much about touching and yet touch so infrequently, our fellow human beings?

The amount and degree of tactility varies cross culturally. People who travel to foreign countries regularly indicate their uncomfortable feelings in regard to physical proximity to other people. In some cultures it is customary to stand closer to people when conversing with them. Sometimes more casual touching is experienced. French men and men in the Soviet Union hug and kiss each other as a greeting. Men in the United States

generally shake hands and in some cultures there is no contact at all. These discrepancies are often unnerving to the traveler.

Jourard²¹ visited public eating places around the world and tabulated the frequency of physical contacts between couples (male-female). Over a period of one hour, contacts in the Florida (USA) location, (2), were more than only the contacts in London, England (0). San Juan, Puerto Rico registered the highest frequency (180). Although this is far from conclusive research, it does indicate that our culture is not one that engages in a great deal of touching behavior.

Another study attempted to explore the question of how people touch each other. Jourard and Rubin²² administered a questionnaire to students asking them to identify which of twenty-four body parts they contacted with four specific groups of people. The groups were mothers, fathers, friends of the same sex and friends of the opposite sex. One of their findings indicated that females were more accessible to touch than males. The fathers in the study did the least amount of touching and generally contact was made only on the hands.

A researcher who has made an additional contribution is Hall²³ with his concept of proxemics. He distinguished four zones which indicated "appropriate" distance between two North American speakers. Hall designated zero to 1½ feet as the intimate range; 1½ to 4 feet as the personal; 4 to 10 feet as the social-consultive and 10 feet or over as

²¹Sidney M. Jourard, "An Exploratory Study of Body-Accessibility," British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 5, (1966):pp. 221-31.

²²Sidney M. Jourard and J.E. Rubin, "Self-Disclosure and Touching: A Study of Two Modes of Interpersonal Encounter and Their Inter-Relation," Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 8 (1968); pp. 39-48.

²³Edward T. Hall, "A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behavior," American Anthropologist, 65, (1963): pp. 1003-26.

the public range. Hall premised that when these limits were inappropriately passed, negative feelings were invoked. This point has been supported by other researchers and leads to the conclusion that various cultures have implicit restrictions based upon norms regarding "appropriate" physical proxemics and that negative feelings and discomfort are experienced when a violation occurs. It should be noted that Hall's observations are of behaviors as they are and do not indicate whether the behavior regarding interaction zones is constructive or destructive in our human relationships.

When considering touching behavior in the school setting, the matter of appropriateness is significant. When is a teacher's touch appropriate? At what times would a touch be inappropriate? This study will not find answers to all of the questions that can be raised but at least will be of some heuristic value for additional research which will, hopefully, follow.

In the schools, it has been observed that many students spend a great deal of their time in search of love and attention*. The reluctance of teachers to reach out and touch them to communicate a caring attitude compounds their feelings of loneliness and inadequacy. Perhaps the reported increase in promiscuous behavior, the increase in sensory awareness and other growth groups, and the rapid development of human sexuality labs is an effort to meet an unfulfilled need. In his seminal book on touching, Montagu²⁴ states:

*A personal observation.

²⁴Ashley Montagu Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

"When affection and involvement are conveyed through touch, it is those meanings as well as the security-giving satisfactions, with which touch will become associated. Inadequate tactile experience will result in a lack of such associations and a consequent inability to relate to others in many fundamental ways."²⁵

Another anthropologist who recognizes the significance of touching is Morris who observes;

"The need that we, as adults, have to make body contact with one another is basic and powerful, but, as we have seen, it is rarely fully expressed. Instead, it appears in fragmented, modified or disguised forms in many of the signs, gestures and signals we make to one another in our daily lives."²⁶

Morris' notion is readily understood by most teachers who often observed the pushing, poking, tripping, tickling, pulling, etc. behaviors that school children indulge in so often. Morris goes on to state:

"If a man feels the friendly urge to touch another man's head but is inhibited about making it a friendly caress, he can employ the simple device of mock aggression. Instead of fondling his partner's head which would have too strong a sexual flavour, he can deliver a playful 'pretend-attack', such as ruffling the hair or squeezing the neck in a mock-grasp. Just as play-fighting helped the parent to prolong intimacies with his growing children, so many a fragment of play-assault can be observed between male

²⁵Ibid. p. 335.

²⁶Desmond Morris, Intimate Behavior, (Bantam Books Edition), (New York: Random House, Inc, 1971), pp. 121-2.

friends, enabling them to be both manly
and intimate at one and the same time,"²⁷

Morris goes on to point out the wide range of people who by profession are legitimate "touchers" and the many activities that people engage in that legitimize human contact, i.e. hair-dressers, barbers, tailors, clothing sales people, dentists and doctors. Medical doctors are well aware of the large number of patients who return regularly for "treatment" and examination in spite of questionable ailments. This is particularly the case with older people who are so often neglected in our modern society.

Consider, as well, the tremendous popularity of athletic competition where either the contest itself, the jubilation of victory or consolation of defeat brings on a great deal of legitimate physical contact. Morris is truly a trained observer.

It is generally acknowledged how much children learn by imitating and modeling what others do. It seems that an awareness of how the behavior of parents and teachers affects children would be extremely important. Consider Montagu's observation of the English upper classes:

"Too often a lackluster childhood combined with a minimum of tactile stimulation, compounded by the experience of a public school, produced a rather emotionally arid human being who was quite incapable of warm, human relationships."²⁸

It should be remembered that the culture found in North America is not very unlike that in England.

²⁷ Ibid., page 135.

²⁸ Montagu, op. cit., p. 301.

Summary

A review of research in anthropology does not yield a great deal of empirical data, however, the observations of those who so critically study cultures and the human beings who establish them, are invaluable.

COMMUNICATIONS

Within the social sciences a relatively new group of researchers has appeared which contributes greatly to the literature relating to the phenomenon of touching. Although there is considerable debate still in evidence, communication researchers are making considerable gains toward agreement as to what is and what is not communication. They are generally more restrictive in their definitions, labeling merely behavior much of what others would consider communication. An agreeable definition of communication includes two essential elements:

- 1) Intention - a message must be intended to be transmitted.
- 2) Shared Symbol System - the symbols or gestures used to transmit a message must be recognizable by both the sender and receiver.

It can readily be seen that psychiatrists, most psychologists and others who interpret meaning into inadvertent behavior are going to have difficulty with the elements identified. For this study, when referring to tactile communications, both elements must be present in order for a communication to occur. A distinction is made then between a touch intended to communicate a specific message and general touching or casual physical contact.

A communications researcher who is beginning to provide some data relative to tactual contact through his general work with non-verbal communication is Mehrabian.²⁹ He formulated a relationship

²⁹Albert Mehrabian, "Orientation Behaviors and Nonverbal Attitude Communication," Journal of Communication, 17, 1967, pp. 324-32.

between proxemics and liking and disliking. He found that closer physical proximity is associated with greater liking and with perception of greater liking. It would seem, therefore, that teachers who kept a close proximity to their students would communicate greater liking for them and would be perceived by their students as liking them. It stands to reason that the reverse would also be true. Teachers who maintain a great distance between themselves and their students communicate dislike. One of the problems with the lack of knowledge regarding tactile communication is that teachers who, in fact, so like their students may be communicating the opposite due to some misinformation or social taboo regarding physical closeness.

In spite of the fact that we are taught to "keep our distance", there is some indication that some people may even prefer tactile communication over other forms of nonverbal and verbal communication. Knapp³⁰ cites a study by Bardeen.

"Subjects interacted with what they thought were three different people under three different conditions. Actually, they were interacting with the same person each time. The three situations included: Touch only (no talking, blindfolded); visual only (no talking, not blindfolded, no touching); and verbal only (no touching, blindfolded). After the interaction was finished, subjects picked adjectives which they felt were most descriptive of their encounters under each condition. The touch only encounter was described as: 'trustful, sensitive, natural,

³⁰Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1972) p. 111.

serious, mature, and warm.' The verbal encounter was described as 'distant, non-communicative, artificial, insensitive, and formal.' The visual condition was labeled: 'artificial, childish, arrogant, comic, and cold.' Each subject was then asked which of the three persons with whom they had communicated they would select as a partner for future interactions. The person encountered by touch only was chosen by 47% of the subjects."³¹

This information has relevance for educators. By no means is it suggested that teachers use only tactile communication but it is suggested that serious consideration be given to supplementing with touch, the verbal expression of positive regard. Teachers have long been noted for their use of touching behavior for communication of their negative feelings. It has been suggested by psychologists that some children, hungry for some form of recognition and attention, intentionally misbehave in order to receive it. Could it be, that even negative, disciplinary touching, painful touching, is better than none at all? There is some evidence from psychological and anthropological studies that this may be the case.

Although clearly written as a popular rather than a scientific book but a work that does give an indication of interest on the part of the people due to the fact that it became a best seller, was written by Fast.³² The book devotes an entire chapter pointing out the importance of touch. In the chapter, Fast reports how he came to recognize the importance. He was teaching a class and for some

³¹J.P. Bardeen, "Interpersonal Perception Through the Tactile, Verbal, and Visual Modes, " (paper presented at ICA convention, Phoenix 1971).

³²Julius Fast, Body Language, (New York: M. Evans & Company, Inc., 1970)

time had been having difficulty with a particularly unruly, fourteen year old boy.

"In a flash of inspiration I wrestled him to the ground and started to tickle him. He squealed with anger at first and then with laughter. Only when he gaspingly promised to behave did I let him up and found, to my own mixed reactions, that I had created a Frankenstein-type of monster. By tickling him I had invaded his body zone and prevented him from using it for defense. Harold behaved himself from that time on, but Harold also became my devoted companion and buddy, hanging on my arm or my neck, pushing me, physically, as he could. I returned the closeness, and somehow we both made it through the session. What fascinated me was that by invading his personal sphere, by violating the sanctity of his territory, I had communicated with him for the first time."³³

The most comprehensive work ever done specifically dealing with tactile communication was a paper written by Frank.³⁴ It is surprising that twenty years have passed since he published his manuscript and so little research has followed. In his paper Frank gives a broad and convincing argument that tactile communication is indeed an area meriting research in depth. He also recognizes the significance for communicating with children.

"The communication between two persons may be governed more by these physiological emotional reactions than by the content of the message, especially since the coding of a message may be warped or distorted by the emotional reaction of the sender. The quality or intent of a message, as contrasted with its content, may be conveyed by the emotional coloring-

³³Ibid. pp. 67-68

³⁴Lawrence K. Frank, "Tactile Communication," Genetic Psychology Monographs, vol. 56 (1957), pp. 209-255.

tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, or lightness or heaviness of touch and the recipient may respond largely to this intent or quality. Thus small children often respond more to quality than to content, hearing the tone of voice more than the words spoken by a parent, and responding to the Kinesic messages."³⁵

Summary

Within the field of ~~communications~~ the area of nonverbal communication is only beginning to be adequately researched. Tactile ~~communication~~, as one form of nonverbal message transference, is recognized by researchers but very much avoided, to this date, in regard to attempting informative research.

³⁵Ibid. p. 216

Medicine

Considering that the medical profession requires physical contact between doctor or nurse and patient, it is disheartening that so few studies exist as to what significance tactile communication may have in the healing process. Some studies into touching behavior between nurses and patients have been conducted and are reviewed here. The first study was conducted by Aguilera³⁶ who hypothesized that the use of touch as a technique of nonverbal communication can increase verbal interaction between the nurse and the psychiatric patient. She stipulated, however, that three criteria must be met.

- 1) It must be acceptable to the patient.
- 2) It must be acceptable to the nurse.
- 3) There must be recognition that it has a unique meaning to each person.

Aguilera selected nurses and patients who, on the basis of their responses on a questionnaire, were determined to be comfortable with tactual contact. The patients selected were matched as evenly as possible regarding sex, age and psychiatric diagnosis. Thirty-six subjects were selected and divided into an experimental and control group. In interacting with the nurses (who worked with both groups), the experimental group received verbal communication and touch gestures. The control group received only verbal communication.

³⁶ Donna Conant Aguilera, "Relationship Between Physical Contact and Verbal Interaction between Nurses and Patients," Journal of Psychiatric Nursing, 5, 1967, pp. 5-21.

The major finding of the study was that the use of touch gestures resulted in increased verbal interaction, rapport and approach behavior as well as positive changes in attitude of the subjects toward the nurses. An additional finding was that no significant changes occurred until eight days had gone by: attributed by Aguilera to the "learning" time for the nurses to become comfortable with using touch.

Cashar and Dixon³⁷ enlisted the aid of their student nurses in observing and recording touch behavior in a hospital setting. These observations led them to conclude that people, in general, are not conscious of their touch behavior. They observed little awareness of intention or reaction to effects on others on the part of the touchers. The student nurses, on the other hand, gained considerable awareness of their own attitudes and behaviors regarding touch through their observations of others. In addition they became more conscious observers of the reactions of people when they use touch. Cashar and Dixon state:

"Aside from considering the patient's feelings, the nurse should also consider her own. Most of us do not often think of using touch in a conscious, deliberate manner and most of us are not aware of our own feelings about being touched unless this has been brought to our attention in some way."³⁸

³⁷Leah Cashar and Barbara Keller Dixon, "The Therapeutic Use of Touch", Journal of Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health Service, 5, 1967, pp. 442-451.

³⁸Ibid. p. 442.

Another nursing educator, Johnson,³⁹ warns against the conflict between intended messages and perceived messages. She recommends that touch needs to be used as a supplement to verbal messages, thereby, strengthening human communication. She states:

"Many writers, particularly those in child psychiatry and anthropology, agree that nonverbal behavior most frequently is of primary importance, particularly in communication feelings and attitudes. Of all the different forms of nonverbal communication, touch, then is the most significant."⁴⁰

The difficulty in interpreting messages delivered tactily which was recognized by others was researched by De Augustinis et. al.⁴¹ through an extensive study on a ward in a psychiatric hospital. She concluded:

- 1) Specific touch gestures do not have universal meanings.
- 2) Messages intended and received similarly were interpreted only 50% of the time.

Regardless of whether the human touch can be used for specific communication or merely as a supportive behavior, medical people are beginning to recognize its power. Gaining ever increasing

³⁹ Betty Sue Johnson, "The Meaning of Touch in Nursing," Nursing Outlook, 13 2, 59-60, February 1965.

⁴⁰ Ibid p. 59

⁴¹ Jane De Augustinis, Rebecca S. Isani and Fern R. Kumler, "Ward Study: The Meaning of Touch in Interpersonal Communication", Some Clinical Approaches to Psychiatric Nursing; Burd and Marshal (ed.), (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963) pp. 271-306.

popularity in the United States is the birth process developed by Leboyer.⁴² He emphasizes the importance of immediate and sustained physical contact between the mother and newborn child.

The medical community, well known for its reluctance to accept the "unscientific," is even taking a sincere look at the ancient art of faith healing. As evidenced in an article by Carlova⁴³ which describes the unexplainable (scientifically) success of Olga Worrall in curing people through the "laying on of hands." The substantial number of doctors beginning to take notice of this type of "unexplainable" phenomenon is indicative of increasing interest in the power of touch. Carlova quotes Dr. William A. McGarey:

"Olga Worrall has a remarkable ability to heal. I have come to know her closely and have seen some of the research in which she has taken part. I have no question in my mind but that she can heal people. I am aware that the American Medical Association, of which I am a part, states that methods of healing should be founded on a scientific basis for a physician to participate in them, but they make no notation in that ethical rule about whether or not a doctor should allow his bedside manner to affect the patient; and also, whether he should stop the healing energy that goes through his hands as he places them on the patient in the process of examination or treatment. Neither the bedside manner nor the healing by laying on of hands, which every doctor does to a certain degree, can be classified as scientifically based. The issue is whether we should use modalities of healing that bring the body back to a more normal state, or whether we should keep

⁴² Frederick Leboyer, Birth Without Violence, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975)

⁴³ John Carlova, "Even M.D.s have faith in this faith healer," Medical Economics, Sept. 1973. pp. 98 - 114.

from people any manner of healing simply because it is not scientific. It might be said that we are being forced to decide between the welfare of our patients and obedience to so-called science."⁴⁴

Summary

Although the medical profession has only begun to recognize the potential of the human touch and communication through touch, they (medical professionals) are no longer ignoring it as insignificant. Admittedly, the behavior is a difficult one to research and it will be some time before the skeptic "scientists" will be convinced.

This section reviewed several studies that lend support to the use of touching as a viable technique. Recognition is made, however, of the difficulties involved in interpreting messages and intentions.

⁴⁴Ibid. p. 114

Education

Only one person has written a book dealing specifically with nonverbal communication in the schools. Thompson,⁴⁵ in regard to tactile communication, makes the following statement:

"Tomorrow is not too soon to begin the humanizing process. And begin it, where possible, by touching students, especially if one teaches small children. An encouraging pat or a sympathetic arm around the shoulders when students are discouraged or distressed may work small wonders. It is a fact--a measurable flow of electrical energy passes from one person to another during tactile stimulation. Although the origins and meaning of this are not clear, its presence is evident, and its effect on human behavior is beyond dispute. A sympathetic human touch soothes the sick and the distressed, the very young, and the very old. Do not underestimate the power of touch." ⁴⁶

One educator who does not underestimate the power of touch is Hymes.

"You can be sure that the closer children are to infancy the more they will accept the signs the infant does. Nursery school, kindergarten, primary children will click best with someone who is motherly. Not that being motherly means having white hair. Even a man can be 'motherly'. These youngsters want an easygoing way; a patient way that gives them lots of time; a gentle way, relaxed and comfortable. And, although obviously you as a teacher have to act in the way that is right for you, young children almost surely are looking for physical signs that you care: your

⁴⁵James J. Thompson, Beyond Words: Nonverbal Communication in the Classroom, (New York: Citation Press, 1973).

⁴⁶Ibid. pp. 184-185.

arm around a child's shoulder, sometimes holding a youngster on your lap, holding a hand, and lots of sympathy when children are hurt...or when they think they are hurt."⁴⁷

Some school districts are beginning to recognize a child's need for "mothering" beyond what actual parents give. A report on one such program utilizing teacher aides with strong affectional skills to support students is reported by Cowen.⁴⁸

Many teachers are strong themselves in expressing affection for their students and need no assistance. Consider Harry Wong, who reports:

"Love cannot be communicated at a distance. Discipline problems decline and learning increases as the distance between the teacher and the student decreases. In fact, my distance decreases to where I touch the student."⁴⁹

Another who agrees but recognizes the unfortunate taboos and reactions that exist in our present society is Heath.⁵⁰

"As friendly as most Americans are, few of us accept our need to be affectionate, tender, and in physical contact with each other. Our

⁴⁷James L. Hymes, A Child Development Point of View, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955) pp. 25 - 26.

⁴⁸Emory Cowen, "Mothers in the Classroom," Psychology Today, Vol. 3 No. 7, Dec. 1969, pp. 36-39.

⁴⁹Harry K. Wong, "Dear Class, I Love You," Learning, Vol. 1, No. 2, Dec. 1972, p. 22.

⁵⁰Douglas H. Heath, Humanizing Schools: New Directions, New Decisions, (New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1971)

society places formidable taboos on emotional relationships, particularly between members of the same sex. We are a touchless society. One of the powerful attractions of Esalen and other human growth centers is that they help people accept their need to touch and be touched. Our fear of being close to each other has intensified in the last decades. I am intrigued by the current dancing styles where young people barely touch or even look at their 'partner.'* A youth, out of fear of being labeled a homosexual, cannot violate the touch barrier with his own sex. The only exceptions our society permits occur when contact is masked by aggressiveness, as in playful wrestling, mutual hugging in the excitement of winning an athletic contest, or drunkenness. To call someone a fag or a queer is one of the more damning indictments we can make in our culture, similar in force to 'nigger' or 'kike'. One boy who comforted a friend whose roommate had just committed suicide, by putting his arm around him, was called a fairy the next day by another student."⁵¹

In light of the many myths and misconceptions as well as the general lack of information relative to touching, the need for research is apparent. In spite of this, few actual studies have been attempted and only one, to the author's knowledge, in an educational setting. In a study by Clapp,⁵² kindergarten children in five elementary schools were studied in an attempt to assess experimentally the effects of touch as an enhancement to perseverance.

*There has been some change in social dancing as evidenced by the current popularity of dances such as the "bump," Perhaps a new trend has started i.e. touching.

⁵¹Ibid p. 22

⁵²Thomas B. Clapp, "A Study of Physical Touch as an Enhancement to Student Perseverance," (unpublished dissertation) University of Maryland, 1969.

The children were given two sets of drawing tasks to copy. The tasks were judged by experts to be similar and of equal difficulty. In the first task the children were all encouraged verbally. In the second task the experimental group was in addition to verbal encouragement, given physical encouragement via pats on the back, arms and shoulders. The criterion measure was, success as determined by the number of drawings completed from the series provided in each task.

The results indicated that those students who were touched did complete more drawings. The results are, however, inconclusive in that there were a number of problems with the design and procedure of the study. Not the least of these was the fact that student teachers were recruited to serve as operators in the study; they were the people offering the physical encouragement. The student teachers were not volunteers and nearly 50% of them indicated on a subsequent questionnaire that they did not feel the experience was worthwhile. In other words, the operator's use of touch was superficial in a large number of cases. A number of other problems with the design of the study make its reliability very questionable. Clapp readily admits the weaknesses of his effort; however, it is significant that someone has taken an initial step in attempting to research the issue. The greatest mistake that Clapp made was to overlook the essential emotional involvement that is essential for genuine communication via human touching.

Summary

In the course of reviewing the literature within the field of education relating to tactile communication or any reference to human physical contact, one is struck by the sparsity of it. In a profession so dependent upon human interpersonal relations the phenomenon of touch has certainly been avoided and is, therefore, little understood.

This section included the thinking of a few theoreticians and reported the only research relating to touch between students and teachers.

Summary of The Chapter

This chapter reviewed a representative sample of the research available in the fields of psychology and anthropology pertaining to touching behavior. In addition, a large portion of the existing literature from the fields of communications and medicine, and virtually all of the research available in education was reviewed. Although not an exhaustive review of the literature it does represent a fairly comprehensive account of that which pertains to tactile communications between teachers and students.

A far better summation than any other is provided on the following page by the anthropologist Desmond Morris.

"The human animal is a social species, capable of loving and greatly in need of being loved. A simple tribal hunter by evolution, he finds himself now in a bewilderingly inflated communal world. Hemmed in on all sides, he defensively turns in on himself. In his emotional retreat, he starts to shut off even those who are nearest and dearest to him until he finds himself alone in a dense crowd. Unable to reach out for emotional support, he becomes tense and strained and possibly, in the end, violent. Lost for comfort, he turns to harmless substitutes for love that ask no questions. But loving is a two-way process, and in the end the substitutes are not enough. In this condition, if he does not find true intimacy--even if it is only with one single person--he will suffer. Driven to armour himself against attack and betrayal, he may have arrived at a state in which all contact seems repellent, where to touch or to be touched means to hurt or be hurt. This, in a sense, has become one of the greatest ailments of our time, a major social disease of modern society that we would do well to cure before it is too late. If the danger remains unheeded, then--like poisonous chemicals in our food--it may increase from generation to generation until the damage has gone beyond repair."⁵³

⁵³

Desmond Morris, *Intimate Behavior*, (Bantam Books edition)
(New York: Random House, Inc. 1971), p. 264

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The historical review of existing knowledge relative to human touching establishes the importance of touching behavior for the expression of positive feeling and attitudes. Having established that the use or misuse of touch may be a significant factor in the growth of children, a survey was conducted to determine whether or not and to what degree touching behavior is currently being utilized by teachers in elementary schools.

Population and Sample

The local school districts within a large Intermediate School District in Michigan, provided a cross-section of urban, suburban and rural schools. The following figures provided by the Intermediate Office reflect the diversity within the county.

K-12 school districts, 1975 - 76

20 public school districts
4,573 employed educators
99,964 students enrolled

Private and parochial schools
898 employed educators
18,784 students enrolled

Urban setting
1,691 employed educators
38,894 students enrolled

Suburban setting
324 employed educators
6,965 students enrolled

Small rural setting
75 employed educators
1,602 students enrolled

This intermediate school district provided an opportunity for surveying teachers from urban schools, where 420 or approximately 25% of the county's elementary teachers work, as well as suburban and rural schools. The suburban school districts provided the largest number of teachers for the survey. Approximately 50% (750) of the total population of elementary teachers are employed by the suburban school districts. The remaining 437 teachers are employed by the districts in the outlying farm country and work in schools in that rural setting.

The actual total size of the population is 1,594 elementary teachers. The goal was to select a sample of approximately 400 representing 25% of all public elementary school teachers in the Intermediate School District. In an effort to maintain the cross-sectional make-up of the county, 50% of the sample was selected from the suburban schools 25% from the rural schools and 25% from the urban school district.

Two factors limited the actual size of the sample. The first was the refusal by the urban school system to participate in the survey. The second limiting factor was a result of the sampling procedure. For organizational purposes it was decided

to limit the number of local school districts to be involved, identify a few districts to represent the others and survey the entire staffs in those elementary buildings. Districts were selected from different areas of the county that would provide the approximate numbers for the sample. The limiting oversight was that not all of the professional educators in a school are classroom teachers. Consequently, the total number of classroom teachers was greatly reduced. Included as supplementary data, however, will be the responses of principals, additional professional educators such as special education teachers, as well as a small sample of urban teachers who volunteered to participate on their own.

The geographical location of the school districts which comprise the sample and the actual number of participating classroom teachers were:

<u>Rural</u>	86 teachers
<u>Suburban</u>	136 teachers
<u>Urban*</u>	16 teachers

It should be noted that although the sample of classroom teachers is smaller than originally hoped for, the addition of a substantial amount of supplementary data contributes to an understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of teachers in a more generic sense.

*Offered as a supplement in Appendix C

The additional people included in the survey were:

Urban classroom teachers	16
Principals	8
Counselors	4
Special education teachers	10
Multi-grade teachers i.e., PE	4
Remedial instruction	<u>9</u>
total	51

The entire sample utilized in the study includes, therefore, 222 elementary classroom teachers representing 14% of the population in the county public schools and 51 additional respondents bringing the total to 273 or 17% of the professional elementary school educators within the Intermediate School District.

Although the existence of limiting factors is not insignificant in this sample, it is felt that it will still sufficiently reflect the attitudes and behaviors of an adequate number of teachers. Although a wide range of variables have not been accounted for, it is reiterated that the intention is to generate hypotheses and for this purpose the sample was considered adequate.

Development of the Survey Instrument

The instrument utilized in this research was self-designed and titled "A Survey of Touching Behavior and Attitudes" (Appendix). A wide range of items was included in an effort to generate as much general information as possible. The intention of the instrument was to assess teacher attitudes regarding touching between elementary teachers and their students in general as well as to identify their own actual behavior with their students.

The instrument is actually a combination opinionnaire and questionnaire. It is an opinionnaire in that it solicits the opinions of teachers regarding other teachers and it is a questionnaire in the assessment of actual behavior via self report. Developed in 1975, the instrument was field tested by selected teachers and reviewed by additional educators following several revisions.

It was understood that the data gathered would surpass that which was necessary to respond to the specific research questions of this study, but that in a seminal study such as this one, the additional data were considered relevant for their potential heuristic value.

One serious flaw in the instrument was fortunately discovered by a respondent during the first administration. The teacher noted that current teaching assignment was requested and yet many questions related to the previous year when the teaching assignment may have been different. Fortunately, the teacher's astute observation prevented a serious validity problem from occurring. Verbal instructions subsequently included the direction to designate the previous year's assignment if different from the current year.

Administration of the Survey

The survey was conducted during the last three months of 1976. In October initial contact was made with the central office of each identified school district. Contact was made on a face to face basis and in each case additional meetings were arranged with the

elementary building principals. In each case, with the exception of the urban school district, permission to proceed was received.

Procedure for Treatment of the Data

In January the completed questionnaires were individually coded and delivered to the computer laboratory at Michigan State University where arrangements had been made for the data to be programmed and computerized.

In addition to a tabulation of all responses to the questions cross tabulations were developed for all questions with the following demographic data.

1. Sex
2. Marital Status
3. Age
4. Education
5. Teaching Experience
6. Tenure Status
7. Teaching Assignment

The original intention was also to examine the data for differences related to rural, urban and suburban schools. The subsequent lack of sufficient data from urban teachers negated that possibility.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter includes the research procedure for the survey component of this study. The survey described was undertaken to ascertain if teacher behaviors and attitudes were consistent with the apparent importance of tactile communication as presented in the review of the literature.

Also included in the chapter are the population and sample for the study, a description of the instrument utilized and the process for administering the survey. In addition a number of difficulties encountered and the possible limiting effect of those difficulties are included.

CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section includes a description of the sample based upon their responses to ten demographic questions included in the survey instrument. The second section includes frequency tables for the twenty-nine questions requiring specific, single responses. In addition, this section includes selected responses to three questions calling for written elaboration and the respondents personal statement. Section three includes selected cross-tabulations bearing directly on the problem and the major questions of the study. The fourth section is a review and summary of the chapter.

The data are presented in the form of tables, discussion and pertinent respondent comments. It should be noted that due to the tendency of the respondents to skip some questions, there is occasionally a discrepancy in total frequencies. The word "blank" indicates the item was unanswered.

SECTION I

Description of the Sample

Presented in this section is a description of the survey participants based upon their responses to the first ten items on the survey instrument.

Sex of the Respondents

Although females outnumbered males by a ratio of more than six to one this is generally reflective of elementary school teaching staffs.

TABLE 1

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Male	30	13.5
Female	<u>192</u>	<u>86.5</u>
Total	222	100.0

Marital Status

Four classifications having potential bearing on tactual behavior were utilized.

TABLE 2

Marital Status Distribution

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Married	167	75.2
Single	36	16.2
Divorced	16	7.2
Widowed	<u>3</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total	222	

Age of the Respondents

The sample age range was from 23 to 64 years with a mean age of 36 years and a median age of 32.5 years. Table 3 illustrates the categorized age distribution of the sample.

TABLE 3

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

<u>Age Interval</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
23 - 30	95	45.2
31 - 40	50	23.8
41 - 50	37	17.7
51 and over	<u>28</u>	<u>13.3</u>
Total	210	100.0
Blank	12	

Education of the Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest earned degree and credits beyond. For the sake of simplification only the highest degree will be considered here.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF EARNED DEGREE

<u>Earned Degree</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Bachelors	154	69.4
Masters	65	29.3
Specialist	<u>1</u>	<u>.5</u>
Total	220	100.0
Blank	2	

Years of Teaching Experience

The range of teaching experience was from 1 to 38 years with a mean of 10 and a median of 8 years. The five respondents leaving this item blank were probably first year teachers with no prior years of experience. Table 5 illustrates the categorized distribution of years of experience.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION BY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

<u>Years</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1 - 3	37	17.1
4 -10	103	47.4
11 -20	52	24.0
21 and over	<u>25</u>	<u>11.5</u>
Total	217	100.0
Blank	5	

Teacher Tenure Status

Due to the potentially controversial nature of touching behavior it was considered important to determine the existence or nonexistence of tenure. Two hundred, nearly 90% of the respondents indicated they did have tenure. Twenty, nearly 10% of the respondents did not have tenure. Two people did not respond to the question.

Teaching Grade Assignment

Respondents were asked to indicate the grade that they taught. In the case of a change in assignment from the previous year, they were asked to indicate the prior year (1975-76). Those people teaching multiple ages or having special assignments were separated from the

sampling and their responses are offered later as supplementary data. Classroom teaching assignments are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
DISTRIBUTION BY TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
K	22	10.2
1	42	19.4
2	34	15.7
3	36	16.7
4	29	13.4
5	42	19.4
6	<u>11</u>	<u>5.1</u>
Total	216	100.0
Blank	6	

Questionnaire items 8-10 attempted to determine the relative size of the school and the number of students in the respondents classrooms. Due to a wide range of inconsistent responses to question #8 (Number of teachers in your school) and question #9 (Approximate number of students in your school) the data were considered invalid. Figures utilized were provided by the Intermediate School District office.

Comparative Building Size and Geographical Location

It was suspected that a relationship might exist between smaller schools and classes and degree of tactile communication.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF BUILDING STAFF AND ENROLLMENT

<u>Building</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Pupil</u>
1	A	Rural	17	291
2	A	Rural	24	593
3	A	Rural	21	499
1	B	Rural	28	730
2	B	Rural	15	505
1	C	Sub.	14	339
2	C	"	14	338
3	C	"	14	345
4	C	"	11	267
1	D	"	20	420
2	D	"	25	488
3	D	"	19	399
4	D	"	18	292
5	D	"	22	449
6	D	"	19	369
7	D	"	22	419

Size of Classes

Class sizes ranged from 10 to 32 with the mean size 24.5 and the median 25.

Geographical Distribution

The respondents were categorized as teaching in rural or suburban schools. An additional small sample of teachers in urban schools was taken and is considered as a supplement to these data. There were 86 (38.7%) of the respondents who taught in rural school districts. There were 136 (61.3%) who taught in suburban school districts.

SECTION II

Frequency Distributions

This section includes the data generated from the main questions in the survey. The data are presented as frequency distribution and percentages. The word blank indicates no response was made to the question.

Respondents opinions were asked for by the first six questionnaire items (no.'s 11-16). In each case they were asked to respond according to the following scale:

- 1) Never
- 2) Seldom
- 3) Occasionally
- 4) Usually
- 5) Always

Question number 11

Question #11 asked: If expressing positive feelings for students, how often do you think teachers should make use of physical touch? Responses are presented in the table below.

TABLE 8

Touch and Positive Feelings

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	0	0
Seldom	1	.5
Occasionally	84	38.4
Usually	118	53.8
Always	<u>16</u>	<u>7.3</u>
Total	219	100.0
Blank	3	

Question Number 12

Question #12 asked: If expressing negative feelings for students, how often do you think teachers should make use of physical touch? Responses are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Touch and Negative Feelings

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	8	3.6
Seldom	89	40.5
Occasionally	88	40.0
Usually	32	14.5
Always	<u>3</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total	220	100.0
Blank	2	

Question Number 13

Question #13 asked: Do you think physical touch is important for improving a student's self-concept? Responses are presented in table 10.

TABLE 10

TOUCH AND SELF-CONCEPT

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	2	.9
Seldom	2	.9
Occasionally	48	22.6
Usually	121	57.2
Always	<u>39</u>	<u>18.4</u>
Total	212	100.0
Blank	10	

Question Number 14

Question #14 asked: How important do you think physical touch is for creating positive student attitudes toward school?

Responses are presented in Table 11.

TABLE 11

TOUCH AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	3	1.4
Seldom	5	2.4
Occasionally	64	30.5
Usually	100	47.6
Always	<u>38</u>	<u>18.1</u>
Total	210	100.0
Blank	12	

Question Number 15

Question #15 asked: If punishing students, how often do you think teachers should use physical touch? Responses are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12

TOUCH AND PUNISHMENT

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	16	7.2
Seldom	117	53.2
Occasionally	71	32.3
Usually	13	5.9
Always	<u>3</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total	220	100.0
Blank	2	

Question Number 16

Question #16 asked: How often, would you think, do your students like to be touched by you? Responses are presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13

STUDENTS LIKING TO BE TOUCHED

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	0	0.0
Seldom	6	2.7
Occasionally	77	35.0
Usually	119	54.1
Always	<u>18</u>	<u>8.2</u>
Total	220	100.0
Blank	2	

Questions #17 through #31 deal with teacher attitudes and behaviors regarding specific situations.

Question Number 17

Question #17 asked: How often do you like your students to touch you to demonstrate positive feelings? Responses are presented in Table 14:

TABLE 14

TEACHERS LIKING TO BE TOUCHED

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	3	1.4
Seldom	21	9.5
Occasionally	108	48.8
Usually	72	32.6
Always	<u>17</u>	<u>7.7</u>
Total	221	100.0
Blank	1	

Question Number 18

Question #18 asked: How often do you encourage students to touch you? Responses are presented in Table 15.

TABLE 15

ENCOURAGEMENT TO TOUCH

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	19	8.7
Seldom	50	22.8
Occasionally	87	39.7
Usually	53	24.2
Always	<u>10</u>	<u>4.6</u>
Total	219	100.0
Blank	3	

Question Number 19

Question #19 asked: When speaking to my students in private, I put my hand(s) on them. Responses are presented in Table 16.

TABLE 16

TOUCHING IN PRIVATE

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	1	.5
Seldom	19	8.6
Occasionally	78	35.3
Usually	100	45.2
Always	<u>23</u>	<u>10.4</u>
Total	221	100.0
Blank	1	

Question Number 20

Question #20 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students? Responses are presented in Table 17.

TABLE 17

TEACHERS HUGGING STUDENTS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	21	9.8
Seldom	68	31.6
Occasionally	80	37.2
Usually	35	16.3
Always	<u>11</u>	<u>5.1</u>
Total	215	100.0
Blank	7	

Question Number 21

Question #21 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you kiss any of your students? Responses are presented in Table 18.

TABLE 18

TEACHERS KISSING STUDENTS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	156	72.9
Seldom	36	16.8
Occasionally	19	8.9
Usually	2	.9
Always	<u>1</u>	<u>.5</u>
Total	214	100.0
Blank	8	

Question Number 22

Question #22 asked: During the past year, how often, on a typical day, did you put your arm around a student affectionately? Responses are presented in Table 19.

TABLE 19

ONE ARM SHOW OF AFFECTION

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	5	2.3
Seldom	22	10.3
Occasionally	89	41.8
Usually	80	37.6
Always	<u>17</u>	<u>8.0</u>
Total	213	100.0
Blank	9	

Question Number 23

Question #23 asked: On a typical day, during the last school year, how frequently did a student sit on your lap?

Responses are presented in Table 20.

TABLE 20

SITTING ON TEACHER'S LAP

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	108	49.8
Seldom	52	24.0
Occasionally	44	20.3
Usually	9	4.1
Always	<u>4</u>	<u>1.8</u>
Total	217	100.0
Blank	5	

Question Number 24

Question #24 asked: When students talk to you, do they put their hand(s) on you? Responses are presented in Table 21.

TABLE 21

STUDENTS TOUCHING TEACHERS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	8	3.7
Seldom	44	20.1
Occasionally	125	57.0
Usually	39	17.8
Always	<u>3</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total	219	100.0
Blank	3	

Question Number 25

Question #25 asked: During the last school year, did students kiss you? Responses are presented in Table 22.

TABLE 22

STUDENTS KISSING TEACHERS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	77	36.5
Seldom	62	29.4
Occasionally	69	32.7
Usually	2	.9
Always	<u>1</u>	<u>.5</u>
Total	211	100.0
Blank	11	

Question Number 26

Question #26 asked: During the last school year, did students hug you? Responses are presented in Table 23.

TABLE 23

STUDENTS HUGGING TEACHERS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	18	8.5
Seldom	45	21.1
Occasionally	100	46.9
Usually	43	20.2
Always	<u>7</u>	<u>3.3</u>
Total	213	100.0
Blank	9	

Question Number 27

Question #27 asked: How often, during the last year, did students ask you not to touch them? Responses are presented in Table 24.

TABLE 24

STUDENTS ASKING NOT TO BE TOUCHED

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	157	72.4
Seldom	51	23.5
Occasionally	7	3.2
Usually	2	.9
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	217	100.0
Blank	5	

Question Number 28

Question #28 asked: How frequently do you ask students not to touch you? Responses are presented in Table 25.

TABLE 25

TEACHERS ASKING NOT TO BE TOUCHED

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	163	74.0
Seldom	45	20.5
Occasionally	12	5.5
Usually	0	0.0
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	220	100.0
Blank	2	

Question Number 29

Question #29 asked: How often during a typical week last year did you spank at least one student? Responses are presented in Table 26.

TABLE 26

TEACHERS SPANKING STUDENTS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	150	69.4
Seldom	57	26.4
Occasionally	9	4.2
Usually	0	0.0
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	216	100.0
Blank	6	

Question Number 30

Question #30 asked: With what did you spank the student?

(refers to question #29) Responses are presented in Table 27.

TABLE 27

METHOD OF SPANKING

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Hand	69	74.2
Object	12	12.9
Both hand & object	<u>12</u>	<u>12.9</u>
Total	93*	100.0
Blank	129	

Question Number 31

Question #31 asked: How often during a week last year did

you slap at least one student? Responses are presented in Table 28.

TABLE 28

TEACHERS SLAPPING STUDENTS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	190	88.4
Seldom	24	11.1
Occasionally	1	.5
Usually	0	0.0
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	215	100.0
Blank	5	

*Discrepancy of frequency in comparison with previous Table is noted here: An apparent misunderstanding of Question #30 contaminated these data.

Questions #32 through #34 deal with the issue of complaints regarding teacher touching behavior. Each of the three questions is related to the others. Question #32 asks about frequency of complaints. Question #33 identifies the complaint. Question #34 asks the respondent to elaborate on the nature of the complaint.

Question Number 32

Question #32 asked: How often has anyone complained about you touching students? Responses are presented in Table 29.

TABLE 29

COMPLAINTS ABOUT TOUCHING

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	190	87.6
Seldom	27	12.4
Occasionally	0	0.0
Usually	0	0.0
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	217	100.0
Blank	5	

Question Number 33

Question #33 asked: Who, if anyone, has complained? Multiple responses to this question created the increased frequency of responses. Responses are presented in Table 30.

TABLE 30

COMPLAINANTS ABOUT TOUCHING

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Student touched	20	9.0
Other student	8	3.6
Teacher	5	2.3
Principal	7	3.2
Superintendent	5	2.3
Parent	16	7.2
Others	<u>6</u>	2.7
Total	67	

Question Number 34

Question #34 asked: Please elaborate on the nature of the complaints. Some selected responses are presented.

"Mother complained that student was hit on ear when she ducked to get away from being hit on shoulder."

"Student had misbehaved and was being reprimanded. I had a hold of his arm/shoulder and he objected."

"Jealousy"

"'Don't touch me!'"

"Birthdays are not spanking affairs."

"Did not want their child touched--I was to tell them if anything occurred. I was to contact them and they would spank at home!"

"One boy will not hold my hand in line--he says it's baby stuff."

"Parents only, are allowed to spank. But after I had just cause--no problem."

It is interesting to note that nearly all of the responses to question #34 described complaints regarding punitive touching and not affectionate touching.

One additional response to question #34 is presented.

"Before recess students were told to stay on (the) sidewalk because of (the) mud and (they) were told they would be spanked if they tracked in mud. Because everyone had to live with their mud. Two (children) deliberately went into the mud and were spanked. The day of the Christmas party, a mother came in to pick up her son who couldn't stay for the party. (She) said that they (parents) almost came up to see me and were mad about it (spanking). I told her what had happened, invited her to ask the class about directions that day, which were stressed, and told her I would be happy to meet with both her husband and herself to discuss this at any time. At this point, she backed off and changed the subject."

Questionnaire items #35 through #39 were general questions calling for yes or no responses.

Question Number 35

Question #35 asked: Do you think that students respond favorably if you physically express affection or caring for them? Responses are presented in Table 31.

TABLE 31

STUDENTS RESPONDING FAVORABLY TO TOUCH

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Yes	215	99.1
No	<u>2</u>	<u>.9</u>
Total	217	100.0
Blank	5	

Question Number 36

Question #36 asked: Do you ever respond favorably

if students physically express affection toward you?

Responses are presented in Table 32.

TABLE 32

TEACHERS RESPONDING FAVORABLY TO TOUCH

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Yes	212	97.2
No	<u>6</u>	<u>2.8</u>
Total	218	100.0
Blank	4	

Question Number 37

Question #37 asked: Do you think there is a need for more research on the effects of physical touching in schools?

Responses are presented in Table 33.

TABLE 33

NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Yes	162	78.6
No	<u>44</u>	<u>21.4</u>
Total	206	100.0
Blank	16	

Question Number 38

Question #38 asked: Which, do you think, desire the more frequent physical contact? Responses are presented in Table 34.

TABLE 34

SEX DIFFERENCES AND DESIRE FOR CONTACT

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Girls	60	27.4
Boys	1	.5
Both the same	<u>158</u>	<u>72.1</u>
Total	219	100.0
Blank	3	

Question Number 39

Question #39 asked: Are you most likely to touch students of your same sex, opposite sex or both sexes equally? Responses are presented in Table 35.

TABLE 35

TOUCHING ACCORDING TO SEX OF STUDENT

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Same sex	15	6.9
Opposite sex	3	1.4
Both equally	<u>198</u>	<u>91.7</u>
Total	216	100.0
Blank	6	

Question Number 40

Question #40 raises the question of inhibition or restraint in asking: How often during the last year did you want to touch a student in a positive manner and yet did not? Responses are presented in Table 36.

TABLE 36

<u>RESTRAINT IN TOUCHING</u>		
<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Never	90	42.5
Seldom	82	38.7
Occasionally	38	17.9
Usually	2	.9
Always	<u>0</u>	<u>.0</u>
Total	212	100.0
Blank	10	

Question Number 41

Question #41 related directly to question #40 and asked:
 What factors, if any, influenced your decision? The entire
 range of responses are presented in appendix B. Some selected
 responses are presented below.

"Child's reaction"

"I feel that I was touching too much and that I
 shouldn't."

"Told not to touch students."

"Possibly a carry over of past beliefs or mind
 sets about 'touching persons' as having a sexual
 connotation to the act."

"I was afraid I'd lose control, behavior-wise."

"Parent's reactions"

"Wanted to keep the 'student-teacher' relationship
 in force."

"Usually it's just taking the time."

"Holding back from getting myself or the student too
 emotionally involved."

Question Number 42

Question #42 asked: Please use the remaining space...
to make your own statement in regard to the importance or
unimportance of touching between elementary teachers and
students. The entire range of responses is presented in
Appendix B. A few selected comments are included here.

"I think it is extremely important. My kids know I love and care about them and touching is a super way to show it."

"I often feel a little spanking would be helpful for some discipline for some children. It seems to be very seldom used by parents in our school and never by the teachers or administration."

"The importance of touching lies in its value as an alternative or additional method of communication."

"I was never a 'touchy' person before I spent a lot of time with a touchy person. I personally enjoy touching and being touched. Before, I was too inhibited to do so. This may be true of most people."

SECTION III

Selected Cross Tabulations

This section includes selected crosstabulations which explore relationships between responses to the questionnaire items and the demographic differences within the sample. Because of the large amount of data generated by the survey only those crosstables felt to be most pertinent to the problem and major questions are presented. The relationships relative to seven variables were sought: sex, marital status, age, education, teaching experience, tenure status and teaching assignment. Each variable is considered separately.

Sex

The examination of the differences between the responses of male teachers and female teachers yielded some interesting results. (The data indicate that male teachers feel that physical touch is more important for improving a student's self-concept and creating positive attitudes than do female teachers.) In response to questions #13 and #14, males responded "usually" or "always" at a greater frequency (82.8% and 79.3%) than females (74.3% and 63.5%). The complete crosstabulations for both questions are included in tables 37 and 38.

Question #13 asked: Do you think physical touch is important for improving a student's self-concept?

TABLE 37

SEX OF TEACHER AND OPINIONS ON SELF-CONCEPT

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	0.0%	3.4%	13.8%	62.1%	20.7%
Female (183)	1.1%	.5%	24.0%	56.3%	18.0%

Question #14 asked: How important do you think physical touch is for creating positive student attitudes toward school?

TABLE 38

SEX OF TEACHER AND OPINIONS ON POSITIVE ATTITUDES

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	0.0	0.0	20.7	55.2	24.1
Female (181)	1.7	2.8	32.0	46.4	17.1

In contrast to the figures above, responses to several questions indicated that male teachers were less inclined to be overtly demonstrable in the expression of affection through physical touch. The following three tables present the responses to three questionnaire items which identified three specific kinds of touching behavior.

Question #20 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students?

Male teachers responded never two and one half times more frequently than female teachers, although combining the never and seldom responses equalizes the difference. The complete response is presented in Table 39.

TABLE 39

SEX OF TEACHERS AND HUGGING STUDENTS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (28)	21.4	21.4	39.3	14.3	3.6
Female (187)	8.0	33.2	36.9	16.6	5.3

Question #21 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you kiss any of your students?

The data showed that male teachers kiss students far less frequently than female teachers. Responses are presented in Table 40.

TABLE 40

SEX OF TEACHERS AND KISSING STUDENTS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	93.1	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0
Female (185)	69.7	18.9	9.7	1.1	.5

Question #22 asked: During the past year, how often, on a typical day, did you put your arm around a student affectionately? At a ratio of better than two to one male teachers responded more frequently that they never or seldom express affection in this manner toward their students. The complete response to the question is presented in Table 41.

TABLE 41

SEX OF TEACHERS AND AFFECTIONATE GESTURES

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	3.4	20.7	44.8	24.1	6.9
Female (184)	2.2	8.7	41.3	39.7	8.2

The questions regarding student expression of affection indicated that male elementary school teachers receive less physical communication as well. Question #25 asked: During the last school year, did students kiss you? The complete response is presented in Table 42.

TABLE 42

STUDENTS KISSING TEACHERS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	65.5	20.7	13.8	0.0	0.0
Female (182)	31.9	30.8	35.7	1.1	.5

Question #26 asked: During the last school year, did students hug you? Examination of the data indicates that male teachers are hugged less frequently by elementary school students than their female counterparts. Table 43 presents the comparison.

TABLE 43

	<u>STUDENTS HUGGING TEACHERS</u>				
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (29)	10.3	31.0	44.8	6.9	6.9
Female (184)	8.2	19.6	47.3	22.3	2.7

In contrast to the lesser frequency of tactual expression of affection by male teachers, the men were more likely to have had physical contact with students of a punitive nature. The data revealed that nearly 72% of the female teachers did not spank any of their students as opposed to nearly 57% of the men. This was in response to question #29 which asked: How often during a typical week last year did you spank at least one student? The complete response is presented in Table 44.

TABLE 44

	<u>TEACHERS SPANKING STUDENTS</u>				
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Male (30)	56.7	40.0	3.3	0.0	0.0
Female (186)	71.5	24.2	4.3	0.0	0.0

The responses to question #38 (Which, do you think, desires the more frequent physical contact, girls, boys or both the same?), yielded some interesting data. It is indicated that male teachers (90%) recognize more readily the desire for physical contact in male students than do their female colleagues (69%). More than 30% of the female teachers felt that girls desired more contact than boys as compared to 7% of the male teachers. The complete response to this question is presented in Table 45.

TABLE 45

	<u>SEX OF STUDENT AND DESIRE FOR CONTACT</u>		
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Both the Same</u>
Male (30)	6.7%	3.3%	90.0%
Female (189)	30.7%	0.0%	69.3%

The examination of the data for relationships between the sex of the teacher and attitudes and behaviors regarding touching between themselves and their students indicate that some district

differences do exist between male and female teachers and touching behavior and attitudes in school classrooms. A study of early child rearing practices as well as the effect of cultural norms and taboos might explain the discrepancies.

Marital Status

Four categories were established which identified the respondents marital status; married, single, divorced and widowed. Because only three people were in the widowed category their response were not considered.

From the examination of the data, several trends are noted that establish the existence of some relationships. In regard to attitudes toward touching, teachers who were divorced tended to place greater value on the importance of touching students than did married teachers and Single teachers placed less value on touching students than either married or divorced teachers.)

In regard to actually engaging in touching students, the married teachers were more likely than the others to demonstrate touching behaviors and more likely to receive touch from students. The single teachers were least likely to either give or receive touch.

The following tables are indicative of the responses which remained quite consistent throughout the questionnaire along the previously mentioned trends. Question #11 asked: If expressing positive feelings for students, how often do you think teachers

should make use of physical touch? The responses are presented in Table 46.

TABLE 46

MARITAL STATUS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD TOUCHING

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Married (165)	0.0	0.0	38.2	55.9	6.7
Single (35)	0.0	2.9	40.0	51.4	5.7
Divorced (16)	0.0	0.0	37.5	43.8	18.8

Question #20 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students? The responses according to marital status are presented in Table 47.

TABLE 47

MARITAL STATUS AND HUGGING STUDENTS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Married (163)	8.6	30.1	36.8	20.2	4.3
Single (36)	19.4	30.6	41.7	2.8	5.6
Divorced (13)	0.0	38.5	38.5	7.7	15.4

The data, in regard to relationships between touching and marital status, were by no means conclusive. As stated previously, however, there did appear to be a rather clear trend that single teachers gave and received less physical touch than teachers who

were currently or had been previously married.

Age

The survey respondents were grouped into four categories according to age; 23-30, 31-40, 41-50, and 51+. Examination of the data indicates the existence of a number of differences between the age groups.

Teachers in the two older age groups are more likely to demonstrate, physically, affection for their students. Teachers in the 41-50 group are the most demonstrative of all the groups. Several crosstabulations verify this observation. The table below is indicative of the trend.

Question #20 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students? The responses are presented in Table 48.

TABLE 48

	<u>AGE AND TEACHERS HUGGING STUDENTS</u>				
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
23-30 (92)	13.0	29.3	40.2	13.0	4.3
31-40 (49)	12.2	26.5	42.9	12.2	6.1
41-50 (37)	5.4	29.7	21.6	32.4	10.8
51+ (25)	4.0	36.0	40.0	20.0	0.0

An interesting relationship appears to exist in regard to spanking students. The youngest and the oldest groups are the most likely to spank children. The table that follows presents the responses regarding teachers spanking students.

Question #29 asked: How often during a typical week last year did you spank at least one student? Table 49 presents the responses.

TABLE 49

	<u>AGE AND TEACHERS SPANKING STUDENTS</u>				
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
23-30 (91)	65.9	29.7	4.4	0.0	0.0
31-40 (50)	76.0	20.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
41-50 (36)	80.6	19.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
51+ (27)	55.6	33.3	11.1	0.0	0.0

Question #31 adds support that the youngest and the oldest teachers tend to touch students more frequently in order to punish them. The question asked: How often during a week last year did you slap at least one student? The responses are presented in Table 50.

TABLE 50

<u>AGE AND TEACHERS SLAPPING STUDENTS</u>					
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
23-30 (91)	87.9	12.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
31-40 (50)	92.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
41-50 (36)	94.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
51+	73.1	23.1	3.8	0.0	0.0

Education

Examination of the data yielded nothing to indicate that any relationship exists between amount of education on the part of the teacher and attitudes or behaviors involving physical touching between teachers and students.

Years of Teaching Experience

Years of teaching experience were arbitrarily divided into four categories; 1-3, 4-10, 11-20 and 21+. Crosstabulation of the data using these categories did not indicate any clear relationships existing between teaching experience and attitudes or behaviors of teachers in regard to touching students.

Teacher Tenure

It was suspected that the security of the tenure would increase the tactile communication of caring and affection. The data did not indicate that any relationship existed between tenure and touching.

In regard to punitive touching the data did indicate a positive relationship between tenure and spanking or slapping students. More non-tenured teachers (84.2%) indicated that they never spanked during the last year than did tenured teachers (67.7%). In regard to slapping, more non-tenured teachers (94.7%) indicated that they never slapped a student during the last year than did tenured teachers (87.7%).

Grade Assignment

Very definite relationships existed in regard to the grade that teachers were assigned and attitudes and touching behavior. In general, as would be suspected, the older the student the less affectionate physical contact he/she received. Attitudes and touching behaviors divided along some very distinct lines according to grade level. The teachers who worked in kindergartens, first, second and third grades, consistently indicated greater importance to touching and engaged in touching behavior most frequently. The teachers working in fourth and fifth grades represented a second distinct group, touching considerably less than the sixth grade teachers who represented the third distinct group.

The following figures are indicative of the beliefs held by the teachers in regard to the importance of touch. Teachers responded either usually or always at the following frequencies to question #11 which asked: If expressing positive feelings for students, how often do you think teachers should make use of physical touch?

Kg.	68%	Fourth	46%	Sixth	9%
First	71%	Fifth	54%		
Second	68%				
Third	75%				

Examination of additional crosstabulations provides support for the trend indicated by the previous figures.

Question #13 asked: Do you think physical touch is important for improving a student's self concept? The response is presented in Table 51 (in percentages).

TABLE 51

GRADE LEVEL AND TOUCH TO IMPROVE SELF CONCEPT

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg. (22)	0.0	0.0	18.2	31.8	50.0
First (41)	0.0	0.0	14.6	70.7	14.6
Second (33)	6.1	3.0	9.1	66.7	15.2
Third (34)	0.0	0.0	17.6	61.8	20.6
Fourth (28)	0.0	3.6	39.3	46.4	10.7
Fifth (40)	0.0	0.0	30.0	55.0	15.0
Sixth	0.0	0.0	40.0	60.0	0.0

Teachers perceptions of whether or not their students like being touched follow the same trend. They perceive positive reception decreasing with the increasing age of the child and distinct divisions between third and fourth grades and between fifth and sixth grades. Table 52 presents the responses to question #16.

Question #16 asked: How often, would you think, do your students like to be touched by you?

TABLE 52

<u>GRADE LEVEL AND STUDENTS LIKING TO BE TOUCHED</u>					
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	0.0	18.2	59.1	22.7
First	0.0	0.0	31.7	61.0	7.3
Second	0.0	3.0	21.2	69.7	6.1
Third	0.0	0.0	27.8	66.7	5.6
Fourth	0.0	3.4	48.3	41.4	6.9
Fifth	0.0	7.1	47.6	38.1	7.1
Sixth	0.0	9.1	63.6	27.3	0.0

It appeared in the data that teachers liked to be touched by their students according to the same grade level trend.

Question #17 asked: How often do you like your students to touch you to demonstrate positive feelings?

TABLE 53

<u>GRADE LEVEL AND TEACHERS LIKING TO BE TOUCHED</u>					
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	4.5	36.4	50.0	9.1
First	0.0	4.8	50.0	38.1	7.1
Second	3.0	3.0	45.5	42.4	6.1
Third	0.0	16.7	41.7	36.1	5.6

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Fourth	0.0	17.2	48.3	24.1	10.3
Fifth	2.4	14.3	57.1	19.0	7.1
Sixth	9.1	0.0	72.7	9.1	9.1

The questions which sought information regarding teachers' touching behavior yielded data which reflected the same trend as the teachers' attitudes. The tables which follow present the responses of a representative selection of the survey questions.

Question #19 asked: When speaking to my students in private, I put my hand(s) on them.

TABLE 54

GRADE LEVEL AND TOUCHING IN PRIVATE

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	4.5	13.6	54.5	27.3
First	0.0	4.8	28.6	54.8	11.9
Second	3.0	9.1	21.2	51.5	15.2
Third	0.0	8.3	38.9	44.4	8.3
Fourth	0.0	3.4	34.5	51.7	10.3
Fifth	0.0	19.0	47.6	31.0	2.4
Sixth	0.0	9.1	72.7	18.2	0.0

Question #20 asked: During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students? Table 55 presents the responses.

TABLE 55

GRADE LEVEL AND TEACHERS HUGGING STUDENTS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	4.5	50.0	31.8	13.6
First	2.4	35.7	28.6	21.5	11.9
Second	3.2	22.6	45.2	22.6	6.5
Third	8.3	16.7	50.0	22.2	2.8
Fourth	14.3	53.6	28.6	3.6	0.0
Fifth	19.8	41.5	34.1	4.9	0.0
Sixth	36.4	54.5	9.1	0.0	0.0

Question #22 asked: During the past year, how often, on a typical day, did you put your arm around a student affectionately? Table 56 presents the responses.

TABLE 56

GRADE LEVEL AND TEACHERS SHOWING AFFECTION

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	0.0	22.7	50.0	27.3
First	0.0	9.5	28.6	50.0	11.9
Second	0.0	9.4	37.5	46.9	6.3
Third	0.0	8.3	47.2	38.9	5.6

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Fourth	0.0	10.3	48.3	37.9	3.9
Fifth	13.5	10.8	56.8	16.2	2.7
Sixth	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

The responses to question #24 indicate how the enculturation process decreases the incidence of touch as children get older. *

Question #24 asked: When students talk to you, do they put their hand(s) on you?

TABLE 57

GRADE LEVEL AND STUDENTS TOUCHING TEACHERS

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	0.0	59.1	36.4	4.5
First	0.0	14.3	57.1	28.6	0.0
Second	3.1	12.5	59.4	25.0	0.0
Third	5.6	19.4	52.8	19.4	2.8
Fourth	6.9	20.7	65.5	3.4	3.4
Fifth	7.1	35.7	54.8	2.4	0.0
Sixth	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

Question #26 asked: During the last school year did students hug you? Table 58 presents the responses.

*This process is described in chapter Two, pp. 22.

TABLE 58

<u>GRADE LEVEL AND STUDENTS HUGGING TEACHERS</u>					
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
Kg.	0.0	0.0	59.1	27.3	13.6
First	0.0	9.8	51.2	34.1	4.9
Second	3.1	15.6	50.0	28.1	3.1
Third	0.0	13.9	50.0	33.3	2.8
Fourth	13.8	37.9	44.8	3.4	0.0
Fifth	25.0	37.5	35.0	2.5	0.0
Sixth	30.0	40.0	30.0	0.0	0.0

Questions #27, #32 and #33a sought information regarding students not wanting to be touched by their teachers. The data indicated the highest incidence at the fourth and fifth grade levels. Generally twice as many students in the fourth and fifth grades requested not to be touched than in the other grades, as reported by their teachers.

Summary

This section included the data from selected crosstabulations of the data according to seven variables. The variables were: sex, marital status, age, education, years of teaching experience, tenure and grade assignment. Relationships were found to exist with four of the variables; sex, age, marital status and grade assignment. Evidence of a slight relationship between teacher tenure and punitive physical contact was in evidence.

SECTION IV

REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter included the results from the survey of 222 elementary classroom teachers in an effort to identify their attitudes and behaviors in regard to physical touch between themselves and their students. Several questions had been posited regarding the nature and the extent of touching in elementary classrooms.

The data indicated that the majority of the teachers in the sample felt that touching between students and teachers was important. In actuality, overt expression of affection between teachers and students such as hugging or kissing was limited and therefore the most common form of contact involved only the teacher's hands.

It was discovered from the data that seldom do either teachers (5.5%) or students (4.1%) request not to be touched. More than 87% of the teachers had never received a complaint about their touching students and the majority of the complaints that were received were concerned with punishment.

The teachers surveyed were highly receptive to the issue of physical contact, 97% indicating that they responded favorably to being touched affectionately by their students. In addition 78% of the teachers felt that the subject of touching needed more research.

Some interesting results were obtained in regard to sex differences of students and how teachers perceived their desire for contact, twenty-seven percent of the teachers felt that girls desired greater amounts of touching as opposed to only one teacher (.5%) who thought boys desired more. The comparative examination of the crosstabulation indicated that it is primarily the female teachers who hold this perception (30% as opposed to 6%).

Relationships were found to exist between touching behavior and four variables: sex, marital status, age and teaching assignment. In regard to sex differences it was discovered that although male teachers indicated greater importance for touching behavior, they engaged in touching their students less frequently than the female teachers. The incidence of touching generally follows the cultural norms of North America. The only type of contact where male teachers exceeded the females in frequency of contacts was when the physical touch was of a punitive nature.

In regard to marital status it was discovered that married and divorced teachers are more inclined to have physical contact with their students. Teachers who have never been married clearly did the least amount of touching. The teachers who attributed the most importance to touch behavior were the divorced teachers.

Relationships were found to exist in regard to the age of the teachers. There appeared to be a directly proportionate progression between the age of the teacher and the amount of overt expression of affection. The older the teachers the more likely they are to hug

and kiss their students. Interestingly in regard to punitive physical contact, the youngest and the oldest were most likely to spank or slap their students.

Significant relationships were not discovered in regard to amount of education, years of teaching experience or whether or not the teacher possessed tenure status. In regard to tenure there was some indication that physical punishment was less likely to be used when the teacher did not have tenure. This is somewhat speculative, however, and additional research is required before any conclusion could be drawn.

The teaching assignment of the teachers clearly indicated relationships with touching behaviors and attitudes. It was noted that teachers in the early elementary grades (k-3) believed and engaged in touching behavior more frequently than the teachers of older students. The sixth grade teachers clearly engaged in the least amount of physical contact with their students although they indicated recognition of the importance of touch.

Presented in this chapter are the results of "A Survey of Touching Behavior and Attitudes" (appendix A). The survey was conducted in order to acquire information regarding the existence and nature of touching between elementary school age students and teachers. Chapter two included a review of the literature which formulates the apparent importance of human physical contact. This chapter included data indicating that elementary teachers do feel that the behavior is important and established evidence as to the nature of touching between students and teachers.

The following chapter includes the information and data from this chapter as well as chapter two in establishing some initial hypotheses as to the importance of touching behavior and its significance and utility as a form of communication between human beings in elementary schools.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the work incorporated in the previous chapters including a presentation of pertinent findings regarding the effect of tactile behavior on interpersonal communication between elementary school teachers and students. General conclusions and hypotheses based upon perceived relationships identified in the literature review and those data generated by the survey of teacher attitudes and behaviors are also presented in this chapter. Additionally included are some recommendations for further research based upon the apparent relationships and hypotheses generated by this study.

Summary of The Design

The study was designed to generate some initial hypotheses regarding the potential significance of touching behavior between elementary school teachers and students. The intention was to provide a substantial review of existing research in a wide range of related disciplines in order to establish the potential importance of touch gestures for teacher-student communication. Having provided substantial verification of the potential importance of the human

touch, a survey of teachers was undertaken to ascertain the existence and nature of touching between teachers and their students.

The self designed instrument "A Survey of Touching Behavior and Attitudes" (Appendix A) was utilized in surveying 222 classroom teachers in a metropolitan, Michigan area. The data gathered via the survey, in addition to the theoretical support provided by the literature, establish some insight into the significance of an inadequately investigated phenomenon.

Examined in this study were six major questions:

1. Can the messages conveyed through touching contribute to the positive development of elementary school children?
2. Can the messages conveyed through the withholding of touch contribute to the lack of positive development of elementary school children?
3. Do elementary school teachers believe that tactile communication is important?
4. To what extent does tactile communication exist between elementary teachers and students?
5. What is the nature of tactile communication in schools?
6. Is further research warranted?

These questions were intended to provide a general focus for the study and by no means were they desired to restrict the generation of additional questions during the course of the study. It is reiterated that the purpose of the study

was to raise questions and generate initial hypotheses which would hopefully possess heuristic value.

The study was based upon a number of assumptions which were considered to be important:

1. There exists insufficient knowledge of the significance of tactile communications between elementary teachers and students.
2. It was important to provide a theoretical foundation preparatory to generating initial hypotheses regarding the touching phenomenon.
3. The expression of positive feelings via touching is an important behavior for elementary school teachers to possess.
4. Many elementary school teachers are uncomfortable with tactile communications.
5. Tactile communication may be a factor in the affective development of children.
6. Tactile communication may be a factor in the cognitive development of children.
7. Tactile communication may be a factor in the psychomotor development of children.
8. Information regarding the significance of touching is desired by classroom teachers.

The following limitations were considered to have significant bearing upon the study:

1. When seeking the opinions of classroom teachers only limited effort was extended to isolate touch from other variables that might affect their opinions. In addition the instrument itself may have precipitated a perceived "appropriate" response.
2. The survey instrument utilized was self-designed and field tested with a rather small group of twelve selected teachers. The survey instrument also could reflect some bias on the part of the researcher.
3. Conclusions drawn from the supportive literature are necessarily limited due to the limited amount and unscientific nature of some of the research.
4. A lack of participation from teachers in urban schools provides insufficient data to generalize regarding geographical, socioeconomic, and cross cultural differences.

The data gathered through the survey were analyzed utilizing frequencies, distributions and the calculation of percentages. In some instances means, medians, and ranges were provided. Cross tabulations were utilized in some cases in order to investigate anticipated relationships.

Summary of the Survey Data

The sample of elementary teachers participating included 136 females and 30 males ranging in ages from 23 to 64 with a mean age of 36 years and a median age of 32.5 years. One hundred sixty seven of the teachers were married, thirty six were single, sixteen divorced and three widowed. Of the participants, the bachelors was the highest degree attained by 154 of them while 65 had earned a masters degree and one teacher held the specialist degree. The range of teaching experience was from 1 to 38 years with a mean of 10 years and a median of 8 years. Ninety percent of the participants had attained tenure status. The teachers taught in grades kindergarten through sixth.

The sample of 222, included teachers from rural and suburban schools in a Michigan metropolitan area; selected from four different school systems. In addition a supplemental sample of sixteen teachers from the urban schools in the area and a group of administrators, counselors, and special assignment teachers is provided (Appendix C).

The major findings of the survey included:

1. More than 75% of the teachers felt that touching was usually to always important for improving a student's self-concept.
2. Overt expression of affection between teachers and students, such as hugging and kissing was limited and therefore the most common contact involved only the teacher's hands.
3. Seldom do either teachers (5.5%) or students (4.1%) request not to be touched.
4. More than 87% of the teachers had never received a complaint and complaints received usually were in regard to punitive touch.
5. Teachers were receptive to touch, ninety-seven percent indicated they responded favorably to being touched affectionately by their students.
6. Of the teachers in the sample of 222, 78% felt that the phenomenon of touch between teachers and students merited greater research.
7. In regard to sex differences and touch, 27% of the teachers felt that girls desired more touching as opposed to

one teacher (.5%) who thought boys desired more. (primarily female teachers held this view).

8. A higher percentage of male teachers attributed greater importance to touch than did females, however females engaged in touching behavior more frequently than males,
9. Males were more likely to use touch punitively than were females.
10. Teachers who have never been married are least likely to touch their students.
11. Older teachers are more likely to express affection through touching than are younger teachers.
12. The youngest and the oldest teachers are most likely to spank or slap their students.
13. There was no relationship between touching and the amount of education of the teacher.
14. Teachers of kindergarten through third grade believed and engaged in touching more frequently than teachers of older students, although they (uppergrade teachers) indicated recognition of the importance of touching.

Conclusions

In the course of examining the theoretical writing and previous research of others from the fields of psychology, anthropology, communications, medicine and education, and surveying professional educators in regard to their attitudes and behaviors it became apparent that the phenomenon of touching behavior is a potentially significant one. The data compiled in this study in regard to the six main questions of the study suggest a number of conclusions:

Question 1 Can the messages conveyed through touching contribute to the positive development of elementary school children?

1. It is likely that the messages conveyed through touching do contribute to the positive development of elementary school children. (derived from the literature)
2. Evidence exists as a result of research on human infants to establish the importance of touching behavior upon the growth and healthy development of human beings in the first two years of life. (derived from the literature)
3. No evidence exists to indicate that the need for human contact between humans does not continue throughout life. (derived from the literature)

Question 2 Can the messages conveyed through the withholding of touch contribute to the lack of positive development of elementary school children?

1. It is uncertain whether the withholding of touch by teachers contributes to the lack of positive development of elementary school children. It does appear that this phenomenon does exist during the first two years of life. (derived from the literature)
2. There is insufficient data available regarding the effects of touch gesture utilization or deprivation. (derived from the literature)
3. The encoding and decoding of tactile communication is difficult and uncertain. (derived from the literature)

Question 3 Do elementary school teachers believe that tactile communication is important?

- ✓ 1. Elementary classroom teachers generally believe in the importance of touching their students. (derived from the survey)

Question 4 To what extent does tactile communication exist between elementary teachers and students?

1. A wide range of touching behavior exists between teachers and students in elementary schools. What messages are conveyed by specific touch

gestures and the encoding accuracy has not been determined. (derived from the survey)

Question 5 What is the nature of tactile communication in schools?

1. Female elementary teachers more frequently express affection toward their students by touching them than do male elementary teachers. (derived from the survey)
2. Male teachers are more likely to punish their elementary students physically than are female teachers. (derived from the survey)
3. There is a direct relationship between children getting older and lesser amounts of tactile communication with teachers. (derived from the survey)
4. In general, touch behavior is seldom overtly expressive of affection through gestures such as hugging and kissing. In some rare cases teachers of early elementary children do frequently hug and kiss them. In most cases, touch is restricted to contact of the teacher's hands with the childrens bodies. (derived from the survey).

Question 6 Is further research warranted?

1. There is little doubt that research into

the effects of the giving and withholding of physical touch between elementary teachers and students is warranted. The behavior is of potentially high significance and there has to this date, clearly, been no research that can negate its importance. In addition the survey revealed that a substantial number of teachers (78%) believed that more research was needed.

The question of additional research suggests a number of additional studies that might shed significant light upon the issue of tactile communications between teachers and students. Some studies which would be helpful are included in the next section.

Recommendations

On the basis of the supportive foundation provided by previous research on the early development of human infants and the lack of evidence to disprove the significance of tactile behavior on the continued development of elementary age children; the potential significance of tactual gestures between elementary teachers and students is considered to be strongly supported. In light of the potential importance of touching and the existence of a considerable degree and range of touching in elementary schools as evidenced by this study,

the following recommendations for additional research are made:

1. A study should be conducted in order to establish either the existence or non-existence of universal touch gestures.
2. Research should be undertaken to establish the degree of accuracy in the encoding and decoding of tactile messages.
3. Research of a more empirical nature should be attempted in an effort to establish scientifically the effect of tactile communication on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of elementary age children.
4. Research which reports the reactions of students to touch gestures from teachers would provide important insights.
5. Observations should be made and recorded of touching behavior in the school setting.
6. Additional educational research should be conducted to explore relationships between different racial and cultural groups and behaviors in schools.
7. Studies should be undertaken to identify the factors that enable some teachers to be "comfortable" with touch gestures and apply them readily to their students.

8. Studies should be conducted to establish the significance of close physical contact between parents and their children and the effect on pre-school learning.

On the basis of this study and related research and information the following recommendations are made to Colleges of Education:

1. Pre-service teacher education programs should recognize the potential significance of tactile communication as well as the significance of nonverbal communication in general in preparing prospective teachers.
2. Courses should be developed which include the study of touch behavior along with other non-verbals as an integral factor in establishing affective interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.
3. Practicing teachers should be provided with information and instruction to develop awareness into the potential importance of the use, misuse or lack of use of tactile communications.
4. Encouragement and support should be extended for increased research into the touch phenomenon and in addition the entire area of nonverbal communication as it pertains to education.

Generated Hypotheses

The previous recommendations suggest a number of studies which might expand the amount of knowledge and information in existence regarding tactile communication and the touching phenomenon. One additional recommendation is offered.

This inquiry into the significance of tactile communication offers strong support for the importance of touching between elementary teachers and students but tests no hypotheses. Subsequent researchers may choose to test a specific hypothesis. The following hypotheses generated by this study are offered as suggestions:

1. The communication of caring attitudes via teachers' tactile contact with their students will enhance student self concepts and positive attitudes toward school.
2. Knowledge of the importance of the human touch and utilization of tactile communication will enhance teacher effectiveness.
3. Pre-service and In-service teacher education regarding the effective utilization of tactile communication will increase teacher effectiveness.

Reflections

This study was undertaken as an inquiry into the phenomenon of touching between teachers and students. Because touching behavior has rarely been researched in the educational setting little knowledge existed regarding the potential importance of the behavior. This effort will hopefully serve as a beginning for additional investigation into an apparently significant behavioral activity.

The literature provides considerable support to establish the necessity of physical contact for the healthy development of human infants. There is evidence to suggest that positive touch remains very important for the first two years of life. Although research on human touching behavior is sparse on later growth and development there is no evidence to indicate that touching does not remain a factor in the continuous growth of human beings.

It is apparent that an enculturation process limits the degree of interpersonal physical contact as infants become children and children become adults. This cultural phenomenon is reflected in the schools. The Survey of Teacher Behavior and Attitudes established the relationship between frequency of tactual gestures and grade level of the student. Does the need for touch contact actually diminish with age or is it suppressed by cultural normative pressure?

A wide range of variables apparently affect an individual's touching behavior. A number of relationships were identified in the Survey of Touching Behavior and Attitudes.

Female teachers are more likely to touch although males attribute higher importance to touching. Married teachers are more likely to touch although divorced teachers attribute higher importance to touching. It seems that those people who are denied physical contact are more likely to feel the loss and therefore more likely to recognize its importance.

Apparently the degree of touching behavior in schools reflects the norms of society. The question comes to mind regarding whether the role of schooling is to reflect society or develop and generate change within it? If it is to develop society, is the legitimatization of affectional expression which has historically been restricted, important enough for educators to consider?

The existence of society's sexual taboos are reflected by the diminishing frequency of touch contacts as students approach puberty. This study was intentionally limited to elementary teachers in order to avoid the suspected additional restrictions of teachers' touching students who are arriving or have arrived at physical womanhood or manhood. Although the complexities of touch gestures between teachers and students are greater in the secondary schools it is suspected that they may also be of significant importance in establishing the kind of interpersonal relationships conducive to learning.

A substantial amount of data has been generated by this study. Analysis and interpretation of these data cannot be considered conclusive to the subject; however a number of interesting relationships have been identified. Responses to some previously unanswered questions have been provided. A great many additional questions are raised by the study. Among these questions are the following:

1. What factors precipitate touch gestures?
2. Should touch gestures be spontaneous or should people be instructed in their "usage".
3. If touch is a basic need which has been repressed is it within the scope of the schools to rectify the matter?
4. What do parents think about physical contact between teachers and their children?
5. How important is tactile communication in secondary schools?
6. Is it possible through training to change a person's behavior in regard to tactile communication.

Answers to questions like these are not readily available although many people have strong feelings and opinions regarding touching behavior. It is a behavior that is ever present in some form and in spite of strong feelings little

is really known about its impact upon learning. It is suggested that it is an area that researchers cannot afford continuing to avoid.

Teachers in the field need re-education in the area of human interpersonal communication and teacher education programs need to supply prospective teachers with interpersonal skills before they get into the field.

It is a strange ordering of priorities that teachers have as many as ten to fifteen courses in what they will teach but only one or two in how to teach. Schools spend millions of dollars on buildings, books, materials, supplies, all "things" and so very little on the type of training and inservice experience that would aid people in their human relationships and enhance the learning process.

Observations and discussions in schools regularly reveal students who feel that certain teachers do not like them and treat them discriminately. In some cases the teachers verify the story, they don't like the student but they had tried not to show it. How does the student know? In other cases teachers are shocked for they indicate that they do indeed like that student and made every effort never to discriminate against any student. Where does the negative message come from? The answer must be, through some form of nonverbal behavior. Perhaps proxemics play a part in communicating like or dislike as Mehrabian has indicated. As an integral part of proxemics, tactile behavior, it would seem, also plays a part.

The entire area of tactile communication, along with the rest of nonverbal communication, needs to be widely researched. It is apparent that the schools may be an important place to focus the research. There is no doubt that the need is there. There is little doubt that teachers are interested in better ways to teach. They are interested in the effect and use of tactual gestures. Parents regularly communicate their desire for better schools. State boards of education are calling for accountability. It is submitted that the potential answers for all of this are not with the "what" of education but with the "how" of education. Learning is a process and communication is an integral, in fact the most important, part of that process. Nonverbal communication is a crucial portion of the total spectrum. In schools, with many children, tactile communication may be the most important of all the nonverbals.

The research is obviously inadequate, particularly as the entire communications field relates to education. But the issues have been raised and it seems that they are sufficient to warrant increasing amounts of study by communications scholars and educators alike. There are many unanswered questions and many students and teachers who await the answers.

Teachers need supportive information and reassurance to overcome the cultural norms that restrict normal and healthy human contact. They need to know the results from a pat on the back, an arm around the shoulder or a hug. They need to know the results

when human contact, tactile contact, is desired and yet withheld. There is much to do.

There is little doubt that tactile communication can make a difference. Teachers have seen the difference a hug makes. They have felt the difference an arm around the shoulder makes. They have wiped away tears and held a trembling hand, touching does make a tremendous difference. It is an extremely effective, expressive and reassuring form of communication. It is imperative that we learn more about it and apply that knowledge to all of our human relationships, including the student-teacher relationship. It may make all the difference in the world.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

A SURVEY OF TOUCHING BEHAVIOR
AND ATTITUDES

This questionnaire is intended to gather data regarding the significance of touching between elementary school teachers and their students. Little research has been conducted to this date as to the relationships of physical contact to the development of students. It is expected that these data will provide some insight into the extent and nature of physical touching in the classroom and attitudes toward the behavior.

The study is intended to be conducted anonymously--please do not sign your name.

Please respond to the following questions by either checking or writing your answer in the space provided.

1. Sex: male_____ female_____
2. Marital status: married_____ single_____ divorced_____ widowed_____
3. Age_____
4. Education (highest degree earned and credits beyond, i.e. BA +12)_____
5. Years of teaching experience_____
6. Do you have tenure?_____
7. Grade assignment_____
8. Number of teachers in your school_____
9. Approximate number of students in your school_____
10. Number of students in your class_____

Use the following scale when responding to the statements below:

1-----never

2-----seldom

3-----occasionally

4-----usually

5-----always

11. If expressing positive feelings for students, how often do you think teachers should make use of physical touch?_____
12. If expressing negative feelings for students, how often do you think teachers should make use of physical touch?_____

13. Do you think physical touch is important for improving a student's self-concept? _____
14. How important do you think physical touch is for creating positive student attitudes toward school? _____

Use the following scale when responding to the statements below:

1-----never

2-----seldom

3-----occasionally

4-----usually

5-----always

15. If punishing students, how often do you think teachers should use physical touch? _____
16. How often, would you think, do your students like to be touched by you? _____
17. How often do you like your students to touch you to demonstrate positive feelings? _____
18. How often do you encourage students to touch you? _____
19. When speaking to my students in private, I put my hand(s) on them. _____
20. During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you hug your students? _____
21. During the last school year, how often, on a typical day, did you kiss any of your students? _____
22. During the past year, how often, on a typical day, did you put your arm around a student affectionately? _____
23. On a typical day, during the last school year, how frequently did a student sit on your lap? _____
24. When students talk to you, do they put their hand(s) on you? _____
25. During the last school year, did students kiss you? _____
26. During the last school year, did students hug you? _____
27. How often, during the last year, did students ask you not to touch them? _____
28. How frequently do you ask students not to touch you? _____
29. How often during a typical week last year did you spank at least one student? _____

30. With what did you spank the student(s)? (please check) Hand _____
Object _____
31. How often during a week last year did you slap at least one student? _____
32. How often has anyone complained about you touching students? _____
33. Who, if anyone, has complained? (please check)
- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Student touched _____ | c. teacher _____ | e. superintendent _____ |
| b. other student _____ | d. principal _____ | f. parent _____ |
| g. other (specify) _____ | | |
34. Please elaborate upon the nature of the complaint(s):

Please respond to the following questions by checking the desired answer space.

35. Do you think that students respond favorably if you physically express affection or caring for them? yes _____ no _____
36. Do you ever respond favorably if students physically express affection toward you? yes _____ no _____
37. Do you think there is a need for more research on the effects of physical touching in schools? yes _____ no _____
38. Which, do you think, desires the more frequent physical contact?
girls _____ boys _____ both the same _____
39. Are you most likely to touch students of your same sex _____ opposite sex _____ both sexes equally _____?

Use the following scale when responding to the statement below:

- 1-----never
- 2-----seldom
- 3-----occasionally
- 4-----usually
- 5-----always

40. How often during the last year did you want to touch a student in a positive manner and yet did not? _____
41. What factors, if any, influenced your decision?
42. Please use the remaining space and the back of this sheet to make your own statement in regard to the importance or unimportance of touching between elementary teachers and students.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Responses to Survey Questions
Requiring Subjective Responses*

Question #34 Please elaborate upon the nature of the complaints.

Rural Group

Mother complained that student was hit on ear when she ducked to get away from being hit on shoulder.

Student had misbehaved and was being reprimanded. I had ahold of his arm/shoulder and he objected.

Jealous

Before recess students were told to stay on sidewalk because of mud and were told they would be spanked if they tracked in mud. Because everyone had to live with their mud. Two deliberately went into the mud and were spanked. The day of the Christmas Party a mother came in to pick up her son who couldn't stay for the party. Said that they (Mr. & Mrs.) almost came up to see me and were mad about it. I told her what had happened, invited her to ask the class about directions that day (they were stressed) and told her I would be happy to meet with both her husband, and herself to discuss this at any time. At this point, she backed off and changed the subject.

Did not want me to touch him or her.

Suburban Group

Birthdays are not spanking affairs.

"Don't touch me!"

Did not want their child touched--I was to tell them if anything occurred. I was to contact them and they would spank at home!

One boy will not hold my hand when in line--he says it's baby stuff.

Mother said I had hit him in the face which was untrue. I had held his face as I was scolding him.

Parent upon hearing child's story was upset. After conferring with parent usually gave permission if needed. Most parents whose child was punished usually referred their next child to me.

Parents only are allowed to spank. But after I had just cause,
no problem.

*Responses are presented as written by the teachers.

Already did some 33g. Used lot of terms without understanding.
(Wrote letter) -- Middle child--hurt ego, etc.

Parent wanted to handle his own child's discipline--just let him know--but he had previously stated "He's your problem when he's at school, make him mind."

Some say, "Don't touch me."

Urban Group

"Don't touch me, I will do it" or they will pull away instead of complaining verbally.

Pushed on child's head to put it down--child's behavior--had called her several times--she came to school very angry and used everything she could think of to express her anger. "I don't think this touching belongs in school. Home it's okay!"

Special educ. Teachers

I have never had a complaint about this.

Multi-grade teachers

Birthdays are not spanking affairs.

Principals

Parents felt the child was above reproach and should never be physically corrected.

Parents (few) have said that they prefer I do not spank.

Parent did not agree with spanking.

Parent wanted to handle his own child's discipline - just let him know - but he had previously stated "he's your problem when he's at school, make him mind."

Counselors

"Don't touch Me" -- shrug away

Question #41 What factors, if any, influenced your decision?

Rural Group

Attitude of student at that moment.

Individual daily circumstances

Probably was too busy handling another situation.

Fear of student reaction--time wasn't right.

Type of classroom I had.

I always am emotional; therefore, I demonstrate physically.

Child's reaction

I feel that I was touching too much and that I shouldn't.

Interruption by others.

Some children do not wish to be touched at all/resent such expressions.

Fourth graders have trouble accepting touching. I used to teach first and used it much much more---so I have to think sometimes. I don't want to embarrass the child. It takes a while for the class to get used to my touching.

Whether or not I walked over to him privately or from afar.

Told not to touch students.

Tends to turn 6th graders off.

Past reactions of students (pulling away)

Possibly a carry over of past beliefs or mind sets about "touching persons" as having a sexual connotation to the act.

I usually refrain from hugging girls. But I do usually put my arm around their shoulders.

It may have been the situation we were in.

His or her reactions.

Time did not permit it, or the students was across the room.

Anticipated reception by the student.

I didn't want to show partiality.

Child's attitude-pulled away seemed unsure how to accept my touch or hug.

Question #41 Rural

Presence of other children--possible negative reaction on part of child--presence of teachers.

Large group--not close enough.

If they didn't want it!

If the child was very upset and I felt touching would affect him adversely. This happened on only one occasion--usually a child that is upset responds favorably to touching.

Time--number of students. They seem to have to rub my legs when reading a story.

Don't remember.

None

Age level

The nature of the child.

The student's own manner or drawing away

Did it as frequently as I felt would indicate my concern and interest.

The typical guardedness that seems to overwhelm Americans.

Question i.e. Was it necessary? Would the situation be improved? Would it enrage or settle?

Other people in room proximity.

I was afraid I'd lose control, behavior wise.

Question #41

Suburban Group

When I felt like it, I did. This age, student enjoy and appreciate it. So do I!

He stood away from me very defensively.

How the student might perceive the response.

Some students might feel teacher playing favorites.

The emotional factors of the student at that time and response to touching in the past and the personality of the particular student.

Child's reaction.

Didn't know if the sobbing student could accept my emotional sincerity under such a traumatic situation.

I did not want to embarrass them.

Child's own feeling or needs for it. Social taboo concerning males.

If I thought the child would not have a positive reaction to touching.

Situation

I did it.

Some children are embarrassed, some children don't like to be touched.

Parent's reactions

I don't appreciate them hanging on me so I don't hang on them either.

It is just my way when I encourage or praise--whatever--it is natural for me to touch their shoulder--arm around them. I usually don't think about it.

Probably fear of being taken the wrong way inhibits teachers (as well as other adults in society) from touching another human being.

Physical distance.

Wanted to keep the "student-teacher" relationship in force.

I would do so if I felt drawn. The situation would decide it for you.

Question #41 Suburban

Lack of time--distance (physical) between myself and the child.

Usually it's just taking the time.

It is natural for me to touch the people I am relating to.

My English heritage.

Whenever they've done something well or when they try and don't quite succeed, I put an arm around them, pat their shoulder or put my hand on their head. If I feel like it, I touch.

Would have had to walk over to them in front of the others. Thought it might cause embarrassment.

Might embarrass the student.

I do not feel inhibited when touching children positively. I only refrain if the child feels uncomfortable.

Third grade boys are easily embarrassed. Girls like an occasional hug but boys are apt to be teased.

My previous knowledge about the child's background.

I started to and the child stepped back although did not say anything.

Some kids have grown a fear of touch due to bad experiences before.

Sometimes children are stand-offish until they know it's "safe" or "O.K." to be affectionate.

Physical distance from the child during a group situation.

Too many children present and then they all want a turn and that takes too much time.

Often I notice certain boys would withdraw if I touch their head or put my hand on their shoulder.

Mood of the student. Mood of the teacher.

The child's feelings about being touched. If he or she was extremely uncomfortable.

?thought of it too late.

Not being familiar with any of them long enough. I didn't know how they'd respond.

Was not sure how the student would respond.

Student didn't want me to.

Question #41 Suburban

Lice

The child would be embarrassed in front of his peers. Some boys pull away when being reached out to, indicating they wish to avoid contact.

If I felt the child did not want to be touched, I didn't.

Their feelings toward being touched. Some children get embarrassed by it in the presence of other students.

If I wanted to touch I did.

The child would withdraw from physical touch.

Fear of embarrassing student.

Age; maturation of a girl; situation which may or may not have embarrassed a student i.e. classroom; think I may be overdoing a "good thing;" Not being in good taste as to what other teachers may think especially not knowing the background for hugging or touching.

A touch--if they need affection. No touch--if they had to learn to mature.

If I wanted to, I did.

The only factor in not touching student in positive manner would be distance in room from student at time.

If I feel that touching is in their best interest, I do it.

--Partially, not wanting to show favoritism.

--Also, holding back from getting my self or the student too emotionally involved.

I didn't want to cause a riot in my class.

Comfort of open affection for the student.

Question #41

Urban Group

The child's unwillingness to be touched!

Distance from the student.

Proximity, opportunity, time, peer-response-evaluation

Contagious diseases (impetigo, lice)

The child did not seem to like affection or someone touching them.

There were none. I use a great deal of digression when I use this method of communication.

Remedial Instruction Teachers

Some students seem to pull away or act uncomfortable if touched--that makes me feel uncomfortable touching them, so even if I want to touch, I may not.

Student's age---Location in room--during lectures it is very hard to touch for positive reinforcement.

Reading Teachers

Probably fear of being taken the wrong way inhibits teachers (as well as other adults in society) from touching another human being.

Because on previous occasions, child was very embarrassed when I touched so I waited until he knew me better.

Special Education Teachers

If I felt the student did not like being touched.

The child's reaction--if it was negative I didn't push it.

Sometimes it was the child--their age and how they felt about being touched (or how I didn't know how they felt!)

Reactions of other students, in other words, embarrassment on the part of the recipient.

Situation/other people present.

A bad behavior that is going on with a good behavior--leaning back in chair, tapping pencil.

Multi-grade Teachers

I didn't want to cause a riot in my class.

Principals

The time and place were not "right."

If I choose to touch a child I do. It has to be a sincere rather than a weak effort to show affection.

Never happened.

I must be sure that my physical contacts with children are appropriate and used in good taste. Physical contacts can easily be misinterpreted by parents.

Counselors

My own inhibitness

The level of anxiety expressed and shown by the child as well as his/her openness and/or willingness to receive and give touching.

Child's attitude very unapproachable, hostile -- previous experience with the child when they did not want to be touched.

Didn't think student wanted to be touched.

Question #42 Please use the remaining space and the back of this sheet to make your own statement in regard to the importance of touching between elementary teachers and students.

Rural Group

I think it is very important and some children need more than others. Usually it is the same children who rush up to sit next to me at the reading table or to hold my hand when we are going out. I'm always glad when a shy quiet child takes the initiative and concerned when a child does not want to.

Child that is upset responds favorably to touching. Touching is especially effective when dealing with an emotionally disturbed child. A quiet voice and touching usually quiets the child down.

Depends on circumstances--it can be a real security for some students.

I think touching is very important for teacher and students at all levels of achievement and behavior. Sometimes with so many children and so many different needs some tend to be overlooked. Just a simple pat on the head lets them know they haven't been forgotten.

I feel most humans respond to physical contact in a positive way. Touching imparts a feeling of caring. Children who draw away from contact usually respond in a short time and even seek a touch as if it strengthens their security.

Important if it is a natural response. Too much can sometimes break down the teacher/student relationship. (Some begin to think of you only as a friend--the "teacher" must be there).

I feel many children who come from broken homes need love and affection (not overdone). Children do much better work if they are praised and loved.

For the last few years, about the third week of school I inform them they can get my attention by asking for it rather than by being bad. All they have to do is say, "I need a hug", "give me a tap", "Give me five," whatever. It's amazing how many are collecting just before they go home this year along with other times.

The importance of touching lies in its value as an alternative or additional method of communication.

Very important.

Younger children (4 yrs - 8 yrs) desire touching. Older children spend time on baseball and football and "telling".

Question #42

Rural Group

"I feel that touching is a natural, spontaneous response for me in expressing positive feelings towards students. I feel that it helps convey a warm, friendly, caring relationship to my students. Many children don't get the physical attention they need at home so they especially need it at school."

"Sometimes it is required to touch a student to hold him from walking away when you are talking to him--or it is necessary to hold his attention for a scolding. I don't think it makes a great deal of difference, circumstances alter the situation."

"Students need to feel that people care for them and all too often they do not get this feeling at home. Elementary teachers are often a parent-substitute and touching to show praise or displeasure does not seem unreasonable."

"I feel that it's important for a student to gain good feelings and concepts of himself. Usually a child will resist touching only when he has a poor attitude or self-concept. I think it is easier to express feelings to younger children because they have not yet gained incorrect feelings about physical contact from their environment."

"I feel that it's important, but like many areas it hasn't been explored or talked about. It's an area you have to be made aware of."

"I really think it is important for students to feel a teacher's caring for them. The students respond more favorably to me and the classroom when I have shown physical attention."

"An importance, I feel, has to do with boys at this particular age (4th grade) level that would rather not be touched. The 'wanting to touch' varies from year to year with the groups. It has seemed that the more immature group needs and demands more touching."

"6th graders see themselves as being grown up and not wanting the physical reinforcement younger children have."

"Touching between elementary teachers and students is desirable in building relationships of trust and in eliminating fear and threat from relationships. It seems to me that the habit of touching must come from within, without thinking rather than be a premeditated act for some objective."

This year I have changed and feel that touch can mean the difference between teacher and student and students and teachers--during punishment it can reassure the student that you are supportive yet punish the undesired behavior.

Question #42

Rural Group

In physical education I feel there is a large need for touching between teachers and students--both positive and negative.

Some students crave it due to lack at home--divorce, etc.

I love you a bushe and a peck and a hug around the neck and a kiss for you and me. Everyone tends to learn this as time goes on.

Good behavior often will develop if you give a child an extra hug or let him sit next to you or on your lap. That way he knows you care for him and he is special to you. He is important.

First grade students apparently feel a need for a closeness that comes with a feeling that you care.

I think it is important and especially fulfilling for young children. Older ones I suppose don't like it as much any longer but if had they are getting better self concepts., etc.

Extremely important--has tremendous impact on behavior and child's self concept if he knows you care. It's sometime easier for a child to understand a touch than a word.

Touching is extremely important especially at the primary level.

I was never a "touchy" person before I spent a lot of time with a touch person. I personally enjoy touching and being touched. Before I was too inhibited to do so. This may be true of most people.

Small children really respond to physical contact. They feel secure if they can hug and be hugged in return. Physical touch is also a good form of reward. A pat on the head or a squeeze on the shoulder means a lot.

I feel that it is extremely important to touch either to reinforce positive or negative attitudes.

Students will feel good about themselves knowing that someone cares. Some students feel teachers dislike them and a touch or a positive name such as honey etc. really helps.

"Touching" is a very important means of nonverbal communication especially noticeable for those students whose parents work...Good way to stop unwanted verbal discussion during large group discussions.

A hug, a pat on the back, shaking a hand, all are personal contacts where one individual reaches out to another. Contact--"touching". is a warm way of reaching other people to share or discuss whatever is of importance to you.

When the children are very young, they seem to enjoy the physical contact between teacher and child. However, by 4th or 5th grade, they seem to value their independence or are afraid of peer pressure so don't like it much.

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Rural Group

I think the touching between elementary teachers and students is very important and can definitely affect their attitudes and feelings for thier teacher and toward the school itself.

This depends on the child--depends how much affection they get at home and they need or want more.

I feel that children should be touched often. It is a way of letting them know your positive feelings for them.

I just began to touch students in an affectionate manner--often never having done it much. I feel it expresses my concern and interest and affection admirably.

I feel that it is important to touch a child only if you feel positively toward that child. Touching without affection would be useless. I find students who are too physical overwhelming. I feel stifled by them.

I feel it is extremely important to have physical contact--in our society (presently) children are ignored and more or less tolerated rather than loved. Sometimes the teacher might be the only contact the student ever has--parents are often too busy.

Many little children need love which seems to be lacking in the home. A teacher can often supply in some way so that the child has more self worth and is happier.

I feel that the children in lower grades especially desire physical touching and affection. It usually gives them a feeling of security and quiet. They are more apt to believe you care and want them. There have been children who pulled away from me. If the situation was relaxed, I would let go. If I was attempting to control a child in a problem situation I would not let go.

Many students look to their teachers for the need to be loved. Due to the lack of love shown towards them at home.

Students who are neglected at home need attention. They work better, behave better and do more work when they think someone cares.

Most students will not want to be touched unless there is some insecurity. Depends on parents action toward student.

I think touching is important; too many of our students today don't get this sort of contact at home.

I feel touching helps the child know you care about them, specifically, as an individual.

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Suburban Group

I think it would lose its effectiveness if used more than occasionally.

I happen to believe in "touching". I feel that if I say to a student "You're doing this well" or "Don't hurry", the stroke on the head or shoulder is more reassuring than the words. Yes, I touch even those who withdraw.

There is a lot of touching going on in my classroom. I feel it reassures all of us. We discuss feeling openly.

I think it is extremely important. My kids know I love and care about them and touching is a super way to show it.

If there were more touching, feelings of love and caring in our schools we would have less problems. The most criminal thing I can think of is for a child not to know his teacher cares for him. This is essential to good learning experiences.

Eye contact is a must with touching.

This is a subject that interests me greatly. I believe strongly in touching. It is necessary for strong communication. Teachers should be schooled on its positive affect on children.

Some students need to feel the closeness. If not overdone, provides closer relationship between teacher-students. In discipline situations, touching need to gain attention of student or to let student know you're serious about what's said.

I do not think you have to touch students to show approval or disapproval of their actions.

I think you have to consider the group when you take a position or attitude. Some very mature groups at upper elementary level can respond to physical touch in a negative manner. Their parents report the same. This year the group is a little immature and seem to react relatively positively to touch. I feel that this subject is a highly individual preference on the part of the student. Parents have often commented that some of their children are huggers and kissers, others aren't. I don't believe a teacher should force physical touch, (affection) touch on a child who is not comfortable with it. I have also used touch to get attention by placing my hand on the shoulder. This seems to work well in communicating "I am speaking just to you." I have used this both in scolding and giving directions or saying something of gravity and great significance to the child.

I often feel a little spanking would be helpful for some discipline for some children. It seems to be very seldom used by parents in

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Suburban Group

our school and never by the teachers or administration.

The questions were too vague.

I really feel that touching has been overemphasized to the point of insincerity. Children can tell how you feel about them without having to continually reinforce this. As children become older, unless they have a real emotional need, I feel they prefer, "hands off" policy.

--never in anger--never harshly especially punishment--only for positive reasons or for a more personal attention device.

It's an intuitive thing. Some children are trying desperately to grow up and don't want the physical touch. It's fairly easy indifferent, which ones object.

Each year I feel I achieve a deeper emotion involvement with my student. I feel a limited expression of touch can be most helpful. However, the rapport I have developed beforehand with that child will govern the extent of my touching that individual in emotional situation.

It's up to the individual!

I feel a great bond can be nurtured through respectful touch--when there is sincerity and genuine caring shown physically.

Teachers at these grade levels are often viewed as parent substitutes more so than in secondary schools. Touching, like a pat on the back, a hand on the shoulder or ruffling hair helps create a "cordiality" and warmth, which I think is a necessary ingredient in schools.

Touching is a natural expression for me and I use touch quite a bit in a positive way. If I am personally upset with a child I deliberately refrain from touching.

Touching is not for everyone. Some children respond, particularly to an arm around them for reassurance. As they mature, this is less necessary. Younger children seek to hold my hand as we go down the hall while older ones might recoil (looks "babyish"). The times I discourage touching are when I have to be mobile--i.e., not hold my hand when I must cross playground to discipline another child. I like to go alone. My touching is generally the arm around type.

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As I mentioned before, on some kids it works well and the acceptance is good. Some of my kids do not like to be touched. Maybe they would if it was done more. Further, it has to be a comfortable situation.

I do touch my kids a lot. I am a (touchy) type of person, so it comes natural for me. I teach K and therefore I feel that age group tends to express feelings more openly. I am sincere with my feelings and they know and understand that. As far as spanking a child and touching them in a negative way, I might shake them but I have never spanked them. I feel touching is very important. I also feel that a teacher must take in consideration the age of the child.

Children, especially K thru 2nd grade, need a little more expression of approval or love thru touch. Occasionally grades 3 thru 5 also need a touch of approval such as hand on shoulder or shake hands for a congratulations for a special fete done. All individuals from 10 to 100 need some type of personal touch also when being consoled or special problems arise.

Some students get no physical attention at home. They need this kind of attention to feel that someone really cares about them. Unfortunately, this puts the male teacher in difficult position because of possible parent reaction.

I suspect touching is much more important to younger children than it is to 5 graders. I tend not to do it for either positive or negative support.

I think it is important-many times a physical gesture can mean so much more than anything you can say that is positive. When I am angry at/or with a child I try not to touch them.

Physical touching can be very reassuring to a child to let them know you are aware of them. It can also help settle a somewhat hyperactive child down without disturbing the entire class. Sometimes, though, the kids that "hang on you" need to be somewhat discouraged so they can be a little more independent.

I feel that some touching is important. Children of different ages respond differently to a teacher's touch. I believe a man has to be more careful of who and where he touches his students. Some parents may feel that a male has no right to touch their child, whereas a woman would be seen more as a mother figure and would be able to touch a child. I guess this is a cultural thing.

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I feel there is more of a need for touching at K and early elementary level than later.

I believe children can learn best from a teacher who is "warm" to them. They have to feel that they are worthwhile individuals. Children reflect our attitudes. They truly reflect us. We teach kindness by treating them with kindness. I'm not convinced that "touching" is an essential demonstration of warmth. Anything which doesn't come naturally can fall flat and phoney.

I think physical touch is important. It can be used for both negative and positive vibes. Children need and desire physical contact.

Gives child a sense of belonging. A child needs to feel wanted and welcome and if permissiveness is used the child does not understand what is really expected of him or how anyone feels about him. There must be positive gestures.

Some children seem to need physical closeness more than others. This seems to happen when a child is from a home where the parent is not home often-more frequently.

It is highly important. If the child wants to hug or touch a teacher, the teacher should always respond favorably. The amount of touching depends on each child's personality and teacher's personality. If a teacher feels uncomfortable, then most likely that teacher will not touch as often. The world is filled with different people and children need to learn this and respond accordingly.

#12, 15 are ambiguous to me because they imply "negative" touching, however, touching often shows caring even though negativeness needs to be expressed. Some with punishment-verbal punishment could be used with physical touching that was "positive." Teachers that are people who are inclined to touch, but if not one should probably not go against one's natural feelings for children feel it's not genuine.

I think children like to be touched occasionally-for positive affect. Often this makes them feel they are wanted and "belong" to the group. This varies with grade level. I don't think children should hang on any teacher regardless of grade level. I don't think kissing is necessary for a means of feelings. This intimate gesture should be reserved for their parents, etc.

I feel children should know you care about them but it must be sincere. As children grow older, I believe this comes in other ways than physical contact. I also feel that not all people (teachers) are "hugging type" and people need not be to express affection. Hopefully, the physical contact expression of affection

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should come from the parents and family.

I am a mother. I think this helps in knowing how to respond in this area. I feel you can seldom go wrong in the expression of a positive feeling. Children love to feel close to you and the expression of this feeling makes you feel closer to them. I believe it's a more natural expression from child to teacher. Teachers have to practice to be perfect somewhat. Children are naturally perfect in their expression of a positive feeling. Negative expressions sometimes need to be channeled--depending on how they were expressed at home.

The feeling of someone caring is needed by everyone and touching is one of the best ways to show you care. I feel the students need it and enjoy it.

With physical touching, the students know immediately the teachers feeling and attitude toward them; and will often respond immediately with pleasure and assurance.

As stated before, I feel it is important and have always done it in some form. I have had some children sit in my lap over the years. However, I rarely negatively touch a child--and then only to grab or maybe pull away. I touch positively often when disciplining or discussing a negative behavior.

If a child initiates the touching in positive way, I am always willing to recipitate, but only occasionally feel it is absolutely necessary, as I'm sure the class, feels my positive affection for them without physical contact.

I think a lot of it depends on the teacher's personality and the student's personalities. Some need more physical touch.

I think it's important to show affection by touching especially in the lower grades. It is also important for comforting. Sometimes it should be done in front of the other kids if the child is embarrassed. It is sometimes important for discipline to hold a child's arm but not hand.

Being a K teacher, I find I am also a mother substitute. I feel very close, affectionate and loving toward them. I really become quite attached to them. I always give a hug, "love tap" on the behind or a tickle when they come up for "show and tell". I feel touching in K is probably more prevalent than any other grade. I love these kids and they know it. However, I also on occasion touch for unaccepted behavior and I feel this makes for a much better group.

I feel children need to be touched. They are sensitive and feel

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close when touched, hugged and loved. The child who has been physically punished by a slap, spanking by hand or a small object has no resentment if he feels he has it coming and it is fair and that the teacher still loves him.

I am not a very affectionate type of person and I would not feel comfortable in doing a lot of touching of my students especially older ones in 5th grade.

I think it is an important way of expressing affection.

I feel it is a necessary expression of friendship and love which makes a student feel wanted and worthwhile.

I really believe it is vital for teachers and students to touch each other to develop a good feeling of self. Children-especially on a lower level-need to feel loved and that you care for them as people. A simple loving touch helps a great deal.

I think it is very important to touch elementary children. I think a "positive" touch (not for discipline) means "I like you."

I think it is important. Kindergarten children usually ask for physical attention--they naturally touch the teacher and are touched by the teacher-in work situations, play times-lining up times-entering and leaving times.

Warm fuzzies won't hurt anyone. My experience with younger children lends itself to lots of hugs. Children respond to this show of love and caring.

At my grade level-a touch is most important-and all reinforcement is positive-therefore, it plays an important part of the "aura" in my room.

Kg., first and second grade children really seem to respond and need a friendly touch.

Often when they're leaving I'll be saying have a good day and I guess (illegible) touch several individuals as they leave the gym class.

Kids need the affection shown thru touch. It helps the kid realize that teachers do care about them. Touch is a positive response which is totally for that person.

At age 7-8, kids are hesitant, already to be held on the lap for a little child-teacher conference-I wonder what is the cause.

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It is an effective and perhaps necessary means of transmitting positive feelings. Touching appears to be natural and spontaneous in young children. I feel that the need to be touched is also present in adulthood. Perhaps if it were presented to the elementary child as acceptable behavior it would become acceptable later in life.

In my own experience I find girls find it easier to hug me or hold my hand, perhaps because I am a female too. Boys have a tendency to take it but not respond back or to not like it and withdraw. I think this is a cultural trait since boys are supposed to hold in their emotions or sometimes I think when I reach out to touch them they flinch because someone's touching, in the past, has hurt them. Even at 5th grade I think touching can be a secure feeling but for others an awkward moment. This age group is just starting to become conscious of their body and they are sometimes hesitant because of that, I think.

I feel that touching, particularly in a positive sense is very important for both students and teachers. Students can be made to feel important by this touching. It is easy to know that someone is talking directly to you when they have a hand on your shoulder and maintain eye contact. Discipline can be maintained by touch in ways other than spanking. (i.e. face between hands to talk to student or arm around a belligerent student.) The feeling of love or concern expressed by touch can make the job of teaching easier. Students respond more readily to someone with whom they feel comfortable.

Students need to be shown affection, at any age. They need to be shown that someone cares about them. Therefore, I feel it is very important. Touching can express feelings more than talking can sometimes.

The importance of touching between people especially to express affection and caring to me seems very great and I am glad to see research being done in this area.

Student response to touching varies with the student's personality. Some children do not wish to be touched.

I feel that it is important to have physical contact with the children. It helps to build a better relationship between me and the child. I have noticed that children who don't like to be touched, usually, have a poor attitude toward something. (school, work, parents, or me, etc.)

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In my level (K) I feel that it is important for the teacher to communicate in this way. It gives a positive approach to communication and shows the child that you care for them. I don't approve of touching in a negative way (i.e. spanking)

It is important for the student to realize he/she can trust and rely on you whenever the situation deems it necessary. Many students at the beginning of a school year are reluctant to confide in you. I have found a physical demonstration of caring for a child (putting your arm around them, etc) helps them to be more comfortable around you and opens communication much more readily than just talking to him/her.

I feel it could be an important factor if both the teacher and the child feel comfortable about it. However, if either is "forced" into it then it becomes an unnatural situation.

It happens naturally. Personalities affect the amount of "touching."

I feel that when (it) physical touching comes naturally it's a great way of showing a teacher's positive feelings. I'm not sure of my feelings toward spanking--they certainly are not positive.

Touching is something that depends a lot on the personality of the teacher. To some people touching comes natural. To others touching is not.

I think touching is often a basis for a good solid and secure relationship between children and an adult. In teaching a very low level I found it to be a beginning--learning could come after but seldom before. If you can't really love them and touch them they are losing a great deal of their education.

Should be whatever you are natural and comfortable with.

I think it is important enough especially with low self-concept children to need a ruling in which a teacher could feel sure of no negative results from outside the situation.

For some children, physical contact seems to be quite important and I experience physical contact with this kind of child quite often. Many others are embarrassed by touching and do not seem to profit by positive physical contact. In general I keep a hands off policy towards children if I feel negative towards them.

I don't see the importance of this.

Very important for small children to feel liked, accepted, needed, and comfortable in their "home away from home."

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I feel the degree of touching depends upon how the child responds to it. It's something that can be gradually worked up to as the child gets used to the teacher. A child may withdraw from physical contact at the beginning of the year but then become more comfortable with it and actually like it as he gets used to the teacher. This is great.

Depends heavily on age of students. A pat on the head, arm placed around shoulders or hand on arm are my most frequent physical expressions of affection without being offensive.

It's important-natural, but why do a study? Certain people are touchers others are not.

Touching between students and teachers is important, but it should be a natural act. It also depends on how comfortable the teacher feels.

Touching is very important in my kindergarten room! Shy children need a quiet hug during their show and tell time. A special birthday kiss is very important to the children.

I feel it is very important.

Touching is tangible proof you care. Touching can also direct a student's attention to the subject at hand; turn his head to you; look in his eye.

Since I was a teacher in a building where one teacher was fired for "touching" the students--and another teacher should have been but was not I shy away from intimate touching. Innocence of youth--first graders accept it if it is positive and true.

Reactions should be spontaneous resulting from experiences felt by child and teacher.

I think there is definite place for touching both for affection and discipline.

I love the children in my class in much the same manner that I love my children at home. It would be impossible for me not to touch children. I think it is very important to have a physical communication between children and teachers. It creates a close relationship--A learning loving relationship.

Children need your approval. Physical contact, smiling, mannerisms very much help in this.

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Suburban Group

I feel "touching" in student-teacher relations can be very effective as a quiet manner of reassuring student of his or her self concept and also acceptance by you the teacher. I do feel it should never become an overdone habit with no thought involved.

I feel that touching is an important communicative way to let students know how I feel about them. Touching inspires self-confidence as it tells them that they are "ok" or that I like them. Touching stimulates a willingness to perform socially and academically.

For me, touching is often the only way I can sometimes reach some students who are discipline and emotional problem students.

Touch can be a very beneficial thing in establishing teacher-pupil rapport. I use it both for positive and negative feelings.

It is very important for it initiates a closeness--a rapport which helps in all areas of development.

Actions speak louder than words.

When we use touching in the classroom situation we must create an atmosphere in the room where the children are comfortable--many times, at home, touching occurs only in a negative manner and the children adjust to touching as a positive means of classroom behavior.

I feel it's very important to have physical touch or contact with my students. I work with the six grade levels and I feel they know me and how I react when expressing affection.

It is important. The children know you care. It brings you closer together.

Touching is a good reinforcer to shape positive behaviors. Some children seem to seek positive physical contact. Touching appears to help develop a good self concept.

I feel the frequency of touching in a positive way depends upon the situation and the individual child.

I feel it is important just as it is important for touching between parent and child.

I believe it is very important, and with each year that I teach, I do it more and more.

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Suburban

A touch on the arm or shoulder, putting an arm around a child gives them a calming effect. It also shows that I care about them. I do not think a teacher should go to kissing or allow her students to.

It often helps to gain a students attention by touching rather than speaking without creating a negative feeling.

I feel touching is important between elementary teachers and students. Some students need the secure feeling they receive from being "touched." This is lacking in a lot of the homes.

I feel it is important to touch students in a positive way. It shows more warmth in feelings than just a voice praising or responding to them. It can relax the anxious, nervous or fearful child. A negative touch is also effective (not necessarily a punishment type) for reinforcement of a verbal reprimand. Students should feel free to touch a teacher if they feel the need to , even though this might just be a temporary need.

I think touching between people (and especially children in a learning situation) often bridges a gap that means the difference between trust and fear, attention and inattention, motivation and lack of motivation. In other words, I believe that touching is very important--it shows a person cares for and about the other person. I have found that if I touch a child when speaking to that child the child listens and responds better.

I have always been the type of person who does touch other people often in conversation. I have found this an excellent way of communicating with my pupils in a way that tells them that I approve of them and what they are doing or in letting them know I disapprove.

We were just discussing this a couple of days ago in my classroom. There are many students from broken homes with no father image. My boys need this without feeling it's "queer" to be touched. 5th graders are at that age of "independence" and don't wish to be kissed by anyone, but they do need a touching way that students need and desire touching very much and often. A touch can often say more than many words.

I think it is important if children need to be shown love. For discipline is needed when they fail to listen and follow instructions.

I believe that touching is important. It creates a closeness and a sense of caring. Touching a child signifies individuality in that you're not speaking to a mass of children but that particular one.

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Urban

Touching is great - a pat, squeeze, etc.!!! Hugging and kissing one can start an epidemic which easily gets out of control!

Some children seem to need it and others don't need or encourage any-either positive or negative.

Touching is an extremely important form of communication. It's a natural thing that conveys warmth, caring, protection, love as well as discipline. The relationship between my children and myself is warmer and more personal because we hug and touch each other. To some children it's the only "mothering" they get. A final thought--the affectiveness of this teacher is affected by the number of children in the class.

I think it is extremely important to have a physical contact with students through touching. It gives a child a sense of security, importance, and being cared for. My classes always work more for this type of reward. To have success with young children, it is very important that they know you like them. This has always proved an effective way for me to work with children successfully.

I feel to touch a student is important but it certainly must be done in discreet manner. I firmly believe a touch on the cheek with an index finger or a touch on the top of a student's head, a touch on the shoulder lets a student know that there is a feeling of caring by the teacher and you do have their interest in mind whether it be positive for something done well or perhaps to straighten out a slight problem. A slight touch used properly I feel is a means of positive communication to most students. But the best way to know how to communicate is to know each student as an individual their likes and dislikes.

I've found positive results when touching children. They are much more apt to respond and interact.

Children of this age like to feel loved and want to know that people care about them. If treated in a positive manner they respond readily and appear more willing to try to do their best.

I think you really have to look at each child individually and their age. Also very important is the child's home environment. I feel there are also degrees of touching; hugging, kissing or tapping. All children can handle it depending on the degree. Some children love the hugs while others prefer the tapping or putting a hand on the shoulder. Touching shows you care and usually brings out a good relationship between the child and teacher.

Yes-touch! Gently, positively, calmly, but not "using the child, psychologically manipulating." I also believe and practice a certain amount of "parenta absentia" (if that's the phrase) for the child who needs it, in my estimation.

Question #42

Urban

On the lower elementary level it is essential to have physical contact with the children. A child or adult will feel very alone and apart if they feel the people around them are cold. A child should be free to show positive feelings toward other people. They develop a much better self-concept when shown they are loved and accepted by their peers and teachers.

Special Education Teachers

I feel that touching is a very important factor in strengthening a relationship between students and teachers. You must be careful in how you do the touching. Ex. - a hug for younger ones - a pat on the back for older ones!

I teach 5,6,7, year old special education students. At this age, they love physical touching, in fact crave it. It is one of my primary reinforcers. It helps me establish a caring and safe environment for learning.

I feel it's very important--it's a valuable means of communication and I also feel that a lot of teachers are afraid to use it!

I feel touching is necessary in establishing positive feelings towards students; however, I feel kissing on the part of the teacher is not necessary. Kissing on the part of the students has to be considered in terms of age, sex, mental and emotional levels.

Touching is a good way to positively reinforce student and also helping a child have a more positive self-concept. I believe touching is necessary in teaching!

I would draw a correlation--the more troubled or disturbed a child is the greater the need for touching.

I feel that touching is very important with L.D. children at the elementary level. They need attention which is more significant when paired with physical contact.

The kids I work with need physical touching along with social rewards. I find it gives them a better self-concept and healthy attitude toward school.

I think touching is important to emphasize how you feel a student is doing. It reinforces the position.

Think more of it needs to be done.

Question #42

Multi-Grade Teachers

Touch can be a very beneficial thing in establishing teacher-pupil rapport. I use it both for positive and negative feelings.

In my experience with children in many school districts I have seen a real response and a turn around in attitudes and feelings of self when there has been a show of emotion or feeling on my part toward them. Many times just a hug or a squeeze can show them that they are loved or have real worth. They feel appreciated and can begin to communicate often times their needs to me. Doors can be opened by beginning with a simple thing as a touch or hug.

Children, especially Kgn. thru 2nd grade, need a little more expression of approval or love thru touch. Occasionally grades 3 thru 5 also need a touch of approval such as hand on shoulder or shake hand for a congratulations for a special fete done. All individuals from 1 to 100 need some type of personal touch also when being consoled or special problems arise.

Principals

I feel "self-concept" is enhanced. A touch expresses love, concern, care.

If touching is to be done, it has to be an honest and sincere touch. A child usually knows how one really feels about him whether or not he is touched. All educators should have warmth toward all people and be sincere about it.

Feel it very positive--seems helpful in an attempt to get attention of child. Also, gives him a feeling of self-worth.

I believe physical touch should be used to display affection, happiness, pride etc. for students in many situations. I do not agree that it should be used constantly - but used as an effective way to make your point. I also think physical touch - other than punitive spanking, slapping, etc.-such as a hand on the shoulder is an effective way to discipline a student. I believe if the teacher touches the student he/she gets the complete attention of that student.

I believe the appropriate use of touching and showing affection are very important in the teaching-learning process.

On occasion the more mature 5th grade girl misinterprets the adults' contact. In these cases such contact is limited.

What is your hypothesis?

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Principals

I do not believe in slapping or hitting in any way above the neck. I only believe in spanking by telling the parent the situation that has brought you to the place where you feel you should spank the child and then wait for his answer. In most instances they'll give permission or spank the child themselves. Only occasionally I run into a parent who "just talks" and I may have to tell the parent something more drastic must be done as your "talks" are doing nothing. Mainly I believe in a "hands off" policy when it comes to a naughty child. Any spanking should be on the seat of the pants before a witness and parent notified (preferably before). Occasionally grabbing a child by shoulder or seating him hard works or tipping head up and looking into his eyes as you talk to him. I believe an elementary child likes a stroke on the cheek, a pat on the head, a hand on the shoulder, some show of affection and response as well. I believe an inattentive child responds well without words by just a tap on the shoulder, a tap on his paper, a shake of your head, a touch to remind him to quit day dreaming. I believe as a whole we may be too COLD and could well get better results by warmth in touching and showing of affection.

Counselors

I think it's very important to enhance a positive self-concept.

I see touching as always important and use it as a means of communicating caring for a child. The timing of the touching depends upon the relationship I have with the child as well as his willingness to receive it. A child can back away fast if he/she is not ready for touching.

I feel it is very important to touch children. My experience with it has give me a closer relationship with most children. It brings the child into focus when you touch and talk about a concern or an experience they are sharing with you. It is more personal for them and I feel they can recognize that you truly care for them as a person -- a one of a kind individual. It also helps them to build caring relationships with others.

I think it needs to be researched more. I think it's important as a means of communicating acceptance of students.

Remedial Inst. Teachers

I strongly believe that touching for positive communication is important. It has its place and time during the day, but always seems to create a bond between student and teacher. Touching can consist of anything from a hand rested on a shoulder to holding hands to a hug. All are (at least seem to be appreciated) by students.

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Remedial Inst. Teachers

I think it's extremely important to touch or put an arm around a student. It's a way of saying "I like you", and acceptance of them as a person. To be touched by a student is also important because we usually don't bother touching those we don't like. This touching shows affection on the part of the student toward the teacher. Some students may be lacking affection at home, and to at least feel liked at school will help in their concept of self.

Reading Teachers

I feel it is very important.

I feel that teachers need to be more touching and that children need to feel freer to touch the adults in school. I'm sure it has something to do with positive self-concept which is so important to learning.

Younger children are more demanding of physical contact. I feel that those who wish to touch should not be denied unless it is physically harmful. Occasionally older students respond favorably to touching so I do more. Students with whom I work need to improve self-concept.

I feel teachers of elementary students are a substitute parent for seven hours a day and children should feel close to teachers and vice versa.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Supplementary Data From The Survey

In addition to the 222 classroom teachers surveyed, 51 additional surveys were completed by other educators in a wide range of positions. A review of the data gathered from those people is presented here as a supplement to the study.

The additional people surveyed included:

16 teachers in urban schools

8 elementary principals

4 elementary counselors

10 special education teachers

4 multi-grade teachers

9 remedial instruction teachers

51 total

Urban Teachers

Although the urban school district would not participate in the study, sixteen individual people from a number of different elementary buildings chose to complete the questionnaire on their own. The data were not examined in depth for geographical differences however a cursory examination did not indicate any significant relationships in regard to geographical variables.

In general the urban teachers responded similarly to the suburban and rural teachers. The data from the urban group were consistent with the data from the other classroom teachers. It is unlikely that the addition of the sixteen questionnaires from the urban teachers to the main sample would significantly affect the percentages.

Elementary Principals

In general, the elementary principals attributed the same high degree of importance to touching as a means to communicate positive feelings as did the teachers. It was anticipated that administrators would be "politically" cautious due to the controversial nature of the behavior and to some extent their subjective answers did reflect this concern but not significantly more than the teachers. The principals did receive complaints from parents more frequently as would be expected. These complaints were usually in regard to physical punishment. Only one of the eight principals indicated that corporal punishment was never used. In regard to giving and receiving tactile messages there appeared to be no difference between teachers and principals.

Elementary Counselors

As a group, the counselors attributed very high importance to touching behavior and tactile communication. Their behavior however was not significantly different from the classroom teachers. It was anticipated that counselors would be more physically expressive than the teachers; this was not the case.

Special Education Teachers

The special education teachers, as a group, were more supportive and accepting of touch than the classroom teachers as a whole. They attributed very high importance to the behavior and in addition engaged in touching behavior more frequently with their students. To some extent this greater frequency could be attributed to smaller class size but in addition there seems to be some additudinal differences between special and regular classroom teachers.

Multi-grade Teachers

This group of teachers includes those that work with all of the children of the school for brief periods of time. For the most part they are art, music and physical education teachers. The responses of this group of teachers were consistent with those of other regular classroom teachers. Their limited exposure did not seem to diminish their tactual contact with their students.

Remedial Instruction Teachers

This group included remedial math and reading teachers. Their responses to the questionnaire items were similar to the regular teachers. Their answers reflected the same belief in importance and support for tactile communication. Within the group existed the same wide ranges from little tactual expression to a great deal between different teachers.

Summary

It is apparent that the nature of an educators position does not significantly affect either the belief in importance or tactile behavior of the person. Variables such as the age of the student, class sizes and the attitudes of the teacher do make a difference. In the case of principals, the higher incidence of corporal punishment was the only significant difference from teachers. Special education teachers attributed high importance and engaged in tactual behavior more frequently than any other group.

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