

Building Positive Respectful Relationships  
Between Adults and Children  
in a Classroom Community

By:

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## Abstract

A 1997 survey of Canadians revealed that bullying occurs once in every seven minutes on the playground and once in every twenty-five minutes in the classroom (Craig and Peplar, 1997). It is my feeling that educators need to be positively proactive and pursue interventions in the classroom, that have the potential to improve relationships, discipline and respect in order to reduce this statistic.

This study explored how the adults and students in an individual grade one classroom might build positive relationships in the classroom community. The study was based on the discipline policy of my school division, as stated in the “School Divisions Standard of Behavior” (2006) document and the ideas of Michelle Borba explained in “The Accentuating Respect and Defusing Disrespect Model” (Borba, 2007). Action research data, obtained from the participants, indicated that respect grounded in positive relationships and effective discipline can be introduced to students in an intense one month program, but requires an ongoing relationship between the child and the adult and life-long learning in order to be maintained.

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A final note to Todd, Taylor, Alisha and Tori: I'm back!!!!

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

“A child is the only known substance from which a responsible adult can be made” (Lickona, 1994).

The start of a new school year is always an exciting time for students. It holds the promise of new experiences and friendships. The fall of 1979 was no different than any other year. At five feet two inches tall, and as full of excitement for life as she was tall, a young girl began the final year of her high school career with the hope of one day pursuing some kind of a career that involved her love for drama.

She dreamed this year would be her best year in drama yet. She joined a new group of students, with a variety of skills and ages represented. She arrived for class ready for anything... or so she thought. Her first assignment was to express anger. Each student was to pair off with another student and to direct as much anger as he or she could, through vocabulary and body language, at the other person. The students immediately threw themselves into the activity hurling four letter words and insults at their partners. This, however, was not the way this senior in high school had been raised. She had been taught to use her words in constructive ways when solving problems, never to use vulgar language, and to respect everyone. When she approached her teacher about this, he told her she would have to ‘suck it up’ and do the assignment if she wanted a mark. This assignment left her struggling in a very uncomfortable situation. She felt she could not go against her ethical convictions and therefore declined to take part in the activity. Fearing that this was only the beginning of what the drama class had to offer, she excused herself from class and reported to the school guidance counselor in order to make a change in her timetable. A change that ended her dreams of doing anything in the

future that had to do with drama; but a change that made her aware of the power she had over her own life to know the difference between right and wrong, and to act in a way that was true to herself and her beliefs.

What became of that senior in high school? Well, she became an elementary school teacher and now is in the process of completing her thesis. I was the student and, until I began my Masters program, I had no idea just how much of an impact this incident had had on my life. Why had there been such a lack of relationship between my drama teacher (whom I had already had for three years) and myself that he could not see or hear how this activity affected me? What had become of our society, that it was no big deal (or had even become fun) for students to attack each other in such hurtful ways? When did it become appropriate for educators to sanction the use of this kind of language by students in schools for marks? I began to think maybe it was just me being oversensitive, until seven years ago.

At that time, it became apparent at staff meetings, throughout the 2001 school year, that other teachers at my school were feeling frustrated with the disrespectful behavior of their students and with how much things had changed over the years. Children were no longer showing the type of respect to teachers that the teachers had received, or felt they had received, in the past. Doors were no longer held open for them in the morning. Students did not greet them in the hallway with a smile and eye contact and, when teachers spoke to their classes, the children did not stop and listen to them the first time.

In response, in 2002, our school established a social responsibility team. Its first initiative was to create family groups, which were to be multiage groupings of students

from kindergarten to grade six (Daniel, 2006). Each family group was attached to an adult in the building who served as its mentor and support throughout the students' years at the school. Each year the group welcomed the new kindergarten students, as well as new students at other grade levels, and at the end of the year celebrated the graduation of their grade six students. The groups met approximately once a month and took part in activities designed to create a sense of belonging and that reinforced the school motto "Our differences make us strong. Together we practice kindness, safety, respect and responsibility."

Instituting the family groups was the beginning of collective reflection on how everyone in the school wanted to be treated. As a result of this development and my post graduate studies, I became very interested in how schools promote and develop social responsibility in children. I wanted to explore the questions I had about the impact educators have in this developmental learning process, especially in the context of a pluralistic school such as the one where I taught.

The disciplinary relationships between teachers and students have broadened over time due to the rapid changes in demographic diversity which has led to multiple competing life views. According to Gay (2005), prior to the middle of the twentieth century, classroom discipline was forceful and demanding, instilled primarily through punishment. This form of education through intimidation was expected of teachers. After World War II, the teacher's role became less authoritative. Teachers were expected to assist, interest, and persuade students. Borba (2001) claims that in society there also appeared to be less and less adult supervision of children, personalized schools, community supports, less adequate parenting and less moral modeling.

According to Borba (2001), change needs to begin with our children's moral intelligence. Moral intelligence is "the capacity to understand right from wrong; it means to have strong ethical convictions and to act on them so that one behaves in the right and honorable way" (p.4). "We've always known that the true measure of character rests in our actions—not in mere thoughts." (p.3). The aim of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be to encourage children to develop into caring, loving, competent people (Lickona, 1992).

In 2006 my school division published *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior* (see Figure 1), which presented its mission statement. As stated in this document, "the school is dedicated to educational excellence through challenging and enriching experiences for all, in a safe and caring community" (p. 3), and seeks to foster "a sense of value, belonging, acceptance, respect and dignity" (p. 4).

From this mission statement each school designed supplementary documents to meet and identify what this would look like in its school community. In my school the supplementary document referred to four desirable human virtues: kindness, safety, respect and responsibility. Respect at my school looks and sounds like:

- expressing self with socially acceptable language and behavior,
- showing courtesy for all people in the school and in the community, and
- dressing in accordance to school dress standards (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community (2006).

These documents gave me an insight as to where to begin my research. There were five key behaviors intended to guide educators when they were implementing their

***In the ----- School Division,  
We value –***

1. *the learning and dignity, respect and well being of all.*
2. *a safe and welcoming environment*
3. *the diversity and the uniqueness of all.*
4. *a shared common purpose that inspires and strengthens our commitment, responsibility and accountability to each other.*
5. *honest, respectful and timely communications.*
6. *participation in ongoing, collaborative decision making processes.*
7. *social and environmental responsibility.*
8. *vision, innovation, enthusiasm and involvement*

***In the -----School Division,  
Our vision is to....***

1. *promote challenging learning opportunities that support individual growth in a respectful environment.*
2. *ensure a welcoming environment where everyone is emotionally and physically safe.*
3. *care for each other and the world in which we live.*
4. *promote a sense of community and belonging by valuing meaningful participation in decision making.*
5. *recognize and celebrate the unique and diverse gifts of all.*
6. *commit to a common purpose that will inspire combined efforts to achieve outstanding results and personal satisfaction.*
7. *communicate effectively by sharing information in an honest, respectful manner.*
8. *embrace purposeful change and renewal.*
9. *live our values*

From “*Creating A safe and caring school,*” by Pembina Trails School Division. (2006). Winnipeg,

MB..Author.

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*Figure 1. Creating a Safe and Caring School Mission Statement*

responsibilities found in the division-wide *Standards of Behavior* (2006). The five behaviors were establishing, modeling, teaching, responding professionally and restoring. This action research study used these behaviors as a guide to positively building respectful relationships in one classroom's community.

From a closer look at this document it became obvious that I needed to look at three themes: discipline, relationships and respect. Discipline is defined as “What teachers do to help students conduct themselves appropriately in class and is used to refer to the quality of student conduct or teacher control in class” (Charles, 2008, p. 287). According to Jones (1987), it also refers to “Teacher efforts to engage students in learning in the most positive, unobtrusive fashion possible” (as cited in Charles, p. 287). Throughout my study, I will be using *discipline* as a verb referring to positive action that improves relationships and behaviors between students and teachers.

Relationship is defined as an emotional or other connection between people: the relationship between teachers and students (Dictionary.com, March 30, 2007). Teachers' relationships with students are one of the key factors in determining how fully students will cooperate with teachers' expectations. Charles (2008) believes personal and group benefits are achieved through positive relationships. Respect is defined as “Showing you value others by treating them in a courteous and considerate way” (Borba, 2001, p. 8).

The elementary school where this study took place has approximately three hundred and forty students from kindergarten to grade six. The heritages of thirty-three countries are represented in this population. Many of our students arrived at our school with little or no English. Their parents came to Canada to continue their graduate studies at the university, to begin a new life after leaving war torn homelands, or to study English

in Canada. In addition some of our families are of aboriginal descent and have moved from their traditional reserves to the city. Other families were fighting a cycle of poverty or other difficult family issues.

For the majority of our students, English is not their first language nor is Canada their country of birth. Such cultural differences create a unique set of challenges for children and teachers developing relationships of respect. For example, different ethnic and cultural groups have different views and values that may be missed or misunderstood in school settings, or even incorrectly and often viewed as disrespect. For instance, children of some ethnic and cultural groups adopt a subservient manner in educational settings. Consequently they may not make eye contact or voice disagreeable opinions when interacting with their teachers. Such behaviors may be misinterpreted as disinterestedness, dishonesty or disrespect (Gay, 2005).

Teachers have the ability to build relationships with their students in three ways. They can serve as care givers by loving and respecting them and helping them to succeed academically. This serves to build up their self esteem and experience morality by having their teacher treat them in a moral way. Teachers also can, serve as models, modeling respect and responsibility both inside and outside the classroom. Finally, teachers can serve as ethical mentors by providing moral instruction in the classroom through discussion, personal encouragement, storytelling, and corrective feedback about classroom situations. These relationships can have either positive or negative effects (Lickona, 1992; Borba, 2001).

Once positive relationships are established it becomes possible to teach respect. According to Bluestein (2001), visibility and being valued are critical to students

becoming emotionally safe. In order to do this, children must feel they are being seen and respected by their teachers. “Relationships are the foundation of a personalized school. Opening students’ minds to lifelong learning requires cultivating their trust and respect. Without a positive student-teacher relationship, many students aren’t even willing to try” (Littky and Allen, 1999, p. 26). From this perspective, everything in our lives needs to be intertwined with respect.

The purpose of this study was to understand the discipline, relationships and respect reciprocated between the adults and students, and the respect and relationships between the students in my grade one classroom. Even though we had a divisional value statement, somewhere along the way our school community had not internalized the message. What was missing? How could positive changes be achieved?

It is felt by many (Bluestein, 2001; Borba, 2007; Lickona, 1992) that the school and the classroom are extremely influential in the development of positive character traits due to today’s children’s lack of experiences with these traits. Borba (2007) suggests six techniques to accentuate respect and four to eliminate disrespect that I have chosen to intertwine with my divisional document in this research. Through this study I intended to look at my own discipline and relationship practices and the impact they have had on my grade one students. As well, I attempted to implement Borba’s steps to accentuate respect and eliminate disrespect in students in my classroom.

“Infusing respect is one of the most significant and effective things we can do to increase the following protective factors:

- school success,
- academic achievement,

- a sense of self, safe, secure and nurturing environments,
- a healthy lifestyle,
- positive family and school relationships and
- respectful and caring relationships” (Dean, 2005, p. 138).

### *Research Question*

The present situation in my school led me to develop the encompassing question of “How can I positively build respectful relationships between adults and students in my classroom community?” In order to understand this question more fully, I needed to look at both the students’ and my own definitions of respect and relationships in the classroom in both negative and positive ways. What were the strategies we were using to build relationships and classroom communities where children felt emotionally safe to practice respectful traits? Inversely, by what means were positive relationships, classroom community, and respectful traits undermined or destroyed? Is it possible to teach respect in the classroom and build positive relationships and classroom communities where children feel emotionally safe? Finally, does Borba’s model fit with my division’s model and serve as a practical guide in this endeavor?

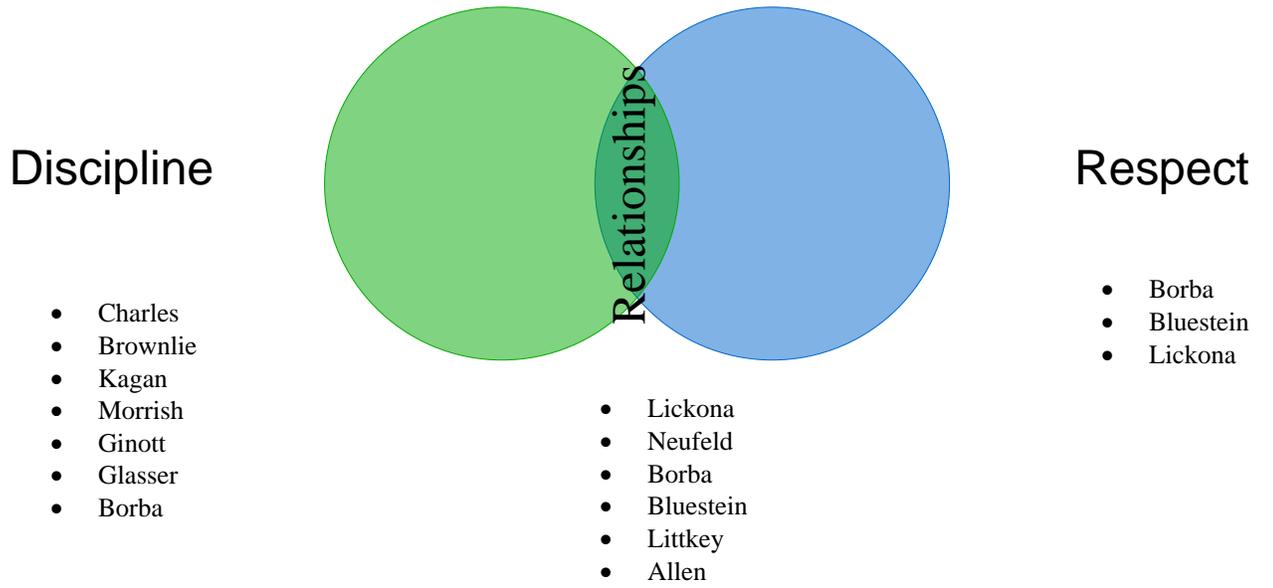
## Chapter 2: Literature Review

*“One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child”*

*Carl Jung*

Children today face new and different challenges when they leave our educational system. Not only are the academics important to their success in life but the fourth “R”, respect, is being brought into the educational equation more and more. Dewey (1916) states that education fails our children when it neglects the school as being a form of community life. This affects everything in a child throughout their school careers, which includes behavior and academics. “To succeed in teaching respect and responsibility, teachers must make the development of a classroom moral community a central educational objective. Children learn morality by living it. They need to *be* a community—to interact, form relationships, work out problems, grow as a group, and learn directly, from their first-hand social experience, lessons about fair play, cooperation, forgiveness, and respect for the worth and dignity of every individual” (Lickona, 1992, p. 90).

My original interest for this study was to look at the respect or lack of, found in schools today. As I read the literature on respect in the classroom, it became clear to me that the areas of discipline, relationships, and respect are intertwined and are all required in order to have a better understanding of the level of respect we find in classrooms (see Figure 2). Throughout my study, I looked closely at how discipline, relationships, and



*Figure 2.* Making Connections between respect, relationships, and discipline

respect were experienced by the adults and children in my grade one classroom. The need for classroom discipline has been universally agreed upon. It is the mechanics of the discipline that theorists have questioned over the years. As stated in Chapter One, in this paper discipline refers to the teacher's classroom control and his or her efforts to engage students in learning in the most positive, unobtrusive fashion possible. The relationships between the students and their teacher are created, either negatively or positively, from those disciplinary practices. Inevitably, this leads to the respect or disrespect that teachers receive from their students.

In my literature review, I will explore the areas of discipline, relationships and respect in the context of a grade one classroom. In addition, I will discuss children at risk, as some researchers have indicated that they may pose special challenges in my classroom.

### *The Role of Discipline in Building Respectful Relationships*

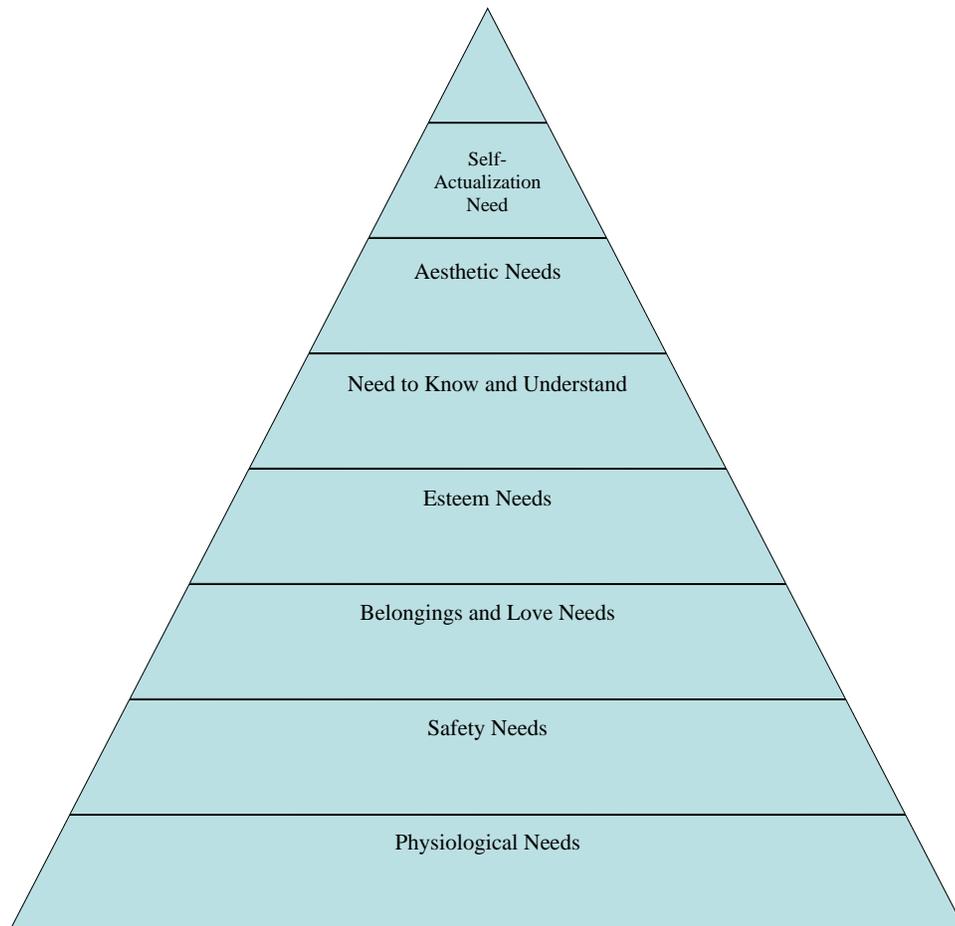
There are three basic conditions that are found in a moral classroom. Students know each other, they respect, affirm and care about each other and they feel they have membership in the classroom. This membership gives them a responsibility to the group (Lickona, 1992). In order for children and teachers to get to know each other, they need to be willing to listen to each other. There are many ways to create a moral classroom. Through various activities, children can be encouraged to feel safe with their classmates and teachers. These activities help to develop a group identity and develop each student's feelings of being a valued member of the class.

It was felt by Lickona (1992) also, that giving the students a voice in their environment gave them a stronger sense of involvement and ownership. Under the

theories of Glasser (1969); Kohn (2001); and Nelson and Lott (1993), teachers began holding classroom meetings to discuss, learn and role play situations that occur in the classroom and develop life mediation and communication skills.

An essential component of discipline to other theorists (Albert, 2003; Brownlie & King, 2000; Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Curwin, 1992 and Driekurs, 1972,) is building an environment where all students belong. Maslow (1998) used the term ‘belonging’ in his hierarchy of needs as shown in Figure 3. According to Maslow, it is essential for humans to meet certain needs in order to go on to meet or satisfy higher needs. Schools, in general, tend to focus on developing academic skills. However, when children are hungry due to lack of food, are experiencing poverty or have abuse occurring in their homes, they often do not have the psychological energy needed to see positive outcomes from their learning. “Classrooms that foster a sense of belonging provide an environment which encourages risk taking, allows for a cooperative spirit, models acceptance, encourages divergent thinking, promotes appreciation of others, practices empathy, and recognizes the unique contributions that each individual makes to the group” (Brownlie & King, 2000, p. 31).

Through the teacher’s development of discipline, students can begin to realize they do have control over their own destiny. Students begin to realize that they cannot control anyone’s behavior but their own (Coloroso, 2002; Glasser, 1986; Gordon, 1989). A deeper understanding of how discipline should work in the classroom has led to the development of philosophies and programs dealing with how to teach good discipline in the twenty-first century. I adapted Bluestein’s *Characteristics of Healthy Adult- Child Relationships* (1999) into a Likert scale to be used in this study to further look at



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*Figure 3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

From *Towards a psychology of being (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. by A.H. Maslow,(1998). New York, NY: Wiley, 1998.

the specific discipline or motivation approaches I use in the classroom. Bluestein looked at ten different styles adopted by other theorists (see Table 1).

Morrish (2000) emphasizes the training of students through clear expectations and the direct teaching of the skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to become socially responsible in the classroom.

Some programs deal with understanding social responsibility and making better choices in your own life. Borba (2001) looks at moral intelligence. She states that children have the ability to distinguish right from wrong, to establish and maintain strong ethical convictions and the willingness to act on their convictions in honorable ways. Her program provides suggestions on how to strengthen students' behavior in these areas. Borba states that there are seven essential virtues; empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness. Through the Raise Responsibility System (Marshall, 2001), children are taught to understand four levels of social development, relate them to behavior and learning and identify their own personal behavior accordingly. From this they are taught to make better choices in their actions.

Win-Win Strategy (Kagan, 2002) teaches both teachers and students to work together on the same side to develop skills. Discipline should be viewed as the strategies chosen that help to build relationship, to lead to success orientation and develop dynamics that are positive and cooperative rather than punitive in an authoritarian and disempowering way (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006). The use of a 4:1 ratio of reinforcement (success) to punishment (failure) will plant a seed so that children will develop an internal moral intelligence capacity to want to succeed even when we are not there watching (Borba, 2001; Scott, 2005).

*Table 1. Theories and Theorists*

Success Orientation	Morrish, 2000
Positivity	Kagan, 2002
Proactivity	Morrish, 2000
Win-win	Kagan, 2002
Eliminating Double Standards	Ginott, 1971
Boundaries	Kohn, 2001 Glasser, 1969 Nelson and Lott, 1993
Supportiveness	Marshall, 2001
Integrity	Borba, 2001
Communication	Curwin and Mendler, 1988
Self-Care	Gossen, 2004

Of course building a moral community in the classroom is an ongoing process and there will be times that the children are not going to comply. “Discipline is not a simple device for securing superficial peace in the classroom; it is the morality of the classroom as a small society” (Durkheim, 1973). Discipline is a way of restoring children to the community when they have made a poor choice with their behavior (Bluestein, 2001). At the other end of the spectrum, the Self-Restitution Theory (Gossen, 2004) is one of the first systems to deal with students that have already misbehaved. It teaches them to reflect on their behavior in a needs rectifying environment in order to identify, rectify and make better choices so they can improve their experiences in life.

### *The Standard of Behavior*

Students need to be specifically taught social skills in order to be able to internalize them and then generalize them to different situations. This means teaching and practice. “Telling isn’t teaching and expectations don’t teach” (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006, p. 3). In my school division, it is believed that students must be specifically taught skills and attitudes imbedded in the Standard of Behavior.

The Standard of Behavior five key behaviors are:

- Establishing the climate conducive to learning – Creating a climate that supports learning is the first step to effectively teaching anything.
- Modeling – The modeling of conduct we desire students to emulate is an ongoing responsibility for all adults in a child’s life – at school, at play, and at home.

- Teaching – Telling isn't teaching and expectations don't teach. Students must be specifically taught skills and attitudes imbedded in the Standard of Behaviour.
- Responding professionally - Staff members will always respond to behaviors that threaten or violate the physical and emotional safety of those in our care. Behavior is always situational and any and every response to behavior must always be informed by the circumstances of the situation.
- Restoring students to the community – “Discipline” must be conceived in terms of strategies like relationship building, success orientation, and developing dynamics that are more positive and cooperative than authoritarian and disempowering (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006, p. 3).

### *The Role of the Teacher*

The teacher is the primary care giver, model and mentor in the classroom. Neufeld (2006) calls the teacher the “Alpha” in the classroom – the most important attachment to the child in the school. As referred to in the development of family groups every child needs a mentor and caregiver he or she can depend on. In these roles the teacher needs to love, support, and respect the child. In order for the child to internalize the positive behaviors that are part of care giving and mentoring, the teacher must model them and give opportunities for the child to explore the behaviors in a safe environment. The child must be allowed to try and make mistakes. Lickona (1992) encourages teachers to look for something in the child's responses that they can affirm; otherwise the

chances of the child being willing to try again at another time lessens. A good rapport with students is essential in this role. Without it the teacher's influence is greatly diminished. "When students feel successful, respected and secure in the classroom, and when they feel a personal connection with their teacher, they're more likely to be receptive to their teacher's moral teaching and guidance" (Lickona, 1992, pp. 75-76).

### *Building Relationships*

According to Lickona (2004), a good teacher-student relationship helps students to feel loved and capable. It motivates them to do and be their best because they care about what the teacher thinks of them. It makes it easier for the teacher and student to communicate and work together to overcome obstacles to learning. Finally it leads students to identify with their teacher, thereby opening them to the positive influence of the teacher's character expectations and personal example.

The progression then of feelings that leads to a moral 'sense' seems to be dependent on attachment, defined here as a fundamental connectedness that leads to a perception of one's value to another. Healthy attachments formed early in life build trust that one's feelings are heard, accepted, and important thus leading to a balance between attending to one's own needs and feelings vs. meeting the needs and accommodating the feelings of others (Adalist-Estrin, 1993, p. 6).

Neufeld (2006) refers to the classroom as an attachment village or the context that is developed in order to raise a child. In traditional societies the attachment village was an actual village where extended families lived, grew up, and took care of their own. In western cultures today we have to create our own attachment villages. I realized that this

is what my school division had referred to as establishing a climate that will support the learning (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006).

### *Rules of Engagement*

How then can we teach social responsibility, an internalized sense of the right and proper way to act? If there is one agreed upon theme of the literature, it is that teaching respect and relationship or attachment needs to become part of the basics of the classroom in order for children themselves to grow up and develop healthy, positive, respectful relationships. The main issues in the literature appear to be whether the child's point in development will allow the child to internalize what is presented to him or her, and the style that the teacher uses to teach these key social responsibility skills.

According to Neufeld (2006), there are five steps involved in cultivating and preserving right relationships with children, which he refers to as the rules of engagement. Step one, is to "collect" children's eyes with, a smile, and a nod – and this invites them into a relationship. Collecting is the essence of greetings rituals. Even if a relationship exists already, children need to be "collected" each time in order to establish a context which makes directing and influencing them possible. The more troubled a child is, the more important to establish such a context. Teachers often tend to regard our formal role as enough, but if we don't collect them, there is no social context to work with them (Neufeld, 2005; Scott, 2005). In order to collect a child, teachers need to "get into their face or space". This can be done through eye contact. The eyes should be smiling eyes if they are to engage with you in a positive manner. When a particular child seems to be of more interest to classmates than the teacher, it is important to make eye contact with what the children are looking at, comment on it and then bring them in.

Step two is to give the child a “touch of proximity” to hold on to. The touch of proximity can be in the form of a smile, hug, handshake or any other positive form of acknowledgement. This interaction recognizes a child’s worth, delight and enjoyment. According to Neufeld (2006), you cannot build a relationship based on praise because praise is based on what they do, not on who they are.

Step three is to enrich the social context so that the child can depend on the teacher. As a teacher you must create this artificially. We must take a dominant position in the relationship and act like the children need you and are highly dependent upon you. We need to take responsibility for the relationship. When teachers accept children’s dependence, the children will move more naturally from dependence to independence.

Step four is to refrain from discipline that divides. There are three forms of discipline that can sabotage a relationship. The first is using the relationship against the child. According to Neufeld, although the “1-2-3 Magic” method, tough love, and time outs may cause a child to comply behaviorally, it creates emotional hardening and has an adverse affect on the student-teacher relationship. The second is using what a child cares about against him or her. It refers to the removal or threat of withdrawal of some form of security in order to get a child to comply. The last form is “trying to make headway in the incident”. The term ‘pick your battles’ is a good motto for this term. Children need to know that nothing they could ever do will sever the relationship you have built with them. This means that sometimes we need to retreat in order to preserve the relationship.

The traditional ways of discipline work best with children who don’t need it, but ironically do not work with children who do need it. After children are sent to the office they will return with less eye contact. In order to avoid diminishing the relationship,

when a child is removed from the classroom, the emphasis should be on the return rather than on the separation. “Sorry this isn’t working, you need to go to the office. I’ll see you soon”.

Step five is to behavior-proof the relationship. Teachers must commit to preserving the relationship at all costs. Part of the teacher’s job, therefore, is to soften the child’s heart, through warm words, and protect the child from stress that is overwhelming. At times this may mean retreating when you have lost the will to preserve the connection. It is important to remember that without relationship, we have no context in which to work with children. The relationship needs to be able to withstand any kind of behavior in order to stay intact.

### *Respect*

Borba (2001, 2005) describes the seven essential virtues to encourage ethical behavior in children: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. Of these, three are core virtues (empathy, conscience, and self-control) that are the foundation of a child’s moral intelligence. “When any one of the three is underdeveloped, the child is left morally defenseless against toxic influences coming his [or her] way; when all three of the core elements are weak, the child becomes a time bomb waiting to explode. A solid core is crucial to developing children’s moral intelligence because it gives kids the power to counter outside and inside vices so that they do what’s right” (Borba, 2001, p.9). If you were looking at these virtues on a moral reasoning scale chronologically, the three would take a child from birth to approximately age twenty.

Respect is valuing others by treating them in courteous and considerate ways. Although respect is not one of her three core virtues it is important because it sets the stage for tolerance and fairness. According to other researchers, respect is considered the core of morality (Lickona, 1994). It is the first value listed in surveys of core values around the world (Dockendorf, 2005).

Morality is respect. Everything in our lives needs to be intertwined with respect. Parents need to respect their children and need to have this respect returned. Discipline must be done in a respectful way, as well (Lickona, 1994). In order for our children to learn to be respectful, they must first begin with self-respect. Through data collected from teachers, it is felt that there has been a steady decreasing in children's self-respect. "Our children's self-respect has steadily decreased over the past decades, and this decrease in self-respect leads them to act disrespectfully toward others as well as themselves and to engage in such disrespectful behaviors as incivility, discourtesy, thoughtlessness, flouting of authority, rudeness, and vulgarity" (Borba, 2001, p. 120). In order to function in the stages of tolerance and fairness, respect must be part of their daily lives.

There are many challenges with the teaching and internalization of respect with children and adults. Borba quotes Finnish teachers as asking, "How can your children learn to be confident around adults if they're always taught to be afraid of them? In our country, our children respect grown-ups because they can trust them" (Borba, 2001, p.125). By warning our children to be wary of other human beings we are actually training them to be disrespectful, rather than practicing the behavior that encourages showing respect.

According to the B.C. Minister of Education (2001), the area of social responsibility, respect takes on three forms:

- respect for ourselves (the valuing of our own life)
- respect for others (treating everyone as having a worth, dignity and to have rights), and
- respect for this place (taking into account and taking care of the environment, ecosystem, and its animals).

Of these three forms of respect, self-respect is especially important. It can be enhanced by three conditions:

- warm acceptance (as unconditional love),
- a democratic environment (students feel empowered and the teacher is a good role model) and
- fair, consistent expectations (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Attitudes of respect develop slowly for children; they are not something that can be experienced once and internalized. When children practice respect on a daily basis, they are more likely to learn to care about others, therefore showing respect for others and return respect for themselves (Borba, 2001).

#### *Research Results looking at Implementing Moral Teaching in the School*

There appears to be little research published on the impact of programs based on implementing skill-based value education to increase behaviors identified with positive academic performance and reducing aggressive behaviors. In fact, the research that has been published leans more towards the failure of many programs. *PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network)* (2007) investigated the effectiveness of

whole-school programs, unfortunately the study was based on the negative aspect of bullying. The study showed that positive outcomes were present in primary and middle year's schools, but not in secondary schools. Unfortunately, the differences were not statistically significant. Countries such as Scandinavia, Italy and Finland seemed to have had strong, positive findings causing researchers to consider looking more in depth at the interventions that look at the broader picture such as school climate. Researchers do realize that in order for any of this to be useful we must monitor the program implementation carefully to guarantee schools are implementing programs as they were designed. In the area of practice though, there is little support for the implementation of the programs. It also must be remembered there is not enough evidence to conclude that the programs should not be used.

On a more global scale, the *What Works Clearinghouse* (2007) looked at character education programs to see what is being used in schools, as well as what is working and what is not. Many of the programs that are published did not meet the criteria to be part of their review. Those programs that did meet the criteria still only had one or two studies that had met the evidence standards of the *What Works Clearinghouse*. The studies looked at student outcomes in three domains; knowledge, academic achievement and behavior. Forty-one programs, with 93 studies inclusively performed on them were reviewed. Out of these 93 studies, 7 met evidence standards, 11 met evidence standards with reservations and 75 studies did not meet evidence standards. Out of the 41 programs 13 programs (based on 18 studies) met the evidence standards, 7 without reservations, and 11 with reservations. The *Caring School Community San Ramon Study* (2006) was the closest study to my research as it looked at the effects of a school based

program to enhance prosocial development on children's peer relations and social adjustment. The findings of this study indicated no discernable effects and no affirmative evidence of effects.

*The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning* (2005) also evaluate programs used for social and emotional learning. Their findings indicated that effective programs begin with children at an early age and continue right into high school. They believe that there are five core social and emotional skills required in children: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making. These skills are taught through a safe and caring classroom environment, and community involvement in program.

There are reasons for and against the use of character education programs in the classroom such as *Accentuating respect and Eliminating disrespect* (Borba, 2007). Some of the reasons for teaching these programs found by Demmon (1996) are: the decline of the family, the erosion of the value system of institutions of our society, the increase in disrespect for authority, rising violence, declining work ethic, ethical illiteracy, and the fact that the school is second only to the family in contributing to a child's values make up.

One reason against teaching these programs is that there is no research evidence of a direct correlation between values and behaviors. It is only an assumption that teaching values will reduce negative behavior. In addition, students do not perceive problems in the same way adults do and therefore might not turn to adults for advice (Demmon, 1996).

Borba (2005) implemented an eight months study using both quantitative and qualitative research to look more closely at the effectiveness of implementing the *Esteem Builders Program* school-wide on elementary students. The study concluded that self-esteem needs to be nurtured at an early age, in a way that the children can understand and follow. Second, Borba found early intervention is most appropriate for breaking negative trends. Third, Borba recommends that skill based activities be used (e.g. activities such as those in *Esteem Builders*, which happens to be Borba's own program). Borba suggested that future research studies evaluate the effectiveness of her methods using single-class model instead of a whole school model.

Until there has been more research done in this area, it is my feeling that we need to continue to be proactive and pursue interventions as it is a fact that youth violence has risen to crisis proportions across North America in recent years. Not only is it occurring in the communities, but in the schoolyard, the playground, and the classroom. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that out of the twenty-six wealthiest nations in the world the United States has the highest youth homicide and suicide rates (Borba, 2001). In the school setting, a 1997 survey of Canadians revealed that bullying occurs once in every seven minutes on the playground and once in every twenty-five minutes in the classroom (Craig and Peplar, 1997). Although figures show that youth in the United States are ten times more likely to commit murder than our youth in Canada, we are definitely not out of the woods (Borba, 2001).

#### *Children at Risk*

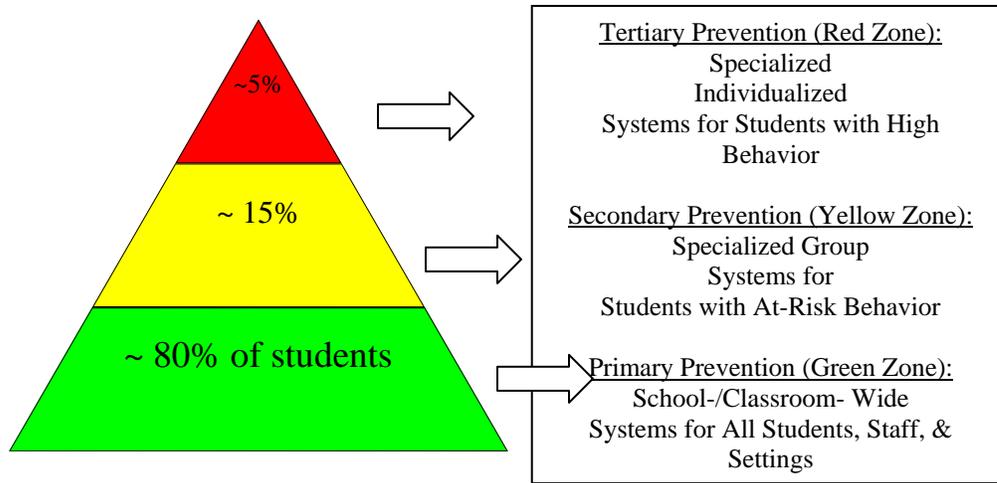
Children who do not develop positive relationships or show respect are vulnerable to the outside world and need to have a comprehensive approach to values and character

education. Some research shows that children need a consistent twenty-one days of intense instruction, whether through teaching, modeling or a number of different strategies in order to develop or reduce negative behavior (Bluestein, 2001). They may experience difficulty making and keeping friends and often isolate themselves or withdraw from or reject advances of friendship. Often, they are overly sensitive and anger easily. They can be impulsive, anxious, insecure, have low self-esteem and are frequently labeled the school bullies. Others are shy and rely on the adults of the school to be their buddies (Borba, 2005).

A continuum of school-wide positive behavior support (Scott, 2005) provides a forum for teachers to identify children who are at risk and who will need extra support in order to be successful. The support continuum is divided into three sections; the tertiary prevention (red) zone, the secondary prevention (yellow) zone, and the primary prevention (green) zone. Eighty percent of students in all schools should fall within the primary prevention zone. These are the children who are able to follow daily routines with very little special intervention. The secondary prevention groups are children who are behaviorally at-risk who have begun to surface in the classroom as needing some form of extra support in order to function at a satisfactory behavioral level. The required interventions and supports are usually found within the in-house school community. Children needing tertiary prevention require more specialized, individualized programming that is often provided by outside agencies. Often these children are referred to as high-risk students. Figure 4 illustrates the relationships among the three groups.

Scott's continuum provides a way for the school personnel to work together to increase student success. Building relationships and positive behavior requires educators

Figure 4. Continuum of School-wide Positive Behavior Support



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From *School wide positive behaviour interventions and supports*, by T.Scott., (2005).

to focus predominantly on those students that fall into the tertiary and secondary prevention zones. These children require relationships the most of all, yet they may resist building them (Neufeld, 2006). Research shows that discipline is part of the journey to success for these students, but how this occurs is the crucial factor. Prevention through rules, routines and arrangements will bring about greater success than reaction to situations where consequences are applied (Scott, 2005).

Discipline, relationships and respect appear to be interwoven together, when it comes to the classroom and teaching. As shown through the research, there are many ways to develop these areas according to what outcome is being pursued. I developed and followed my classroom discipline according to the *Creating a Safe and Caring School*; based on establishing, modeling, teaching, professionally responding and restoring students to the classroom. Through this action research project my purpose was to look at the development of relationships and respect.

I looked at respect according to Borba's Respect model and how it tied into the *Creating a Safe and Caring School*. Maté, co-author of *Hold On To Your Kids* (Maté & Neufeld, 2005), on a visit to my school division, evaluated the *Creating a Safe and Caring School* and determined that the document was good, but lacked the "how to" and "what to do" in order to make this document a blue print for teachers. The innovations and data collection gaps in Table 1 began to give a glimpse into why Maté felt there was something missing in the document. It is through my readings of other researchers that I was able to have data sources to help me understand once I had established, modeled, and taught respect in my classroom, the relationships (negative and positive) that had developed between my students and the adults. This relationship was demonstrated

through the students and teachers' abilities to show respect to each other and the teacher's ability to respond professionally and restore students to the classroom.

Standard of Behavior	Establishing	Modeling	Teaching	Responding Professionally	Restoring Students to the Classroom
Borba's Respect Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accentuate respect</li> <li>reinforce respectful statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>model respectful statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>build awareness of respectful language</li> <li>label appropriate respectful language</li> <li>practice respectful behavior skills</li> <li>teach skills to defuse disrespect</li> <li>label disrespect – call it!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw awareness to disrespect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
Innovations					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posted Clear Targets (Respect Chart)</li> <li>Read Story daily</li> <li><u>Ubuntu Time</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ubuntu Time</li> <li>Journey Journal</li> <li>Quick Scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pulse check</li> <li>Word web brainstorm</li> <li>Fuel for the Journey</li> <li>Journey Journal</li> <li>Borba's Respect Model</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borba's Respect Model</li> </ul>
Data Collection					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checklist on Relationship (Bluestein, 2001)</li> <li>Student Support Continuum (Scott, 2005)</li> <li>Student BC Quick Scale</li> <li>Sociogram</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation of teacher (quick scale)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journey Chart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC Quick Scale</li> <li>Checklist on Relationship (Bluestein, 2001)</li> <li>Observation of Teacher (quick scale)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Support Continuum (Scott, 2005)</li> <li>BC Quick Scale</li> <li>Sociogram</li> </ul>

Table 2. Data Sources according to Creating a Safe and Caring School and Borba's Respect Model

### Chapter 3: The “Method”: Intervening to Promote Respect and Relationships

#### *Overview*

It was through the work my school division had done that I became aware of what was missing (MacBeth, 2007). My colleagues in the school division studied many of the theorists when they were developing their own discipline philosophy. The five key behaviors are described in chapter 2 of *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior*. I had been attempting to use the five key behaviors in my classroom to create a positive form of discipline. Due to the fact that *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior* incorporated many of the theories but did not specify what individual techniques to apply, I looked at my own discipline intertwined with the *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior* and Borba’s respect model to determine how it affected the relationship and respect in my classroom.

This chapter explores the who, what, why, where, when, and how of my action research question and plan. It explores the data collection and analysis that occurred.

#### *Why Action Research?*

According to Philip Runkel (as cited by Schmuck, 1997), “The relationship between researchers and the researched has focused upon the benefit to the researcher and has treated the needs of people in the schools more or less as a nuisance...Quite aside from the morality of the older relationship, it has crippled efforts to make research useful to educators” (p. 139).

*Action research* can be defined as the process of studying a real school or classroom situation to understand and improve the quality of actions or

instruction. It is a systematic and orderly way for teachers to observe their practice or to explore a problem and a possible course of action. Action research is also a type of inquiry that is preplanned, organized and can be shared with others (Johnson, 2005, p.21).

Dewey's universal belief stated that students learn best by doing rather than by being done to (1916). Piaget (1926) and Kegan (1982) believed that we are meaning making beings who take our experiences and make sense of them by reflecting and making new connections. Action research is the study done on a personal scale, where we are able to become more aware of the unspoken elements of our personal theories.

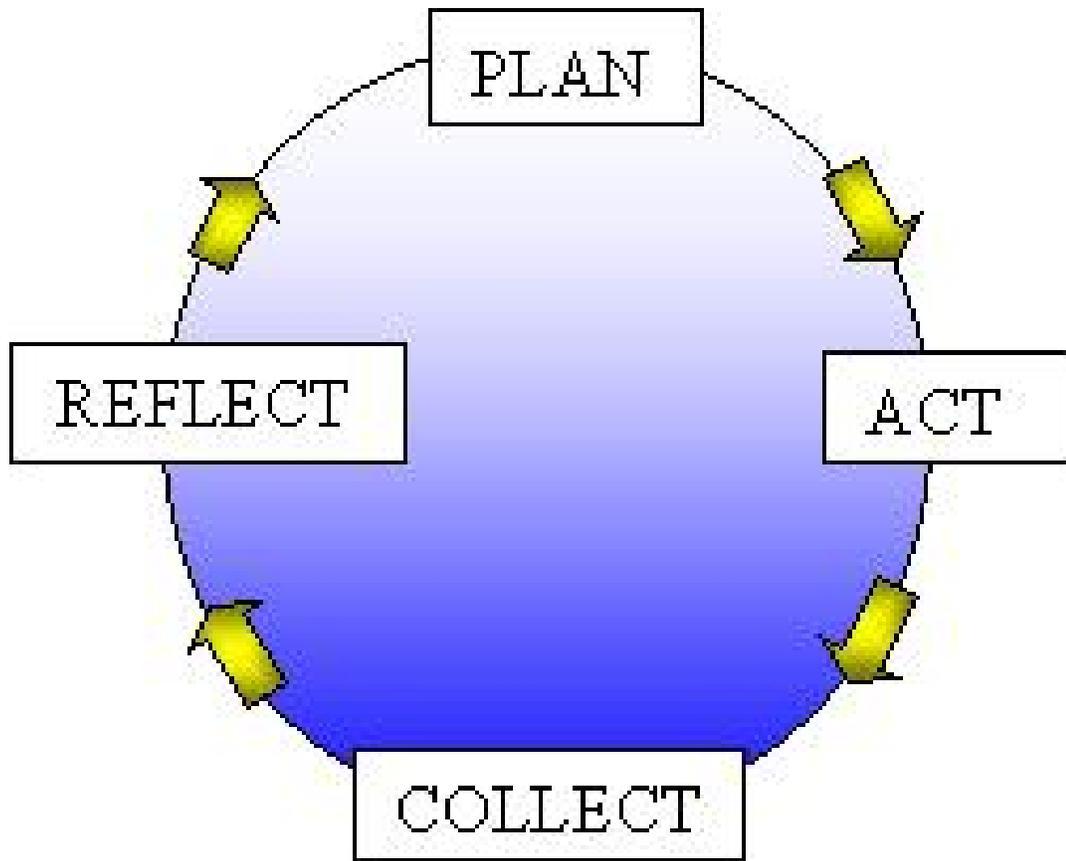
Action researchers spend a lot of time in their studies thinking about (hypotheses) and trying new things out, whereas basic research has direct relationship to physical sciences and is separate from practice. Applied research is focused on a direct application of its findings on people and their environment. Action research is a form of applied research that continues to look at principles and theories but also adds into the equation an action-oriented piece. Action research differs from applied and basic research in four main ways:

- action research is a self-critical inquiry embarked on by all involved in the study,
- it has a clear value system and does not embrace objectivity to the study in the conventional way,
- the study is managed by an insider rather than an impartial outsider, and
- the study is to help make improvements for both the researcher as well as the practice (Johnson, 2005).

Action research is based on an ethical commitment to improve ourselves, the community and society as a whole. There is no attempt by the researcher to remain objective throughout the study but rather to look at our actions, assumptions and beliefs and bring them more into alignment with our values. This is done through collaboration with all involved in the study, developing and testing theories through a cycle of action, observation and reflection.

The purpose of this action research project was to better understand what is involved in building a positive, respectful working relationship between adults and students throughout the day. It became apparent to me that the best place to start was in my own classroom. The methodology of this study was a collaborative action research. I used the action research cycle as my guiding points throughout the research (see figure 5).

The action research cycle seemed to match the process I was doing best by providing a way to link theory with practice. Action research was seen from the inside looking out, rather than the outside looking in. This allowed for decisions to be made that affected the specific environment that was being looked at in a more expedient rate as well as being able to see how this affected other classrooms. I, as the teacher, was not only affected by the planned change but also was able to decide what the next step needed to be. In this case we (my students and I) worked together to form relationships that involved sharing information and understanding (Stringer, 2004) in order to build respect. I monitored the effects of my actions according to the *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior* and Borba's Respect model in my classroom.



*Figure 5.* Action Research Cycle

## *The Setting*

### *Lawrence Westlake School*

This study occurred in an elementary school serving approximately 340 students. The students of the school were diverse in their academic needs, ethnic make-up and home situations. Among the 340 students, 88 were immigrants to Canada and list English as an additional language. There was a representation of thirty-three different countries within the building. Twenty-one of the students were in foster care, seventy-three were from single parent homes, and three were part of the Homestay program, which allows children from abroad to live in Canada while they get their education.

### *My Grade 1 Class*

I have been an early years classroom teacher for twenty years, the past twelve of which have been in Lawrence Westlake School. My present grade one classroom, where the study took place, was comprised of nineteen students, seven girls and twelve boys. Five students had English as an additional language. Two had Individual Educational Plans (or Individual Transition Plans), nine were being supported by the school resource program, and seven were being monitored for social emotional needs. One student had multiple handicaps requiring oxygen and was in a wheelchair.

The classroom was located in an “add-on” wing to the school, which consisted of three classrooms divided by two walls, but no individual classroom doorways (see Figures 6 & 7). The classrooms were connected by a long hallway with a door at the end of each hallway, giving the opportunity for a small community to be developed amongst

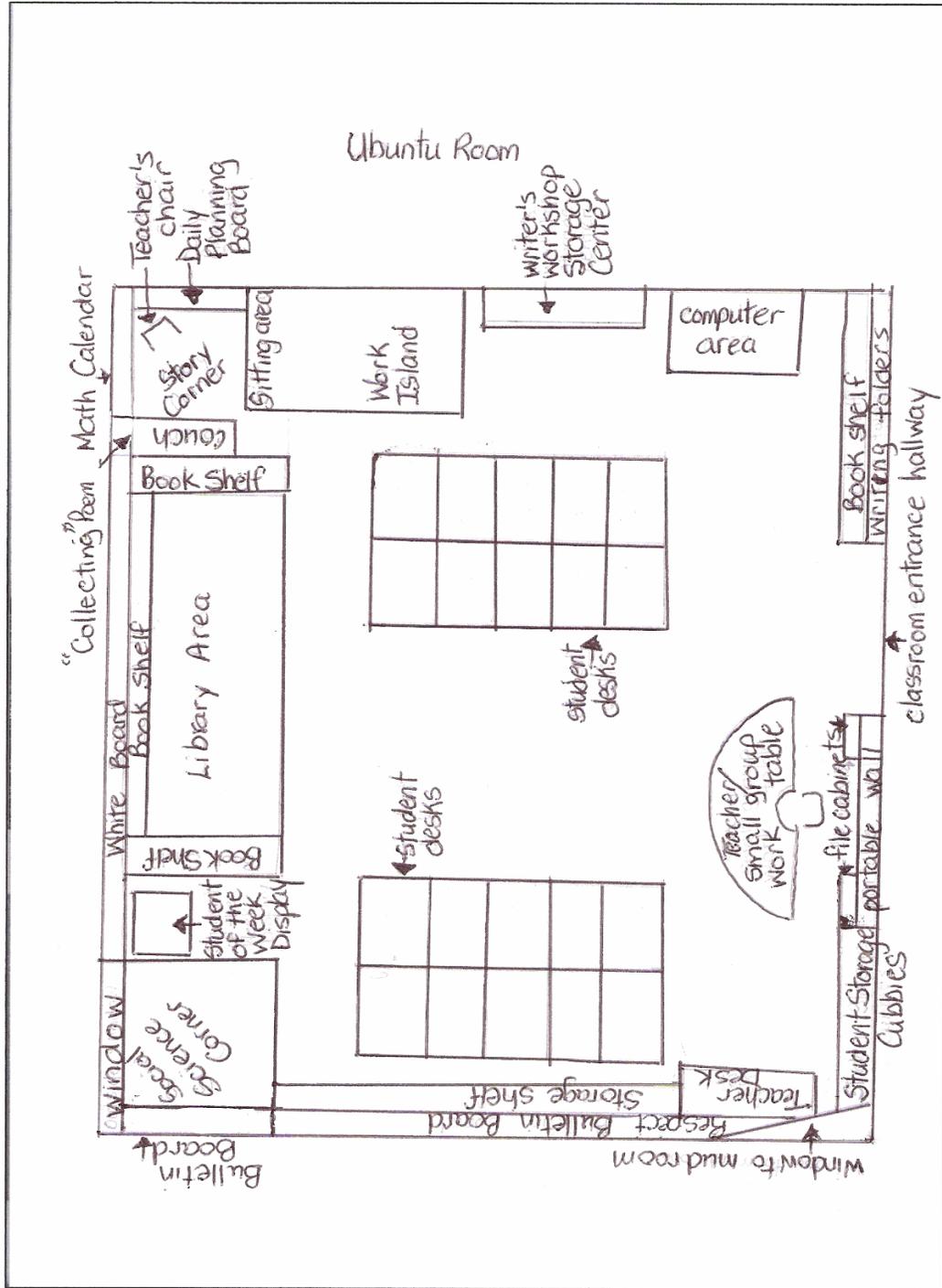
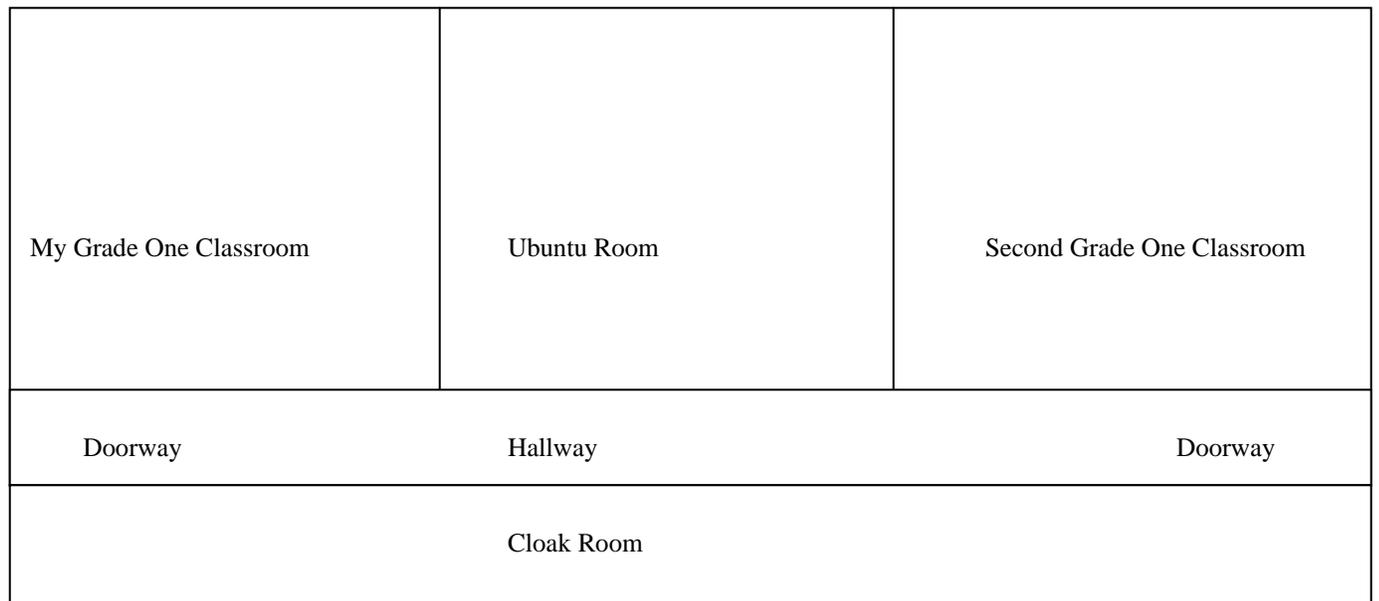


Figure 6. Map of Classroom Area



*Figure 7. Map of Grade One Area*

the two grade one classrooms. Only the two outer rooms had teachers with students. The room in the middle was what was known as the *Ubuntu* (together we belong) room, where the children met at the start of each morning.

### *Recent Initiatives to Build Respect*

For the past two years our school had employed a team of teachers, administrators, and resource teachers to study ways of creating a safe and caring environment. This team was referred to as the School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (P.B.I.S.) Team. The teams were supported by the School Division through periodic meetings and in servicing throughout the school year. I was part of our school P.B.I.S. Team.

From the first day of the establishment of the P.B.I.S. team, staff was very clear in expressing a need for more respect in the classroom from the students. We, therefore, chose to work on *respectful movement* in the school as our first initiative. We created a working document for our staff (Table 3). Teachers were given post it notes to stick on a map to indicate where in the building they felt there were problems and what they were. From this the team created a chart based on six key areas at Lawrence Westlake School (street and playground safety, hallways, stairs, doorways, O Canada and announcements and washrooms) and what the responsibilities were for both students and staff in order to help our school develop respectful movement. Before the project began the staff was asked to record and monitor student movement using a simple checklist. The school was then given a two week period to teach, model and monitor expectations. At the end of the two week period staff were asked to use their checklist again to collect data on behavior infringements. The results suggested that staff were able to state what they did not like.

## Social Responsibility Focus Team

TARGET BEHAVIOR: Respectful Movement

Area	Student Responsibility	Staff Responsibility
"O Canada" and Opening Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stand quietly by your desk facing the front for the playing of the anthem</li> <li>- sit quietly listening to the announcements</li> <li>- write reminders relevant to you in your planner</li> <li>- if you are not in your classroom for O Canada and the opening announcements, stop where you are and remain there until the announcements are completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- model respectful behavior in the classroom</li> <li>- model our expectations and supervise students in the hallways or foyer if you are in close proximity</li> <li>- if you are in the office or Xerox area during this time, stop what you are doing and model quiet respect; listening to the announcements</li> </ul>
Hallways a. individual student going on errand or to washroom  b. c. class moving to another area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- walk quietly on right; hands to self</li> <li>- wear shoes</li> <li>- takes most direct route</li> <li>- return promptly</li> <li>- walk quietly on right; hands to self</li> <li>- stay with group</li> <li>- follow teacher's lead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be aware of time student left and time student returns</li> <li>- line up the class</li> <li>- lead students to the area</li> <li>- ensure all students arrive</li> <li>- if there is a second adult, have an adult at each end of the line</li> <li>- acknowledge appropriate movement</li> <li>- wait for and greet adult receiving class</li> </ul>
Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- walk quietly on right; hands to self</li> <li>- touch every step with a foot</li> </ul>	- teach, monitor and model expectations
Doorways a. lining up after recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- move to line up at warning bell</li> <li>- line up respectfully with class group in designated area</li> <li>- start the line 2 meters from the door</li> <li>- be ready to move inside at second bell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- move to doorway to supervise at warning bell</li> <li>- monitor and correct lining up behavior</li> <li>- supervise entry of your class</li> </ul>

b. lining up by a specialist door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- line up on right of hallway by specialist door</li> <li>- wait quietly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- supervise class until receiving teacher is ready</li> <li>- receiving teacher to start class promptly at designated time</li> <li>- specialist teachers will take class to cloak room for recess if class is from 10:00 – 10:30 or 2:00 – 2:30</li> <li>- homeroom teacher will meet specialist teacher and class at cloak room</li> </ul>
<p>Washrooms</p> <p>Designated areas</p> <p>K – In their classroom</p> <p>1- parking lot doors</p> <p>2 + 3- gym office</p> <p>4 – parking lot doors</p> <p>5 – gym office</p> <p>6 – main office</p> <p>Gym – main office Music/ French – gym office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- walk quietly on right; hands to self</li> <li>- use designated facilities</li> <li>- wash hands</li> <li>- return using the most direct route</li> <li>- return to class promptly</li> <li>- after recess or lunch, hang outdoors clothes and change shoes before obtaining permission to go to washroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be aware of time student left and time student returns</li> <li>- supervise groups of students using washrooms (i.e. before recess)</li> <li>- do attendance check promptly after recess</li> </ul>
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- respectful behavior</li> <li>no snowballs</li> <li>no play fighting or physical play</li> <li>- stay in designated area</li> <li>- only the grade level of the day can enter the wooden boundaries for the play structure</li> <li>- dress for the weather</li> <li>- bring in equipment</li> <li>- move to line up at warning bell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be on time for supervision</li> <li>- be vigilant</li> <li>- spread out supervision</li> <li>- reinforce warning bell</li> <li>- stay on duty until all students are in</li> <li>- teachers not on duty must move to doors at warning bell and be there to let students in, assisting their grade level partner on duty</li> </ul>
Street and Playground Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- patrols and mediators are to be at their post on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- staff will ensure that these important student positions are carried out</li> <li>- dismiss/release students with enough time to be dressed and ready to take care of their responsibility</li> </ul>

Table 3. Respectful Movement

but less able (or perhaps less willing) to indicate whether behavior had gotten any better – any more respectful. The results did suggest some improvement in the school, but the data were incomplete and in this way ambiguous.

In the classroom, everyday is an opportunity to work on discipline, relationships and respect. The establishing of initial contact is very important to relationship building. Previous to the start of the school year, I had done some “collecting” with the students that were to be in my classroom for the next year. “Collecting” refers to bringing the children together in their new classroom in order to make a connection with them before they are actually immersed in the setting (Neufeld, 2005). In April, therefore the children from Kindergarten came to visit my classroom and spent some time with me learning about the annual hatching of chicks. This event helped to introduce myself as their classroom teacher for the upcoming year. (There were two grade one classrooms so about half the children were in my classroom the following year). The children also attended orientation for one half hour with both grade one teachers. At this time the teachers introduced them to some of the class routines and expectations. I sent out a letter, also, just before the school year began (August) to introduce myself and to invite children to bring in an item from home on the first day to help introduce themselves and share about their likes and dislikes to the class (Figure 8).

The first two days of school were a staggered start. Half of the class came the first day and the rest came the following day. All students came on the third day. This allowed the teachers and students to build a relationship in a smaller group previous to the whole group being present. Later in September, there were two days in which the school took part in “Strong Beginnings”, an initiative that allowed students and staff to develop an

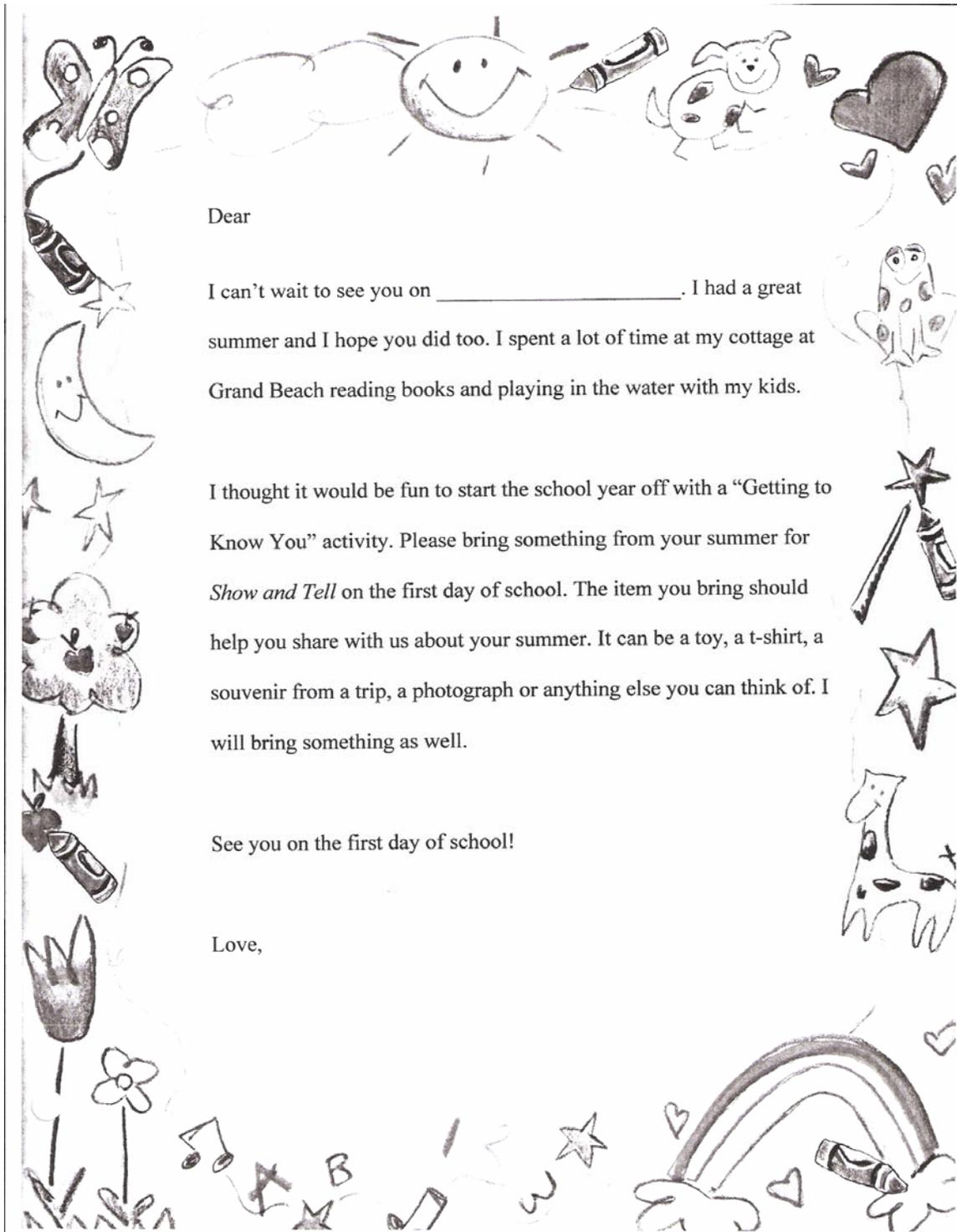


Figure 8. Welcome to School Letter

understanding of where our children were academically as well as time to further build relationships with them. Each school completed this process in a way that best fit the clientele of their school. Our students each came in for ninety minutes scheduled one-on-one time.

Each morning in grade one began with a togetherness time for all grade one students, referred to as “*ubuntu*” a South African word meaning to belong. Belonging is important at the beginning of the year to creating relationships with students. As I explained to them each year, they are all part of a circle of life. I demonstrated this idea by inviting students to lie face down in a circle with their hands stretched over their heads and touching in order to create a continual circle (see Figure 9). When even one child is missing, the circle is no longer complete. Everyone is therefore an important part of the classroom community.

“*Ubuntu*” time was an opportunity to model for the children what discipline, positive relationships and respect looks like with both classes present. My teaching partner and I attempted to stage situations for the children to see the relationship and respect we had for each other as well as setting the stage for what discipline looked like in not just one of our classrooms but in our whole grade one wing. In this way there was no misunderstanding about discipline and through interaction between both of us during this time they began to build a relationship that allowed them to feel comfortable to come to either one of us with concerns or celebratory information.

*Imagining a New Way Forward: Applying Borba’s Model in My Grade One Classroom*

Now that it has been decided that the importance of respect, relationships, and discipline must be addressed and we have chosen who the participants were to be in order



*Figure 9. Ubuntu time: Belonging*

to carry out this study, I created a set of rules, routines, and physical arrangements to avoid predictable problems from occurring. The Standard of Behavior gave a good philosophical overview of what our discipline practices should be based on but did not state what was needed for their particular setting or how to create a safe and caring community in the classroom so children and adults could practice what they were learning.

A safe and caring learning environment occurs in classrooms where there is a sense of belonging, security, and positive respect. According to Borba, positive, respectful statements are contagious. There can be dramatic changes in a classroom when staff and students deliberately focus on the positive traits of respect. Through the teaching and internalizing of these traits students' learning environments will provide the safe haven that so many of our students crave as well as helping them to be better prepared to deal with the difficulties life throws at them in a more constructive way.

Borba (2007) has developed six ways to catch and accentuate the trait of respect in the classroom.

*Steps to Accentuating Respect*

- Model respectful statements: Teachers need to remember that they may be the only model of respect in the children's lives. Throughout my research I attempted to model language that would be deemed respectful.
- Accentuate respect: It is important to make it very clear to students that they may not speak hurtfully about themselves or others. This is considered to be a commandment of the classroom and should be posted for all to see. The students participated in the coloring of a No Disrespect Zone poster.

- Build awareness of respectful language: Society today has more of an emphasis on disrespect than respect. We, as educators, should not assume that children are familiar with respectful language. Children should brainstorm with their teacher lists of statements that show respect. These should be posted in the classroom, as well. Through the use of stories, the children helped to create a list of respectful statements that were hung in the classroom. We organized the respect shown in the stories, also, into categories of looks like, feels like and sounds like to be posted in the classroom.
- Label appropriate respectful language. Often children have said disrespectful comments so often they do not realize that they do it. It is helpful if teachers label appropriate and inappropriate language for them. During the first two weeks of the study we concentrated on respectful language.
- Reinforce respectful statements. Respectful language should be reinforced if we want them to keep using it. Teachers should try to ignore the disrespectful language for awhile.
- Practice respectful behavior skills. It is not enough to simply post respectful language. Children must have an opportunity to practice it as well.

### *Steps to Eliminate Disrespect*

Disrespect has a domino effect in our classrooms. Disrespectful statements such as put downs, name calling, and teasing can escalate into more serious situations very quickly causing the breakdown of safe and caring learning environments and creating environments of fear, anxiety, and tension. Research has also show a direct correlation

between what teachers see as insignificant disrespectful acts in the classroom to more serious acts of violence beginning with pushing, harassment and neglect (Borba, 2007).

In learning any new skill, it is important to remember that change will not be automatic. Some back sliding will occur throughout the process. The most important thing in the teaching of new habits is to be consistent. Children are not aware in many situations that they are being disrespectful.

Some of the rules for success are:

- Draw awareness to disrespect. Disrespect causes more disrespect. It is important to call out the disrespect in a way that does not sound negative. Borba suggests using a code word or signal that all the children know or to casually mention to remember to use respectful words.
- Label disrespect...Call it! Students must practice letting other students know when they have used a put down or form of disrespect by using a code word with other students that they all recognize. This helps students to learn not to accept disrespect.
- Teach skills to defuse disrespect. Make sure all children and adults are taught the skills to handle disrespectful actions. We examined this skill by rereading the stories used in the accentuating respect lesson in order to see how they defused disrespect. Borba had suggested a list of appropriate ways to handle defusing disrespect. These skills were posted in the classroom as well.
- Teach skills to replace negativity. Many students are disrespectful simply through ignorance. They are surrounded by it daily and are unaware that it is disrespectful or that there is another way. Respectful skills need to be taught

in order to replace negative behavior. This was practiced through the use of puppets. The puppets gave the children the opportunity to say things they may not have been willing to say in an actual situation without practice and encouragement.

### *My Own Strategies for Implementation*

Throughout my day in a grade one classroom there was a foundation of respect and relationships. At least this is what I wanted to believe. I implemented a six week study of Borba's implementation of accentuating respect and eliminating disrespect in the classroom with the use of Scott's continuum of positive behavior and the British Columbia quick scale in order to identify those children experiencing difficulties in the areas of respect and relationships. Through what was referred to as a Journey Journal (Brownlie, 2000) both teachers and students had the opportunity to track their own progress and set backs as we learned about our ability as a classroom community to show respect and build relationships.

### *Data Sources and Collection*

In order to create a culture of respect, I and the children needed to teach, model, and practice the new skills of respect. The practice needed to be on a regular basis in order for everyone to learn to apply and reflect on the impact their actions have had on themselves, others and the environment (Dean, 2005). In my classroom I believe that we must start with the basics to give everyone an equal chance to become aware of some of these skills. Neufeld (2006) states that even children already aware of the customs of engagement, need to be gathered before each new activity begins.

The following data sources were chosen because of their potential to help both the children and myself build a positive respectful, relationship in the classroom and model the key principles in eliminating disrespect and accentuating respect. I gathered information in hopes that it became data used as evidence for our values about discipline, relationships and respect in the classroom. My own values and beliefs told me that through establishing, modeling, teaching, responding professionally and restoring students to the community, I could help our class build respectful relationships. My data collection was based on three forms of qualitative data:

- experiencing through our senses,
- inquiring into the experiences and thought of others, and
- examining documents and artifacts.

The table that follows (Table 4) shows the links between my research questions and data gathering technique.

### *Observing*

#### *Experiencing through our senses*

“Aware of being familiar with classroom routines, an experienced observer might initiate a new set of observations with the strategy that in yet another classroom one simply assumes "business as usual...." The observer sets a sort of radar, scanning constantly for whatever it is that those in the setting are doing to keep the system operating smoothly” (Mills, 2007, p. 61).

The goal of observation is to increase understanding and empathy. Throughout this action research project, I was be an active participant observer of my own teaching practices as

Research Question	Sub-questions	Data Source			
How can I positively build respectful relationships between adults and students in my classroom community?	How do I define respect?	Teacher Journey Journal entry	BC Standard of Behavior Quick Scale		
	How do teachers define a positive and negative teacher-student relationship?	Teacher Journey Journal Entries	Bluestein's Checklist of Healthy Relationships		
	How do students define respect?	Brainstorming word web activity	Journey Journal Entries	Student conversation	
	How does research define respect in the classroom?	BC Standard of Behavior Quick Scale	Michelle Borba: How to Accentuate and Eliminate Respect	Literature review	
	How do students define a positive and negative teacher-student relationship?	Fuel for the Journey Web	Journey Journal Entries	BC Standard of Behavior Quick Scale	Sociogram
	What are the strategies we presently use to build relationships and classroom communities where children feel safe emotionally to practice respect traits and what hampers our relationships with students?	Teacher Journal Entry	Photographs	Sample activities	Student Journey Journal Entries
	Does Borba's model fit with my division's model and classroom?	Teacher Journey Journal Entries	Scott's Continuum of Positive Behavior	BC Standard of Behavior Quick Scale	Students Journey Journal Entries
	Does implementing Borba's strategies improve relationships among students and between students and teachers?	Teacher Journey Journal Entries	Scott's Continuum of Positive Behavior	BC Standard of Behavior Quick Scale	Students Journey Journal Entries

Table 4. Research Questions and Data Sources

well as of my students' learning. I began the action research by completing a checklist on characteristics of healthy adult-child relationships. This Likert scale adapted from Bluestein's (1999) checklist helped me to set the baseline of my classroom discipline. As I stated earlier in order to have a better understanding of the relationship and respect level in your classroom, the classroom discipline must be taken into account. As stated in Chapter Two, Bluestein's adapted Likert scale was divided into ten different categories representing the different views of theorists on discipline.

From this Likert scale (Table 5) I had a better understanding of what form of discipline I employed in my classroom. By using the Likert scale at the beginning and end of the study I was able to see if my teaching style had changed at all from the events that had occurred during the research. After I had completed the scale, the first time, I sealed the results in an envelope so that I was not tempted to compare it when filling the scale out at the end of the study.

Throughout the time period the children and I had the opportunity to take an informal check as to how they were doing in their centers in the area of respect by participating in a pulse check. The children were asked to show a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" according to how they felt their progress was going. Holding their thumb up with a closed fist showed they were meeting our posted respect targets, while pointing their thumb down with a closed fist indicated they were not meeting the targets. The reasoning behind the "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" was to be used for our discussions and practice sessions during our classroom morning meetings. This helped us to learn and practice new skills. When opportunities arose where disrespect was shown I named it

***Likert Scale:  
Characteristics of Healthy Adult-Child Relationships***

**By Jane Bluestein, Ph. D.**

Use this list to evaluate patterns in your current relationships with the children in your life (or even other adults in your life). If you have implemented a specific discipline or motivation approach, does it encourage relationships in which the following are true?

Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Most of the time = 4, Always = 5

1	2	3	4	5	
					<b><i>Proactivity:</i></b>
					I focused on prevention – not reaction.
					I attempted to meet my children’s needs in healthy, constructive ways.
					<b><i>Win-Win:</i></b>
					I motivated cooperative behavior without powering, threatening, humiliating or using conditional approval.
					I was more interested in encouraging cooperation than obedience, even though the outcome behaviors usually looked about the same.
					I wanted to empower my children within limits that did not disempower others.
					I used my authority to set limits, offer choices, and decide what is and is not negotiable.
					<b><i>Success Orientation:</i></b>
					I asked my children to do things for which they are developmentally and experientially prepared.
					I gave clear directions.
					I set clear, pro-active and win-win boundaries.
					I attempted to accommodate my children’s preferences and learning styles, allowing them to study and learn in ways that are most natural for them.
					I gave my children opportunities to self-manage.
					I stayed in the present.
					<b><i>Positivity:</i></b>
					I separated my children’s behavior from their worth.
					I stated boundaries as promises rather than threats.

					Our home is reward-oriented (that is, focused on positive outcomes for cooperation rather than punishment or negative outcomes for misbehavior).
					I thought of consequences as the <i>positive</i> outcomes for cooperation or positive behavior.
					I looked for the positive (what the child is doing right) and built on that.
					I tried to maintain my sense of humor.
					<b><i>Avoiding Double Standards:</i></b>
					I modeled the kinds of behavior I would like my children to exhibit.
					I avoided talking to my children in ways I would not talk to adults.
					In terms of motivation, I recognized that children desire (and deserve) to experience meaningful outcomes as a result of the behaviors they choose, just as adults do.
					I avoided making a big deal over issues and incidents that involves my children just because they aren't adults.
					<b><i>Boundaries:</i></b>
					I offered my children a variety of meaningful positive consequences to motivate or encourage cooperative behavior.
					I recognized my child's positive behavior without reinforcing dependence and people-pleasing.
					I avoided giving warnings, as well as delayed or meaningless negative consequences.
					I avoided asking for excuses. (I was willing to withhold privileges and rewards until children came through on their end regardless of their excuses.)
					I built in some proactive flexibility so I can accommodate occasional problems that may arise without compromising my boundaries.
					<b><i>Supportiveness:</i></b>
					I accepted the child's feelings even if I didn't understand or agree with them.
					I respected the reality of the child's experience, and was willing to validate that reality.

					I have a variety of healthy outlets for children to use to get their feelings out (or be listened to) without creating problems for themselves or others.
					I listened without giving advice, dismissing the problem, or interfering with the feelings.
					I asked, rather than told, to help children find solutions to problems without giving them answers or advice about what they should do.
					<b><i>Integrity:</i></b>
					I made choices based on my values and the children's needs regardless of possible reactions from others.
					I was able to deal with criticism without becoming defensive, apologetic or reactive, and without explaining in order to secure approval for what I'm doing.
					I maintained regular, positive contact with other adults in the children's lives.
					<b><i>Communication:</i></b>
					I avoided using my feelings as a way to control or change others.
					I took responsibility for solving problems that arose in my classroom and relationships with my children.
					I communicated positively and responsibly with the child's parent or guardian.
					When I slipped up and said or did something hurtful, I took responsibility for my behavior (rather than blaming it on something the child had done).
					When I made a mistake or failed to keep my word, I avoided making excuses and apologized to make things right.
					I was able and willing to ask for what I wanted directly.
					<b><i>Self-care</i></b>
					I modeled a commitment to personal growth.
					I knew how to set boundaries and was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
					When things got to be too much for me, I was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
					I developed a strong support network and was willing to use it.

					I minimized or avoided contact with negative, toxic people and experiences.
					I used my mistakes and errors as opportunities for new learning rather than as excuses for beating myself up.
					I had a variety of outlets and resources outside of my work situations for personal enrichment, relaxation, stress management and fun.
					I acknowledged what I've done right and gave myself space to grow and keep getting better!

*Table 5. Characteristics of Healthy Adult – Child Relationships Likert Scale*

Excerpted and adapted from *21<sup>st</sup> Century Discipline*, revised edition, by Jane Bluestein, Ph. D. © 1999, McGraw-Hill Children's Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted with permission from the author and publisher.

(the disrespect), rather than referring to the student, in order to help them recognize that this is an example of disrespect. According to Borba, the rule is: One Put-Down = One Put Up. We used our discussions to practice this motto in many different situations, not just the one that occurred in the classroom.

As participant-observers I attempted to step back from my involvement and remember I was also a researcher. In this way I hopefully, was able to give up some of my beliefs so that we were open to the whole big picture of what was going on in front of us. Looking at what Holly (2005) referred to as the “big data—little data” design heeds me to zoom in for a closer look at individual things going on and zoom out to the whole picture creating new observations.

In order to have a true picture of what went on in my classroom, I had the opportunity to be a passive observer in my classroom as well. While the children were working, I wandered and observed how they interacted with each other practicing their respectful skills and building relationships. I was able to remain a passive observer by wearing my “quiet hat”. The “quiet hat” (figure 10) is a white cowboy hat I had in my classroom that I used for times when the children were not to interrupt or talk to me. (Situations such as individual testing or guided reading groups were times when I normally wore this hat.) The students quickly came to understand that this was an important time and that it did not last forever. While the hat was on my head they were to ask another adult in the room for help, another student, or wait patiently for me to remove the hat. I never wore it for more than ten to fifteen minutes at a time.



*Figure 10.* Quiet Hat

As the classroom teacher and the researcher, I was aware that I could not observe and record what goes on every minute during the school day. I instead used our one hour of English Language Arts lesson and centers time each morning as my specified time for my research. This occurred from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. I planned to use this time to record the children's behavior in regards to respect on the quick scale (Table 6). I recorded their behavior three times throughout the study; once as the study began, once again after two weeks and finally on the last day of the study. The field notes that were taken during the passive observer time were in the form of the quick scale and antidotal notes at the bottom of the sheet. The idea behind the quick scale and continuum of school-wide positive behavior was to be able to see growth over time. I looked to see if their ability to show respect improved from the start of the project to the end. Each time the quick scale was filled out it was sealed and put away until I was ready to analyze the data. In this way I would not be influenced by what I had recorded in the previous observation session. This improved the validity of the results.

*Interviewing: Inquiring into the Experiences and Thoughts of Others*

It was important that the children felt they had a voice in this process as well. Through a class quick scale and the criteria we had spoken about, I helped the class complete two charts. The first one would be on a large class diagram comparing myself (the teacher) to the class in regards to respect in the classroom. This diagram was the same one that I used to evaluate the children, except I blew it up on "11 x17" paper. Together the students helped me highlight where I am on the scale. I had no opinion in how they wish to mark it. I marked with the highlighter how they felt. The second one was done, individually and privately by the child, in regards to their personal being. This

## British Columbia Quick Scale

Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets expectations (at minimal level)	Fully meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Does not respect others' space and belongings	Needs reminding to respect others' space and belongings	Usually respects others' space and belongings	Respects others space and belongings
Does not notice how others are feeling	Sometimes shows caring for others' feelings	Often shows caring for others' feelings	Shows caring for others' feelings in most situations
Does not explain feelings or make "I" statements; blames or puts down others	If an adult helps, sometimes tries to explain feelings and make "I" statements, but often blames others	Tries to express feelings honestly and appropriately, using "I" statements; may need some help from an adult	Usually expresses feelings honestly and appropriately, using "I" statements; may need occasional support
Expresses anger inappropriately	Tries to manage anger appropriately	Usually manages anger appropriately	Manages anger appropriately
May not tell the truth about own behavior	Usually tells the truth about own behavior	With support, can use criteria to evaluate own behavior	Can use criteria to evaluate own behavior
Sometimes disrespectful; may make excuses and refuse to apologize	Usually respectful to others; is willing to apologize for mistakes	Usually treats others fairly and respectfully	Treats everyone fairly and respectfully
Can often repeat rules but has difficulty connecting them to own actions	With help from an adult, can make connections between rules and own actions	Generally follows rules; may need reminding	Consistently follows rules

Notes:

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Table 6. British Columbia Quick Scale

Adapted from Ministry of Education. (2001) *BC Performance Standards: Social Responsibility A Framework*. British Columbia: Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Branch, Province of British Columbia.

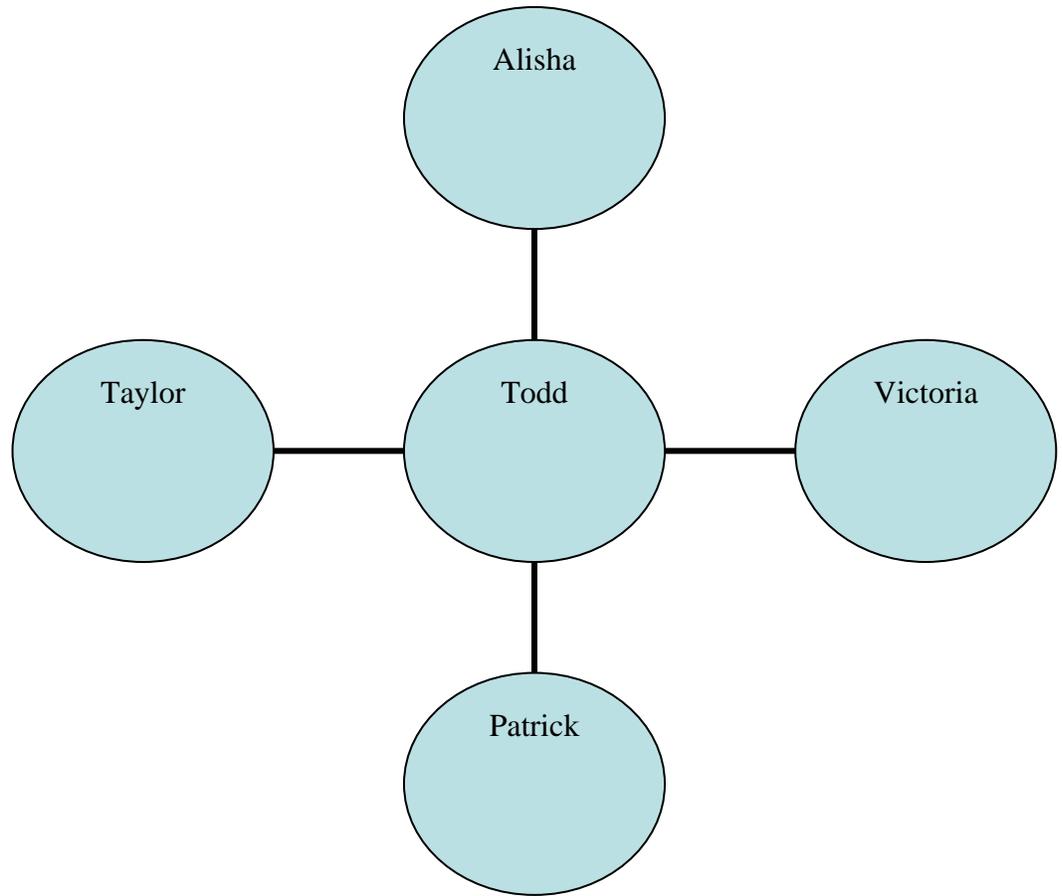
gave them the opportunity to let personal thoughts, feelings, and observations be heard in a non-threatening way. I, also, had the children create a sociogram at the beginning, middle and end of the research (Figure 11), to study peer networks and relationships, based on the students in our classroom. Each student listed on an index card who they would like to work in a group with. From this I was able to see who was favored in our classroom as well as who had more difficulty with relationships and respect. Sociograms (Holly, 2005) can give the researchers insight into discipline problems as well.

To begin our study of respect, I showed the children the video “Respecting Differences” (Sunburst Communications, 2000). Through this 18 minute video children:

- understood the importance of getting and giving respect,
- recognized that people with disabilities deserve the same respect as everyone else,
- even though everyone is different, we are all the same in some ways, and
- learned how to overcome barriers of different languages and cultures.

Following this video the children brainstormed to build a word web representing their ideas of what respect looks like, sounds like, and feels like. This word web was used as a basis for their developing a bank of vocabulary and actions towards building positive respectful relationships. It gave me a base line as to where they were in their understanding of respect and how it affected their world.

As a group we created a “Fuel for the Journey” chart, brainstorming different phrases that were respectful that they could practice in the classroom with their classmates.



*Figure 11.* Sociogram of Friends in Grade One

The fuel chart was made of respectful “sounds like starters” (see Figure 12 for example). A chart was also to be made for “Road Blocks on the Journey”, consisting of phrases that respect did not sound like.

### *Examining Documents and Other Data Sources*

At the end of the study I used the students’ quick scales to compare how they had grown in the area of respect or not. On one sheet, per student, I collected all of their quick scale data. Each time the quick scale was used was indicated in a different color. For example the initial marking of the quick scale was done in pink. The middle of the study data collection on the quick scale was done in yellow and the end of the one month study was done in green. At the end of six weeks it was done again in orange.

From the quick scales, I was able to have a better perspective as to which children were to be placed where on the continuum of school-wide positive behavior support. Again this chart was completed three times throughout the study as listed earlier. The first time the continuum was filled out was based completely on the teacher’s perspective. Using Scott’s continuum of school-wide positive behavior support chart we looked at what children were at-risk for building relationships and internalizing and demonstrating respect.

Students’ names were placed on the continuum of school-wide positive behavior support to represent where they had fallen at the end of two weeks, following the phase of accentuating respect in the classroom. I repeated the quick scale for continuum placements again at the end of week four following the phase of eliminating disrespect in the classroom. All results were sealed until the end of six weeks.

Twice in a six day cycle, I had a one-half hour period to allow the children to

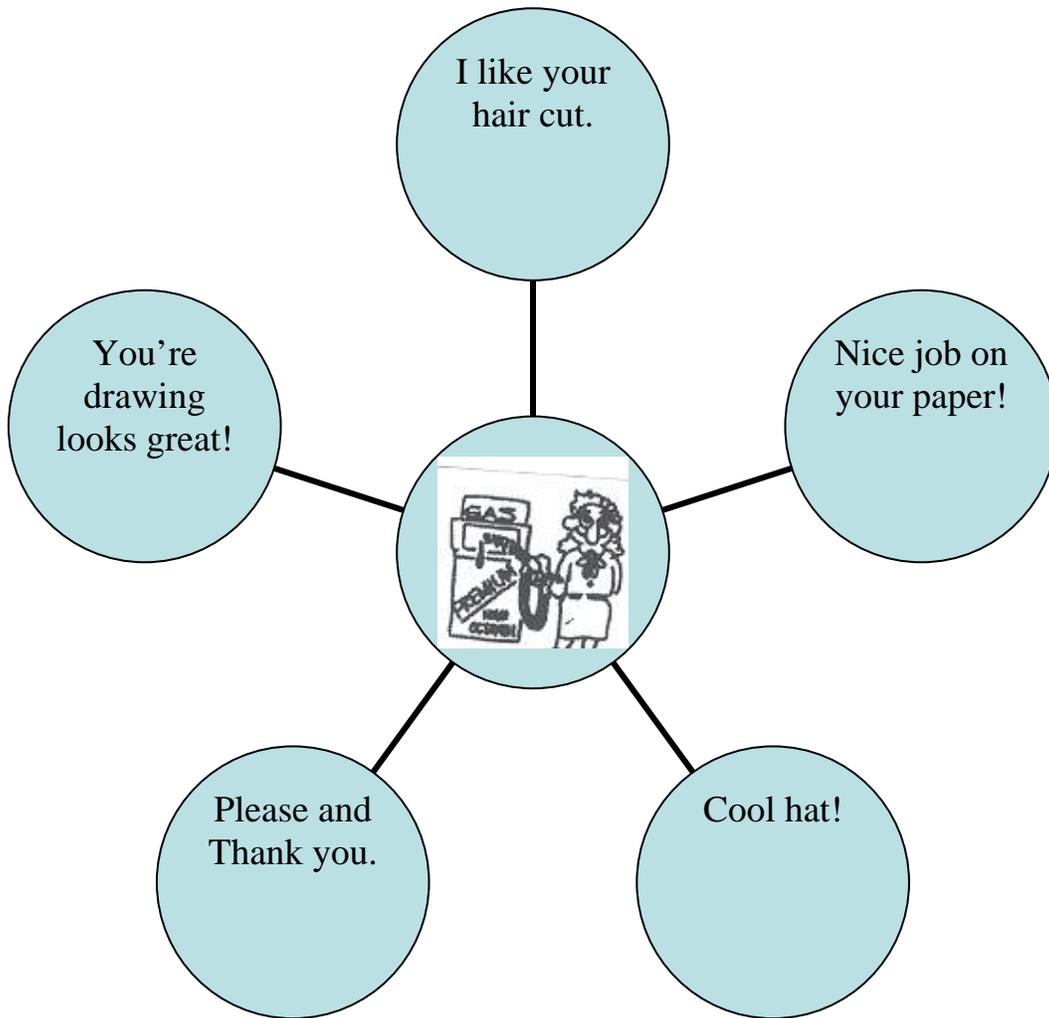


Figure 12. Fuel for the Journey

create their journey journal map. This allowed for six dates of entries onto their journey map. Using the symbols provided to the students (Figure 13) the map allowed the children to record the events, their thoughts and feelings on their growth or lack of in the area of respect. As a teacher researcher this gave me insight into the student's world, throughout the process. I kept a journey journal map, as well, in order to record the classroom activity throughout the time period as well as my own thoughts and feelings. This helped to reflect on my teaching over time and helped in the planning of future lessons. Figure 14 illustrates a map sample.

As a follow up to this month long study on respect and relationships I kept a journal of anecdotal observations for two more weeks in order to determine whether the effects of the unit were persistent. I administered the quick scale on the students again two weeks later to see if the effects still appeared to be present or not.

A map (as presented earlier), as well as photographs of the area were also useful in order to answer questions about why certain situations possibly arose when students were learning. All forms of data collection that were to be used in this project were based on the thoughts and actions of the students and the teachers. Together we were building knowledge and community (Nucci, 2005).

### *Ethical Issues*

Before beginning this action research project, I needed to inform the participants and the children's parents of the purpose and nature of the project. They needed to be made aware that this project was not to look at their child as an individual but rather as a study to develop a philosophy to help teachers and children as a group to receive a better education in a safe, respectful environment for all. The study was not based on their

**Symbols That Relate to Learning as a Journey**

We have found it useful to use symbols that connect with the metaphor of learning as a journey.

**Roadblocks:** What are the roadblocks on your journey? (i.e., reading journey, writing journey, cooperation journey, and so on) What do you need in order to get over/around them?

**Fuel/gas station:** What will help you to move on your journey? Is there something you need to learn in order to move? Do you need to be encouraged? Do you need assistance?

**Uphill:** What goals do you struggle to reach? How does that feel? How can others help you get up that hill?

**Downhill:** What goals have been easy for you to reach? How did that feel? Did others help you?

**Carpool:** Are you more able to move on your journey if someone helps you? But remember they can't do it for you!

**Detour:** Do you need to try something else before you can move on your journey?

*Illustrations by Riffe Bauman*

*Figure 13. Journey Map Symbols*

*Learning in safe schools.* By F. Brownlie and J. King (2000).  
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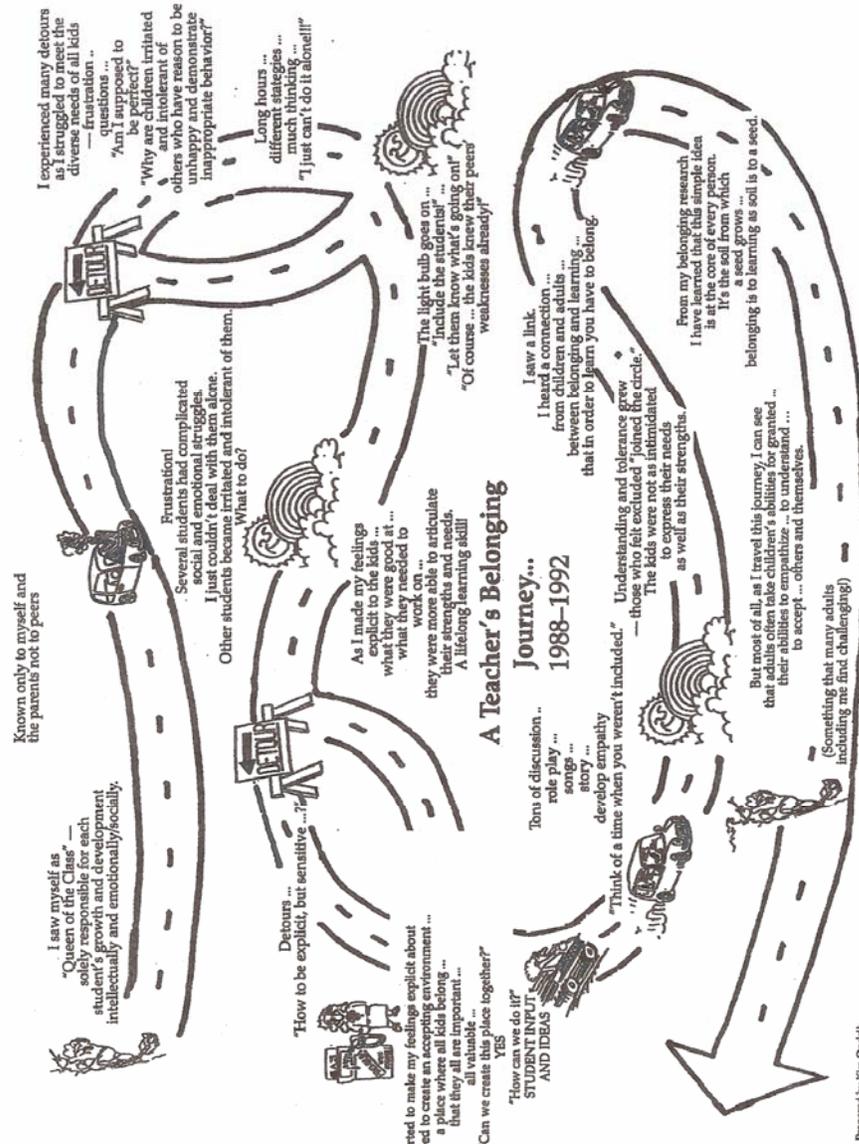


Figure 14. Sample Journey Map  
 Learning in safe schools. By F. Brownlie and J. King (2000).  
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children in particular but on early years students and how teachers and students build respect and relationships in order to make their school community and educational years prosperous.

To address my position of power, I had a third party (a parent within the school who had children in grades other than grade one) introduce the project to the possible participants and parents and had her field questions as well as collected consent forms for the research project. This third party person was available should the participants have any problems, concerns, or questions throughout the study (*“Practitioner-Research”*: *Guidelines for Researchers and Research Ethics Boards at the University of Manitoba*). She was not employed with the school or school division. This took any further pressure off the participants’ feelings that they must participate. I wanted all participants to feel as comfortable as possible.

Permission to participate was required from all participants and had to be freely given (*“Practitioner-Research”*: *Guidelines for Researchers and Research Ethics Boards at the University of Manitoba*). This included my grade one students’ parents because the students are minors.

Due to the number of parents with English as a second language, I employed our English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher in support for translations if necessary. Parents had the option of having their children opt in or out of the study but understood that the project would still take place in the classroom as part the regular teaching program. This helped to ensure that their child was not penalized for withdrawing. In this case it meant that I would not use their work as sources of data for analysis. As the teacher-researcher, I was not be aware of who has chosen to participate or not until I was

ready to start analyzing the data. All work samples that were used for data collection were photo copied. (*“Practitioner-Research”: Guidelines for Researchers and Research Ethics Boards at the University of Manitoba*).

No child or any other participant was to be identified by name in reporting the results of the study. If a reference was made to certain children they were given different names to protect their privacy and insure confidentiality of information. Permission also had to be granted to scribe/audio-record information they provide. Possible samples of the children’s work were used to show the growth and thoughts through out the project, if permission was given, but again no names were associated with the work. There was no link back to the school as the school was also not be identified by name in the study.

All participants had the option of opting out of the project at any time throughout the project at no penalty to them. Any information that had been collected from them was at this point returned or destroyed (Stringer, 2004).

All data was kept locked up in order to protect the confidentiality of all participants. From these procedures all participants should feel confident to be part of the study. There was no deception, or reciprocity from taking part in this project. The benefit to those who participated would be new knowledge for accentuating respect or eliminating disrespect that the student was able to internalize and apply daily. As well, the ability to build more positive relationships with adults and students in the classroom was a benefit. All information was handled with care and accuracy. The ownership of the data remained with the participant who had made a comment or demonstrated their thoughts in some way on the subject.

We needed to remember that the research was taking place to help us to become better teachers and the children to get more out of their time with us through relationships and respect. We were looking at how to improve our situation not to harm students or teachers. No curriculum based lesson time was lost in this process.

### *Strategies for Analyzing Data*

Data interpretation is the ability to take our data collection apart (analysis), put it back together in new ways (synthesize), in an attempt to confirm our values and move forward into action. Analysis gives us a better picture of the whole (big data – little data). The big data is the research as a whole and the little data is when we begin to look closer and take the data apart in order to make more sense of it.

In this study all field notes needed to be organized in a chronological fashion by date, time and learning center that the child was participating at. The field notes were logged into a computer data base. The field notes were in the form of the journey journals and the anecdotal notes from the passive-observations when filling out the quick scales.

It was important to be aware of all missing data in order to account for the change in numbers. This included monitoring any changes to the group. The use of transcription allowed me to be engaged with my students abilities and thinking from the start of the study as well as an awareness of my own impact on the study. This in turn provided me with the opportunity to improve the trustworthiness and validity of my data collecting techniques.

Once recorded in my data base, I began the process of coding and categorizing data and started looking for themes that were important or common factors throughout. As I read through the data, it was important to record all the thoughts that came to mind,

not only common and diverse themes, but illuminating or transformative events as well. At this point I started looking for parts in the information in order to get meaning from the journey journals and anecdotal notes from the quick scale and continuum I began moving it to a more narrow focus of my study. I was able to take these parts and began categorizing them. Each category had its own file on the computer in order to cut and paste information from one application to another. Throughout the process I checked over and over to make sure all data entries were relevant to the category they had been placed in. The data entries were also coded in several different ways to cover several categories. It was important to have a master coding sheet to indicate all of the possible types of groupings. In my case there were different children who were experiencing relationship problems that were not experiencing respect problems.

It was important to define the label of each category in order to decide whether or not data was placed in that category. I used what I had learned from this to help me plan future data collection and action. If the data analysis was not presented as I thought then I looked further into the data analysis to see where I needed to go next. I was willing to compare the data I had, ask questions and speculate. These educated guesses were what helped to drive our own learning and teaching as teacher researchers. An example of this was my initial placing of students in the groups for the continuum of positive behavior. The sociogram helped to give insight in regards to the feelings of the children in the classroom and who they liked to work with and who they did not like to work with. This fell into alignment with the continuum. If it did not then it was time to look at what other pieces of the puzzle I was missing.

The journey charts gave me some insight into the thoughts and feelings of the students about why they were reacting to respect and relationship building the way they were. The combined teacher/class quick scale allowed me to see what I was doing or not doing through their eyes. This may or may not have reflected the way I see myself as a teacher. It did, however, give me a basis to evaluate my classroom discipline plan. This in turn I compared to my initial and final relationship survey.

In addition to categorizing the data I also looked at patterns that developed. This was part of synthesizing or putting it back together. These patterns played a part whether big or small in the way that data played out. This was an area where I looked more closely at the map and photographs of the classroom to see if incidents that occurred happened more in certain areas of the classroom. Did they occur at transition time or in the early organization phase? Did the amount of space that the center takes place in have anything to do with the data being collected? There were many patterns I needed to open mindedly look for and question. It was important to, also, look for data that disproved my theory.

#### *Applying Guba's Criteria for Validity of Qualitative Research*

In designing my study, I used Guba's criteria (as cited in Mills, (2007) for validity of qualitative research. Through member checks in the forms of the respect word web, fuel for the journey and road blocks for the journey charts, I was able to check to see if what I was recording was really representative of what the children were thinking and saying. The pulse checks also gave me an informal way of getting immediate feedback from the children. Through triangulation (figure 15) I was able to cross check the variety of data sources and methods that I had chosen to explore to created a positive respectful

relationship between adults and children in my classroom. These forms of data collection create credibility for the study.

In the area of transferability, I chose data collection tools that allowed any classroom teacher to know the specific criteria required to be meeting expectations in the area of respect (quick scale) and to identify their own discipline style (Likert scale) in order to have the results remain in the same context for data. The detailed description of the school and my classroom were included to allow for a strong feel for the type of environment and clientele that I worked with .

Similar to triangulation, in Guba's dependability area we looked for the stability of the data. Therefore, I had made sure in the areas of experiencing, inquiring and examining, that there was more than one form of data collection in each area. In most cases there were more than three. I gave a good description of the layout of my classroom as well as some of the activities and initiatives that took place in my classroom and school before the study was to take place.

I have left what Guba refers to as an "audit trail" with my timetable, allowing an external audience the opportunity to follow along according to what data collection will occur on what days of the study. My (the teacher's) journey journal and anecdotal journal after the study will also give insight throughout out and after the action part (with students) of the study. The data collection chart, research questions and data sources table allowed for an external audience to follow the process as well.

I addressed confirmability by keeping to forms of a journal throughout the study. One journal was in the journey journal format which was the same as the children's' journey journals. The other journal took the form of an anecdotal journal for two weeks

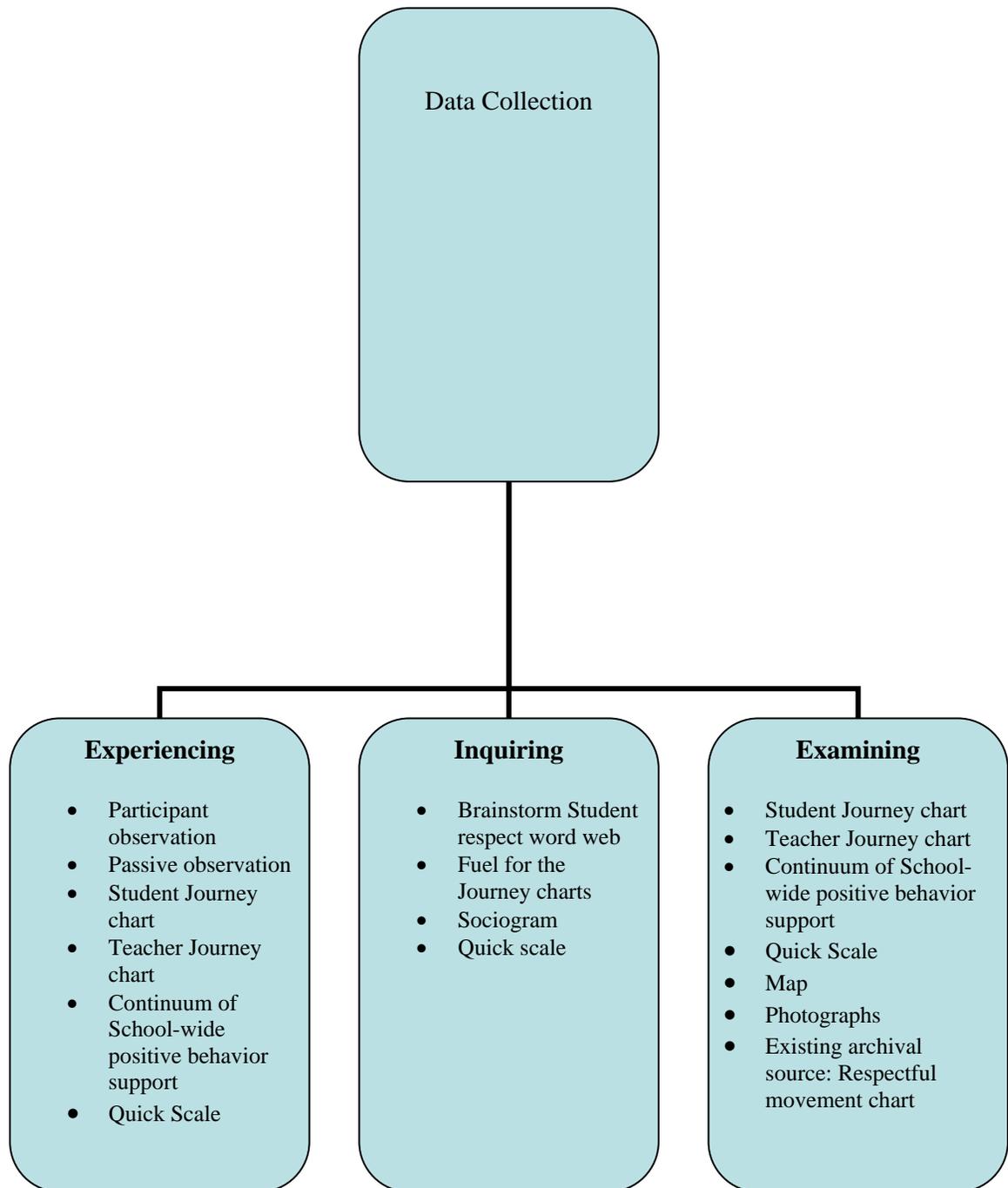


Figure 15. Triangulation of Data Collection

following the active accentuating respect and eliminating disrespect teaching time for one month. This time allowed me to see if whether what was established in the four weeks had remained constant in their lives or had diminished or continued to grow.

I believe that children at an early age can be taught many of the values and virtues that our society holds high such as respect. My question looked at under what atmosphere (discipline) and with a specific respect model can the children in grade one and the adults internalize it to become part of their daily lives in the classroom community? Throughout the data interpretation process I hoped to be able to see clearly who the children were that were having difficulty with relationships and respect and why this occurred (theorizing). I wanted to look at different possible ways in order to help them meet the goal of feeling safe and comfortable enough to build positive, respectful relationships in their classroom.

This research was completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of my Masters in Education. Externally this study will be helpful to others in the sense that it will give a comprehensive format for teachers to monitor their class through Scott's continuum of school-wide positive behavior support and samples of ways to establish, model, teach, respond professionally and restore children to the classroom while teaching them how to succeed (through respect teaching) not only in the classroom community but in the bigger community as well.

## Chapter 4: Results of the Interventions

### Summary

It was my strong feeling that all children could be taught the value of respect that drew me to this study. If children could not be taught this value and they were not born with it than where did it come from? I could see how discipline and relationships were connected. In our classrooms we build an environment through our style of discipline and the relationships we build with our students. I was just not sure how the discipline, relationships and respect were intertwined. This study would hopefully answer some of these questions for me.

The implementation of Borba's respect model was divided into three sections. The first two weeks of the study concentrated on accentuating respect and the next two weeks focused on defusing disrespect. The final two weeks, focused on observations to determine whether the children and adults were able to internalize what they had learned and practiced about accentuating respect and defusing disrespect. In order to develop each of these areas Borba had developed strategies to follow. The strategies were given in a generic form in order to be applied to any classroom. Due to the fact that much of what occurs in the classroom is depended on the students and my relationship and teaching style, I was not able to give many specific details in the methods chapter. I, like Borba, could give general plans of my study and then had to wait to see what direction the study took. I set up the study following the guidelines of Borba's respect model intertwined with my school division's Standard of Behavior document.

The Standard of Behavior's five key behaviors are:

1. Establishing the climate conducive to learning – Creating a climate that supports learning is the first step to effectively teaching anything.
2. Modeling – The modeling of conduct we desire students to emulate is an ongoing responsibility for all adults in a child's life – at school, at play, and at home.
3. Teaching – Telling isn't teaching and expectations don't teach. Students must be specifically taught skills and attitudes imbedded in the Standard of Behavior.
4. Responding professionally - Staff members will always respond to behaviors that threaten or violate the physical and emotional safety of those in our care. Behavior is always situational and any and every response to behavior must always be informed by the circumstances of the situation.
5. Restoring students to the community – “Discipline” must be conceived in terms of strategies like relationship building, success orientation, and developing dynamics that are more positive and cooperative than authoritarian and disempowering (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006, p. 3).

*Establishing the climate conducive to learning*

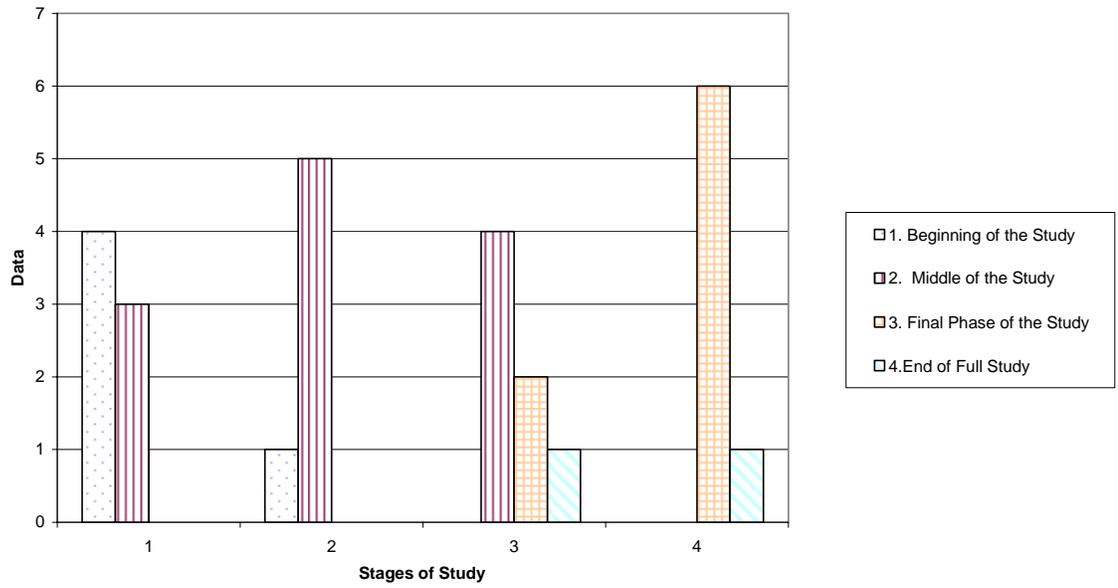
Before the teaching of the respect unit could begin I collected base line information on both myself and my students. To determine where the students appeared to stand in their development of respect, I used the *British Columbia Quick Scale*. The quick scale was completed in the middle, after week four and again two weeks after the study had

been completed. Figure 16 shows the results of all four quick scales. The (x) axis indicated the time period in the study that the quick scale was completed and the (y) axis indicated how many times the student met one of the four criteria (Not yet within expectations, Meets expectations (at minimal level), Fully meets expectations, or Exceeds expectations) throughout the seven categories. The legend for the categories for all eight students' quick scales is located immediately following the last quick scale. The children were then placed in the red, yellow and green zones of the *Continuum of Effective Behavior Support* accordingly. Each child was placed in a zone using the percentages to grade the students on a curve, as indicated by the *Continuum*, to separate the group.

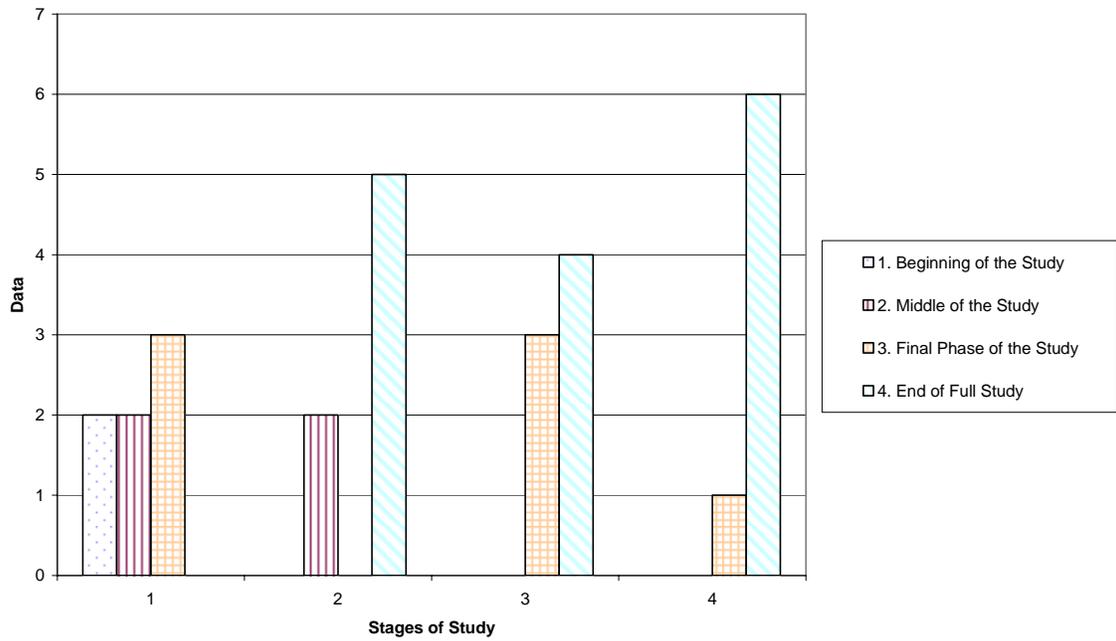
As the teacher, I looked at my style of building relationships using the Likert scale I had adapted from Bluestein's Characteristics of Healthy Adult-Child relationships at the beginning of the study and then again after week four. The students completed a sociogram stating the four people in the classroom that they could work the best with. The chosen children had to be those that they were able to get all their work done with, that they did not get in trouble with, and who they enjoyed being with. The sociogram was repeated twice more throughout the study, once after week two and once at the end of the four weeks. The results from these three documents were sealed and locked away each time until after the unit was taught and I was ready to analyze the data.

The children then helped to create a word web recording everything they knew about respect. This gave us a basis to work from for the study. Each morning during our accentuating respect portion of the study, the students were "collected" (Neufeld, 2006) in the library corner and then participated in our respect activities of a cloze passage,

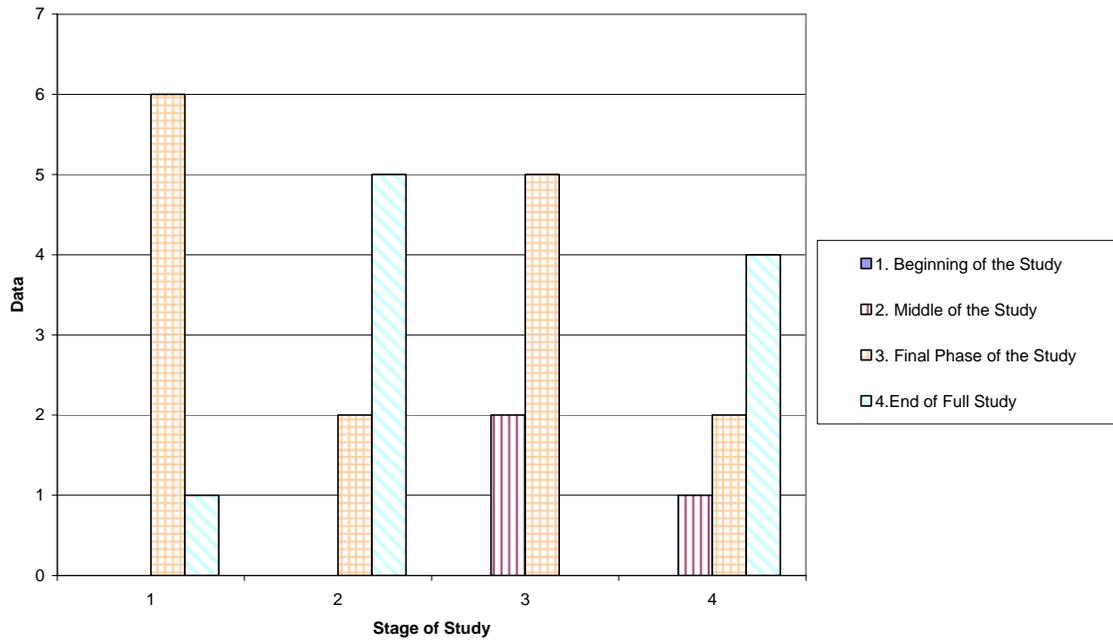
Nick's Quick Scale



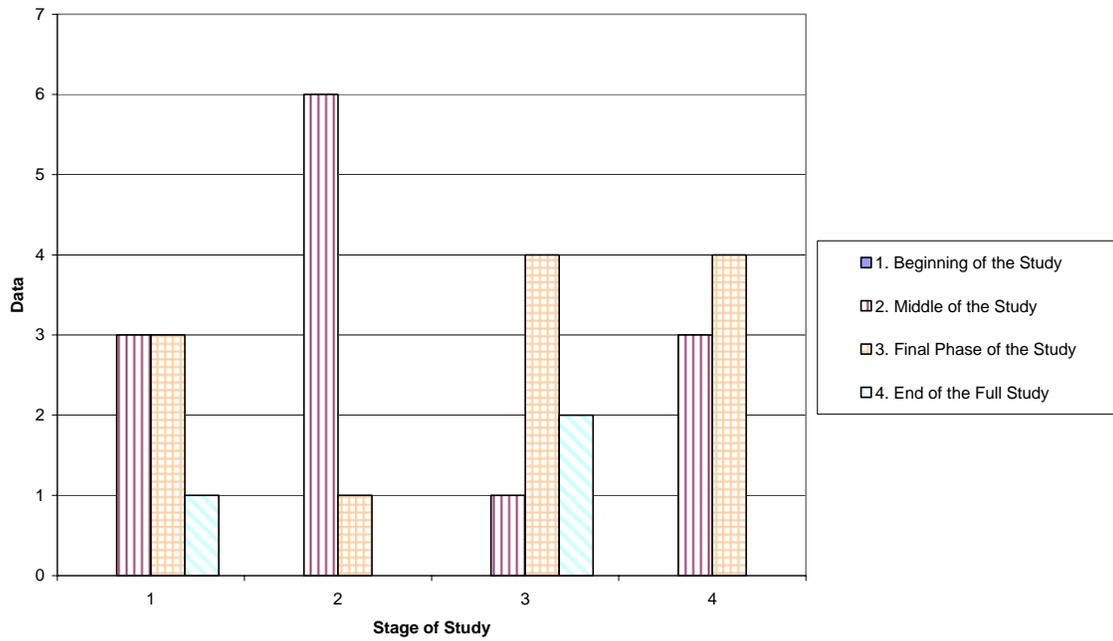
Bob's Quick Scale



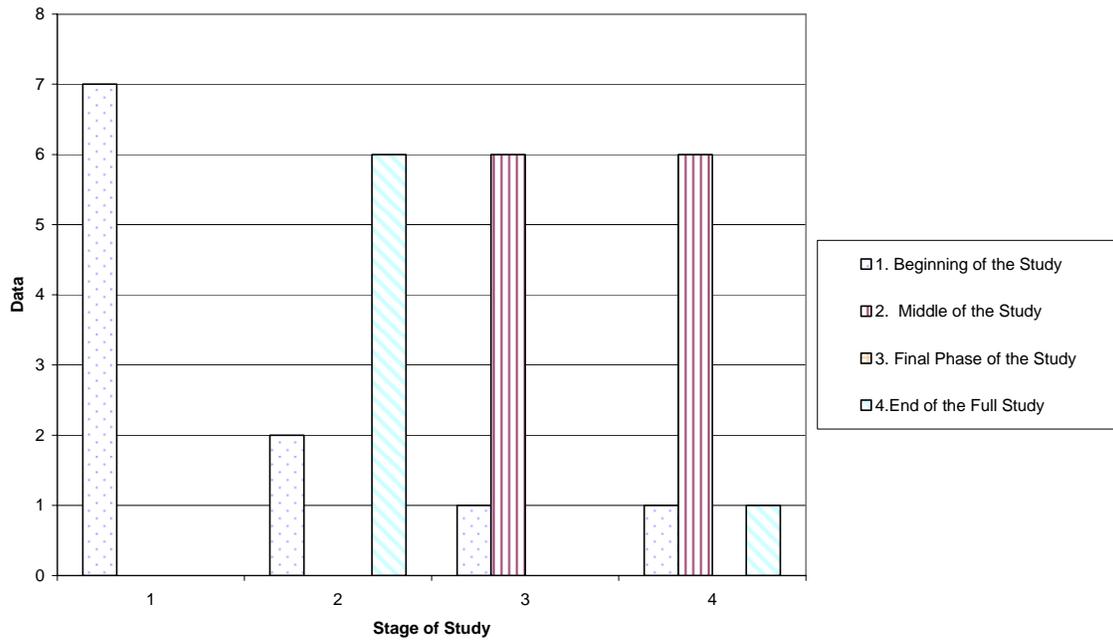
Fred's Quick Scale



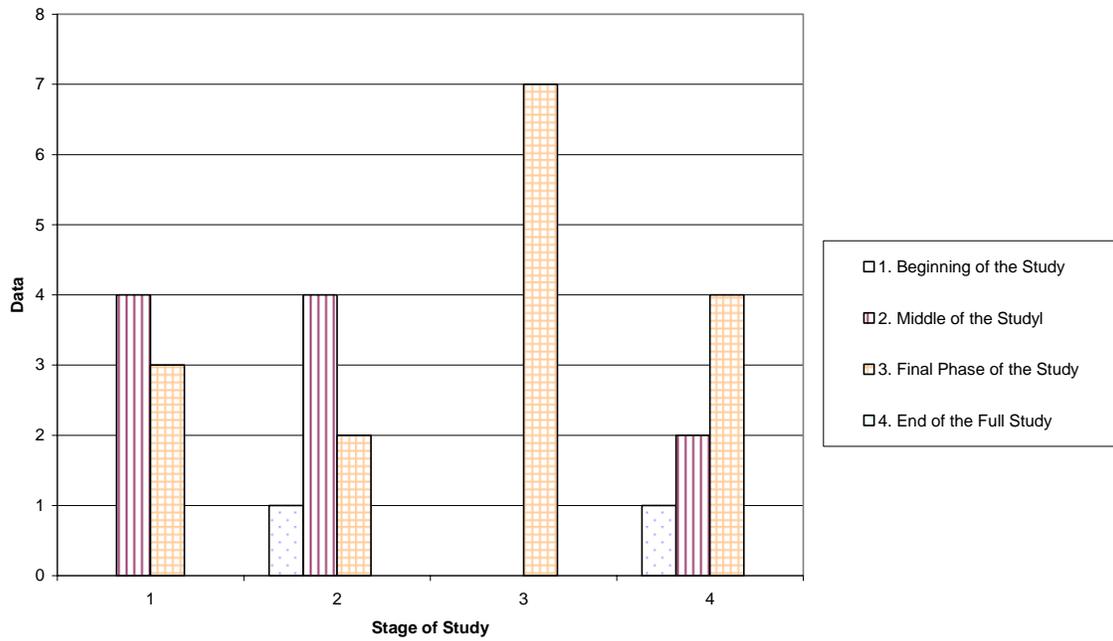
Robert's Quick Scale



Michael's Quick Scale



Steve's Quick Scale



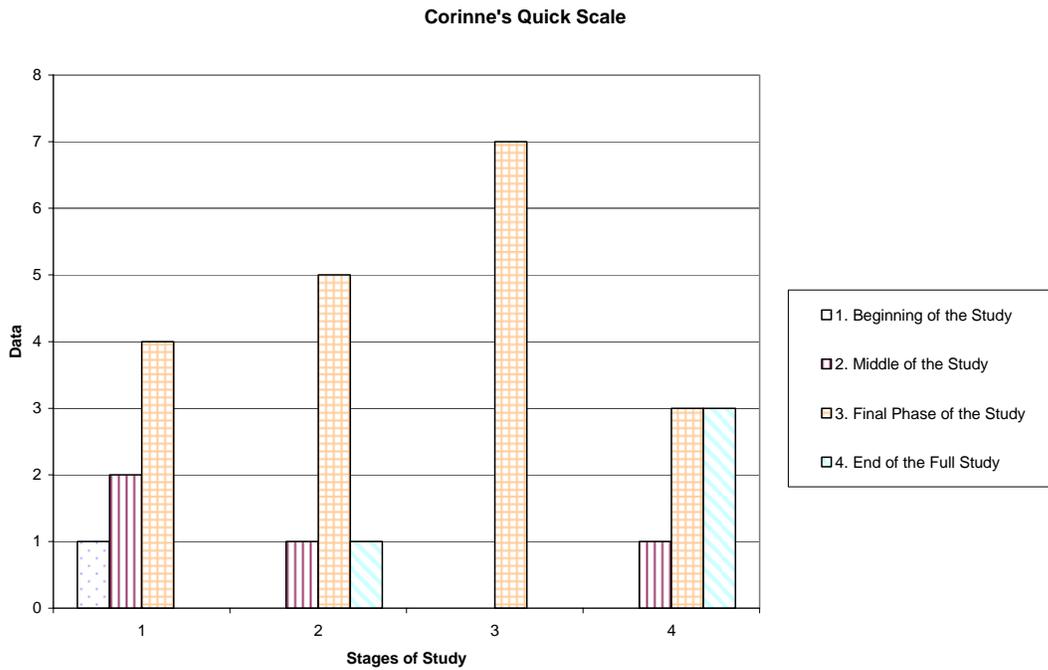
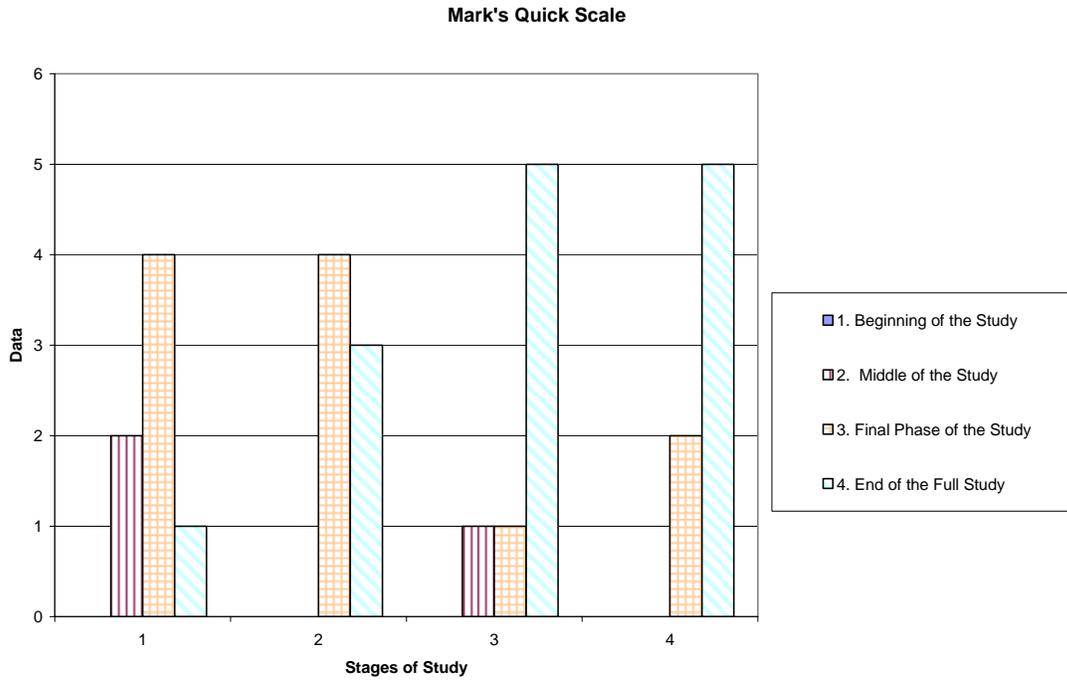


Figure 16. Student Quick Scale Results

story, and or puppets. The indication that this was an issue that needed to be explored came quite early by the fact that one of my students spit in another students hair as we were brainstorming for respect words. When I questioned him as to why he did it, his response was “for no reason”.

### *Modeling and Teaching*

The modeling and teaching of this project was based on Borba’s respect model.

#### *Steps to Accentuating Respect*

- Model respectful statements: Teachers need to remember that they may be the only model of respect in the children’s lives.
- Accentuate respect: It is important to make it very clear to students that they may not speak hurtfully about themselves or others. This is considered to be a commandment of the classroom and should be posted for all to see.
- Build awareness of respectful language: Society today has more of an emphasis on disrespect than respect. We, as educators, should not assume that children are familiar with respectful language. Children should brainstorm with their teacher lists of statements that show respect. These should be posted in the classroom, as well.
- Label appropriate respectful language. Often children have said disrespectful comments so often they do not realize that they do it. It is helpful if teachers label appropriate and inappropriate language for them.
- Reinforce respectful statements. Respectful language should be reinforced if we want them to keep using it. Teachers should try to ignore the disrespectful language for awhile.

- Practice respectful behavior skills. It is not enough to simply post respectful language. Children must have an opportunity to practice it as well.

Our unit on respect began with a short video, *Respecting Differences* (2000). The premise of the video was on respecting different abilities. The video took place at the start of a school year with a new teacher, who was confined to a wheelchair. It looked at how the teacher built up her relationship with her new students by allowing them to ask questions so that they could have a better understanding. Just because she was in a wheelchair didn't mean she was unable to do many things with her students that other teachers, who were not in wheelchairs, had done with them previously.

Throughout the study the direct teaching and practice was done through cloze passages, stories and /or puppets. In our daily cloze passage, on respect, the children were required to figure out the missing letters. The letters varied each day but after the first two days most of the letters from the word 'respect' were always missing, allowing the children to focus on our key word as well as learning to spell it. The following is a sample of one of our cloze passages.

*Our social responsibility goal this week is Respect. When we are respectful we treat others with courtesy and consideration. We say 'Please' and 'thank you' and use our best manners at all times. Respectful people smile and compliment others. How respectful are you? Take time to reflect on how you practice being respectful. Have a respectful day and a fabulous Tuesday! (Leclair, 2007).*

We then reviewed what we had placed on the chart and read a story that dealt with respect. There were five specific books we covered:

Lilly's Purple Purse by Kevin Henkes

Synopsis: Lilly has received a new purple plastic purse as a gift and wants to show it to everyone at school. Unfortunately her enthusiasm and timing had caused her to show disrespect in many areas. This book teaches the children what to do after you have been disrespectful.

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes

Synopsis: Chrysanthemum becomes the object of teasing because of her name in this book. She learns how to respect herself and defuse the disrespect she is receiving from others.

The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill

Synopsis: Mean Jean was the recess queen (a.k.a. the class bully) in this book. No one did anything without her permission until Katie Sue, the new kid, came to school with confidence and self respect and a lack of knowledge that she was suppose to be afraid of Mean Jean. She teaches the other children how to defuse disrespect and develop a friendship with Mean Jean.

The Meanest Thing to Say by Bill Cosby

Synopsis: In this book Little Bill has to deal with a new boy at school who encourages the children to play a game called 'The Meanest Thing to say'. You have twelve chances to think of something mean to say about someone. Little Bill learns about relationship with his friends and family and how to solve problems in a positive way and

Omar on Ice by Maryann Kovalski.

Synopsis: Omar wants to be an artist when he grows up. His teacher makes one unintentional comment that makes Omar question his ability to be an artist. Omar's experiences help children to build self respect and see their special gifts in other ways.

The areas of respect that the children were able to identify from the stories were placed into story bubbles and put up on the wall to remind the students of the attributes of respect. The same stories were read again in the second half of the study as we looked for ways to defuse disrespect. The suggested ways for defusing disrespect were pinned on the wall as mini posters to help the children make better choices. The students colored No Disrespect Zone posters (Figure 17) and Respectful Language posters during free center time. These posters were posted around the school.

Six times throughout the study the students were given an opportunity to record, using journey language that had been introduced in the classroom, where they were in their development with respect and defusing disrespect. Each time they were required to glue the symbol down on their road map that best represented them at the time. They then had to write the evidence that supported why they chose that symbol.

#### *Responding professionally and Restoring Students to the Community*

I became aware of how important it was to teach children how to defuse disrespect on their own in order that the amount of time spent on responding professionally and restoring students was minimal.

#### *Defusing Disrespect*

Some of the rules for success are:

- Draw awareness to disrespect. Disrespect causes more disrespect. It is important to call out the disrespect in a way that does not sound negative. Borba suggests

using a code word or signal that all the children know or to casually mention to remember to use respectful words.

- Label disrespect...Call it! Students must practice letting other students know when they have used a put down or form of disrespect by using a code word with other students that they all recognize. This helps students to learn not to accept disrespect.
- Teach skills to defuse disrespect. Make sure all children and adults are taught the skills to handle disrespectful actions.
- Teach skills to replace negativity. Many students are disrespectful simply through ignorance. They are surrounded by it daily and are unaware that it is disrespectful or that there is another way. Respectful skills need to be taught in order to replace negative behavior.

In order to practice what they knew and had been learning about respect I brought in three puppets; respectful raccoon, disrespectful dog and an extra to play the role of the teacher, student, visitor, etc. Each morning after the cloze passage I would read a scenario that could occur in the school and the children would react to it through the puppets in either a respectful or disrespectful way depending on which puppet they had (Figure 18).

Sample question:

*It's sports day and your team lost the relay race because your friend fell over.*

*What can you say to your friend?*

*You are lining up and someone pushes in front of you. What can you say or do?*

(Schroeder, 2004).

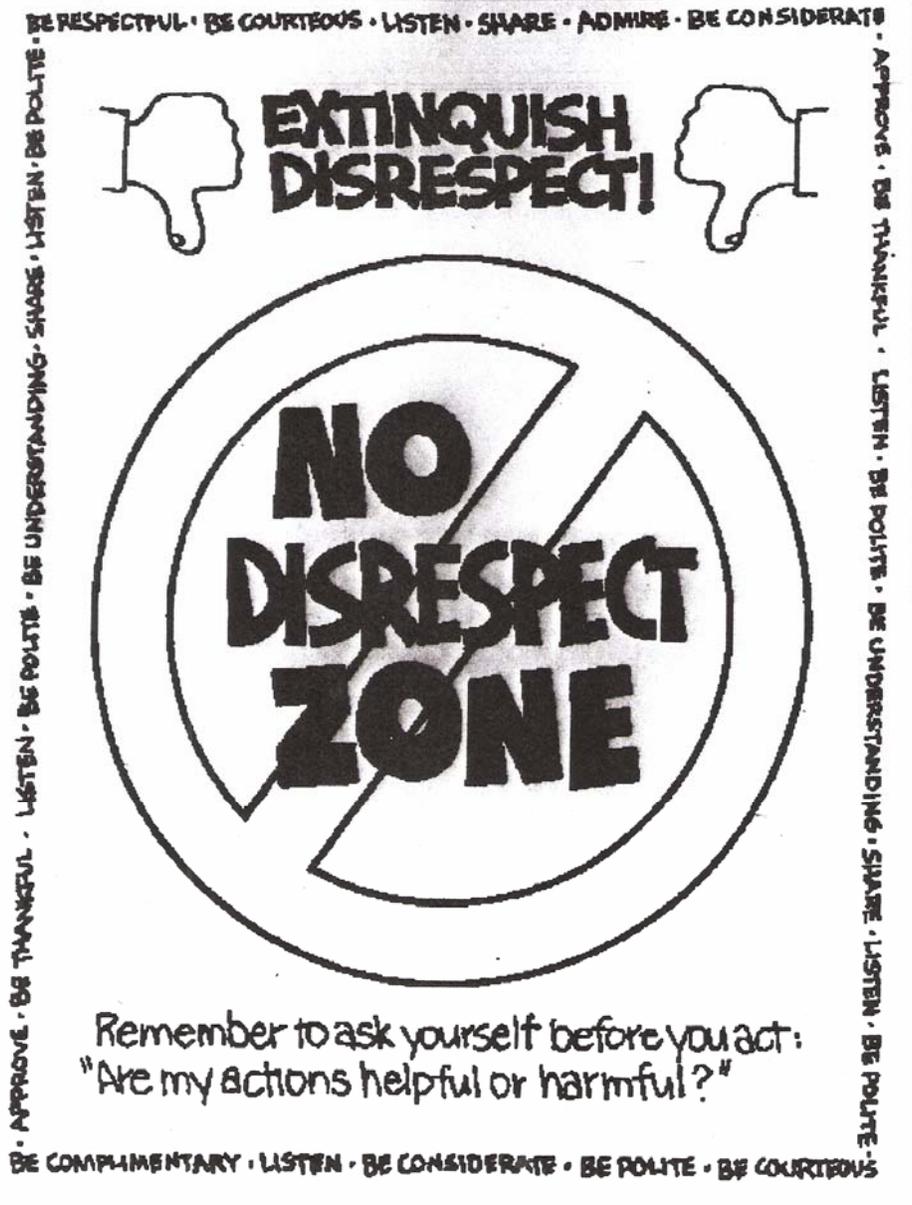


Figure 17. Defusing Disrespect Poster



Disrespectful Dog

Respectful Raccoon

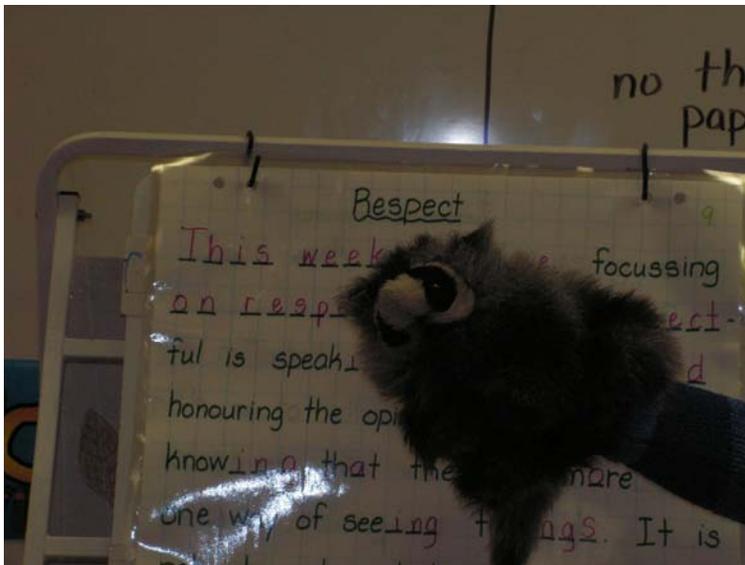


Figure 18. Puppets for Practicing Accentuating Respect and Defusing Disrespect

This gave the opportunities to remove the onus off of the child and place it on the puppet. This technique turned out to be very informative.

### *Issues Arising From the Intervention*

Once the study was underway there were several planned activities that I did not end up using the data for as it became clear that it was irrelevant to the study. One of these activities was the quick scale the students did on me (their teacher). It became clear as Lickona (2004) had stated that the relationship that is present between the adult and the child will have a strong impact on how they see you and what they are willing to do for you. The results of the quick scale seemed to indicate that we (the students and I) as a whole had created a good relationship throughout the year or possibly they were afraid to say anything negative about me in fear as to how it would reflect back on them. In any case there was no data on the quick scale that stood out from the others.

The use of the thumbs up/thumbs down pulse check was quickly dropped during the study as I realized the students were more effected by the peer pressure of knowing what every one else was choosing than how they were actually doing. Again they wanted to please their teacher and not be different from their friends. I tried to make it a more private response by giving them a sheet to check off the thumbs down/thumbs up but this did not seem to make a difference either.

I felt, also, that it would be more beneficial to observe the children throughout the day to see if the children were transferring their new knowledge to more than our one hour lesson time daily. My observations therefore became more random throughout the day.

I chose not to create a “Road Blocks on the Journey” chart with the children because I did not want to display the negative when the first two weeks of the project had concentrated on the positive. Instead I chose to allow the children to hear what the negative sounded like using Disrespectful Dog and then followed it up with Respectful Raccoon defusing the disrespect. The defusing disrespect sayings from Borba were posted as mini-posters on the wall instead.

During the study, other techniques arose that had more to do with the students’ initiatives than mine. At our school we have what are known as the yellow/blue slips. This is one way my school has chosen to try to diminish the need to respond professionally and restore students to the community. Each adult has a pad of these slips. The slips are collated in a four to one ratio in the pad; for every four yellow slips there is a blue slip. Yellow indicates meeting expectations and blue indicates a problem that may have to be dealt with through the office. Each month according to the value being taught, this month being respect, the students try to earn yellow slips indicating that they are using this value in their everyday lives. When students receive a yellow slip they may take it down to the office and place it in a large envelope on the vice-principal’s door to be rewarded at the end of the month. The students are very enthusiastic over this process.

Two students per class have the opportunity, also, to participate in special lunch with the guidance counselor once per cycle, if they earn one of the special lunch tickets. It is usually left up to the teacher to decide. My students decided that they should have a say in who got to go according to their ability to be respectful (Glasser, 1969; Kohn, 2001; Nelson and Lott, 1993). I created a *caught you showing respect* ticket that the children could use to reward others. The tickets would then be placed in our own

classroom draw to decide who would go to special lunch. Initially they just put the students name on the draw ticket and the name of the person who nominated them. By the end of the study they had to fill out the form and verify the ticket with an adult in the classroom by giving evidence of what the student had done to deserve this ticket.

Another opportunity that arose during the course of our study was *Operation Donation*; the collecting of food items on a school wide basis to give to Winnipeg Harvest for those that do not have enough to eat. This became an application of the learning about respect for others.

#### *A Closer Look at Several Students*

After the first week of the study it became apparent to me that in order to really understand my students and their relationships and development of respect I could not remain focused on all the children in the class. I needed to focus in on a smaller group. The quick scale and sociogram would have given me the information required to move to this next level of study. In order to have relevant information and insight for other classroom teachers at the end of this study, however, I needed to see things from the view point of a regular classroom teacher rather than through the data analysis of a researcher at this point. I, therefore, chose seven boys in my classroom, who were struggling with their ability to get along with others and focusing during lesson and work time; Nick, Bob, Fred, Robert, Michael, Steve and Mark. These were the students that would 'stick out' in the minds of most classroom teachers when they looked at who interventions may have had to be set up for.

*Nick*

At the start of the study, Nick was a quiet, sometimes sad looking six year old boy who had trouble with friendships. He often put food in his desk and left it there until it would rot. The girls that sat with him would volunteer to clean out his desk more because they could not stand the smell than out of the idea of helping out a friend. Often Nick would say things to the other students that were inappropriate causing them to not want to play with him. My instincts told me that Nick was going to have real problems, in both relationships and respect with his classmates, if some intervention was not incorporated into his school day.

*Bob*

Bob was a very confident six year old boy in the classroom. He was very sure of himself and his knowledge. It was the adults that had to work with him on a daily basis that had the hardest time with him. Bob never raised his hand to respond to questions during lesson time but rather blurted out the answers. If someone else was already answering he would just yell louder in order to be heard over their voice. He was the student whose name I always left on my lesson plan for guest teachers when I was away. He knew where everything was located in the classroom and what the routine was for every little miniscule detail of the day. I felt if this was his strength than we needed to capitalize on it in a positive way for him. Although he appeared to be popular with his peers, Bob had his moments that caused the other students to question their admiration for him. Bob could be very impulsive, but in a quiet way, as I have already mentioned as Bob was the student who had spit in Fred's hair.

*Fred*

Fred, at the beginning of the study was my people pleaser child. He never wanted to get in trouble and was willing to take responsibility for anything he did wrong. He would apologize to those he wronged and forgive and forget anything that was done to him. He was always one of the first students to arrive if someone else was hurt or upset. Fred had trouble understanding why Robert did not follow the class rules the way they had been set out at the start of the year. He spent a lot of time coming to ask me what to do each time one of these situations arose. Fred was one of my English as an additional language students. He had a good understanding of English but occasionally would require an explanation for a word or further instructions for an activity. Fred is always smiling and looking happy.

*Robert*

Robert joined us late in the year. By the time he arrived our routines had been learned and set with the other children and many friendships had been developed. Robert was friendly and very enthusiastic each day about the end of the day clean up. He worked hard to build friendships but had trouble developing them in a way that was acceptable to the other students.

*Michael*

Michael was an extremely bubbly, always smiling individual. His exuberance for life seemed to just permeate the whole classroom. He would constantly float around the classroom, entertaining his classmates. Unfortunately this occurred almost always at an inappropriate time such as lesson time or work time. He was very popular with the group,

even though he kept them from getting their work done. It appeared that everyone was Michael's friend.

*Steve*

Steve was mesmerized by Superman. If you could not make a connection between Superman and what you were doing during the day it was sometimes hard to keep Steve's attention. Steve enjoyed our classroom activities overall, but his friendships and talking to them during class were more important to him. Steve was very impulsive in his actions with his friends. When problems would arise with them he was usually unable to explain why he had reacted in a way that was not acceptable. This impulsivity often got him in trouble with the adults in the school.

*Mark*

Mark is my social butterfly of the group. He was happiest when he was talking to his classmates and he appeared to be happy most of the day. Mark's love for talking caused him to often not complete his work. It did not make a difference if you spoke to his parents or made him take his work home if he did not complete it. Mark could not be stopped from talking. His friends all seemed to like him.

These were the seven boys in my class that I felt would need the most intervention. Once their outbursts, chatter and arguments could be dealt with through the teaching of how to be respectful to one another then I thought I would have a very quiet smooth running classroom. However, once I began looking at the data I realized there was one more student that kept appearing throughout the study that had not caught my eye until now. A student that this study made me realize had to be included for all

teachers to truly understand the impact of relationships and respect in my classroom. The student was Corinne.

### *Corinne*

Corinne was a happy, quiet individual, who did her work and basically kept to herself. She never made any waves in the classroom and basically ‘flew under the teacher radar’ for problems. She had trouble getting herself organized when it came to the end of the day. She did not move quickly to get ready for home and was never sure if she had all of her supplies (her home reading, lunch kit, mittens, etc.). I had to assign an educational assistant to her at the end of the day to make sure she did not miss her school bus home. She did not seem to have trouble getting ready for recess and going out to play with the other children, though she was a little slow. None of these things were a problem to a teacher of a classroom of six year old boys and girls. There was no yelling. There were no complaints and she always appeared happy. Maybe this was where my ignorance and lack of using a microscope to really get to know my class, prior to this study, had failed both Corinne and myself.

### Pieces of Evidence

As stated earlier I grounded this study in my school division’s Standard of Behavior document (2006). Each section of data collection and analysis was based on one of the five standards. Within each standard I specifically looked at how this standard had influenced each of our eight students and the adults in the areas of respect and relationship.

*Establishing the climate conducive to learning*

In order to begin my study I needed to establish my own style of relationship building. The adapted Lickert scale that I used suggested ten possible types of healthy adult-child relationships that teachers incorporate in the classroom. There were five possible choices to each statement; *never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, most of the time = 4, and always = 5*. By analyzing more closely the areas I had chosen the responses of *most of the time = 4 or always = 5*, I was able to narrow my style down to four philosophies. According to my own self-evaluation (Table 7), these were the philosophies that I used to communicate to the class. The Win-Win (Kagan, 2002) and Success Orientation (Morrish, 2000) philosophies suggested that I shared the power in the classroom and that I provided opportunities to self-manage under clear directions and boundaries. Self-Care philosophy (Gossen, 2004) suggested that there was a feeling of worth in taking care of ones self while the integrity philosophy (Borba, 2001) spoke of allowing children to act within their personal system.

As I reviewed the initial lesson's transcript on respect there was evidence that I did use these philosophies with my students. An example of this was evident when I was able to use Bob's action of spitting in Fred's hair and turn it into an opportunity for a new goal, strategy or growth.

*Excerpt from Respect Word Web Transcript:*

*Monday, Feb. 25*

*T: MM hmm but before that remember we talked about eyes are watching, (students join in automatically) ears are listening, lips are closed, hands are still,*

*feet are quiet. So which one of those things do you think you should be doing so that wouldn't have happened?*

Previous to our unit beginning, the children had memorized this short poem on respectful listening that we had been using. It had been part of our 'collecting' ritual since the start of the school year.

*Eyes are watching*

*Ears are listening*

*Lips are closed*

*Hands are still*

*Feet are quiet*

*Excerpt from Respect Word Web Transcript:*

*Monday, Feb. 25*

*Bob: Lips are closed.*

*T: Lips are closed. If your lips are closed there would be no spitting. Ok?*

*Can we work at that really hard? I know you can do it.*

*Bob: (shakes head yes)*

*T: Alright (continues on with lesson) so we've got be nice, be good,*

*responsibility. Take a look what else could we add?*

The last statement in the above sample demonstrated the ability that I had to depersonalize the problem so that the whole class could learn from the incident without humiliating the child who had caused the incident. This fell under the heading of Communication (Curwin and Mendler, 1988) and Supportiveness (Marshall, 2001). If I

***Likert Scale:***  
***Characteristics of Healthy Adult-Child Relationships***

**By Jane Bluestein, Ph. D.**

Use this list to evaluate patterns in your current relationships with the children in your life (or even other adults in your life). If you have implemented a specific discipline or motivation approach, does it encourage relationships in which the following are true?

Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Most of the time = 4, Always = 5

1	2	3	4	5	
					<b><i>Proactivity:</i></b>
	√				I focused on prevention – not reaction.
			√		I attempted to meet my children’ needs in healthy, constructive ways.
					<b><i>Win-Win:</i></b>
			√		I motivated cooperative behavior without powering, threatening, humiliating or using conditional approval.
			√		I was more interested in encouraging cooperation than obedience, even though the outcome behaviors usually looked about the same.
				√	I wanted to empower my children within limits that did not disempower others.
				√	I used my authority to set limits, offer choices, and decide what is and is not negotiable.
					<b><i>Success Orientation:</i></b>
			√		I asked my children to do things for which they are developmentally and experientially prepared.
			√		I gave clear directions.
				√	I set clear, pro-active and win-win boundaries.
			√		I attempted to accommodate my children’s preferences and learning styles, allowing them to study and learn in ways that are most natural for them.
				√	I gave my children opportunities to self-manage.
				√	I stayed in the present.
					<b><i>Positivity:</i></b>
			√		I separated my children’s behavior from their worth.
		√			I stated boundaries as promises rather than threats.
					Our home is reward-oriented (that is, focused on

			√		positive outcomes for cooperation rather than punishment or negative outcomes for misbehavior).
		√			I thought of consequences as the <i>positive</i> outcomes for cooperation or positive behavior.
			√		I looked for the positive (what the child is doing right) and built on that.
				√	I tried to maintain my sense of humor.
					<b><i>Avoiding Double Standards:</i></b>
		√			I modeled the kinds of behavior I would like my children to exhibit.
			√		I avoided talking to my children in ways I would not talk to adults.
			√		In terms of motivation, I recognized that children desire (and deserve) to experience meaningful outcomes as a result of the behaviors they choose, just as adults do.
		√			I avoided making a big deal over issues and incidents that involves my children just because they aren't adults.
					<b><i>Boundaries:</i></b>
		√			I offered my children a variety of meaningful positive consequences to motivate or encourage cooperative behavior.
		√			I recognized my child's positive behavior without reinforcing dependence and people-pleasing.
			√		I avoided giving warnings, as well as delayed or meaningless negative consequences. (When my child misbehaves, I was willing to withdraw privileges immediately.)
		√			I avoided asking for excuses. (I was willing to withhold privileges and rewards until children came through on their end regardless of their excuses.)
		√			I built in some proactive flexibility so I can accommodate occasional problems that may arise without compromising my boundaries.
					<b><i>Supportiveness:</i></b>
			√		I accepted the child's feelings even if I didn't understand or agree with them.
		√			I respected the reality of the child's experience, and was willing to validate that reality.
					I have a variety of healthy outlets for children to use

		√			to get their feelings out (or be listened to) without creating problems for themselves or others.
		√			I listened without giving advice, dismissing the problem, or interfering with the feelings.
		√			I asked, rather than told, to help children find solutions to problems without giving them answers or advice about what they should do.
					<b><i>Integrity:</i></b>
			√		I made choices based on my values and the children's needs regardless of possible reactions from others.
			√		I was able to deal with criticism without becoming defensive, apologetic or reactive, and without explaining in order to secure approval for what I'm doing.
				√	I maintained regular, positive contact with other adults in the children's lives.
					<b><i>Communication:</i></b>
			√		I avoided using my feelings as a way to control or change others.
			√		I took responsibility for solving problems that arose in my classroom and relationships with my children.
				√	I communicated positively and responsibly with the child's parent or guardian.
			√		When I slipped up and said or did something hurtful, I took responsibility for my behavior (rather than blaming it on something the child had done).
			√		When I made a mistake or failed to keep my word, I avoided making excuses and apologized to make things right.
		√			I was able and willing to ask for what I wanted directly.
					<b><i>Self-care</i></b>
			√		I modeled a commitment to personal growth.
		√			I knew how to set boundaries and was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
			√		When things got to be too much for me, I was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
			√		I developed a strong support network and was willing to use it.
					I minimized or avoided contact with negative, toxic

			√	people and experiences.
			√	I used my mistakes and errors as opportunities for new learning rather than as excuses for beating myself up.
			√	I had a variety of outlets and resources outside of my work situations for personal enrichment, relaxation, stress management and fun.
			√	I acknowledged what I've done right and gave myself space to grow and keep getting better!

*Table 7: Initial Likert Scale*

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looked hard enough I could discover some way that I had used most of the relationship styles in one way or another, but not necessarily in a significant way.

In the initial lesson the children helped me to create a respect word web. The ideas were their own with a small amount of guidance from me to help them word their thoughts in positive rather than negative terms. Borba suggested that the focus be on the positive and to ignore the negative for the first portion of the study. Using the definition for respect as “Showing you value others by treating them in a courteous and considerate way” (Borba, 2001, p. 8), the children were able to express their idea of respect quite well. Borba’s definition did not define the term ‘others’ and therefore suggested that respect only had to do with your actions and thoughts towards other people. The British Columbia (2001) *Performance standards: Social responsibility a framework* suggests that all values being taught to students should be looked at from three view points; respect for yourself, respect for others and respect for the environment. This was the view point my children seemed to come from. Out of fourteen statements ten were linked to respect for others, but it needs to be noted that two described respect for one’s self and two described respect for the environment. This is how all our values are taught at our school and is part of our motto.

In chapter 2, I wrote in depth about Neufeld’s 5 steps of cultivating and preserving right relationships;

Step 1: to “collect” children’s eyes with, a smile, and a nod

Step 2: to give the child a “touch of proximity” to hold on to

Step 3: to enrich the social context so that the child can depend on the teacher

Step 4: to refrain from discipline that divides

### Step 5: to behavior-proof the relationship

These five steps reinforced the thought processes behind the Standard of Behavior and helped to give a clear illustration of the actions and thought processes of my eight children. Neufeld makes it very clear in his research that “collecting” children’s eyes with a smile or a nod invites them into a relationship. If we do not collect them, there is no social context to work with them. I believed this was the case with Nick and Robert. So I set out looking at four specific criteria in the students and recorded their results accordingly using venn diagrams and the color coding of the *Continuum of School-wide Effective Behavior Support*:

- students who showed growth in respect,
- students who showed growth in relationships,
- students whose respect and relationship standings correlated, and
- significant findings in any areas throughout the study with individual children.

According to the *B.C. Quick Scale* and the sociogram results (Figure 19), the children started out the study with children in every area of the continuum. In the area of respect four children were in the green zone, two in the yellow zone and two in the red zone. In the area of relationships four students fell in the green zone, three in the yellow zone and one in the red zone. Bob and Mark fell in the green zone for both respect and relationships. Steve fell in the yellow zone for both and Nick fell into the red zone for both respect and relationships.

#### *Nick*

Previous to the study Nick had a lot of problems with his peers and his teachers as stated earlier. There were key concepts that Nick seemed to have stuck in his head as the

## Comparisons of Respect and Relationships (Beginning of the Study)

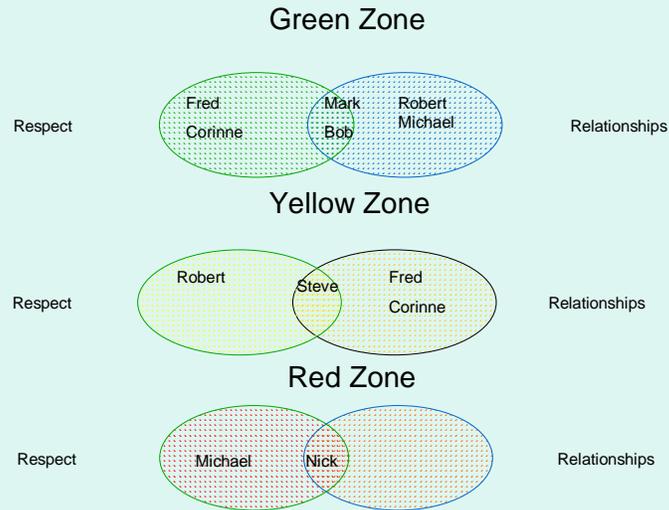


Figure 19. Comparison of Respect and Relationships (Beginning of the Study)

way to solve his problems. He demonstrated this during our initial lesson when we were working on our respect word web. The only thing Nick could focus on was hitting. Here is the exchange between Nick and his teacher as he tried to come up with something in a positive form to place on our respect chart.

*Excerpt from Respect Word Web Transcript:*

*Monday, Feb. 25*

*Nick: Being nice to others?*

*Nick: Don't hit them.*

*Nick: don't hit*

*Nick: not hitting*

*T: well you're not hitting but what are you doing?*

*Nick: hitting someone*

*T: no. take a look. Eyes are watching, ears are listening, lips are closed (children help)*

*Children: (with excitement) Hands are still.*

*T: Hands are still. If your hands are still can you hit?*

*Children: no*

*T: No. Hands are still.*

*Nick: not mean?*

It was very difficult for Nick to move away from this way of thinking indicating to me that this pattern of thinking had already been internalized by Nick. Nick fell within the red zone in the area of relationships at the beginning.

*Robert*

Robert had not been present for the start of the year to be part of the establishing of our rules and routines. This had put him at a disadvantage from his first day in the classroom. I always attach a student from our classroom to walk the new student through our daily routine and to help them get their bearings and find their way around. Unfortunately I had been away sick for Robert's first two days of school. I am not sure what routines he was introduced to or not. At the beginning of the study Robert was in the green zone for relationships and the yellow zone for respect. He was the new kid and most of the boys were trying to be his friends and make him feel at home.

*Bob*

Bob started the study in the green zone according to his peers' sociograms for relationships and the quick scale for respect. As I look at the data now I wish that I had questioned the students on why they had chosen the students they did. I began to question if their cognitive ability to link their relationships to how respectful they may be treated by others is possible. It appeared the adults saw the children through one lens color of glass (in the area of respect) while the students saw them through a whole different lens color of glass (in the area of relationships). An example of this was that Fred had chosen Bob as one of the students he wanted to sit with. In fact out of the other seven students four of them had chosen Bob. Why was he so popular with the other students if he appeared to have no real concern for their feelings or well being?

*Michael*

Michael had trouble choosing anyone to sit with at first. His first choice was to sit with himself. When questioned about this he felt that he talked too much and fooled

around too much, so it was better for him to sit by himself. These facts were true; that he often was unable to finish his work because he spent all his time entertaining the students that sat with him or giving his snack his full attention. I tried to get him to understand that the sociogram was to help him get to sit with those children that could maybe help him focus on his work instead of getting him to fool around. Michael stuck to his beliefs that it would not help to say who he wanted to sit with. In this way, Michael had shown great integrity already. He did write down Robert and Fred after a great deal of thought and discussion with me. By requesting that he write something down on paper, I now ask myself if I was really asking him to compromise his integrity for my needs to have him supply me with data. Michael fell within the green zone in the area of relationships according to his peers, but in the red zone when it came to respect. Michael had to constantly be reminded to follow the rules of the classroom in the area of respect. Most conversations or lessons where Michael participates usually ended with Michael making reference to some 'bathroom humor'. This made him like a 'ticking time bomb just waiting to go off' with the adults.

*Steve*

Steve began the study in the yellow zone for respect and relationships. Though Steve appeared to be very excited about everything we did in the classroom it did not become obvious to me that he did not participate in many things unless he was called upon until I reviewed my data. Steve only volunteered to participate with one activity with the puppets. When he was called upon he would be willing to do his part. Steve's relationships with his friends were more important to him than his relationships with the

adults. The choices he would make while with his friends caused him to have difficulty with the adults.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Tuesday, March 4*

*We had a special guest reader in today and Steve, Bob, Robert, and Michael did not show her the same respectful listening they would give me.*

Steve did not like to be caught in any of his poor choices in the classroom. Although his relationships with his friends were important, his approval from the adults in his life (adults in the classroom and his parents) was also important.

*Mark*

Mark was in the green zone for both relationships and respect. Mark was very excited about learning about respect and getting to use the journey journal map. Mark had indicated from the beginning that he felt this was an area he needed help with and was ready to dive into the study. His initial journey map entry was the symbol for roadblock with the explanation of *'I'm not good at respect'*. The only thing that I saw as a downfall for Mark was his continual talking that kept him and his table mates from getting their work done. As the study progressed I was to learn that there was more to Mark's interest and need for guidance in respect than I knew.

*Fred*

Fred fell into the yellow zone for relationships and the green zone for respect. He was extremely excited about the whole unit of respect. At the beginning of the unit he was friendly to all the children in the class but sometimes had trouble explaining his view point for maintaining healthy friendships. Even after Bob had spit in his hair he was

willing to forgive him and be his friend. He even had requested to sit with Bob. Fred would come to me frequently in order to help him explain to others what the rules were. Fred was good at knowing the rules and though his English appeared to be fine he was lacking the knowledge to put his words together to make some of his feelings known. His relationship with me at the start of the unit appeared to be good. He liked to come to share with me the things that were exciting to him.

### *Corinne*

Corinne was in the yellow group for relationships and the green group for respect. Though she appeared to be happy and friends with everyone in the class she was chosen by only one other girl in the classroom in the sociogram. Corinne spent a lot of time in the girl's washroom. I am not sure if this was an avoidance or attention technique for her or not. Her initial journey map entry indicated that she did not really understand what respect was with the use of the symbol for downhill she stated '*I like to work with my friends*'. Corinne did not volunteer once while we were using the puppets. She always appeared to be enjoying them and seemed to be involved. This helped to camouflage her so that it did not cross my mind that she was not physically participating.

### *Modeling*

Modeling was one of the three types of teacher relationships discussed in chapter 1. I, therefore, looked at the standard of modeling from the adult perspective. Throughout the study there were up to four adults present in the classroom at any given time; myself, as their classroom teacher, the teacher candidate, who was in her first year of the after degree program and two educational assistants. One of the assistants was in

the room on a full time basis (EA1), while the other was in the room on a part time, sporadic basis (EA2). At the beginning of the study I became very aware of how much negativity we as the adults were modeling. It is not that we did not notice the positive but that the negatives were the areas we seemed to speak out about.

*Excerpt from Respect Word Web Transcript:*

*Monday, Feb. 25*

*EA2: Tell Mrs. M. what you just did?*

*Bob: It was an accident.*

*EA2: No it wasn't an accident.*

*Bob: (mumbles) I spit at ....*

It was from this data that I knew we did not qualify as the *model* in the three types of teacher relationships. We had as much to learn as the students. As we progressed throughout the study and the adults began to internalize the use of positive modeling and language I began to see a difference.

The puppet portion of the day was used for modeling respectful behavior and practice. I used the Disrespectful Dog and Respectful Raccoon to demonstrate what accentuating respect, defusing respect and sometimes being disrespectful looked like.

*Excerpt from Teacher Journal*

*Monday, March 10*

*You need to ask your teacher for help but she is talking to another teacher. What can you say or do? (Schroeder, 2004)*

*I took Disrespectful Dog and role played him poking the teacher and calling the teacher's name over and over again until I got a response.*

### *Teaching*

According to the research I had looked at, it was important to teach the children specific skills in order for them to be able to internalize. In the process of teaching there needs to be the element of practice (Brownlie & King, 2000; Morrish, 2000). Glasser (1969) suggested the use of classroom meetings to discuss, learn and role play situations that occur in the classroom. I chose to use the stories, cloze passages and discussions as our forum for teaching or (telling) and the puppets and our visit to other settings as our practice to see if we could internalize what we had been learning. The main areas we focused on, at first, were the respectful listener poem at lesson times. Once this was introduced the children became much better listeners. It was necessary to ‘collect’ them with this poem each time in order for it to work though.

We often spoke in the story corner about why we need to be a ‘good’ listener. Putting it in terms to do with respect and with the cloze passage seemed to put it in a form the children could understand.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Friday, February 29*

*We did our social responsibility cloze passage and talked about respecting ourselves. This looks like not worrying so much about what our neighbor is doing during the lesson time but making sure we are showing respect towards our own learning and the adult who is trying to teach us something. When we are able to do this we are able to benefit.*

This seemed to be one of our ‘aha’ moments for many of the students. The children referred to this as respecting themselves. It was reinforced throughout the study by the students’ actions.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Thursday, March 6*

*Students are beginning to internalize and practice some of what we have been learning. The main one that has been noticed by myself and the E.A.s is that they need to be respectful of themselves and not worry so much about their neighbors unless telling the adult about them will get them out of trouble and not into trouble. Bob and Steve were both caught stopping themselves and rephrasing so that they were showing respect for themselves. Both actually verbalized it to themselves but out loud. Instead of telling on each other they chose to cooperate and do their work.*

There were several occasions outside of our respect lesson time and the classroom environment that I used for teaching the children about respect. Again, each time we had an opportunity to practice we would start by ‘collecting’ the group with our respect poem. One opportunity was a trombone concert held in the gym for the whole school. Together we talked about what respectful listening would look like in the gym. We spoke about moving from their spot in line if the person they were standing next to would tempt them to talk or be disrespectful during the concert. This activity helped the children to begin to use the integrity they were beginning to develop. The concert went very well, with me only having to signal to one student who returned the signal and showed respect

the rest of the concert. Michael, however, had to be moved to come and sit with me; where he still continued to make silly large motions.

Another opportunity we had to practice what we were learning was a trip to our in-school library. This was different than their regular visits as the librarian was not going to be there to do a fifteen minute mini lesson followed by book browsing and then signing out books. Instead they were to go with me, the librarian was absent and the technician would be on her lunch hour until twenty minutes into their scheduled time. I was not going to be helping them as I would have my quiet hat on to do reading testing with individual students and to observe how each individual handled this task. Our library is located in the center pod of an open area concept school. It is the second floor of the school, with two stair cases located across from each other leading up to the third floor classrooms. The classrooms are adjacent to the library from the third floor by walls of half height allowing the classrooms to look down into the library. The children were reminded that due to the design of the library they were required to be respectful of the other classes working. I asked them what this looked like and they gave me the rules of using whisper voices, no running, find a book quietly, and sit and read a book quietly at a table until the library technician returned from her lunch to help them sign out their books. I was very pleased with their progress on this activity overall. On a spot check approximately ten minutes into the activity Nick, Bob, Michael, Mark and Steve were all sitting at a table and reading books. Corinne was quietly wandering and looking for a book and Robert was working with TA1 finishing up some of his classroom work. Fred was having trouble using a quiet voice while he was looking for a book. I was beginning to see a new level of respect and understanding between the students and individually.

I don't know if this new understanding was for the better or not. Now that they had acquired a working definition of respect for themselves they seemed to set higher standards as to what was required of them. At this mid point in the study there were only two children in the area of respect in the green zone, four in the yellow zone, and two in the red zone. In the area of relationships, there were three in the green zone, two in the yellow zone, and three in the green zone. Once again, Bob and Mark remained in the green zone in both areas. Corinne was now in the yellow for respect and relationships and Nick remained in the red for both (Figure 20).

By the end of week four, the children seemed to be settling in to what I referred to as their comfort zones. They had had the opportunity to try out new vocabulary and actions in the first four weeks and had discovered what set of abilities and values felt most natural to them. These were the behaviors they had settled in to. Three children were in the green, four in the yellow and one in the red, in the area of respect. In the area of relationships two children were in the green, three were in the yellow, and three were in the red. The results from the beginning to this point were not significant. In fact they had gone down in some areas. This raised the need to question whether having brought to mind disrespectful behavior in week three and four had caused students to act out on the negative rather than the positive behavior (Figure 21).

The study ended with little significant change (Figure 22) to support the teaching of respect over a one month period. Bob was still in the green for both respect and relationships and Fred was now in the yellow for both. Nick did make significant

## Comparison of Respect and Relationships (Middle of the Study)

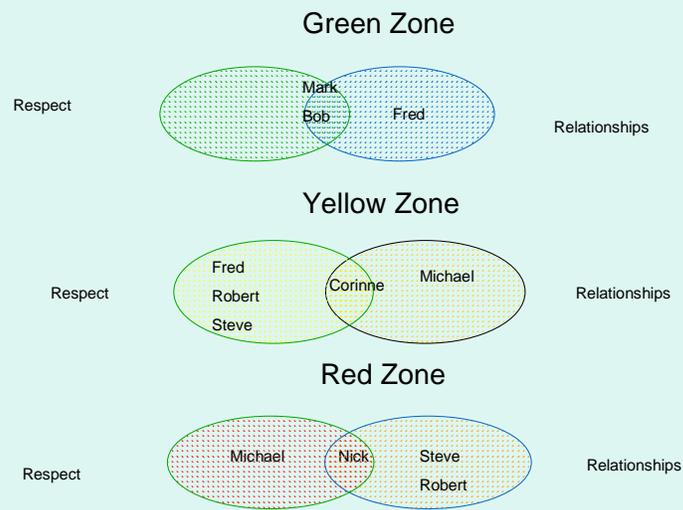


Figure 20. Comparison of Respect and Relationships (Middle of the Study)

progress through out in both respect and relationships. At the same time Corinne, Michael and Robert seemed to be struggling in an uphill battle in their ability to internalize and demonstrate respect.

*Nick*

The first time Nick wrote in his journey journal he began working on explaining where he was in his respect journey when he wrote that he is *not working together* and chose the carpool picture. On his second entry he had chosen to take a detour and wrote *I was nice to others*. The detour sign indicated that this was something new he was trying. Nick continued to take in everything that we talked about in the unit. He volunteered to participate on a regular basis in the puppet activities. This was good practice for Nick. He was able to articulate both respect and disrespect through the puppets.

By the end of the four week teaching portion of the study Nick had moved to the yellow zone in the area of relationships and respect. One of the interesting comments that Nick shared with me from this point on was that he likes school now. Two weeks later when I revisited the respect quick scale, Nick had moved into the green zone.

*Robert*

As the study progressed I realized that I was not losing my relationship with Robert but that I had never really built a relationship with him and neither had any of the other children. This became apparent as he went from the yellow zone at the start of the study to the red zone in relationships two weeks into the study. Robert began to complain that he missed his old school and his friends. Because Robert was verbal about his unhappiness and was showing signs of trouble with friendships I was able to begin to help him.

Robert spent a lot of time throughout the study telling the other students what they were to do if they were being respectful.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Wednesday, March 19*

*Robert reminded others to face the puppets*

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Wednesday, March 26*

*Robert telling group to 'be quiet' and wait for teacher*

The difficulty for him was that he was not able to internalize any of these rules for himself. The children saw him as being bossy, rather than helpful because they had not developed a relationship with him. *Excerpt form Teacher journal:*

*Friday, March 7*

*At the building center Fred was getting angry @ Robert. They were arguing over elastics at the geoboard center. I reminded them that the elastics were mine, and I share with everyone. I could help by getting more. Fred thanked me. Robert continued to aggravate Fred by taking his supplies. Robert's bugging seemed to appear he wanted to be friends but just didn't know how.*

By the end of the study we were able to bring him back into the yellow zone. At the end of the study he still was not happy but we will continue to work together on this.

*Bob*

Bob became another interesting child throughout the study. Bob stayed in the green zone for relationships and respect throughout the study. Yet overall the students

## Comparison of Respect and Relationships (Final Phase)

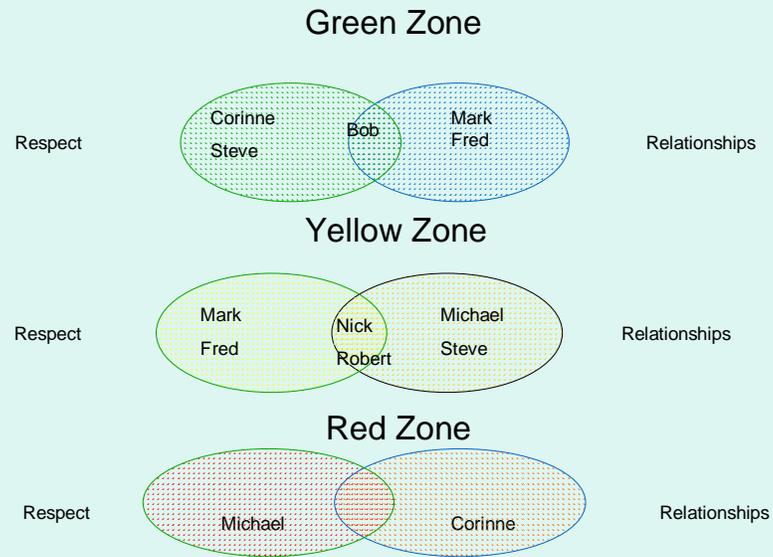


Figure 21. Comparison of Respect and Relationships (Final Phase)

## Comparison of Respect and Relationships (End of Full Study)

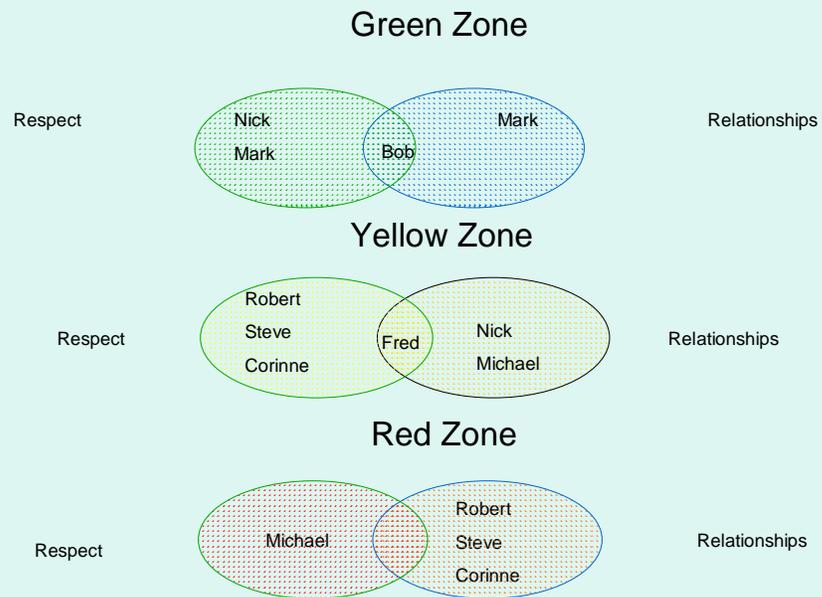


Figure 22. Comparison of Respect and Relationships (End of the Full Study)

and I would all agree that the most noticeable progress in the areas of respect would have to be from Bob. When children practice respect on a daily basis, they are more likely to learn to care about others, therefore showing respect for others and return respect for themselves (Borba, 2001). This appeared to be the case for Bob. When we first spoke about using the *caught you showing respect* tickets, Bob also suggested having a wall to show you who were being disrespectful (wall of shame). Because we were trying to stay in the positive I explained that our next step would be learning to defuse disrespect so we would never need to have a disrespect wall. Bob seemed content with this answer.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Friday, March 14*

*While looking for books in the library, Robert discovered the book he was interested in was on display on the top shelf. He quietly whispered to Bob who reached up, took it down and handed it to him. In the past this would have been a big deal to Bob. He still would have done it, but he would have made sure that others knew he did.*

During our puppet time I began to see a great deal of thought going into his responses.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Tuesday, March 18*

*Ask your friends if they would like to come to your house after school (Schroeder, 2004).*

*Bob (as disrespectful dog): I'm coming to your house. (explained that he wants to be invited and wasn't and not even sure if he wants to go)*

*(he either had put lots of thought into this or had possibly experienced it once his self...I spoke to him, he said that he just thought of it. He never saw it on tv or experienced it himself.)*

Near the end of the study, Bob was chosen two weeks in a row to go to special lunch. In the past the students would have been very upset about whether this was fair or not. At this point in the study they actually discussed it. Since they had been the ones who had noticed Bob being more respectful and had nominated him by placing his name in the draw with the *caught you showing respect* tickets they did not argue. They felt he had earned it 'fair and square'. This was a huge amount of growth for our classroom.

#### *Michael*

Michael had moved from the green zone in relationships with the children at the beginning of the study to the yellow zone for the rest of the study. In the area of respect he had remained stagnant in the red zone.

Michael did make some progress throughout the study. He still kept to his belief that sitting with others was not for him but he did make an attempt to work with others. The majority of the time, however, he did find it difficult to express his words with his friends and often ended up hitting them and crying out of frustration. This was reflected in his lack of movement from the red zone. His actions gave me data to back up his requests to allow him to work on his own. In the library, Michael found a quiet spot and was very content to sit and read on his own. This indicated to me the peace he could find if left on his own. It is noted that books were an escape that Michael did enjoy.

Michael spent most of the study falling back on his ability to be the class clown to get through every situation that required any form of a response or work out of him. He

often depended on his bathroom humor to create a stir from the other students and hopefully side track the teachers from the original task at hand. Michael had no interest in using the Respectful Raccoon puppet. He would rather use the Disrespectful Dog because that was where he got the biggest response from the group. Throughout the study I tried to build up a relationship with Michael but there appeared to be a wall of some kind that I don't think either of us were able to permeate past. I feel there are possible other extenuating circumstances that must be looked into further with him. This would be what Scott referred to as tertiary prevention requiring more specialized, individualized programming provided by outside agencies for support.

*Steve*

In the initial part of the study Steve was in the yellow zone for relationships. He then moved to the red and then revisited the yellow by the end of week four. In the area of respect Steve stayed in the yellow zone except in the quick scale completed at the end of week four. At this point he was in the green zone. Borba stated that attitudes of respect develop slowly. They are not something that can be experienced once and internalized. It also states that children cognitively need the opportunity to revisit the level of understanding that they were previously at. I think this was the case with Steve. He was trying hard and was quite excited when he earned a special lunch ticket but still had blips in his development scale causing him to regress. Throughout the puppet practice time Steve only volunteered to participate twice. On one of the two occasions he found it to be too confusing and sat back down.

During Steve's time in the red zone, he spent a lot of this time convincing others to do something they should not to someone else or their belongings because he thought it would be funny. Steve still focused a great deal on his own needs.

In the building center incident I thought all had been solved when I got more elastics for the geoboards.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Friday, March 7*

*Steve took ¾ of them when Fred took them out of the box and felt it was fair.*

*Fred suggested putting them in the middle and everyone take them 1 at a time.*

*Steve took a while to warm up to it.*

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Thursday, March 13*

*Steve took Fred's eraser and threw it for no reason. Fred couldn't find it (even though it was directly under his desk and I could see it from my desk) and erased all of Steve's work with the half of eraser he still had. We roll played like in the Recess Queen. Steve was Mean Jean and Fred was Katie Sue. Fred decided to give Steve the signal in the roll play for being disrespectful and Steve went and got the eraser for Fred. Fred then apologized to Steve for erasing his paper.*

There were obvious relationship issues between Fred and Steve as well.

*Mark*

As Mark became more aware of what respect looked like, sounded like and felt like his ability to demonstrate it seemed to decrease. I knew that he had an understanding

of what it was from his journey journal entries. The evidence he gave for his symbol choices were always well aligned.

<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Roadblock</i>	<i>I'm not good at respect.</i>
<i>Feb. 29</i>	<i>Roadblock</i>	<i>sometimes bossy to my friends</i>
<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Roadblock</i>	<i>I am bad at respect</i>
<i>Mar.11</i>	<i>Roadblock</i>	<i>I am having trouble with a Friend who lives by me.</i>
<i>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Uphill</i>	<i>I am having trouble with defusing</i>
<i>Mar. 19</i>	<i>Gas Station</i>	<i>Because I am still learning Defusing disrespect</i>

When I spoke to him in regards to his difficulties, he shared that his difficulties were not so much at school but at home. He realized he had been disrespectful to his best friend on his street a lot and he wasn't sure how to fix it. With this discussion I knew that Mark had shown great improvement by the end of the study.

The turning point in the classroom seemed to be on Monday, April 7.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Mark came and sat with me at my working table in order to get his work done (on my request). He sat and talked to me for a few minutes until he could get focused. I think he just needs to have that initial talk time in order to settle in to work but he also needs someone to help him get focused on his work. He still would day dream and look around the room but he did not talk as much.*

After this exchange and work time between myself and Mark he was able to sit quietly at his desk and complete his work without doing too much talking. If he felt he was unable to complete this work he would request that he be allowed to move his desk closer to my table and away from the rest of his group so that he could concentrate. This seemed to work for him as well. It was such a major improvement that I gave him both a *caught you showing respect* ticket that day and a yellow slip for the office the following day when he continued making good choices. Neufeld (2006) indicated in chapter two, however, that you cannot build a relationship based on praise because praise is based on what they do, not on who they are. I found it did encourage him to keep trying, though.

### *Fred*

Fred seemed to move from one bad relationship to another throughout the study. Though he seemed to be working very hard on the relationships his struggles increased. In the area of relationship Fred went from yellow to green and final stayed at green. Again, without having asked the children why they chose the way they did I am not able to be certain why he was in the green. My instinct tells me that Fred moved to the green because of his positive, supportive disposition. Each of the altercations that Fred was involved in helped him to grow a little more in the relationship and respect areas. The eraser scenario (as listed earlier) helped Fred and Steve to internalize what to do in this type of situation a little better. I think at times Fred was more concerned about hurting the other children's feelings and in this way he was not respecting himself. By the end of the study Fred was able to verbalize to me that sitting with Steve was not good for him. More importantly, Fred was able to use his words to tell me why. Because this was the last week before spring break I promised him that he would have a new spot in the classroom

immediately following the break. I used the sociogram to try to give everyone one of their four requests they had for sitting together. This turned out to create a new problem for Fred. It seemed he now got along with his new table mate so well he was too busy talking to get any of his work done.

In the area of respect Fred moved from the green zone and then to the yellow zone where he stayed for the rest of the study. Though he appeared to have a strong relationship with the teacher candidate first term and was anxiously awaiting her return, Fred seemed to have trouble reconnecting with the teacher candidate when she took over the teaching at the beginning of week four. Although Ms. J tried to keep things very positive with Fred, she had to send him back to his desk from the story corner several times in order to teach her lesson to the rest of the group. He never did reconnect with her. I hoped to get more information from his journey journal but he was absent for three of the six entry days and on one day was unable to put into words why he had chosen to take a detour.

### *Corinne*

As the research progressed Corinne moved from the green to the yellow to the red zone in the area of relationships with her peers in the sociogram. (See Table 8 for relationship sociograms.) Again only one girl chose to put Corinne on her sociogram. By the end of the study Corinne had moved into the red zone in the area of relationships. Each time Corinne had picked the same two girls on her sociogram. Neither of these girls had chosen her. If I had looked at this information throughout the study I may have been able to help Corinne in her building of friendships in the classroom. Denise and Amanda (the two girls she chose)

Student	Number of students that chose them as one of their top four to work with.										
5 Nick											
6 Corinne	■										
9 Bob	■	■	■	■	■						
12 Robert	■	■									
14 Michael	■	■	■								
15 Steve	■										
16 Mark	■	■	■	■	■						
18 Fred	■	■									

Initial Relationship Sociogram

Student	Number of students that chose them as one of their top four to work with.										
5											
6	■										
9	■	■	■								
12											
14	■										
15											
16	■	■	■	■	■						
18	■	■	■								

Mid Relationship Sociogram

Student	Number of students that chose them as one of their top four to work with.										
5	■										
6											
9	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
12	■										
14	■										
15	■	■									
16	■	■	■								
18	■	■	■	■							

Final Sociogram

Table 8. Sociogram Results

were always more than willing to sit with and work with all the children in the classroom. Throughout the study Corinne continued to show the difficulty she was having with the whole study by her journey journal comments.

*Excerpt from Journal journey entries:*

*Downhill                      I went downhill because I love to work.*

*Downhill                      because I work fast enough*

She did not seem to have the concept of what respect was at all, even after all the lessons and puppet scenarios and stories that had been presented to her. Was this possibly a social-emotional development concern?

*Responding Professionally and Restoring Students to the Community*

I had chosen to combine the areas of responding professionally and restoring to the community together as they need to work together in order to view the effect they have had on the relationship. Responding professionally keeps in mind that “behavior is always situational and any and every response to behavior must always be informed by the circumstances of the situation” (Creating a Safe and Caring School Community, 2006, p. 3). About half way through the study Nick began seeking out a positive relationship with me. Here is an excerpt from my journal.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Wednesday, March 12*

*At the end of yesterday I realized Nick forgot his binder in the classroom, he was at daycare. The school daycare is just down the hall from our classroom. I*

*stopped by the daycare to let him know and give it back to him. Nick wanted to share with me about soccer starting last night. We spent a couple of minutes*

*talking. He is opening up to me more and more each day. I noticed that he has a big smile whenever he is sharing with me now.*

Because of the positive initiative of a relationship between Nick and myself it was important that I handled a situation, that could have been negative, carefully. Lickona (1992) and Neufeld (2005) as stated in chapter 2, encourages teachers to look for something in the child's response that they can affirm; otherwise the chances of the child being willing to try again at another time lessens.

*Excerpt from Teacher Journal:*

*End of the day:*

*Thursday, March 13*

*Nick had taken some of the power of 10 cards and put them in his pocket. TAI had caught him. When I spoke to him he said that he put them in his pocket so that he could finish their game in the afternoon. I explained to him that he could put them in his cubby until the afternoon but in his pocket he may forget and they would go home with him. Then we wouldn't have a complete set. He was very happy with our discussion and asked if he could put it in his cubby. I told him yes but if he wasn't in the middle of a game please leave it with the rest of the cards.*

Sometimes it is hard to know what has caused the change; the collecting, the professional ways of responding or the style of discipline. It is hard to evaluate whether it is the opportunity the children and I had to have a week off that has created the calm and happiness in the classroom or the change in the seating arrangement. If I had incorporated the use of the sociogram in their seating plan each month I would have a better reading on this.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Thursday, April 10*

*It is spring break and I have had time to remove myself from the study a bit. As my mind relaxes it occurred to me that I should have focused more on the relationships of the students. By this I mean that I should have focused more on the sociograms and used the information throughout the study to help them possibly reach their potential with relationships and respect. I could have been using the sociograms to plan the seating plan throughout. I plan to use the sociogram to set up their seating plan for April. When the children come back after the break, I am hoping they are calmer but I will also see if sitting with those that they want to sit with helps. Fred specifically told me that he does not want to sit with the students he was sitting with in March. There seemed to be a lot of conflicts there. I will use this last week of observations to see if it makes a difference.*

As stated by Bluestein (2001) in chapter one, discipline is a way of restoring children to the community when they have made a poor choice with their behavior. Having spring break in the middle of the study caused the adults in the classroom to really focus on their ability to behavior proof the relationship (Neufeld, 2005). The children and adults were getting anxious for the break and were tired.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Thursday, March 13*

*The classroom in general seems to be louder than it was lately but I think that has to do with spring, melting and wetness, and the fact that we went straight from indoor recess and the freezing temperatures to this. There was no real in between.*

The teacher candidate in my classroom had been present since week two in the study. By the beginning of week five when I needed to strictly observe the children, she was ready to take over sixty percent of the teaching load. I thought this was perfect timing. (Note: Week five was the week before spring break). It turned out to be a real eye opener for all of us. Miss J. had been in our classroom during the first term of the year for five weeks. The children were familiar with her and had looked forward to her return. What we had not seen coming was the impact of Neufeld's statement that you must collect them each and every time in order to establish a context which makes directing and influencing them possible.

As we got closer to spring break Bob's behavior regressed back to some of his old ways. This was also the time period that my teacher candidate took over the teaching. Borba reminds us that with the use of her model we must allow for the time children will revisit the way they had acted before. This action after all had been the norm for them and accentuating respect and defusing disrespect is the most recent rule.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Wednesday, March 26*

*Bob started group in reading when teacher wasn't ready yet*

*Bob got up to get a pencil for charting during poetry circle without permission*

Once they returned after spring break, Miss J. was able to reinforce her relationships and ‘collection’ strategies with the students. Things began to return to a positive flow. Here is an incident in the story corner with the teacher candidate.

*Teacher journal:*

*Thursday, April 10*

*Teacher candidate is able to use a quiet voice to give instructions and give multiple directions that the children are able to hear today because they are not all talking all at the same time. “Please leave your work at your desk and join me in the story corner. It is snack time so bring them with you.” She was patient in waiting for all of them to make the connection between both sets of directions and to collect their snack. They were able to have a quiet group discussion about things going on in their own lives while they waited for everyone else. Bob monopolized the discussion but not in a way he would have before. It was a polite quiet conversation instead of him yelling over other peoples’ voices to have his point be heard.*

*Teacher candidate. gave the directions of what they were going to do before starting the reading*

*Bob started to speak out of turn*

*Teacher candidate thanked another student for putting up their hand and Bob stopped talking right away and waited his turn.*

Ms. J. was able to reestablish her relationship with almost all of them overtime and then their respect for her improved once again. Even though Fred had anxiously been awaiting her return, he was an example of a child who takes a little longer to be able to

reestablish his relationships and to transfer them from one adult to another. He still had not reestablished his relationship when she finished her teaching block at the school two weeks later.

Recess seemed to still be a difficult time for the students. There was a regular flow of reports each day. I have begun to think that this is more connected to relationships with the adults than I realized. I think the children just want to tell adults about their problems. Even after they have told a duty teacher outside and have had the problem solved, they have a need to continue looking for more adults to tell.

*Excerpt from Teacher journal:*

*Tuesday, March 4*

*Recess seemed to have more problems today but the children and I had the language to discuss what to do at recess because of the charts. Am I just more aware of the problems that go on at recess? Are the kids more aware and telling me more? Or are there more problems since we started our study? I'm hoping that we are just all more aware because I seem to be getting more reports from students as to what they are doing to solve problems as well.*

In chapter 1, Lickona (1992) and Borba (2001) had spoken of three possible styles of teacher relationships. I believe I had shown that the type of relationship that I was developing with my students was one as more of an ethical mentor (Borba, 2001), than the care giver (Neufeld, 2006) or the model (Lickona, 1992). Using Borba's steps to accentuating respect and defusing disrespect I directly taught respect through moral instruction. The moral instruction was accomplished through discussion, personal encouragement, storytelling and corrective feedback. The beginning of the study made it

clear to me that we (the adults in the classroom) had as much to learn about relationships and respect as the students. As the ethical mentor, I was able to incorporate Borba's model into my practice of the *Standard of Behavior* in my regular day and use her steps to learn along with the children.

Through the reevaluation of myself, using the Likert scale, at the end of week four it showed that I felt I had improved in eight of the styles, win-win had remained the same but success orientation had decreased. This was an 'aha' moment. All the relationships I had looked at on the Lickert scale were healthy adult-child relationships. I don't think one (meaning the teacher) could help but come out in a more positive light when you were focused on the positive. Integrity, which is the style that Borba's philosophy is based on, was the only area that I now had all 5's in. As the teacher I had internalized what her style was about. In actions, I believe I spoke the language of Borba's Integrity walk but I walked the walk of supportiveness (Marshall, 2001 ) and positivity (Kagan 2002), and Win-win (Kagan, 2002). In essence I had learned Borba's Integrity walk as if it were a subject I was studying for an exam but I had also learned how to overall be a more positive person and build relationships in my classroom. The teaching of respect had been my vehicle to reach this goal (Table 9).

The data throughout this research project has helped me to see myself and the students in a very different light than I did previous to the start of the project. Each of my students is a very different individual, facing their growth in respect, discipline and relationships from different developmental levels. Holly (2005) referred to this as the "big data—little data" design so that I could zoom in for a closer look at the individual things going on. Each piece of data organized through the *Standard of Behavior* has

helped me to analyze myself, the children and my discipline as a whole from five key standards. In the following chapter I will be putting it all together again as I come to conclusions about respect, relationships and discipline in reference to my classroom.

***Likert Scale:***  
***Characteristics of Healthy Adult-Child Relationships***

**By Jane Bluestein, Ph. D.**

Use this list to evaluate patterns in your current relationships with the children in your life (or even other adults in your life). If you have implemented a specific discipline or motivation approach, does it encourage relationships in which the following are true?

Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Most of the time = 4, Always = 5

1	2	3	4	5	
					<b><i>Proactivity:</i></b>
	√		x		I focused on prevention – not reaction.
			√x		I attempted to meet my children’ needs in healthy, constructive ways.
					<b><i>Win-Win:</i></b>
			√x		I motivated cooperative behavior without powering, threatening, humiliating or using conditional approval.
			√x		I was more interested in encouraging cooperation than obedience, even though the outcome behaviors usually looked about the same.
				√x	I wanted to empower my children within limits that did not disempower others.
				√x	I used my authority to set limits, offer choices, and decide what is and is not negotiable.
					<b><i>Success Orientation:</i></b>
			√	x	I asked my children to do things for which they are developmentally and experientially prepared.
		x	√		I gave clear directions.
			x	√	I set clear, pro-active and win-win boundaries.
			√x		I attempted to accommodate my children’s preferences and learning styles, allowing them to study and learn in ways that are most natural for them.
				√x	I gave my children opportunities to self-manage.
			x	√	I stayed in the present.
					<b><i>Positivity:</i></b>
			√x		I separated my children’s behavior from their worth.
		√		x	I stated boundaries as promises rather than threats.

			√	x	Our classroom is reward-oriented (that is, focused on positive outcomes for cooperation rather than punishment or negative outcomes for misbehavior).
		√		x	I thought of consequences as the <i>positive</i> outcomes for cooperation or positive behavior.
			√	x	I looked for the positive (what the child is doing right) and built on that.
				√x	I tried to maintain my sense of humor.
					<b><i>Avoiding Double Standards:</i></b>
		√		x	I modeled the kinds of behavior I would like my children to exhibit.
			√	x	I avoided talking to my children in ways I would not talk to adults.
			√x		In terms of motivation, I recognized that children desire (and deserve) to experience meaningful outcomes as a result of the behaviors they choose, just as adults do.
		√x			I avoided making a big deal over issues and incidents that involves my children just because they aren't adults.
					<b><i>Boundaries:</i></b>
		√		x	I offered my children a variety of meaningful positive consequences to motivate or encourage cooperative behavior.
		√x			I recognized my child's positive behavior without reinforcing dependence and people-pleasing.
x			√		I avoided giving warnings, as well as delayed or meaningless negative consequences. (When my child misbehaves, I was willing to withdraw privileges immediately.)
		√x			I avoided asking for excuses. (I was willing to withhold privileges and rewards until children came through on their end regardless of their excuses.)
		√		x	I built in some proactive flexibility so I can accommodate occasional problems that may arise without compromising my boundaries.
					<b><i>Supportiveness:</i></b>
			√x		I accepted the child's feelings even if I didn't understand or agree with them.
		√		x	I respected the reality of the child's experience, and was willing to validate that reality.

		√x			I have a variety of healthy outlets for children to use to get their feelings out (or be listened to) without creating problems for themselves or others.
		√x			I listened without giving advice, dismissing the problem, or interfering with the feelings.
		√	x		I asked, rather than told, to help children find solutions to problems without giving them answers or advice about what they should do.
					<b><i>Integrity:</i></b>
			√	x	I made choices based on my values and the children's needs regardless of possible reactions from others.
			√	x	I was able to deal with criticism without becoming defensive, apologetic or reactive, and without explaining in order to secure approval for what I'm doing.
				√x	I maintained regular, positive contact with other adults in the children's lives.
					<b><i>Communication:</i></b>
		x	√		I avoided using my feelings as a way to control or change others.
			√x		I took responsibility for solving problems that arose in my classroom and relationships with my children.
			x	√	I communicated positively and responsibly with the child's parent or guardian.
			√	x	When I slipped up and said or did something hurtful, I took responsibility for my behavior (rather than blaming it on something the child had done).
			√	x	When I made a mistake or failed to keep my word, I avoided making excuses and apologized to make things right.
		√	x		I was able and willing to ask for what I wanted directly.
					<b><i>Self-care</i></b>
			√	x	I modeled a commitment to personal growth.
		√	x		I knew how to set boundaries and was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
			√x		When things got to be too much for me, I was willing to reach out for help without making others responsible for my feelings or state of mind.
			√	x	I developed a strong support network and was willing to use it.

			x	√	I minimized or avoided contact with negative, toxic people and experiences.
			√	x	I used my mistakes and errors as opportunities for new learning rather than as excuses for beating myself up.
			√x		I had a variety of outlets and resources outside of my work situations for personal enrichment, relaxation, stress management and fun.
			√	x	I acknowledged what I've done right and gave myself space to grow and keep getting better!

Legend	
√	Initial results
x	Final results

*Figure ?.* Initial and Final Likert Scale

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## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations: Putting it All Together

‘Which comes first the chicken or the egg?’ could be a theme for this study. The research about building respectful relationships between adults and students has led to a new question: ‘Which comes first relationship or respect or is it possible to teach and build both at the same time?’

In chapter one I spoke of three areas that I needed to concentrate on; relationships, discipline and respect. Discipline is defined as “Teacher efforts to engage students in learning in the most positive, unobtrusive fashion possible” (as cited in Charles, 2008, p. 287). Throughout my study I used *discipline* as a verb referring to positive action that improved relationship and behavior between students and teachers. Relationship is defined as an emotional or other connection between people: the relationship between teachers and students (Dictionary.com, March 30, 2007) and respect is defined as “Showing you value others by treating them in a courteous and considerate way” (Borba, 2001, p. 8). Each ultimately played an integral role in my study. At times you will note that the findings regarding discipline, respect and relationship have crossed over into each of the other headings. This is due to the fact that I have now realized how tightly interwoven they truly are. One cannot be truly understood without some interplay from the others.

### *A Compilation of the Student Results*

As stated earlier, I set out to look at four specific criteria. The first area was to look for students who showed growth in respect. Both Bob and Mark started in the green zone and basically stayed there. Mark revisited the yellow zone in the final phase and then returned back to the green zone by the end of the full study. Borba stated that in

learning any skill, it is important to remember that change will not be automatic and that some back sliding will occur, as was the case with Mark for a very short while. The most important thing in the teaching of new habits is to be consistent.

The fact that Bob and Mark remained mainly in the green zone could have indicated that they had already met their potential in the area of respect. Through the journey journal notes and observations from both the children and me, however, it became clear they understood it and continued to show further growth in this area. It appeared they continued to move to higher thinking levels in the area of respect.

Nick was the success case. He started out in the red zone for both the initial and mid quick scale scoring period but by the last four weeks he moved to the yellow and then into the green. His actions and happiness, in the classroom, indicated that not only was he acting on what he was learning but he was internalizing it as well.

Next, I looked at growth in relationships between the students. Again, Bob and Mark were in the green zone and remained there throughout the study. As in the area of respect, their actions, observations, and our journal journey notes indicated the depth of their understanding and growth. Nick continued to be our success story. He moved from the red zone at the beginning of the study to the yellow zone by the final phase of the study, where he continued to stay by the end of the full study. It was obvious in Nick's actions that he had now learned to build relationships in an appropriate, acceptable way.

The results of the sociogram and *B.C. Quick Scale* indicated by the end of the study that there was an important correlation between the students' level of respect and relationships. Over the four possible recordings of their growth, Bob remained in the green zone for both respect and relationships. Nick's scores in respect and relationships

correlated three out of four times and Mark's scores showed correlation two out of four times. Fred, Robert, Steve, and Corinne only showed correlation in one area. Michael did not show correlations in respect and relationships at any time throughout the study. This indicated to me that relationships and respect need to be linked at the same approximately developmental level in order for children to be able to be open to learning and internalize what they have been taught.

The last set of criteria I looked at was significant findings in any areas throughout the study with individual children. In the area of relationships, Corinne, Michael, and Robert all seemed to be struggling uphill and the struggle seemed to only get worse as the study progressed. After looking more closely at the study and many observation notes and teacher journal entries the picture became clearer. Corinne was added to the study for this exact reason. Corinne had started out the study in the yellow and had eventually fallen into the red. It was never clear why she had not been chosen by others to work and sit with them. It could have been possible that I was attempting to collect too much data causing me to over simplify the importance of the sociogram and the need to have a deeper understanding of the significance behind it. It did become clear to me, however that I had defined children who were having trouble with relationships and respect as those children who caused a disruption in the class and not children who were quite and appeared well behaved.

Michael had gone from the green to the yellow throughout the study, in the area of respect. Michael had been the class clown and had made his friendships through entertaining the class. As the study progressed, the children's definition of respect did not include bathroom humour and caused the children to not choose Michael as readily on

their sociogram chart. This knowledge appeared to affect Michael both in the areas of respect and relationships.

I don't think Robert had ever really formed a relationship with me or any of the students in the classroom. His lack of initial relationship building and introduction to the discipline in the classroom when he arrived earlier in the year had put him at a detriment. As the study progressed, he took a detour and quit trying to make friends in his previous style and began enforcing the rules of respect in the classroom. This did not sit well with the other students and Robert's uphill climb became steeper and steeper.

In the area of relationships only Fred had begun an uphill battle by the end of the study. This had to do with his inability to reconnect with Ms. J. after she had returned back to the classroom. It was becoming clearer how important "collecting" was to this process.

### *Conclusions*

#### *Respect*

In the case of this study, there were not significant outcomes to teaching respect over a one month intense program. Borba (2001) stated that the core of moral development is empathy, conscience, and self-control. Without these three being fully developed the ability to show respect and build relationships will be very difficult. Could the problem for my students have been that these three areas were still underdeveloped in them? Research indicated that children who are at risk may experience difficulty making and keeping friends and often isolate themselves or withdraw or reject from advances of friendship. Often they are overly sensitive and anger easily. They can be impulsive, anxious, and insecure, have low self-esteem and are frequently labeled the school bullies.

Others are shy and rely on the adults of the school to be their buddies. (Borba,2005). My students all began the study with different home lives, influences and teachings. They came to the table all in different places. They had strengths in some areas but were still lost in other areas. The question remains then as to how long this process would take to actually help these children grow in the area of respect? Borba (2001) reminded us that if we looked at these virtues on a moral reasoning scale chronologically, the three (empathy, conscience, and self-control) could take a child from birth to approximately age twenty and respect is to follow these three. I do, however, believe this was a good basis or starting point for the children. Many of the children had been exposed to respect in their pasts but few had been exposed to defusing disrespect. This is why many of our recess problems kept revisiting us.

There is the opinion, also, that it is not possible to teach respect in the classroom at all. Considering that only three students showed significant improvement, two students showed a significant decline and three remained fairly neutral throughout the study. It may be considered, also, that when respect in the negative form is brought to the forefront of our minds that this may be what we concentrate on rather than our ability to defuse disrespect.

There were individual significant positive outcomes, however, as in the case of Bob, Mark and Nick. In each of these cases it is noted that there was a definite correlation between their ability to internalize respect and relationship. This indicates to me that relationships played a much bigger role in our ability to teach values. It indicated, as well, that relationships impact our teaching and ability to internalize what we are being taught.

This brings me to ask if it is possible that the student's academic ability may have something to do with their ability to internalize this learning. In the cases of Bob, Mark, and Nick all were fairly bright children who experienced little difficulty with regular classroom school work. Corinne, Fred, Michael and Robert all struggled in their daily academics as well as in the areas of respect and/or relationships.

### *Relationships*

Neufeld (2006) was clear on his belief that it is essential that we establish the rules of engagement if we are to develop meaningful, positive relationships. Once these are established then the context for teaching and learning is set. Most of the children showed growth throughout the study while working with me (their teacher). It is essential to acknowledge that they had spent almost six months, having our routines formed and developing a relationship with me prior to the study, allowing us to dive right into the area of respect. The Teacher candidate, Ms. J. had a more difficult time at first getting the children to show respect with her when she took over more of the teaching. Even though she had previously been in the classroom for a five week period in the first term the children needed the time to reestablish their relationship with her before they were willing to show her respect or work with her.

### *Discipline*

As my study came to a close I finally realized that Borba's philosophy is a form of discipline to be taught and as a piece of what could make a good healthy relationship. Respect needs to be taught. It is not something that we are just born knowing how to do. There are specific principles Borba lays out to be followed but what you do is left up to you to fit with your personality and teaching style and who your children for that current

year are. The steps for accentuating respect and defusing disrespect are the positive actions that were being used to improve relationships and behavior between students and teachers.

I will continue to research and be an advocate for the teaching of values due to the success of Nick. Though I might not have the formula right, I do know that something in our study worked for Nick.

In order to do this, teachers need to be very specific in the skills that we want the children to learn and give them time to practice and see these skills being modeled. They need to be practiced, to grow, and most important to be internalized so they can be used in many different situations. The Standard of Behavior provides opportunities for this to happen through the format of establishing, modeling, teaching, responding professionally and restoring to the community. All of these areas were able to be seen to varying degrees of success throughout the study with my children.

Children need to have time to start trying these newly learned skills and to revisit their old ways along their journey. Steven, Fred, Bob, Nick and Robert all experienced these revisits throughout out the study. All of the students benefited in some way from the study even if it only went as far as an introduction to respect and help the adults reevaluate their relationships with some of the students. There were other circumstances that interfered with or influenced the students learning throughout the study. Corinne and Steve did not get as much practice of what they were learning throughout the study due to the lack of participation. Fred and Steve had more opportunities to practice how to be respectful to each other due to their clash of respectful relationship skills to each other, as was also the case with Robert and most of the students he came in contact with. In these

cases a six week study was not enough time to work out the relationship or respect issues they had with each other. In Mark's case the in class teaching and modeling was very helpful and made him more aware of other areas he wanted to work on, but did not branch out far enough in our internalizing to different situations to give him the confidence to solve his problems with friends outside of the school.

*My Personal Reflections*

In answer to the question 'Which comes first relationship or respect or is it possible to teach and build both at the same time?' based on the data from this study I would, without hesitation, agree with Littkey and Allen (1999). Without positive relationships between teachers and students, children are not willing to focus on anything we are trying to teach them. We must first build up positive relationships between students and adults as well as cultivating the relationships between the children. This is a process that takes time, caring, listening, observations and discussion. Once a positive relationship foundation has been built then you may help them to learn and internalize values such as respect amongst the people they encounter. Every child is different and therefore will need you as the teacher to keep Neufeld's rules of engagement forefront in your mind if we are to reach these children. The traditional way of discipline works well with children who don't need it but does not work with children who do need it according to Neufeld (2005).

I would agree with the research completed by The Collaborative for Academics, Social and Emotional Learning (2005). Respect, being a lifelong learning requires cultivation over time. Like Borba (2005) I, also, believe that early intervention is most appropriate for breaking negative trends. There may, also, be other factors that come into

play such as extenuating circumstances in their lives outside of the classroom that we have no control over (hunger, abuse, etc.). Though this project did not look at the home as a base line for experiences in the areas of relationship and respect it is evident that some children have arrived at school with more or less self-respect than others. I believe their relationships at home would have a lot to say towards the results of this study if it had been given a voice.

As I remember the young girl I was back in high school, it is now clear to me that without any form of a relationship between my drama teacher and I, there was no context for him to know my moral beliefs or understand why I was so readily willing to leave my dream behind. Being one class of many throughout the day, I'm guessing it had never crossed his mind how important it might be to "collect" and build a relationship with his students in order to have all his students succeed or to evolve his lesson of anger into a accentuating respect and defusing disrespect lesson.

*Continuing the Cycle in my Classroom*

For teachers who want to teach respect in their classroom, I would like to share what I have learned from this study and how I plan to move this research into the next cycle in my own classroom. The main thing that I have been made aware of is that discipline and relationships must be established first before it will be possible to teach values.

Sometimes it helps to have what we as teachers do in the area of relationships spelled out directly. The use of the healthy adult-child relationship scale was good in order to see the positive of what we do in the classroom. However, it is also useful to have it spelled out directly as to what we do in the negative so that we can "call it" as

Borba suggests and “defuse it”. While this study made me aware of what my philosophy is for relationships in my classroom it did not give me any specific criticism to help me to improve my ways with the children. In the future I would request the support of a peer coach in my classroom periodically to assist me in having a better understanding of my positive and negative discipline practices. This would allow me to continue the action research cycle in order to improve on the quality of instruction in my classroom. I will continue incorporating “collecting” techniques in my classroom to gather the children in to me and strengthen the building of relationships.

As for the relationships directly between children and the classroom as a whole, it is essential that we as teacher, through sociograms, or some other form of observations take closer note of all children in the classroom even those that are more on the quiet side. Just because they seem to be what a classroom teacher’s happy, healthy student would be does not mean you have the whole picture. I made a habit out of switching my children’s seats once a month. I thought this was a good way for them to get to know the other children in the classroom. In the future, I plan to use the sociogram on a monthly basis to allow the children to have some say as to who they will sit with each month. In addition I will ask questions regarding their choices to give me more insight into their thinking process to work with.

I will, also, develop relationship building opportunities for my students and me to connect on a personal level. I plan to spend some lunch hour opportunities to eat lunch with some of my children at school. (I stay at school for lunch most days.) While participating in the study one of the students had to eat lunch at school while waiting for a sibling to pick him up. Because he was not in lunch program the student would have

had to eat in the office while waiting. I invited him to eat lunch with me in the classroom. This invitation and thirty minutes of time developed a relationship for this child that I never thought possible. The relationship that adults and children develop together will give us so much more knowledge to work with these children. Corinne's year could have been much more meaningful if I had seen past the quiet, hard working child and built more of a relationship with her. Nick blossomed once he felt that he was worthy of self-care (Gossen, 2004) and that he was being supported (Marshall, 2001). His poor choices at the beginning of the year had affected the building of a relationship between him and me. Once we got passed the negative and focused on the positive we were able to make great strides.

Throughout the six weeks study I have learned that in order to truly have these life long skills internalized so that they can be used automatically in different situations and setting they must be focused on for a period longer than six weeks. Borba suggested in her own writing (2001) that the attitude of respect develops slowly for children. It must be practiced on a daily basis in order to have the chance to experience and internalize it. Bluestein (2001) stated that children need a consistent twenty-one days of intense instruction, whether through teaching, modeling or a number of different strategies in order to develop or reduce negative behavior. Had it been a longer study Steve and Fred might have made even further progress, Corinne might have surfaced to the adults in the classroom, and relationships might have been developed with Robert. This is yet to be seen.

I will continue to teach about respect throughout the year. My school was incorporating the teaching of respect for a one month period. Borba suggested that a

study of teaching values should be monitored over a one year time frame. I am suggesting that if respect is the value that is important to you, your classroom and your school that you continue to establish, model, teach, and reinforce this as long as you have contact with these students. They may not have internalized what you have taught but they will have been exposed to it, which is always worth something. As a form of research, I would suggest this study be used again over at least a one year period to reevaluate this.

### *Future Studies*

One of the areas I still have to question is how much their social emotional level plays a part in this. Overall, Bob had been able to internalize and demonstrate more of the skills accentuated in Borba's study than any of the other students that I looked at. In class he was also more advanced in most of his subject areas and more confident in himself. Robert struggled with the respect and relationship skills throughout the study. He, also, struggled in his academic areas more than any of the other students. Is there a direct correlation between the social emotional and academic? A study looking at this might help us to understand children's development in respect and relationships better.

In some cultures the need to look at respect or lack of respect in schools may not be a concern. Are their culturally performed practices that we could adopt that would make a difference? Due to the fact that my group of children came from many different heritages, it may be helpful to be more aware of cultural practices that are used by their families' homes and homelands as a form of positive discipline.

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## Appendix A: Human Ethics Approval Certificate

**APPROVAL CERTIFICATE**

14 February 2008

**TO:** Eleanor Maine (Advisor K. Seifert)  
Principal Investigator

**FROM:** Stan Straw, Chair  
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

**Re:** Protocol #E2007:094  
“Building Positive, Respectful Relationships between Adults and Students in a Classroom Community”

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

**Please note:**

- if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Kathryn Bartmanovich, Research Grants & Contract Services (fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

**The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study** (available at: [http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors\\_ethics\\_human\\_REB\\_forms\\_guidelines.html](http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html)) **in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

## Appendix B: Participant Consent Letter

*Research Project Title:* Building Positive, Respectful Relationships between Adults and Students in a Classroom Community

*Researcher:* Eleanor Maine

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask.

Dear Parents:

As part of our regular classroom instruction, your child will be receiving instruction on accentuating respect and eliminating disrespect. This social responsibility monthly goal study will begin on February 1, 2008 and be completed on March 14, 2008. In addition to this classroom instruction, I am also conducting a study entitled *Building Positive, Respectful Relationships between Adults and Students in a Classroom Community*. This research is part of the requirements for a Master of Education degree in Inclusive Special Education through the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology at the University of Manitoba.

The purpose of this research project is to look at interaction between teachers and students in the classroom in regards to respect and the relationships they develop with each other. Through this study I intend to look at my own discipline and relationship practices and the impact it has on my grade one students. As well, I will implement a program to accentuate respect and eliminate disrespect in students in the classroom.

During our daily English Language Arts time I will be teaching my grade one students about eliminating disrespect and accentuating respect. I will be monitoring their behavior and language according to what they have been learning through their interaction with each other during their English Language Arts center time, as well as monitoring what they write in a communication journal to me. I will, also, look at their circle of friends consist of in the classroom in order to understand classroom relationships better.

The study is not based on your child in particular but on early years students and how teachers and students build respect and relationships in order to make their school community and educational years prosperous.

In accordance with the University's standards for ethical research, the identities of students will be protected. No child will be identified, by name in reporting the results of the study. If a reference is made to certain children they will be given different names to protect their privacy and insure confidentiality of information. It may be required to record on a tape recorder our lesson times in order for me to accurately document what

students have said. All of my observation notes and collected samples of student work will be kept secure in a locked cabinet in my home. No one other than I will have access to any information which includes the identity of the child. As in my usual practice, all classroom information that is collected will be held in the locked cabinet and destroyed after one year.

Your permission for your child's responses to the teaching intervention to be used in the research must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission. The instruction in the classroom will be provided to all children regardless of whether or not the results of that instruction are used for my research. This study is separate from and will not effect their grades in anyway. In fact, there are no grades awarded to this unit whether they are part of the study or not. In order to avoid any pressures you might feel because I am your child's teacher, I have asked that all returned consent forms to be sent to the office to be placed in a envelope addressed to Mrs. ( a parent representative in the school), not to me. (Parent representative) will not reveal the names to me until I have completed the teaching of the unit and can be reached at (phone number of parent representative) for further information. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact my principal(Principal) (school phone number), or my research supervisor, Dr. K. Seifert. 474-9859 or [seifert@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:seifert@cc.umanitoba.ca) respecting this study.

There are no known or anticipated risks to your child associated with giving consent for information to be used in this study. All classes and students will take part in a school initiative to embrace in our daily learning in the classroom the school's motto, "Our differences make us strong. Together we practice kindness, safety, respect and responsibility." Each month is designated to the teaching of, through classroom activities and family groups, one of these values (kindness, safety, respect and responsibility). My study is simply a glimpse at what we are already doing in the school but more intensely on what I am doing with my students in my classroom. The benefit to participating would be any knowledge in regards to accentuating respect or eliminating disrespect that the student is able to internalize and behave accordingly daily. As well, the ability to build more positive relationships with adults and students in the classroom would be a benefit. A copy of the final written research report will be left in the school and the principal and Parent Advisory Council will be informed when it is available to be viewed by interested parties. I will, also, send home a copy of your child's evaluation in regards to their development in the area of respect and a 1 – 2 page summary of the study results.

I am available at your convenience to answer any questions you may have. I may be reached at the school (phone number) or by e-mail [emaine@peminatrails.ca](mailto:emaine@peminatrails.ca).

Sincerely,

Eleanor Maine  
Dalhousie Elementary School

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

I give my consent for examples of my child's classroom work to be included, under a pseudonym, in Eleanor Maine's Master's Project for the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, at the University of Manitoba.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant's Parent	Signature	Date
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***Please talk about this with your child and if they consent, have them sign the form.***

Student Consent

I have asked my child, \_\_\_\_\_, who has indicated consent to have examples based on their work used in the Masters Project report.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participating student	Student's signature	Date
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***A copy of this consent form may be kept by you, and the signed, returned copy will be held by, ( name ) a parent within the school who has children in grades other than grade one.***

## Appendix C: Superintendent Consent Letter

To: The Superintendent's Department

As a follow up to our conversation in regards to my thesis action research in my classroom, I would like to take this opportunity to share the exact nature of my research.

The purpose of this study is an ongoing conversation regarding the discipline, relationships and respect reciprocated between adults and students in my grade one classroom. The students and I will work together for a one month period incorporating the social goal of the month "respect" into our daily routines. This will be followed by a two week monitoring phase on my part to see if once we have completed our teaching if the learning has been internalized into their daily routines or not.

My original interest for this study was to look at the respect or lack of, found in schools today. As I read the literature on respect in the classroom, it became clear to me that the areas of discipline, relationships, and respect are intertwined and are all required in order to have a better understanding of the level of respect we find in classrooms. Throughout my study, I will look more closely at the discipline, relationships, and respect between adults and children in my grade one classroom. The need for classroom discipline has been universally agreed upon. It is the mechanics of the discipline that theorists have questioned over the years. For the discussions in this paper, discipline is the teacher control and efforts to engage students in learning in the most positive, unobtrusive fashion possible (what the teacher does). The relationship is what is created, negatively or positively from the discipline, and the respect or disrespect is what teachers receive from their students in return (what the student does).

In order to understand this issue further, I intend to look at my own discipline and relationship practices and the impact it has on my grade one students. As well, I will implement Michelle Borba's steps to accentuate respect and eliminate disrespect in students in the classroom.

I will be studying relationships through a student sociogram and a teacher Likert scale on healthy adult-child relationships. In the area of respect student's skill and growth will be monitored according to their placement on the Continuum of Positive behavior, where the teacher will chart where the students are in the class. The British Columbia Quick Scale will show in more specifics where their strengths and weakness fall in the area of respect. These tools will be used at the beginning, middle and end of the study to compare the amount of growth throughout the study. The students and teacher will record their journey as well on a journey map, designed with language the children can understand and use to show how they feel their journey is going.

At the end of the study the students will have an opportunity to design their own code of conduct emphasizing what they were able to get out of the project. This will be followed by the teacher filling out a final quick scale on students and a healthy adult-

child relationships Likert scale two weeks after the student involvement part of the study has been completed.

At the completion of my study, I will send a report on the results to you. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your interest and allowing me to do my thesis project in my classroom.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Maine

## Appendix D: Principal's Consent Letter

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