

1990

## Iowa teachers of the year: a case study

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**McKay, Joane Williams, Ph.D.**

**Iowa State University, 1990**

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**Iowa teachers of the year : A case study**

**by**

**Joane Williams McKay**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department: Professional Studies in Education  
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**Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa  
1990**

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

" . . . I don't want to be a mediocre teacher,  
I want to be one of the best."

– excerpt from student teacher  
autobiographical statement  
(McKay, 1961)

### Introduction

The student teacher who declares a desire to be "one of the best" holds an image or vision of what it means to be an outstanding teacher. Yet, that same student may be at a loss when faced with describing the qualities and characteristics of an outstanding teacher. Research on teaching is a "continuing attempt to find out what makes one teacher successful while another is ineffective" (Fant, Hill, Lee, & Landes, 1985, p. 3). In addressing the need for a coherent program of teacher preparation, Lanier (1984) suggests that there is a need for "real-life exemplars of excellence." Cruickshank (1986) observes that "short of the search for the Holy Grail, there hardly has been a human quest more persistently and doggedly pursued than the hunt for the 'good' teacher" (p. 1). Van Schaack and Glick (1982) believe that "the elusive essence of the superlative teacher . . . can be explored by entering the superlative teacher's world and observing what they do" (p. 8).

Although the literature is replete with studies on effective teaching, Wiedmer (1983) argues that a limited amount of research has been conducted on outstanding teachers to determine what contributes to outstanding teaching abilities or why select individuals are particularly

successful classroom teachers. Wiedmer (1983) contends that studies done in the past often list the personal qualities and/or behaviors of select groups of teachers, but that no comprehensive study has been conducted on those persons identified by each state as a "representative of the best." Costa and Garmston (1987) conclude that "Superior teachers do not simply behave. Rather there is a complex pattern of intellectual functions that are basic to those teaching behaviors" (p. 7). While studies done in the past present lists of personal qualities and/or behaviors of teachers that may result in a teacher being evaluated as outstanding, excellent, or above-average, the lack of in-depth observations of outstanding teachers is apparent in the literature. Furthermore, Dillon (1989) suggests "the answer to 'what makes an effective teacher?' depends on the theoretical perspective and research methodology selected by the researcher" (p. 1).

To provide a background for the theoretical perspective and the research methodology, the researcher presents a comprehensive review of the literature on teacher effectiveness and the Teacher of the Year program. The review of effective teacher literature will illuminate characteristics of outstanding teachers as discovered from the quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The review of the Teacher of the Year literature will contribute the historical perspective of the Teacher of the Year program by providing a rationale for the selection of those persons identified and honored as outstanding teachers. Concurrently, a solid foundation for the participant selection for this study will be provided by the Teacher of the Year literature.

### Overview of effective teaching literature

Lanier (1984) states that three general conceptions are represented in the literature and "have paralleled the dominant research paradigms on effective teachers and teaching" (p. 6). In a chronological review of the evolution of effective teaching research, Lanier (1984) suggests that "the teacher as an effective person, the teacher as a skilled performer, and the teacher as a professional decisionmaker" have been the three conceptions that have evolved (p. 6).

Lanier's (1984) review supports Bridgewater's (1983) conclusion: "the quest for a valid index of teacher effectiveness has been one of the elusive targets in the history of educational research" (p. 1). Several recent studies (Berliner, 1986; Brophy & Good, 1983; Flanders, 1970; Gage, 1984; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986) on the effective teacher use quantitative research methodology. Dillon (1989) suggests that "previous research, predominantly process-product research, has identified particular behaviors that are recommended for use by teachers who want to be effective" and concludes that:

... a more valid indicator of the nature of effective teaching and meaningful learning requires long-term observation in classrooms, talking with teachers and students, and attempting to understand how and why participants act as they do during lessons. (p. 256)

Lortie (1975) provided a rationale for an in-depth look at a teacher's work:

Despite their pivotal role, public schools have received relatively little sociological study. Schooling is long on prescription, short on description. That is nowhere more evident than in the case

of the two million persons who teach in the public schools . . . .  
Although books and articles instructing teachers on how they  
should behave are legion, empirical studies of teaching work--  
and the outlook of those who staff the schools--remain rare.  
(p. vii)

Another way of looking at the paradigms of effective teaching is to  
examine the influences on the socialization of teachers. Lortie (1975)  
concluded that "socialization is a subjective process--it is something that  
happens to people as they move through a series of structured experiences  
and internalize the subculture of the group" (p. 61). Petersen (1989)  
suggested that the socialization process included not only developing  
teaching strategies and methodologies, but also learning the values,  
attitudes, norms, behavioral patterns, and interests of the profession.

From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the findings of the research  
community influenced lists of behavioral performances that were associated  
with effective teaching. In reviewing the changing views and the gradual  
shift in research and practice for teacher education, Lanier (1984) states that  
"the endless lists of behavioral performances lacked coherence in terms of  
their overall relationship to the preparation of a more effective teacher"  
(p. 17).

The research of the 1980s indicates that discriminating factors  
generally differentiate effective teachers from ineffective teachers. The  
common traits or characteristics include: enthusiasm for teaching, self-  
confidence, communicative skills, Socratic approach to teaching, warmth,  
concern for students, avoidance of failure in students, and professionalism

(Van Schaack & Glick, 1982; Wiedmer, 1983). However, the elusive essence of the ethos of outstanding teachers has not been documented in the literature.

Ethos is Greek for disposition, character. Ethos, then, is defined as the characteristic and distinguishing attitudes and habits of a racial, political, occupational, or other group. Lortie's (1975) work has portrayed the ethos of the teaching profession--that pattern of orientations and sentiments that is peculiar to teachers. In this study, ethos is defined as the pattern of pre-occupations, orientations, beliefs, and preferences which are unique to persons in a particular group. The understanding of the culture of a group is an important element in examining the ethos of a group. Spradley (1980) defined culture as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior" (p. 6). Historically, then, when researchers have investigated the ethos of the teaching profession, the focus has included the culture, orientations, beliefs and preferences of the group.

Lortie (1975) approached the study of ethos from two different perspectives and found the same themes. "Conservatism, individualism, and presentism are significant components in the ethos of American classroom teachers" (Lortie, 1975, p. 212). Furthermore, Lortie's study suggested that "teacher-teacher interaction did not seem to play a critical part in the work life of the respondents" (p. 192).

Interest in the ethos of the teaching profession has also led researchers toward an interest in examining socialization. Merton, Reader, and Kendall (1957) defined socialization as the process by which people selectively acquire the attitudes, values, beliefs, skills, and knowledge (in

short, the culture) current in groups to which they are or seek to become a member. Zeichner (1984) suggested that biography is a powerful influence on teacher development. Petersen (1989) reported that philosophical differences in conceptualizing and describing the socialization process are apparent, but that teachers do learn and change with experience; that particular change is called socialization.

The study of a classroom and the teacher's interaction within that classroom is not without precedent. Bolster (1983) argues that explanations of classroom life are "often more clearly understood and accepted by practitioners toward whom the research is aimed" (p. 256). Ryan (1982) argues that researchers can only begin to uncover knowledge about socialization issues when observations are made in the appropriate setting. Later, Crow (1987) holds that "in order for the subtleties of the socialization process to be understood, the field must first begin to design studies that capture the richness of life within a particular teacher education context by using qualitative research methods" (p. 8).

More recently, the need to study effective teachers has also been documented (Barr, 1986; Berliner, 1986; Dillon, 1989; Easterly, 1983; Knowles, 1988; Smyth, 1989). Berliner (1986) noted that "we need to find and study expert and experienced teachers . . . they can, more than most teachers, provide us with the cases--the richly detailed descriptions of instructional events--that should form a part of teacher education programs" (p. 5). Smyth (1989) concludes that "teachers must reflect on the reasons that they teach as they do and challenges teachers to describe what they do, inform what their actions mean, confront how they came to be the kind of teacher they are, and



examine how they might do things differently" (p. 5). Added to this understanding is Knowles (1988) belief that teacher biographies (historical perspectives on how teachers developed teaching attitudes, values, and beliefs over time) are believed to be increasingly important in understanding the process of teacher socialization.

From a qualitative research perspective, Petersen (1989) argues that teacher effectiveness develops over time through the influences of specific socializing variables as reported in the literature. Petersen (1989) contends that past experiences with effective teachers as role models serve to perpetuate effective teaching capabilities. The socializing variables cited in the literature that impact on socializing teachers into the teaching profession include:

(a) key individuals; (b) cooperating teacher/university supervisor; (c) ecological characteristics of classrooms; (d) student teacher/cooperating teacher similarities and differences; (e) bureaucratic characteristics of schools; (f) changes in attitudes, values, beliefs, skills, and knowledge; (g) role expectations; (h) student teacher biography; (i) communication skills and (j) acquiring teacher behavior. (p. 8)

While the eleven categories of socializing influences are far from mutually exclusive, Petersen's (1989) research strongly documents that outstanding teacher traits develop over time and are encouraged through a process of spaced repetition. Spaced repetition suggests that future teachers experience role models over time (i.e., a teacher who the future teacher had in sixth grade, and a teacher who the future teacher had in ninth grade may have modeled the outstanding teacher traits).

Van Schaack and Glick (1982) embarked on their study of superlative teachers by asking: (a) How does such a teacher feel, think, and act? (b) Is there a predictable pattern that describes outstanding teachers at all educational levels? (c) Are there any common threads of personality, philosophy, and or style that weave through their teaching excellence? (d) What is the essence of superlative teaching? and (e) Can this essence be developed in those who would teach? (p. 8). Dillon (1989) proposed that a study of "how one teacher and his students constructed the sociocultural organization in his classroom" would be helpful to those interested in the description and interpretation of effective teachers (p. 256).

In contrast, the effective teaching literature is generally predicated upon surveying random samples of teachers. Van Schaack and Glick (1982) were the first to look into the classroom of persons selected as Teachers of the Year. The authors concluded that "the elusive essence of the superlative teacher can be researched by focusing on gifted teachers who are acknowledged by their students, peers, and other professionals as being at the top of their profession" (p. 8).

Thus, selecting outstanding teachers for study seems an appropriate approach. Recipients of State Teacher of the Year Awards seem to be a natural group from which to select. The process of selection by which a teacher becomes a Teacher of the Year is important to the focus of this research. A brief review of the Teacher of the Year literature follows.

### Overview of the teacher of the year program

The United States Office of Education began the National Teacher of the Year Program in 1952 in cooperation with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Teacher of the Year Award is the oldest ongoing award program honoring classroom teachers. The focus of the Teacher of the Year Program is not on the "best" teacher but on a selection of teachers who are representatives of excellent teachers across states and the nation.

Miller (1986) outlines how State Teacher of the Year award winners are selected. Each year, students, teachers, teachers' organizations, parents, school administrators, or other nominating bodies choose individuals to be State Teachers of the Year. Wiedmer (1983) points out that each state's candidate must teach in a state-approved or accredited school, prekindergarten through grade twelve, and plan to continue in an active teaching status. Junior college instructors, university teachers, and administrative and/or supervisory personnel are not eligible for Teacher of the Year nomination.

The Council of Chief State School Officers recommends that selection committees take into consideration the nominated candidate's personal and professional traits and accomplishments when making selections. Each state is responsible for developing state guidelines, selection procedures, and time lines for the selection of the State Teacher of the Year.

On the local level, superintendents nominate Teacher of the Year candidates from their districts. Nomination forms must be signed by the superintendent and include at least a one-page letter of recommendation written by the superintendent in support of the candidates. Benton (1987)

states that "nominees should be exceptionally skilled and dedicated classroom teachers who are planning to continue in active teaching status" (p. 2).

A portfolio is required for each candidate that includes information on six areas: (a) biographical information, (b) professional preparation and experience, (c) philosophy of teaching, (d) teaching strengths and techniques, (e) leadership and service, and (f) appendix. Pertinent letters and other applicable materials from administrators, colleagues, students, and community personnel are included in the appendix in support of statements for areas (d) and (e).

In Iowa, five finalist candidates are named during the month of October and are invited for interviews with an appointed committee of Department of Education officials, Iowa State Education Association representatives, and business and community leaders. No classroom teachers are on the selection committee. The Iowa Teacher of the Year is named upon a thorough review of the portfolio combined with the recommendations and interview information.

#### Statement of the problem

The problem is that the body of literature on effective teaching lacks in-depth descriptions of persons identified as outstanding teachers. The literature exhibits a paucity of descriptions of outstanding teachers; furthermore, researchers have not used outstanding teaching as a criterion in defining effective teachers (Berliner, 1986; Dillon, 1989; Easterly, 1986;

Lortie, 1975). This study will extend the knowledge base by providing an in-depth description of the ethos of three award-winning Iowa Teachers of the Year.

#### Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to present a detailed and comprehensive description of ethos of three teachers who have been selected as Iowa Teachers of the Year. This study is a qualitative study honoring the canons and assumptions of evidence suggested by Erickson (1986). Collection of data over a three month period of time comprised an interweaving of interviews with three Iowa Teachers of the Year, participant observation of Teachers' of the Year classrooms, and semi-structured interviews with students, parents and principals.

Based on the preliminary literature review which confirmed that becoming and being an effective teacher is very complex, the researcher proposed the two major components essential in question formulation at the broadest level--(1) key individuals and (2) ecological characteristics of the classroom. Specifically, the research questions are: (1) Who are the key individuals influencing the shaping of attitudes, values, and beliefs of these Iowa Teachers of the Year? (2) What are the ecological characteristics of the classroom that influence the behavior in the teaching environment for these Iowa Teachers of the Year? The study of Easterly (1983) on outstanding elementary teachers provides some insight to the first question. She states that "clearly, the predominant influences on this group of outstanding elementary teachers were other teachers--teachers whom they respected--

teachers who had reached out and encouraged them" (p. 13). Additional research is needed to study the predominant influences by outstanding teachers. Doyle and Ponder (1975) defined the classroom ecological system as "that network of interconnected processes and events which impinges upon behavior in the teaching environment" (p. 183). This is the definition selected for investigating the second question.

Therefore, this study places emphasis on determining the individuals who had shaped the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the teacher. Secondly, the researcher was particularly interested in actions and patterns of actions the teachers displayed during daily classroom lessons that may provide a positive learning environment. Using the two basic research questions as the underpinnings of the study, the researcher completed a thorough review of literature and developed six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of key individuals and six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of ecological characteristics. In addition, the researcher selected questions from these initial twelve sub-questions as a focus for the observations. For example, the researcher chose to observe the verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns of action in the classroom as a direct outgrowth of question number nine, "What verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns of action does the Teacher of the Year display as he/she interacts with students?" (See Appendix A for list of research questions).

## Overview of Methodology

### Research design

Based on the purpose of this study and a qualitative approach to address the research questions, the researcher selected a case study research design for investigating the ethos of selected Teachers of the Year. Erickson (1986) stated that:

Interpretive, participant observational fieldwork has been used in the social sciences as a research method for about seven years. Fieldwork research involves (a) intensive, long-term participation in a field setting; (b) carefully recording of what happens in the setting by writing field notes and collecting other kinds of documentary evidence (e.g. memos, records, examples of student work, audiotapes, videotapes); and (c) subsequent analytic reflection on the documentary record obtained in the field, and reporting by means of detailed description, using narrative vignettes and direct quotes from interviews . . . (p. 121)

Yin (1989) provides a focused understanding of the interpretive study with a definition of case study design as an empirical inquiry that: "investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23). Knowles (1988) argues that "the reflective nature of the case study gives opportunities for delving into teachers' past experiences in relation to their present thinking and classroom actions" (p. 2).

Information was gathered by three-day, on-site visitations in each of the teacher's classroom. Material gathered during the on-site visitations included script-tape notes, audio cassette recordings, videotaped segments and program-related artifacts.

An additional source of information for the items relating to key individuals and questions relating to ecological characteristics of the classroom was obtained by a one to two hour interview with the Teacher of the Year using the guided interview format. The purpose of the interviews was to provide a source of evidence to confirm what had been observed in the classroom and to probe for the reasons why a teacher chose to interact as she did within the classroom setting.

Information from newspaper articles is available because these teachers have received attention in the print media during the year that they were named Teacher of the Year. The researcher had access to several artifacts including lesson plans, the classroom teacher's resume, curriculum guides, and packets of teaching materials developed by the classroom teacher.

Selection of participants. The school sites, as well as the teacher in the observed classroom, were chosen in a purposive manner (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Three previous studies (McKay, 1987; Van Schaack & Glick, 1982; Wiedmer, 1983) provided the basis for the selection of the specific Teachers of the Year to be studied. Van Schaack and Glick (1982) were the first researchers to go into the classrooms of elementary and secondary school teachers who were finalists or winners of National Teacher of the Year competition. Wiedmer (1983) extended the knowledge base with the initial research that was national in scope on the Teachers of the Year 1978-1982. Finally, McKay (1987) narrowed the research focus to look at the interests, work habits, attitudes, and characteristics of Teachers' of the Year, 1981-1983, in a ten-state area in the Midwest including Iowa. Based on these studies the researcher determined that the selected teachers should be



representative of the elementary, middle school, and high school divisions in the public schools (i.e., grades K-6, 7-8, and 9-12). Inasmuch as the Teacher of the Year program stipulates that Teachers of the Year must be classroom teachers who are continuing to teach, the researcher determined that the teachers selected for this study should be currently teaching in an Iowa public school. Because of financial limitations of the researcher, the investigation was limited to the Iowa Teachers of the Year in the last decade. The three teachers who met this criterion included: Teacher A, a sixth grade teacher teaching in an elementary school in a rural Iowa community; Teacher B, a middle school teacher teaching in seventh and eighth grades in a rural Iowa community; and Teacher C, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in an Iowa high school in a city setting.

Assumptions. There are two assumptions that are important for interpreting this research. The first is that Teachers of the Year act in the classroom on the basis of what they believe it means to be a teacher. Knowles (1988) suggests that "teaching practice is to some degree a reflection of school and education-related life experiences and the resultant ordering of personal priorities and beliefs about teaching" (p. 8).

The second assumption is that a case study, using qualitative data collection methods, can uncover a complex set of data. According to Erickson (1986, p. 146), to analyze data from qualitative studies is to "generate empirical assertions, largely through induction" and to "establish an evidentiary warrant" for these assertions by systematically searching for disconfirming as well as confirming data. Through a repeated and thorough reading of the entire data record accumulated from the on-site visitations of

the three Iowa Teachers of the Year, the researcher provided a detailed and comprehensive description of the ethos of three teachers who have been selected as Iowa Teachers of the Year. The purpose of case study research is to provide a comprehensive description of the informants (Crow, 1987).

### Limitation of study

Response effect. The major limitation of the study is the response effect. Response effect refers to the tendency for respondents to give "inaccurate or incorrect responses" (Borg & Gall, 1983). Montgomery (1990) reports strategies to provide a nonthreatening atmosphere in an interview situation: (a) informing the subjects about the project, (b) assuring the subjects in regard to confidentiality, (c) making an appointment for interviews in advance, (d) forwarding a letter of explanation about the project, and (e) allowing for short as well as in-depth answers from the subjects (p. 16).

Researcher's influence on environment. A second limitation is the researcher's influence on the environment. The researcher's intrusion into the natural teaching setting often influences the interaction and possibly interrupts program activities (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Researcher's generalization for teacher education. A third limitation is the generalization that may be made in reference to teacher preparation because the investigation was not set forth as a study of teacher preparation, but rather as an understanding of the ethos of persons who have been named as Teachers of the Year.

Although some of the findings of this study may provide insights for those individuals conducting teacher preparation programs and others in education, the reader is reminded that the study does not examine the impact of teacher preparation programs on teacher performance and effectiveness. Key individuals and ecological characteristics of classroom are only two elements of the complex process relating to teacher and school quality and ultimately student outcomes. With the emphasis on these two elements and the in-depth qualitative approach, the study should contribute to the body of knowledge on quality education.

#### Definition of terms

The following list of terms and definitions provides a reference for words and phrases used in this study. The purpose is to assist in understanding concepts used in the description of the study, as well as interpretation of the data.

Attitudes. Dispositions to act (Becker et al., 1961); manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, 1989, p. 96).

Beliefs. Concept of a teacher's beliefs refers to those propositions about teaching and the learning environment that the teacher holds to be true, with what degree of credulity, with what kind and quality of evidence, in relation to what other beliefs, values, and attitudes, and in light of what consequences such beliefs have in actions the teacher takes (Smith and

Shepard, 1988, p. 309). Or, developing theories (implicit as well as explicit) to account for events which are important to a person (Lortie, 1975, p. 162).

Chief state school officer. The head of the Department of Education, appointed or elected, in each of the 50 states and six territories who is responsible for overseeing and administering the Teacher of the Year program. Each Chief State School Officer is a representative member of the Council of Chief State School Officers, one of three Teacher of the Year program co-sponsors.

Culture. The acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior (Spradley, 1980, p. 6).

Ecological characteristics. The classroom ecological system is the network of interconnected processes and events that impinge upon behavior in the teaching environment (Doyle & Ponder, 1975, p. 183).

Ecological patterns. Those patterns linking the ecological patterns to the organizational features of public schools and to the career system we find in teaching (Lortie, 1975, p. 14).

Effective teaching. Refers to the effect that the teacher's performance has on pupils.

Ethos. The disposition, character, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific people, culture, or movement [Gk: *ethos*, custom.] (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1985, p. 467).

Ethos of teaching. The pattern of orientations and sentiments which is peculiar to teachers and which distinguishes them from members of other occupations (Lortie, 1975, p. viii).

Holistic research. Descriptions of total phenomena within the various contexts and to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behavior toward, and belief about, the phenomena (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 3).

National Teacher of the Year. The one individual who is selected yearly at the national level in a National Teacher of the Year program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Good Housekeeping Magazine.

Participant observation. Researchers take part in the daily activities of people, reconstructing their interactions and activities in field notes taken on the spot or as soon as possible after their occurrence. Included in the field notes are interpretive comments based on researcher perceptions.

Preference. The selecting of or right to select someone or something over another or others.

Preoccupation. To heed particular aspects of the environment and be indifferent to others (Lortie, 1975, p. 162).

Socialization. The process by which people selectively acquire the attitudes, values, beliefs, skills, and knowledge (in short, the culture) current in groups to which they are or seek to become a member (Petersen, 1989, p. 4).

State Teacher of the Year. The one individual who is selected yearly at the state level in a State Teacher of the Year program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Good Housekeeping Magazine.

Values. Generalized beliefs (Becker et al., 1961); the ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which people of the group have affective regard (i.e., freedom, education); to consider with respect to worth, excellence, usefulness or importance; to regard; to esteem highly (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, 1989, p. 1578).

## CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of five parts. First, a brief review of qualitative research is presented as a backdrop for understanding the need to employ a case study methodology. Second, a general review of teacher effectiveness literature is examined with the expressed purpose of determining the extent and direction of research on teacher effectiveness. Third, a background of the Teacher of the Year program and in-depth review of the Teacher of the Year literature is presented. Three studies were particularly valuable in shaping the direction of this last section including: (a) a published report entitled A Qualitative Study of Excellence in Teaching and the Search for Excellence in Teaching: An Annotated Bibliography (Van Schaack & Glick, 1982), (b) an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers of the Year 1978-82: A profile and an analysis (Wiedmer, 1983), and (c) an unpublished master's thesis, Interests, work habits, attitudes and characteristics of teachers of the year: 1981-83 (McKay, 1987). Fourth, literature that is directly related to the research questions generated for the interviews conducted in this study is summarized. Fifth, the weakness in the literature and rationale for the study is presented.

### Part One: Overview of Qualitative Research

#### Use of qualitative research in education

It was not until the late 1960s that qualitative research in education was utilized to any great extent. Qualitative research has been associated with other descriptive terms that either described or were used

synonymously with qualitative research such as field research, naturalistic, ethnographic, symbolic interactionist, the Chicago school, phenomenological, case study, interpretive, and descriptive (Bogden & Biklen, 1982). For the purpose of this study the researcher relied on Knowles' (1988) observation that case study techniques for data collection are not subjected to long term participant observation. Case study methodology allows the researcher to describe, in detail, a few selected participants so that the "intensive involvement by the researcher becomes not only feasible but highly desirable" (p. 50).

#### Chronological review of literature on qualitative research

An impetus was given to qualitative research in the 1960s as federal agencies started to fund research employing qualitative methods. By the mid-1960s, the federal government began to "encourage anthropological research into American schools" (Eddy, 1985).

Rist (1984) suggested that quantitative researchers "change their attitude from 'disdain' to 'detente'" and further argued that the way to "understand human beings and the social environments that they have created is to watch, talk, listen, and participate with them in these environments" (p. 160). Rist concluded that qualitative research focuses on a different way of knowing--one based on experience, empathy, and involvement (p. 160).

In a historical review of the traditions of qualitative research in education, it is noted that:



Qualitative research methods represented the kind of democratic impetus on the rise during the sixties. The climate of the times renewed interest in qualitative methods, created a need for more experienced mentors of this research approach, and opened the way for methodological growth and development. ( Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 20)

### Features of qualitative research

Several characteristics can be used to describe qualitative research.

Five such characteristics are offered by Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 22):

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive.
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

"Meaning" for qualitative researchers has been understood as "learning how one comes to know" (Eisner, 1979) or "describing participants, settings, and circumstances so clearly that the image produced constitutes providing a verbal photograph" (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984). Finally, Spradley (1979) advised that qualitative research lends itself to using the interview as a source of data to yield a cultural description as perceived by participants.

Erickson (1986) suggested nine main elements of a report of fieldwork research:

1. empirical assertions
2. analytic narrative vignettes
3. quotes from fieldnotes
4. quotes from interviews
5. synoptic data reports (maps, frequency tables, figures)
6. interpretive commentary framing particular description
7. interpretive commentary framing general description
8. theoretical discussion
9. report of the natural history of inquiry in the study. (p. 145)

#### Case study design

At the core of this growing body of literature on qualitative research is the understanding of the various data collection techniques used.

Hammersly (1989) explains the term case study as "the collection and presentation of detailed, relatively unstructured information from a range of sources about a particular individual, group or institution, usually including the accounts of subjects themselves" (p. 93). The case study method allows an inquiry to maintain the integrity of participants' experiences; yet, it can also remain sensitive to the many nuances that contemporary teaching events and circumstances impose (Knowles, 1988).

Erickson (1986) stated that:

Interpretive, participant observational fieldwork has been used in the social sciences as a research method for about seven years. Fieldwork research involves (a) intensive, long-term participation in a field setting; (b) carefully recording of what happens in the setting by writing field notes and collecting other kinds of documentary evidence

(e.g., memos, records, examples of student work, audiotapes, videotapes); and (c) subsequent analytic reflection on the documentary record obtained in the field, and reporting by means of detailed description, using narrative vignettes and direct quotes from interviews . . . (p. 121)

Yin (1989) defined the case study design as an empirical inquiry that: "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

#### Participant observation as research technique

In a qualitative study, the researcher is one of the data gathering tools used. According to Dobbert (1982):

Another reason that anthropologists have for utilizing themselves as an influence of research is that human beings in everyday life are not objective. They act on the basis of their social positions, values, and preferences. One cannot understand subjective beings by means of detached, objective observations. (p. 6)

Participant observation is a technique used by persons doing case study as a data-gathering device. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) noted "participant observation traditionally has been viewed by practitioners as a nonjudgmental strategy for acquiring data to depict social groups and cultural scenes authentically" (p. 111).

Practitioners agree that it is not possible to record everything that is happening. Most observers accept the more achievable goal of "recording phenomena salient to the defined topic" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

### Survey research

In contrast, Isaac and Michael (1971) suggested survey research as an appropriate method to collect factual information, to identify problems, to make comparisons and evaluations, and to determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations. Nevertheless, as early as 1932, Waller "relied on in-depth interviews, life histories, participant observation, case records, diaries, letters, and other personal documents to describe the social world of teachers and their students" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 13).

### Summary

In summary, qualitative research in contrast to strict statistical portrayals, is in a distinct position to capitalize on the 'human dimension'" (Rist, 1984, p. 165). Rist concluded that:

Qualitative research is the antithesis of research predicated on prefabricated and furtive encounters. Understanding the dynamics of program implementation, for example, will demand a long-term commitment to the in-depth study of multiple social programs. These kinds of demands are the raison d'etre of qualitative work. By taking us inside the social settings and organizations of our societies, it informs us of existing conditions as they are, not as we might hope them to be. Substituting understanding for presumption is no mean feat. (p. 168)

Finally, the work of Lortie (1975) concluded that "teaching is unique. No other occupation can claim a membership of over two million college graduates and tens of thousands with advanced degrees. To expect teachers to contribute to the development of occupational knowledge seems reasonable. . ." (p. 244). This researcher would suggest that those persons

selected as Teacher of the Year provide the profession with a unique opportunity for a case study investigation to examine the orientations, beliefs, and preferences--the very ethos of the person identified as Teacher of the Year.

### Part Two: A General Review of Teacher Effectiveness

Currently, teacher effectiveness permeates the literature as a means of understanding the effect the teacher's performance has on the pupils. Those investigators involved in studying effective teaching have surveyed thousands of teachers in an effort to understand the "how" of teaching. This study differs from the effective teaching studies in that it focuses on those teachers who have been identified by an outside source (i.e., the Chief State School Officers) as teachers who are "representative of the best." Thus, the review of literature not only addresses the major ideas in the research on teacher effectiveness, but it also focuses on the limited studies available on those persons identified as outstanding teachers.

#### Overview of teacher effectiveness theories

Medley's (1979) review of the history of empirical research on teacher effectiveness revealed four general theories. The four theories included citing an effective teacher by examining: (a) personality traits, (b) methods used in teaching, (c) teacher behavior, and (d) product-process-presage. The research on the methods of measurement of the affective and cognitive domain has led to much of the discussion about the qualities of outstanding teachers. Cruickshank (1986) argues that the search for a good teacher

changed in the 1960s because of two factors: (a) the emergence of models to guide inquiry on teaching, and (b) the appearance of more objective classroom observation instruments.

Lanier (1984) suggests that three general conceptions are represented in the literature and "have paralleled the dominant research paradigms on effective teachers and teaching" (p. 6). Lanier offers three concepts that appear to shape and form the profiles of effective teaching: (1) the teacher as an effective person, (2) the teacher as a skilled performer, and (3) the teacher as a professional decision maker. In focusing on the needed research, Lanier (1984) concludes that "well-educated teachers, not outside 'experts,' are in the best position to assess needs and design educational strategies best fitted to the specific characteristics of individual classrooms" (p. i).

#### Personality traits

Easterly (1983) used the "pathfinder" characteristics outlined by novelist Gail Sheehy (1974) to determine personality traits of outstanding teachers. Easterly (1983) includes the following traits: (a) a willingness to risk change, (b) a sense of right-timing, (c) a capacity for loving, (d) an acquisition of opposite gender strengths, (e) a sense of purpose, (f) a sense of well-being, and (g) an ability to use a system of support networks (p. 50).

Van Schaack and Glick (1982) indicate that "excellent teachers are caring, creative, enthusiastic, and intellectually curious people who have positive attitudes toward themselves and their students" (p. 6). The author suggests that:

The intellectual dimensions of learning presumably are more readily accessible and surely are evaluated more often, but this does not deny the centrality or at least, the equally important affective dimensions. The things that matter are the mind and the spirit of the learner, the intellect and soul of the teacher, and the uplifting and insightful exchanges and experiences that students and teachers have as partners in the educational setting. To deny these coactive ingredients as indicators of excellence is folly. (p. 58)

Crow (1987) suggested that a teacher has a teacher role identity. In studying student teachers, Crow proposed that teacher role identities "developed over time" and were influenced by family, friends, and former teachers. Crow's observation is revealed in the literature as TRI (Teacher Role Identity) theory.

Twenty-five years after Ryan's extensive study of teachers, it is not surprising that there is continuing debate within the profession on what constitutes the traits and behaviors of effective teachers. Cruickshank (1986) contends that "some teachers make more of a difference than do others and that the behaviors of effective teachers, to some extent, have been found" (p. 86).

### Teaching methods

Another theory of effective teaching identifies an outstanding teacher by documenting the teacher's interaction skills within the classroom. For some, this theory is simply based on classroom management. Brophy and Good (1983), in summarizing classroom management, suggest that there are key indicators of effective management that include:

Good preparation of the classroom and installation of rules and procedures at the beginning of the year, 'with-it-ness' and overlapping in general interaction with students, smoothness and momentum in lesson pacing, variety and appropriate level of challenge in assignments, consistent accountability procedures and follow-up concerning seatwork, and clarity about when and how students can get help and about what options are available when they finish. (p. 360)

Perhaps the most important statement to be gleaned from Brophy and Good's (1983) summary of findings is that "the last 15 years have produced an orderly knowledge base linking teacher behavior to methods" (p. 365). Later, Brophy and Good (1984) cautioned the profession to, "Remember the perfect teacher does not exist . . . . This, the continual process of improving our teaching skills, is the essence of professional teaching" (p. 365).

### Teacher behaviors

Bridgewater (1983) reports that research on teacher effectiveness has been conducted for many years and has generated more than 10,000 published studies. Earlier, Dunkin and Biddle (1974) indicated that the shortcoming of the earlier studies was that they did not focus on the actual process of teaching in the classroom (i.e., the crucial events of teacher-pupil interaction). Ryan (1982) concluded that there were three major patterns of teachers' classroom behaviors and outlined them as: (a) warm, understanding, and friendly behaviors versus aloof, egocentric, and restricted teacher classroom behavior; (b) responsible, businesslike, and systematic versus evading, unplanned, and slipshod teacher classroom behavior; and (c) stimulating and imaginative versus dull and routine teacher classroom behavior (Ryan, p. 15).



Earlier, Flanders (1970) attempted to classify behaviors in terms of the interactive situation between the teacher and the students. Bridgewater (1983) concluded that effective teacher studies based on Flanders interactive theory reported that superior teachers talked less, accepted more student ideas, encouraged more pupil-initiated participation, and gave fewer directions than did the average teachers.

Manatt, Palmer, and Hildabaugh (1976) offered five rubrics descriptive of teacher behavior: (a) productive teaching techniques, (b) positive interpersonal relations, (c) organized and structured class management, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) desirable out-of-class behavior. The literature is replete with lists of teacher behaviors, teacher traits, and teacher interaction skills but few lists present a ranked order of the criteria for effective teachers. One exception is Manatt (1987) who offers another list of discriminating criteria in ranked order. McKay (1987, p. 21) reports that Manatt's list includes:

1. Maintains an effective relationship with students' families.
2. Provides instruction appropriate for capabilities, rates of learning styles of students.
3. Prepares appropriate evaluation activities.
4. Communicates effectively with students.
5. Monitors seatwork closely.
6. Demonstrates sensitivity in relating to students.
7. Promotes positive self-concept in students.
8. Promotes students' self-discipline and responsibility.
9. Uses a variety of technique.

10. Spends time at the beginning of the learning demonstrating processes to the student (cueing).
11. Uses controlled (guided) practice before assigning homework (independent practice).
12. Organizes students for effective instruction.
13. Provides students with specific evaluative feedback.
14. Selects and uses appropriate lesson content, learning activities, and materials.
15. Demonstrates ability to monitor student behavior.
16. Writes effective lesson plans.
17. Demonstrates a willingness to keep curriculum and instructional practices current.
18. Has high expectations.
19. Organizes resources and materials for effective instruction.
20. Models and gives concrete examples.

#### Product-process-presage

As early as 1960, Mitzel proposed that teaching effectiveness could be classified according to "product, process, or presage" (p. 36). Mitzel defines product as a change in student behavior. Process indicated both teacher and student behaviors--rapport, teacher clarity, student attentiveness--that have mediating effects on product variables. Presage is considered to be a teacher characteristic such as intelligence, industry, adaptability, grade point average in college, and success in student teaching.

Moreover, the research from the turn of the century until the early 1970s focuses on the process of teaching (usually teacher behavior) and uses such measures as ratings, classroom observation, or classroom information on what the teacher is doing in the classroom. A number of comprehensive reviews of the research on teacher effectiveness show that teacher behaviors do make a difference with regard to student learning (Ornstein, 1985). The behavior and methods tend to cluster into five broad teacher patterns: (a) classroom management techniques, (b) direct and structured learning strategies, (c) academic focus and student opportunity to learn, (d) flexibility in instructional planning and variability in media and methods, and (e) democratic "warm" behaviors, as well as teacher enthusiasm and teacher acceptance of student's ideas and feeling (Brophy, 1979; Gage, 1978; Good, 1979; Rosenshine, 1979).

### Summary

Bridgewater (1983), Lanier (1984), and Medley (1979) support the idea that "no consensus exists on the definition of an 'outstanding teacher.'" Nevertheless, four theories that provide the basis for determining effective teacher are: (1) personality traits - suggests the teacher's personality is the major factor in the teacher's effectiveness; (2) methods theory - suggests that the teacher is effective because of methods used; (3) teacher behavior theory - suggests the teacher is effective because of specific behaviors and interaction skills; and (4) product-process-presage theory - suggests the teacher is effective because of behavior and achievement changes in students and specific characteristics such as intelligence, adaptability, and grade point

average in college. The lack of knowledge about superlative teachers can be explained, in part, by the fact that very few research studies have been concluded that involve teachers who have been cited as outstanding. McKay (1987), Midthun (1988), Van Schaack and Glick (1982), and Wiedmer (1983) provide the core of those researchers who have studied teachers identified in the Teacher of the Year program.

### Part Three: Overview of the Literature on Teacher of the Year Teacher of the Year studies

Several programs have been initiated to honor teacher excellence. Wiedmer (1983) described Ahren's 1969 doctoral dissertation as providing data on all 75 teachers who won local teaching awards between 1963 and 1969 from New England institutions of higher education. Ahren's study conducted at the University of Massachusetts is the only study of its type. Goldsmid, Gruber, and Wilson's (1977) study, *Perceived Attributes of Superior Teachers*, looked at the distinguishing characteristics of superior teachers at the University of North Carolina located in Chapel Hill. In contrast, studies of outstanding elementary and secondary teachers are scarce. For example, in 1984 a program was organized in Indiana to nominate teachers as recipients for Presidential Awards Program for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching. Within two years of the inception of the Presidential Awards Program, a study had been conducted to determine the essence of the characteristics of an outstanding mathematics teacher (Balka, 1986).

What this researcher finds as incongruous in the literature is the fact that the Teacher of the Year program has been in existence for thirty-eight

years and only one comprehensive study of the national program exists (Wiedmer, 1983). Van Schaak and Glick (1982) included five winners and four finalists in the National Teacher of the Year program in their study of excellence in teaching. McKay (1987) provided a profile of the interests, work habits, attitudes, and characteristics of Teachers of the Year 1981-83 in a ten-state area in the Midwest. Midthun (1988) looked at the media usage among Minnesota Teachers of the Year and suggested "the rare use of recognized effective teachers as a study group and their expertise in the field would suggest a prime source for further research and study regarding effectiveness" (p. 22).

Furthermore, only one study of those persons identified as Teachers of the Year (Van Schaack & Glick, 1982) has utilized on-site visitations in the classrooms and communities of the Teachers of the Year. Perhaps, effective teaching is as Wiedmer (1983) suggests: "the orchestration of a great many skills into a coherent system that meets the need of the class and/or individuals" (p. 37). Understanding with Cruickshank (1986) that the search for the outstanding teacher is to be in search of the 'Holy Grail,' the researcher notes that each year, across the United States, teacher committees, parents, education associations, principals, and superintendents set forth nominations for those individuals whom they deem worthy of Teacher of the Year nomination.

#### Background on teacher of the year program in Iowa

The state of Iowa became involved in the Teacher of the Year program in 1958 with the nomination of Jean Listebarger Humphrey, an elementary

teacher in Ames Community Schools, Ames, Iowa. Humphrey was named the National Teacher of the Year in 1958 and is the only Iowa Teacher of the Year to win the national honor.

In Iowa, five semi-finalists are named during the month of October. The semi-finalists are invited to Des Moines for a personal interview by a selection committee of six judges. The judges include university teacher educators, Department of Education officials, Iowa State Education Association representatives, representatives of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and business and community leaders. No classroom teachers are the selection committee. The Iowa Teacher of the Year is named upon a thorough review of the portfolio combined with the recommendations and interview information.

The state of Iowa selection process changed in 1988 to comply with changes that were taking place at the national level. Most notably, the portfolio that is required for each nominee changed in content and importance. Lepley (1990) reports that the Teacher of the Year program in Iowa has taken a new and more prominent direction with the Department of Education supporting efforts of the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) to provide monetary support for the recipient of the award. The recipient is also being given a larger leadership role in statewide education activities through the Department of Education. In 1990 a proposal went to the Iowa legislature suggesting that the Iowa Teacher of the Year be named an Ambassador for Education and be given a year's leave of absence from the teaching site to travel across Iowa promoting education. It is expected that the individual selected as Iowa's 1991 Teacher of the Year will receive a

monetary award from Iowa corporations as a result of solicitations made by the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA).

The Iowa and all other State Teachers of the Year become candidates for national honors. In early December, four National finalists are selected. At some time during the January-February period, the four finalists are interviewed and videotaped. Finally, the finalists travel to Washington, D.C. where they are interviewed by The National Selection Committee. In April, 1991, the National Teacher of the Year's identity will be announced in a White House ceremony.

The National Teacher of the Year receives an engraved citation and a handcrafted crystal apple. The National Teacher of the Year makes appearances on national news media, is appointed to the Commission on Presidential Scholars, is invited to address major conferences and meetings, and is the subject of a feature article about the winners in Good Housekeeping magazine, as well as included in the Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year. Since 1980 the National Teacher of the Year has been released from classroom duties during the school year.

#### Review of the teacher of the year literature

Sociologist Daniel Lortie (1975) argues that more than any other factor, teachers base their estimations of professional success or failure on what happens in the classroom. McKay (1987) concurs with Lortie's observation in reporting that "Teachers of the Year value opinions expressed by students as the most important item in assessing the effectiveness of their own teaching" (p. 90). Van Schaack and Glick (1982) suggest "the teacher is the

most important component of a successful classroom experience" (p. 8). The authors are convinced that Teachers of the Year are superlative teachers and point out that:

Having observed the final selection meeting for the 1978 award and traveling 14,000 miles to visit five winners (1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, and 1981) and four finalists, I am convinced that those included in this study are superlative teachers. ( p. 3)

It is evident that no one knows for certain what comprises excellence in teaching; yet these award-winning Teachers of the Year have been cited for their excellence. Wiedmer (1983) suggested that "by studying those teachers who have been identified as 'representatives of the best,' educators may find insight into the methods and techniques which work for an individual to become an outstanding teacher" (p. 98).

#### Part Four: Literature Review Basis for Research Questions

##### Background

Five studies from the review of literature initially influenced the research questions (Dillon, 1989; Easterly, 1983; Lortie, 1975; Petersen, 1989 and Van Schaack & Glick, 1982). The researcher proposed the two major components essential in question formulation at the broadest level--(1) key individuals and (2) ecological characteristics of the classroom. Specifically, the research questions are: (1) Who are the key individuals influencing the shaping of attitudes, values, and beliefs of these Iowa Teachers of the Year? (2) What are the ecological characteristics of the classroom that influence the behavior in the teaching environment for these Iowa Teachers of the Year? Using the two basic research questions as the underpinnings of the study, the



researcher completed a thorough review of literature and developed six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of key individuals and six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of ecological characteristics. Each of the questions and a brief rationale for their inclusion in the study follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the Iowa Teachers of the Year? In a national study of the Teacher of the Year, Wiedmer (1983) reported that the typical 1978-82 Teacher of the Year award winners were female and were between thirty-one and fifty years of age when they received the award (median age 42). Teachers of the Year were likely to be Caucasian, married, and have one or fewer dependent children. Typically, the Teachers' of the Year parents and spouses did not have any teaching experience (p. 171). In contrast, McKay (1987) reported that the typical 1981-83 Teacher of the Year in a ten-state area in the Midwest were female and were between 31 and 65 years of age. The mean age was 51.6. Teachers of the Year in the ten-state area were Anglo-American, married, and have two or three children (p. 83).

2. Who were the key people influencing the Teachers of the Year to become a teacher? Just as there is no profile of the outstanding teacher, there is also no definite predictor on why or how individuals enter the teaching profession. Bruce Brombacher, Teacher of the Year, 1982, remembers that "almost everyone in my family is involved in teaching" (Wexler, 1982, p. 29). Easterly (1983) reports that 12 of the 24 teachers in the Study of Outstanding Elementary Teachers identified "other teachers" as

influencing their decision to become teachers. Lortie's (1975) interviewed 94 elementary and secondary teachers and observed that:

A large proportion of respondents volunteered information about how their current work is affected by the teaching they received . . . 42 percent of the respondents went out of their way to connect their own teaching practice [with their outstanding teacher] . . . the remembered teacher is a strong role model for the respondent. (p. 63)

3. Who were the key individuals in shaping attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Teachers of the Year? Lortie's (1975) study of teachers provided the idea that "whatever the source of the shared sentiments, it is essential to know their nature if we are to grasp the ethos of an occupation." For purposes of analysis Lortie (1975) divided the idea of "sentiment" into three components--preoccupations, beliefs, and preferences (p. 162). McKay (1987) discovered that Teachers of the Year were typically influenced by the school classroom teacher who supervised the student teaching as the person who had the greatest impact on the award winner's success as a teacher. Wiedmer (1983) states that, "They [Teachers of the Year] decided on teaching as their career in elementary or secondary school and were greatly influenced by parents, relatives, and friends in their career choice" (p. 172).

Lortie (1975) concluded that psychic rewards have special significance for teachers and that such rewards are linked to achievement with students. Knowing that they have reached a student is an important source of satisfaction for many of the Teachers of the Year. Thus, in reviewing the literature concerning attitudes, values, and beliefs, one theme becomes apparent--teaching is a career in which there are extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. However, Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) conclude that,

"Teaching is typically portrayed as an occupation largely devoid of extrinsic rewards" (p. 510).

4. How would the Teachers of the Year describe the support received from families and colleagues? McKay (1987) reports that Teachers of the Year credit their university supervisor and their public school teacher as influencing their success in student teaching. However, a sampling of those who responded as "other" revealed that "my parents," "a cousin who taught special education in my district and I tried to model myself after her," "peers and administrators," "junior high and high school teachers," and one respondent credited "God" with the greatest impact on her student teaching experience (p. 58). In fact, Lortie (1975) identified teaching as a "cellular profession" suggesting that "teachers spent the teaching day isolated from other adults" (p. 14).

5. How would the Teachers' of the Year students describe their teacher? One further theory about the way to identify an outstanding teacher is the teacher's interaction skills within the classroom. For some, this criterion is simply classroom management. Brophy and Good (1983), in summarizing classroom management, suggest that there are key indicators of effective management which include:

Good preparation of the classroom and installation of rules and procedures at the beginning of the year, 'with-it-ness' and overlapping in general interaction with students, smoothness and momentum in lesson pacing, variety and appropriate level of challenge in assignments, consistent accountability procedures and follow-up concerning seatwork, and clarity about when and how students can help and about what options are available when they finish. (p. 360)

Brophy and Good (1984) reported that "students are another source that teachers can tap for relevant information . . . Students have unique perspectives . . ." (p. 373).

6. What are the Teachers' of the Year perceptions of the community's opinion of them as teachers? The most often selected reason for a teacher's nomination is innovative curriculum. Teachers of the Year believe, also, that their selection is based on proven effectiveness of classroom instruction (McKay, 1987). Wiedmer (1983) wrote that: "Teachers of the Year generally believed they were selected to be Teachers of the Year due to community, student, and parent support; because of their exemplary teaching practices; and because of their dedication to, enthusiasm for, and love of teaching" (p. 50).

7. How do the Teachers of the Year describe effective teaching? McKay (1987) states that the award winners are likely to describe the most effective teaching as having good judgment/reasoning as the most important factor in effective teaching. Teachers of the Year also reported the "capacity to relate to others as an important factor" (p. 85).

Plihal (1982) points out that there is a difference between content areas as to how teachers perceive success in the classroom. For example, math teachers indicated student learning was most rewarding and social studies teachers indicate that the process, rather than the outcome, was most rewarding. Wiedmer (1983) reported Teachers of the Year as believing that effective teachers possess a variety of characteristics including love of children, encouragement of positive self-images, the promotion of an

atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, possession of a broad knowledge of subject matter, enthusiasm, possession of a sense of humor, and being well-prepared (p. 183).

8. What is the nature of the social organization in the Teachers' of the Year classroom? Lortie (1975) argued that "teacher purposes revolve around classroom events" (p. 163). As early as 1977, Hoy and Rees, in a study of beginning teachers, suggested that the social structure of the school bureaucracy quickly informs the novice teacher of the need to conform to its norms, values, and traditions (Crow, 1987). Ducharme, Kluender, and Kluender (1986) raised the question for the profession: "How can school environment be enhanced so that dedicated teachers will continue to remain in the classroom?" (p. 46). More recently, Dillon (1989) asserted that social organization in the observed classroom was constructed jointly by Appleby [the teacher] and his students. Dillon writes, "Appleby worked to bridge students' home culture with school culture. He also interacted with students in ways that met their cognitive and affective needs. Thus, Appleby established an environment in the classroom that resulted in reduced resistance to learning and increased active participation during lessons" (p. 237). Dillon (1989) shares, "It is clear that Appleby believes that learning cannot occur successfully without student's feeling good about themselves and about their ability to learn" (p. 239).

Lortie (1975) argues that "without the title to identify their managerial functions, teachers do not benefit from the principle of administrative discretion nor are they expected to show the personal qualities (e.g., independence in decision-making, aggressiveness) which mark the manager.

Teachers rarely have budgetary discretion and the other prerogatives which are part of the manager's working equipment" (p. 167).

9. What verbal and nonverbal actions/pattern of action do the Teachers of the Year display as they interact with students? Norton (1977) concluded: "Teacher effectiveness is shown to be intrinsically related to the way one communicates" (p. 526). Daniel (1983) concludes that three factors contribute significantly to student perceptions of teaching effectiveness: organizational stability, instructional adaptability, and interpersonal flexibility. Rogers (1969) suggested that in order to free children to learn, teachers needed to provide three conditions: empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness. Dillon (1989) concluded that "Appleby's belief that all students can be successful learners, led to an open, risk-free learning environment" (p. 254). In a summary statement about the pattern of action in a classroom, Dillon writes:

. . . at the heart of Appleby's teaching are two driving forces--his sensitivity to his students and what they explicitly and implicitly need as they attempt to learn in a variety of contexts, and his love of the excitement, the unpredictableness, and the challenge of unsolved problems associated with teaching. These rewards and challenges are what motivate teachers like Appleby to strive toward mastering the art of effective teaching. (p. 255)

10. How do the Teachers of the Year perceive and interpret their actions in various contexts involving students of varying abilities? The social organization in traditional classrooms is constructed and controlled by the teacher, reflecting his or her likes, goals, and needs (Goodlad, 1984; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusik, 1986; Sizer, 1985). Mitchell, Ortiz, and Mitchell (1982) found that teachers do not select

learning activities because they lead to valued outcomes, but "because they value such activities in and of themselves" (p. 511). Lortie (1975) indicated that the number one answer given by teachers on whether or not they had had a good day was how things had gone in the classroom. Teachers of the Year echo Lortie when given options for the most important source of satisfaction. McKay (1987) reports for Teachers of the Year a "good day" was "the times I know I have 'reached' a student or group of students and they have learned" (p. 63). Lortie (1975) suggests "although teachers have difficulty meeting individual needs in the grouped structure of public schools, they are expected to make individual assessments and decisions about students" (p. 167).

Brophy and Good (1984) documented "a variety of ways in which teachers sometimes vary their behavior toward high-and-low achieving students" (p. 104). The authors cite sixteen behaviors that may indicate differential treatment. For example, the authors include praising low achievers less frequently than high achievers for success, generally paying less attention to low achievers or interacting with them less, using less eye contact, and employing other nonverbal communication of attention and responsiveness in interaction with low achievers" (p. 104).

11. How do students in the Teachers' of the Year classrooms and administrators of the schools perceive and interpret the actions of the Teachers of the Year during lesson interactions? Wiedmer (1983) suggests that Teachers of the Year feel the most important measure school officials could take to retain outstanding teachers would be to provide more competent administrators (p. 183). Bridgewater (1983) concluded,

"theoretically, evaluating teachers is still plagued with the basic question 'what teacher characteristics and behavior make students learn more?'" (p. 29). In an extensive review of the literature, Bridgewater (1983) concluded that the practice of "principals evaluating teachers was found to be the mainstay of most evaluation systems" (p. 30).

Brophy and Good (1984) suggest that some students are reliable observers of classroom events and "others are probably not perceptive." Yet, McKay (1987) found that Teachers of the Year selected from a list of eight options and concluded that the majority felt the most important factor in assessing the effectiveness of their teaching would be the opinions of students.

Petersen (1989) suggests that pupil responses to student teachers had a "strong socializing influence for student teachers" (p. 388). As early as 1977, Karmos and Jacko (1977) reported that pupils in the classroom tend to legitimize student teacher role identities. However, Fant, Hill, Lee, and Landes (1985) in researching the factors for components of direct instruction (i.e., the most effective protocol for enhancing student achievement) suggest "more effective teachers let students know help is available and show affection toward them" (p. 6). Firestone (1989) in his study of student alienation in schools reports "high school students expect to receive respect from adults in the school; this is one attribute they recognize in a good teacher" (p. 42). Zeichner (1987) has challenged the profession to explore the effect of pupil response on teacher effectiveness.



12. What circumstances or conditions of their work role do the Teachers of the Year perceive as encouraging or discouraging teaching excellence? How do they describe a 'good day'? Wiedmer (1983) cited a "helpful and cooperative principal with being the most important element that contributed to the raising of teacher morale" (p. 186). In the same study of Teachers of the Year, Wiedmer reported that low teacher morale was attributed to a lack of cooperation and support from administrators. "An excessive teaching load and poor pupil discipline" (Wiedmer, 1983, p. 186) were the next most frequently cited contributors to low teacher morale.

Many studies report that teachers find the flexible schedule attractive (Biklen, 1983; Hall, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Nelson, 1983). There is also continuing discussion about the isolation factor for teachers. One of the concerns is the number of hours that constitute an average work week for the teacher. Wiedmer (1983) reports for Teachers of the Year that "on a daily basis, Teachers of the Year normally spent three or more hours beyond their contractual agreements on school-related activities" (p. 275). Van Schaack and Glick (1982) describe Bob Heyer, 1975 National Teacher of the Year, by reporting a colleague's comment that "Bob doesn't know about a 40-hour week" (p. 9). McKay (1987) states, "Teachers of the Year report that they also average an unusual amount of time working at home on school-related items (i.e., from 10-30 hours per week)" (p. 70). Lortie (1990) inquired of the researcher, "Are you going to tell people that to be an outstanding teacher you have to work 99 hours a week?"

Lortie (1975) gave impetus to the teachers' perception that "they want to focus on instruction; they wish others would understand that and respect

their wish by helping them fulfill it" (p. 185). Lortie (1975) noted that teachers based their answer about a "good day" on what happened in the classroom. The author indicated that the number one answer given by teachers on whether or not they had had a good day was how things have gone in the classroom. McKay (1987) reports for Teachers of the Year "good day" was "the times I know I have 'reached' a student or a group of students and they have learned" (p. 63).

Firestone (1989) suggests: just as students' feelings about school depended on teachers, teachers' alienation depended on the responses they got from students. As one teacher put it: "[A bad day is] when you think you're really cooking and they say, 'can I go to the bathroom?' . . . When you look into their eyes, and you can see clear out of the backs of their heads" (p. 42). Grover and Saphier (1987) suggest that skillful teachers are persons who communicate the idea that "this is important, you can do it and I won't give up on you" (p. 47).

### Weaknesses in the literature

What makes a teacher outstanding? This is the dilemma that has faced teacher educators, practitioners, administrators, and students for centuries. Theoretically and empirically, effective teaching has reflected the behaviorist approach. As a result, the research has concentrated on the outcomes of specific teacher behaviors, traits or situations. Dillon (1989) observed that, "effective teaching is part of a much larger issue--larger than merely examining particular teaching behaviors." For Dillon (1989), the "larger issue" focused on answers to questions such as, "What is the nature of the

social organization in a classroom where effective teaching and motivated, meaningful learning occur? How are classrooms such as these constructed? What actions do teachers use as they work with students, in what contexts do they use these actions, and what are the intentions behind these actions?" (p. 254).

Much of the research concerning effective teaching has identified particular behaviors that are recommended for teachers who want to become effective. Dillon (1989) writes that "these discreet behaviors have been arranged on precoded checklists used to assess teachers' effectiveness. The scores on these checklists, along with student's test scores, are often used as sole or major indicators of a teacher's effectiveness" (p. 257).

Lortie (1975) gave the initial impetus to the quest for understanding the ethos of the teaching profession with his exploration of the sentiments teachers share. Lortie stated that "the assumption is that teacher sentiments represent an adaptation to their work situation; if we understand the problems of teachers, their sentiments should prove more understandable." However, Lortie's study revealed that "there is a certain ambivalence in the teacher's sentiments" (p. 186). Lortie writes:

They [the teachers] do not challenge the basic order. They accept the fact that students, space, supplies, and schedules are 'owned and controlled' by other and that they should control the means of production . . . . For at the base of teacher status is the indisputable constraint that without access to a position in the schools the teacher cannot practice his [her] craft. (p. 186)

Psychic rewards and teacher sentiments rotate around classroom events and relationships with students; the cathexis of classroom life underlies much of what teachers feel about their work. (p. 187)

Earlier, Zeichner (1980) stated that "the profession of teacher education cannot even begin to approach the question of how effective it is until it begins to understand more about what presently exists. The research to date has failed to provide us with an adequate understanding of what occurs" (p. 56).

Outstanding teachers are described as being creative, energetic, committed to encouraging independence and self-direction in students, enthusiastic, innovative, efficient, organized, adaptive, understanding, patient, conscientious, professionally active, stimulating, knowledgeable, respectful of others' opinions, self-confident, and increasingly more effective as time goes by (McKay, 1987, p. 33).

Finally, Wiedmer (1983) and Midthun (1988) cite the scarcity of studies of effective teaching that are based on the study of persons who have been selected as recipients of awards for outstanding teaching. Thus, current research reveals that little is known about two key issues when studying outstanding teachers: (1) Who are the key individuals influencing the shaping of attitudes, values, and beliefs of outstanding teachers? and (2) What are the ecological characteristics of the classroom that influence the behavior in the teaching environment?

The simple prescription for effective teaching is still not available, but traits and behaviors associated with effective teachers are thoroughly documented in the literature; what troubles the researcher is the lack of in-depth descriptions of persons identified as outstanding teachers. The findings of this study will be helpful to practitioners and researchers who are interested in the description and interpretation of three Iowa Teachers of the

Year who are perceived to be outstanding. Finally, the researcher believes that this study, in part, extends and answers Lortie's (1975) claim that:

A teacher today can be considered outstanding by those who are familiar with his work without being thought to have made a single contribution to knowledge of teaching in general; the ablest people in the occupation are not expected to add to the shared knowledge of the group. (p. 241)

Lortie (1975) asserted that progress toward contributions from practicing classroom teachers, [as researchers and partners in research], would have to be introduced and reinforced if intellectual autonomy is to get under way (p. 241). Furthermore, becoming an outstanding teacher is not a product of isolated variables but is a result of interaction within the context of a classroom. This study is a concrete example of the type of partnership Lortie envisioned when he talked about teacher-researchers who look "at the actual difficulties facing classroom teachers " (p. 242).

### CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to present a detailed and comprehensive description of the ethos of three teachers who have been selected as Iowa Teachers of the Year. The methods used in this study are explained in Chapter III and include the: (a) sample, (b) design, (c) procedures, (d) basis of data analysis, (e) assumptions and limitations of the study's design, and (f) instruments used for data collection.

#### Selection of Participants for the Study

The researcher sought to select three teachers who were: (1) Iowa Teachers of the Year who continued to teach, and (2) Iowa Teachers of the Year who taught at different grade level assignments. Adherence to the "in classroom criterion" was important in the selection process of those included in this study. Teachers of the Year in Iowa who no longer teach in the public school were not considered for this study. A second reason for the participant selection was grade level taught. Three Iowa Teachers of the Year were selected for this study. It is assumed that these three descriptions of Teachers of the Year may or may not be similar depending on grade level taught. All three Iowa Teachers of the Year were presently teaching in the public schools and each Teacher of the Year selected represented a different grade level (i.e., K-6, middle school, and high school).

An important factor in the decision to participate in the study was the discussion with each of the Teachers of the Year three months prior to her involvement in the study. Specifically, they were told, and each

acknowledged that she understood, about the intense nature of the case study data collection techniques.

The participants were informed that the researcher would observe them teaching in their classrooms for three days and the study would be driven by the ongoing analysis of data. This process of analysis gives rise to the possibility that the data collection process would proceed in different directions according to the analysis. In addition, the participants were informed that they would be interviewed prior to the study, and to a lesser extent, their colleagues, students, and supervisor would be interviewed. There were no monetary or extrinsic rewards offered to the participants.

During the exploratory research phase prior to the study proper, several steps were taken to protect the rights of human subjects in this research. This exploratory phase provided the following: (a) access to the school site and permission from the school principal to observe the teacher and class of students identified for the study; (b) presentation of the research proposal and a signed statement from the teacher giving permission to use her classroom as a research site; and (c) permission statements from the teacher and students to videotape in the classroom in each of the proposed observation sites. Examples of permission statements from the Teachers of the Years are included in Appendix B along with examples of the correspondence between the researcher and the Teacher of the Year and the building principal.

## Design

Because the purpose of this study is descriptive, a case study research design was deemed appropriate for investigating the ethos of three Iowa Teachers of the Year. The individuals to be studied have been identified on the basis of their selection by the Iowa State Department of Education. These individuals can be identified as "rare, unusual, or critical" (Montgomery, 1990, p. 60) on the basis of the selection process that identifies only one teacher per year as the Iowa Teacher of the Year.

### Methods of Data Collection

#### Data collection period

The data gathering period was during March, April, and May, 1990, at the request of the teachers involved in the study. The initial contact in March informed the researcher about the orientation of the informants. This included making the initial contact with the school and procuring signed statements of permission that provided access to the three school settings.

The data gathering period provided the researcher an opportunity for on-site visits. The on-site visits were conducted in a similar pattern with the researcher going to the school for a partial day as the initial on-site observation followed by two full days on-site. In the case of the Teacher of the Year who was assigned part-time administrative tasks in the central office of the school district, the visits were reversed with the two full days at the beginning of the on-site observation followed by a partial day of



observation. In each case the on-site visits consisted of equal amounts of time and can be documented as follows:

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Days Visited</u>	<u>Clock Hours Observed</u>
Teacher A	April 2, 3, 4	20
Teacher B	April 30, May 1, 2	20
Teacher C	May 22, 23, 24	20

Primary data in the form of field notes and audio and videotaped lesson transcriptions were collected. In the researcher's role as participant observer, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom, talked with the instructors before and after lessons, and wrote field notes in the form of script-tape. The researcher focused on narrative descriptions of the Teachers of the Year verbal and nonverbal interaction during the observations.

Observations involved script-taping and audio taping the activities of the class period taught by the teacher. Script-taping is used to record objective data of teacher-learner behaviors (Hunter, 1988). Script-taped information is noted every time the behavior changes. The purpose of script-taping in the teaching/learning environment is to document an exact representation of classroom activities, interactions, responses, and contexts.

Observational contextual information was recorded by the researcher. The contextual information included the date, time, class title, placement site, and the code name of the Teacher of the Year. Next, the researcher recorded specific information about the classroom in an attempt to describe the setting (i.e., notes about the size of the room, placement of desks, location of the overhead, bookshelves, maps, blackboard, bulletin boards). In

addition, the researcher noted the teacher's attire, observable emotions, classroom climate, and general environment of the classroom.

As the class began, the researcher script-taped and audiotaped the lesson. OBS is observational information noted and recorded by the researcher. KID is a response from a pupil. JMC is the researcher. Teacher A (T-A), Teacher B (T-B), or Teacher C (T-C) indicated the code for the particular Teacher of the Year. The particular settings are identified with code names including: Small Town, Middle Town, and Large Town, Iowa.

#### Observational excerpt

An example of the script-tape is given below:

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
	4-2-90	2:08 p.m.	6th grade	Small Town	T-A
JMC:	2:08	walked in; told to go to table; brief introduction			
KID:	2:10	working quietly			
OBS:	2:11	room arranged with individual desks, students at a desk; students answer questions individually; they answer quickly; plus and minus.			
T-A:	2:11	asks boy "what do you think?"			
T-A:	2:11	moves to another boy's desk in room			
T-A:	2:12	moves to back of room; all eyes on her; two children talk quietly.			

For the researcher who would want to examine the raw data, the exact documentation of what the participant observer noted while in the classroom is available. The codes listed above are simply the "shorthand"

used by this particular researcher. A significant part of the script-tape is the opportunity for the researcher to note the times at which teaching strategies change, interruptions occur, and teacher movement, directions, verbal, and nonverbal actions are recorded to provide an accurate description of what happens in the classroom.

#### On-site contextual information

The researcher collected as much specific information about each particular site as possible. This information came from personal observation, teacher handbooks, student newsletters, faculty lounge notes, and informal interviews.

The on-site contextual information found in the daily field notes included such things as the number of pupils enrolled in the class, the number of males and females enrolled in the class, space and equipment available. In addition, careful notation was made concerning the number of extracurricular duties for which the Teacher of the Year was responsible or was in attendance.

#### Teacher of the Year and student interactions

The researcher noted the interactions between the Teacher of the Year and the students as they entered the classroom. What method did the Teacher of the Year use for taking role, for dealing with absenteeism, for providing make-up work for yesterday's absent students? How did the Teacher of the Year handle the interruptions from the intercom, the next door colleague who needed a videotape, or the principal or school nurse

who needed to see a student? What kinds of conversation did the Teacher of the Year initiate with the pupils? What kind of classroom management was utilized? Similar information was noted during the lesson and as pupils left the classroom.

In each case, three key student informants were utilized as additional primary sources. Dillon (1989) states that "these students were selected in a purposive manner--they were representative of the observed class membership in respect to different achievement levels, social class and race, and they were willing to talk openly" (p. 234). In this study, the Teacher of the Year being observed was asked to name three students in the classroom who would be representative of the class membership. In addition, the researcher interviewed the immediate supervisor of the Teacher of the Year, parents, and colleagues of the Teacher of the Year.

### Procedures

Entrance interview. During the first day of the on-site classroom observation, each Teacher of the Year completed an audiotaped entrance interview. The duration of each interview varied from 45 minutes to two hours. The question formulation was at the broadest level based on the preliminary literature review and indicated two major components: (1) key individuals and (2) ecological characteristics of the classroom. Using the two basic research questions, the researcher completed a thorough review of the literature and developed six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of key individuals and six open-ended questions that addressed the issue of ecological characteristics (see Appendix C).

Items on the interview schedule were developed by the researcher based on a review of the literature on outstanding teachers. The items were reviewed by three different groups: (a) the items were reviewed by two university teacher education professionals; (b) the items were reviewed by a pilot interview conducted with a Teacher of the Year candidate who was not part of the final study; (c) the interview schedule was submitted to the Iowa State University Human Subjects Committee for review (see Appendix A). Several changes were made based upon recommendations from university teacher education professionals, a Teacher of the Year candidate, and committee members.

Using these questions the researcher explored the informants' beliefs about: (a) key individuals who influenced their beliefs, values, ideas, about teaching and (b) their perceptions about the ecological characteristics of the classroom (see Appendix C). The duration of each interview varied from 45 minutes to two hours.

Informal interviews. The informal interviews occurred each day with each of the participants. The informal interviews would occur, for example, as the researcher and the teacher stood at the door awaiting the next class, or as the researcher and teacher walked down the hall to another meeting. The emphasis was on clarification of what had been observed as well as gaining understanding about the "why" of what had been observed.

Classroom observations. Initiating the classroom observations on the first day with a limited amount of on-site time was guided by Knowles' (1988) suggestion that "in an effort to reduce informant stress by the presence of the researcher, observations were limited to between one and two

continuous hours, which sometimes encompassed portions of three class periods during each visitation" (p. 18). The second day of the on-site observation the researcher "shadowed" the teacher from the moment she arrived at the work setting until she left the building for the day. In each of the three cases, the "shadowing" continued during after school hours and included any extra-curricular assignments or meetings that the teacher was attending.

During the third day, when the researcher relied primarily on the videotape observation of the classroom, the procedure was the same, but the researcher videotaped the lessons rather than script-taping. In each case the researcher was the primary data gathering instrument. The researcher was also the sole operator of the video camera in an effort to assure a minimal amount of intrusion into the classroom setting.

Additional data collection. A review of materials provided by the Teacher of the Year included biographical information, course syllabi, letters of support, and clippings or documents about special projects. Through an analysis of this material the researcher was able to become more familiar with the background, procedures, and processes utilized by the Teacher of the Year.

### Data analysis

Basis for data analysis. The data were analyzed according to the principles of "constant comparative" data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1975). The constant comparative method, a procedure that combines inductive behavior-category coding with simultaneous comparison of all incidents

observed (Dillon, 1989) was used with all of the data. The constant comparative method of data classification identifies categories and generates statements of relationships (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

For example, as the researcher noticed how the teacher opened the lesson and determined the method for teaching the lesson, the researcher classified the choices into ecological characteristics of the classroom. The classification would be coded in two categories: verbal and nonverbal. From this categorization, the data collected were coded and stored.

Glaser and Strauss (1975) has suggested that the constant comparative method may be thought of as a series of steps. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state that "the steps all seem to happen at once and the analysis keeps doubling back to more data collection and coding" (p. 70). Step One: Begin collecting data. In this step the researcher collected field notes at the site of the Teacher of the Year's current school setting. Step Two: Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus. In this step, the researcher read the field notes and made an initial determination that the research items had been covered and that there were other areas that were emerging. At this point the researcher determined that these issues would be labeled unintended outcomes and would require further research in the literature. A specific example of this procedure would be in the repeated pattern that appeared in the script-tapes about how polite the Teachers of the Year were toward their students. Conversely, the researcher became aware of the politeness (i.e., students responding to the teacher and to one another with "please," "thank you," and "I am sorry"). Thus, the researcher would return to the literature to search for other studies that

would call attention to this phenomena. Step Three: Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories in the interview question. In this step the researcher utilized the audiotaped entrance interview, observed the classroom and script-taped the happenings in the classroom and continued to probe the underlying reasons for the various answers to the research questions.

Step Four: Write about the categories being explored, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents that occurred in the data while continually searching for new incidents. In this step the researcher began a rough draft based on the three Teachers of the Year as a means of discovering new incidents for research. Step Five: Work with the data. In this step the researcher listened to audiotapes, viewed videotapes, and re-read field notes to determine whether the emerging profile was an accurate reflection of what was observed. Step Six: Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories. In this step the researcher determined the major categories that were revealed in the field notes by reading the notes and assigning a code to the various happenings. At the same time the writing of the analysis was taking place and the researcher continued to sample, code, and re-write. Thus, the constant comparative method of data analysis relied upon simultaneous comparison of all incidents observed to assist in the analysis of the data collected from interviews, observations, review of student and teacher artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, textbooks, assignments).

A computer program entitled The Ethnograph (Seidel, Kjolseth, and Seymour, 1988) was used during the data analysis. This computer program



was developed by qualitative social scientists as "an efficient alternative to the often cumbersome task of managing field notes, transcripts, documents, and other types of text data collected and analyzed in field study research" (p. 1). The Ethnograph is a set of interactive, menu-driven computer programs designed to assist the qualitative researcher in some of the mechanical aspects of data analyses. By utilizing the computer to perform the mechanical aspects of the data analysis, the researcher was free to devote more time to the interpretive work of coding the data as well as interpreting it.

Basically, then, the The Ethnograph computer program allows the researcher to enter field notes into the computer and code and record the data. The field notes were sorted with the ease of technology rather than the labor intensiveness of using wall charts, notebooks, and checklists for recording the data.

Entering code names into the computer as a means of allowing for inserting, changing, modifying, and printing code mapping schemes provided the researcher a myriad of ways to look at the data.

Data analysis cycle. The Ethnograph allowed the researcher to code and record the data. A schematic framework for The Ethnograph is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

A Schematic Framework for the Ethnograph<sup>a</sup>

- 
11. Report the Data
  10. Re-search Codes
  9. Modify Codes
  8. Reflect on Data (Interpret Data)
  7. Search for Codes
  6. Enter Codes
  5. Code Mapping
  4. Number and Print Raw Data File
  3. Convert Data (Computer Entry)
  2. Transcribe Raw Data
  1. Collect Data
- 

<sup>a</sup>Seidel, Kjolseth, & Seymour, 1988.

A brief explanation of each step in the schematic framework for The Ethnograph is presented in the following narrative. Step one entailed collecting the data and step two involved transcribing verbatim raw data and entering the data into the computer. Step three was the conversion of raw data into a standard computer file, a form that The Ethnograph can manipulate. Step four involved a procedure in which The Ethnograph

numbers the lines of the verbatim data and prints the raw data. An example of how the data appears once the researcher has completed step four appears below:

---

NUMBERED VERSION OF FILE	OBS	+ T-A DOC	Day 1	April 2
	OBS: Children immediately discuss		26	
	question		27	
	children in room; teacher		28	
	walks to a boy; answers question		29	
	quickly; moves to another group		30	
	clear across the room		31	
	OBS: T-A moves quickly from one		32	
	room to another		33	

---

The first four steps outlined above are preliminary mechanical steps for qualitative data analysis. In fact, the steps simply outline the process of transcribing the data from the field notes into a computer print form. As the researcher script-tapes, a type of shorthand was used to expedite the note-taking. Therefore, what is fed into the computer is the researcher's shorthand (e.g., OBS=observation, T-A=teacher being observed.)

Step five involved determining the mapping that the researcher observed in the data. Step six entailed entering code words into the computer. The researcher emphasizes that the coding is a subjective process. Each individual teacher was assigned a code letter and except for the teacher's

initials the code would be the same. For example, the code presented below is the code for Teacher A; thus, the last two letters of the code were T-A to help the computer recognized during a search the materials that were related to T-A. When coding for Teacher B, the researcher used T-B as the last two code letters, and when coding for Teacher C the researcher either T-C . [Note: the maximum number of code letter entry allowed The Ethnograph program is eight.] In the case of the coding for this research, the codes were developed based on the interview items (see Appendix C) and include the following list:

Table 2

Coding Plan


---

	Code
Item 1 Demographics	
T-A	DEMT-A
T-B	DEMT-B
T-C	DEMT-C
Item 2 Key People	
Professional Contacts	KEYPCTA
Family	KEYFAMTA
	Code
Dad	KEYDADTA
Mom	KEYMOMTA
University faculty	KEYUFTA
Colleagues	KEYCOLTA
Teaching family	KEYTFTA

Table 2

Continued

---

Mentor	KEYMENTA
Item 3 Attitudes, values beliefs	AVBTA
Item 4 Support from family	FAMSUPTA
Support from colleagues	COLSUPTA
Item 5 Students describe teacher	STUDESTA
Item 6 Community's opinion	COMPERTA
Item 7 Describe effective teaching	DESEFTTA
Item 8 Nature of social organization	
Students	OBECSTA
Desks, bulletin boards	OBECOTA
Item 9 Verbal and nonverbal actions	
Verbal	OBVBTA
Nonverbal	OBNVTA
Item 10 Teacher's perception	T-CHPERTA
Item 11 Student's perception	STUPERTA
Administrator's perception	ADMPERTA
	Code
Item 12 Conditions of work	
Encouraging	WRKCNATA
Discouraging	WRKCNDTA
Good day	GODAYTA
Bad day	BADDATA

Table 2

Continued

---

Unintended Outcomes	
Teacher appearance	OBT-APTA
Interruptions	OBINTTA
Committee work	OBCOMTA
Miscellaneous observation	OBMISTA
Parent Conferences	OBPTTA
Teacher personality	OBPERTA
Teacher's creativity	OBT-CTA
Extracurricular activities	OBEATA

---

Step seven, the search step, entailed searching the files for specific codes. The computer searched for all data that has been coded as OBNVRTA and provided the researcher all data coded with those particular letters. This provided the researcher an opportunity to look at all parts of the field notes that had been coded OBNVTA (i.e., observed nonverbal interactions of T-A with her students). The researcher emphasizes that the data is not a quantifiable observation; rather, the computer has, by the ease of technology, gathered all of the notes on observed nonverbal interactions of T-A with her students into one printout so that the researcher may analyze that portion of field notes in a comprehensive manner. An example of the data provided once the computer did a search for OBNVTA is shown below:

-----  
 NUMBERED VERSION OF FILE OBS + T-A DOC Day 1 April 2

OBNVTA

OBS: Children immediately discuss	26 ----OBS
question	27
OBS: 21 children in room; teacher	29 ----OBSMISTA
walks to a boy; answers question	30
quickly; moves to another group	31 ----OBNVTA
clear across the room	32
OBS: T-A moves quickly from one	34 ---OBNVTA
room to another	35

-----

The printed output combined similar codes to allow the researcher to capture a sense of code frequencies. For example, one particular file for one of the Teachers of the Year revealed that there was student/teacher interaction constantly with each numbered line revealing a new speaker.

After the document had been printed, step five allowed the researcher to reflect on the data, comment on the data, mark the data, code the data, and analyze the text. Therefore, the first set of data were often referred to as verbatim data as entered into the computer program or the "emic" data. The "etic" realm of the data is the researcher's reflection on the data as he/she analyzes the data. The verbatim data are not altered during the process, but the researcher determines by coding which parts of the verbatim data will be utilized and coded as "attitudes, values, beliefs." At this point the researcher may choose to code that portion as AVBT-A which would

mean that this is an "attitude, value, or belief" that was observed while script-taping or interviewing a particular Teacher of the Year. Steps 8 through 10 repeat steps 5 through 7. Thus, The Ethnograph is noted for its cyclical, interactive capabilities. The researcher has the opportunity to reflect on the data for interpretive purposes in as many ways as the researcher chooses to think about the data (Petersen, 1989).

The researcher script-taped an average of 20 class hours for each of the three Teachers of the Year for a total of 60 class hours of on-site observations. In addition, the researcher videotaped one of the on-site days. The videotapes were made by the researcher with no additional camera person in the room. Each videotape began at the beginning of each lesson that the teacher taught and followed the teacher throughout the teaching period. This process was completed each time a new group of students entered the room. These videotapes were for the purpose of confirming what the researcher had script-taped on the previous two days.

Three design tests for case studies. There are several ways that qualitative researchers enhance the external and internal reliability of the data. Kidder (1981) identified three validity/reliability tests that are appropriate for descriptive case study designs: construct validity, external validity, and reliability (cited in Yin, 1984).

Construct validity (Kidder, 1981) refers to establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. Further, Montgomery (1990) suggests that "to meet the requirements of construct validity, selected measures must reflect the characteristics or traits of interest" (p. 61). In this study several steps were taken to insure construct validity: (1) Each of the



research questions was literature based. (2) Research questions were formulated and submitted for review to a panel of experts including classroom teachers, university professors in teacher education and Teachers of the Year. Revisions were then made by the researcher. (3) Multiple sources of data collection were used.

External validity establishes the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized (Yin, 1989). Differences in the types of generalization allowed comprise an important distinction between inferential and descriptive studies. Yin (1989) provides a succinct statement clarifying the difference when he states, ". . . survey research relies on statistical generalization, whereas case studies (as with experiments) rely on analytical generalization" (p. 43). Finally, Erickson (1986) states that analyzing data from qualitative studies is "to generate empirical assertions, largely through induction" (p. 146). In this study, external validity is assessed by replicating findings among three Teachers of the Year. If replication occurs to a great extent, empirical assertions can be made, but the researcher's primary purpose is to provide a detailed description of the ethos of the selected group of Teachers of the Year.

Reliability refers to the possibility that another researcher could replicate the study with similar results. The goal of reliability is to minimize errors and biases in a study (Yin, 1989). As a participant-observer during the course of this case study, the researcher attempted to reproduce in a complete manner, the actual experiences, actions and thoughts of the selected Teachers of the Year and their students.

To overcome potential biases (Erickson, 1986; Yin, 1989) the researcher has taken graduate coursework in qualitative research design, has practiced observation and interview techniques for over 15 years as a freelance journalist, and completed graduate work in teacher evaluation using the Hunter (1988) script-taping method prior to this study.

The researcher has over 20 years of experience as a classroom teacher at both the middle school and senior high school levels and in a university setting. The researcher has experience as a media specialist in an elementary setting. In addition, the researcher has been named an Honorary National State Teacher of the Year. This honor gave the researcher added insight into the program that honors Teachers of the Year.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) assert that qualitative researchers have wrestled over the years with the issue of bias and note that qualitative researchers "talk about limiting observers' biases, not eliminating them" (p. 43). The researcher had no practical experience with or working knowledge of the specific schools in which the selected Teachers of the Year taught. The researcher previously had worked with the selected teachers in a professional role, but the researcher had not been in the classroom of any of the three participants.

### Instrumentation

Research questions. Qualitative research is used to generate hypotheses and questions in order to create an overall cultural perspective inherent in a particular situation. The interview questions were general enough to permit the researcher to gather a wide variety of potentially relevant data while, at the same time, the questions provided a framework of reference for the two basic research questions focusing the study. The questions were formulated at the broadest level focusing on two factors--the key individuals and the ecological characteristics of the classroom. In her study of outstanding elementary teachers Easterly (1983) states that "clearly, the predominant influences on this group of teachers were other teachers--teachers whom they respected--teachers who had reached out and encouraged them" (p. 13). Doyle and Ponder (1975) defined the classroom ecological system as "that network of interconnected processes and events which impinges upon behavior in the teaching environment" (p. 183).

### Summary

In this qualitative study with a case study design, two basic research questions were addressed: (1) Who are the key individuals influencing the shaping of attitudes, values, and beliefs of three Iowa Teachers of the Year? and (2) What are the ecological characteristics of the classroom that influence the behavior in the teaching environment for these Iowa Teachers of the

Year? In addition, six open-ended questions for each research question were advanced. In total twelve questions that were research based and related to the two basic research questions were included. A complete list of the interview questions is found in Appendix C.

#### CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of the data collected is categorized into six sections. The chapter follows an organizational pattern that replicates the research interview questions. The researcher chose to present the analysis in an order that replicates the hierarchy in the public schools. Teacher A is the elementary teacher, Teacher B is the middle school teacher, and Teacher C is the secondary teacher. Each section consists of an abbreviated statement of the interview item. For example, the first interview item was, "What are the demographic characteristics of the Iowa Teachers of the Year?" Because the teachers' responses to this provided several types of information, the first section includes: (a) personal background, (b) educational background, (c) teaching experience, and (d) the teacher's perception of herself as a teacher followed by a summary. The source of the data is the entrance interview.

The second section addresses the key individuals influencing the Teachers of the Year. Categories included here are: (a) key individuals, (b) attitudes, values, and beliefs, (c) support system, (d) perception of students' descriptions of the Teacher of the Year, and (e) perception of the community's description of the Teacher of the Year. The source of the data is the entrance interview. The third section summarizes the interview perceptions of the Teachers of the Year about the ecological characteristics of their classroom. The source of the data is found in Appendix C, questions 7-12.

The fourth section summarizes the ecological characteristics of the classroom. The data sources for this section are the on-site observations to

provide additional insight into the research question, "What were the ecological characteristics of the Teachers' of the Year classrooms?" Categories included: (a) appearance of the teacher and the classroom, (b) the social organization in the Teachers' of the Year classroom? and (c) verbal and nonverbal patterns of action.

The fifth section summarizes the findings gained from semi-structured interviews with principals, parents, students, colleagues, and community members. This section is purposely anonymous because the researcher did not want the Teachers of the Year to be able to identify the particular principal, student, parent, or colleague interviewed. This is an added precaution to protect the rights of human subjects in this research.

The final section gives background for an additional finding that addresses the Teachers' of the Year polite treatment of their students. This section is included as an additional finding.

#### Iowa Teachers of the Year: An Overview.

Goodson (1981) argues that "in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is crucial that we know about the person the teacher is . . ." (p. 69). The purpose of this section is to present a comprehensive overview of each Iowa Teachers' of the Year personal background, educational background and personal perspectives about how these teachers were influenced to become teachers.

The data presented in this chapter were collected through audio taped entrance interviews and conversations between the researcher and the individual Teachers of the Year. The underlined words or phrases in the

narrative statements are those words or phrases that the Teachers of the Year emphasized on the audio tapes. The words or phrases in brackets have been added by the researcher for clarity of responses.

### Teacher A

Personal background. Teacher A, 39, grew up in Small Town, Iowa, where she attended kindergarten through grade 12 in the Small Town School District. She was a sixth grade teacher in Small Town when she was named the Iowa Teacher of the Year. Teacher A's responsibilities include the teaching of reading, math, spelling, language arts, and science. This is her sixth year of teaching in Small Town.

Teacher A was divorced and has remarried. Her spouse is in business for himself, and they have two daughters. One daughter is pre-school age and the second daughter is in first grade in the Small Town School District.

Teacher A had many different work experiences during her high school and college years. Teacher A taught at the Small Town swimming pool during the summers, and it was working with the children, teaching swimming, that she became convinced to become a teacher.

Teacher A's mother and grandmother were teachers; her father was also a teacher who left education after two years and became a businessman. She has a younger brother.

Educational background. Teacher A attended elementary, middle school and high school in Small Town. She credits good teachers in math and science in high school as the reason that she began her college education at Iowa State University where she majored in zoology. At the end of her

freshman year she transferred to the University of Northern Iowa. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa. Teacher A completed her bachelor's degree and was graduated magna cum laude from the University of Northern Iowa in 1973. She completed her master's degree in 1977. She returned to Iowa State University for a year as a graduate assistant in curriculum and instructional technology but discovered "that was not the program for me!"

Currently, she is completing course work on a doctorate in elementary education at the University of Iowa. In addition to being licensed as an elementary teacher, she has state endorsement as an elementary principal and as a media specialist.

Teaching experience. Teacher A's sixteen years of teaching experience include her first teaching position as a sixth grade science teacher in 1973. Teacher A taught fifth and sixth grade science in Iowa from 1973 to 1977 and taught fourth grade in Iowa schools from 1978 to 1981.

From 1981 to 1983, Teacher A taught fifth grade in Texas. She returned to Iowa in 1983 to accept a teaching job in Small Town.

Becoming a teacher. Teacher A explains how she became a teacher by saying that it was during the Vietnam era and there were not many career opportunities for zoology majors. Teacher A took water safety as a freshman at Iowa State and during the summer she secured a position at the Small Town swimming pool. She liked working with the nine to eleven-year old students and decided, ". . . this is wonderful! I could be a teacher and still pursue my love which was science. So that's how I got into teaching" (Teacher A, Interview, #2, April, 1990).



Teacher A knew "realistically what teaching was going to be" based on being around her mother and her grandmother who were both teachers. She volunteered that she thought her mother did not really like teaching. Teacher A could not name a key person influencing her decision to become a teacher. She said:

I can't point to one person and 'say well this is the person that influenced me.' I would say it was with the kids themselves, swimming, that did it for me. That's not what you want is it?  
(Teacher A, Interview, # 2, April, 1990)

A second interview item that helps clarify the Teachers of the Year perception of herself as a teacher was item number three, "Who were the key individuals in shaping the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Teachers of the Year?" Teacher A provided the following insights about her attitudes and values:

. . . maybe because of my growing up here [Small Town] is part of it. I felt like I needed to give something back. This was the district that educated me. Plus, I feel like I've learned a lot from the people here. I think I should give something back to them. You don't get to be Teacher of the Year on your own in your own isolated box. You've got all kinds of other professional people who are helping you along the way. And I mean, I owe something to them. (Teacher A, Interview, # 3, April, 1990)

Teacher of the year award. When reflecting on the meaning of the Teacher of the Year award, Teacher A commented that "you're not trying to be anything 'best.' I mean there's not a contest that I was in as for how fast could I run, or how smart my students were or anything like that." Her consensus was that "half a dozen other people in my district could have been Teacher of the Year. I mean they're as good if not better teachers than I am in the classroom" (Teacher A, Interview, #6, April, 1990).

By the time Teacher A was named Iowa's Teacher of the Year, the Iowa State Education Association had solicited money from corporate sponsors so that the Iowa Teacher of the Year received a lump sum of \$2,900.00. Teacher A gave \$1,900.00 of the award money directly to her district with only one stipulation, "I don't want it used to buy typewriters or duplicator machines; I want it used for professional development." She explains her action by saying, "Well I, maybe because of my growing up here is part of it, I felt like I need to give something back . . ." (Teacher A, Interview, #6, April, 1990).

Attitude toward teaching. When thinking about her attitude toward teaching, Teacher A suggested:

You've got to have the freedom to call the shots in the classroom. But yet that does not mean you close your door and just do your own thing all the time. (Teacher A, Interview, #3, April, 1990)

In talking about her leaving the classroom to go back to graduate school the first time, Teacher A confided:

And I got to the point where I was more worried about whether students were wearing their overshoes at recess than I was about what I would call the up-in-the-clouds kinds of things. I needed to get back into something that was a little more theory based. So that's when I went to Iowa State for a year as a grad assistant. (Teacher A, Interview, #3, April, 1990)

### Teacher B

Personal background. Teacher B, 31, was born in Iowa and grew up on a farm in Iowa. Teacher B attended kindergarten through grade 12 in the same school which she describes as a small school. "In fact," Teacher B says,

"the school closed last year as one of the smallest school districts in the state. I shouldn't say they closed; they consolidated to whole group sharing with a nearby school" (Teacher B, Interview, #1, May, 1990).

Teacher B was an eighth grade teacher at a junior high school in Another Town, Iowa when she was named the Iowa Teacher of the Year. Teacher B is married and has no children. She and her spouse live in Middle Town, Iowa where he is a farm manager for Iowa State University.

During her high school years, Teacher B was very active in athletics, band, and vocal music, "all of that stuff, every club and everything you can be in because in a small school everybody is in everything, or it doesn't fly" (Teacher B, Interview, #1, May, 1990).

Teacher B was raised on the farm that her family owns. Her father was a farmer, and her mother was a homemaker. When asked if her mother was a teacher, Teacher B responded, "no, she is a farmwife." She has a sister and a brother. Teacher B is the middle child.

Educational background. Teacher B attended all twelve years of school in one school. She went from this K-12 school experience to Iowa State University where she was graduated as a physical education major in the College of Education and went to an Iowa public school to do her student teaching. She explains, "I student taught in physical education and realized about half way through my student teaching experience that I was meant for the classroom and not the gymnasium" (Teacher B, Interview, #2, May, 1990).

Teacher B graduated from Iowa State University in 1980 with a physical education major, a social studies minor, and an Iowa teaching certificate. After substitute teaching for three years, she accepted the position

at Another Town Junior High, and "jumped at the chance to go back to school to pick up enough courses for certification in teaching English." In addition to being licensed as a 7-12 English teacher, Teacher B has coaching certifications in volleyball, basketball, and track.

Teacher B has teaching approvals in English, physical education, American government, American history, sociology, reading, and health. The Teacher of the Year was a State of Iowa scholar and was graduated with distinction from Iowa State University. Teacher B has completed graduate work at Drake University and Northeast Missouri State. Currently, Teacher B is pursuing a master's degree in Educational Administration at Iowa State University. This necessitates a round-trip to Ames every Tuesday evening to attend graduate classes.

Teaching experience. Teacher B's teaching experience includes eight years in the classroom and three years as a substitute teacher in the Another Town area. During her role as substitute teacher, "she taught everything--home economics, band, shop, special education, art, and all the academic areas" (Bartusek,1989, p. 5). Teacher B describes her first teaching job as follows:

In 1983 I was hired as a social studies/English teacher for seventh grade students in the junior high in Another Town. And I taught various subjects for the next seven years. I student taught PE which was the only time I taught PE, but I taught geography and civics and health and English and speech, and computer literacy and this year I'm teaching reading for the first time. I coached. I've always coached junior high athletics. When I first started coaching, I coached year-around. I coached volleyball, basketball, track, softball, and swimming. Now I'm coaching volleyball and basketball. I coached a mock trial team one year

or two years. . . .Now I teach eighth grade language arts classes predominantly all day long. The only seventh grade class I have is the seventh grade literature class. (Teacher B, Interview, #1, May, 1990)

The move to Middle Town was precipitated by the fact that "my husband accepted a job in this part of the state, so I was fortunate enough to land a job in Middle Town and teach at the Middle Town Middle School now" (Teacher B, Interview, #4, May, 1990).

Becoming a teacher. Teacher B explains that "she really wanted to teach." Anyone who quits a paying job, enrolls in three classes in order to teach in an academic area where you have no preparation, and takes out a loan to do the above "really wants to teach." That's how Teacher B describes her initiation into her first job. Upon reflection about the reason she became a teacher, Teacher B states:

I don't know if it was people, or not, but it became obvious to me I guess, through the activities that I was in in high school, that I needed to do something that was people oriented.

. . . I had the ability to get up in front of other people. and it became obvious to me that other people didn't. I can't run very fast, but I can get up in front of other people and make them understand an idea. You know, keep them listening. And I guess that became clear to me. Whether those teachers [three

elementary teachers] pointed that out to me, or if it was the activities that I was involved in, I don't know. I would have to say the other influence would be my mother. (Teacher B, Interview, #2, May, 1990)

Teacher of the Year award. Teacher B often uses her background in athletics for analogies to describe herself as a teacher. Teacher B states that, "... teachers, like athletes, need practice to be good. I'm a better teacher this year than I was last year because I learned things last year I can put to use now" (Bartusek, 1988, p. 4). In thinking about the Teacher of the Year award, Teacher B said, "I think I was given a very nice award; I think I tried; I think there are thousands of people who tried. And I really don't think that there is anything that differentiates me from the bunch. I just happen to have been the one selected" (Teacher B, Interview, # 7, May, 1990).

Attitude toward teaching. Teacher B talked about her attitude toward working with particular students and described her feelings as follows:

... I want to go to bed knowing that I did what I thought was right according to my value system and I want to have a clear conscience at night.

I'm not out to save the world. A missionary? I think, too, with [name of student] and with me, and I'll have to admit this, that it's selfish in a way, because I see there with [name of student] an opportunity to make a difference and that's how I get my reward for teaching. (Teacher B, Interview, #7, May, 1990)

### Teacher C

Personal background. Teacher C, 46, teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) at Large Town High School and coordinates the teaching of K-12 English as a Second Language in the local schools. Teacher C was

named Iowa's Teacher of the Year by the Iowa Department of Education after nomination by her local principal.

Teacher C was born in Iowa and grew up on a farm. Teacher C attended a local school from kindergarten through grade eight; after eighth grade graduation, Teacher C's family moved to an adjacent rural district where she attended high school. Teacher C is married, and her spouse is a university professor in sociology; they have college-aged daughters who are studying to become teachers.

The Teacher of the Year describes her growing up years as being part of "a very close family." She says she is a person with "real Iowa roots." There are four daughters in the family and "we write letters to one another every week." All the sisters write to the mother, and then the mother exchanges all the letters--it's a round robin" (Teacher C, Interview, May, #3, 1990).

Neither of Teacher C's parents finished high school. Teacher C says:

It was very important to them that I go to school. They were children of the Depression and about the time when they had both worked very hard on the farm. My mother came from Kansas and was the eleventh of twelve children; and, my dad was one of five--second from the end of five--and had a real strong work ethic, and they thought it was very important we try. They always encouraged us in school. (Teacher C, Interview, #1, May, 1990)

Teacher C had two aunts who were teachers, and she remembers them as people she admired. She remembers thinking that, "they were really doing something that was beyond what anybody in my family had done" (Teacher C, Interview, #1, May, 1990). Teacher C remembers that there were two career choices for women in the time Teacher C was growing up; it appeared either women became nurses or teachers.

Educational background. Teacher C attended elementary school in a rural Iowa town and remembers eighth grade graduation as a milestone in her life. She was graduated as the salutatorian of her high school. Incidentally, her spouse, whom she met in high school, graduated as the valedictorian, and Teacher C recalls those years as friendly academic competition between them.

Teacher C enrolled in Drake University as an elementary education major. During her sophomore year she transferred to Iowa State University, enrolled in secondary education, and graduated with a B.S. in English and Speech in 1965. She completed a master's of science degree in Teaching of English at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, in 1969. A decade later, in 1979, Teacher C completed a second master's degree. This time it was a master's of arts degree in Linguistics with a focus on teaching English as a Foreign Language from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Her certifications include an Iowa Permanent Professional Certificate issued in 1975 and endorsements in English and speech at the secondary level as well as a post secondary endorsement in English.

Teacher C's special academic honors include graduating as the highest scholar in the College of Science and Humanities at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa in 1965 and a 4.00 G.P.A. at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse in 1969.

Teaching experience. Teacher C began her teaching career at a large high school in central Iowa as a language arts secondary teacher in 1965-1966. In 1967 her spouse enrolled in graduate school in LaCrosse, Wisconsin and she taught English in the local high school in LaCrosse. From 1970-1972 she



taught in an alternative program for girls who were not married and had small babies or were pregnant. The position was with the Madison, Wisconsin Public Schools in a Pupil Services Alternative Program where Teacher C was the language arts and sociology teacher.

During 1976-78, Teacher C was a Teaching Assistant and Administrative Assistant to the Director of English as a Second Language program at the University of Iowa, Department of Linguistics. In 1978 and 1979 she taught English as a Second Language at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. In 1980-81 Teacher C returned to the high school classroom as the founder of the English as a Second Language program in a large high school in Iowa. In 1981, she became the English as a Second Language (ESL) secondary teacher at Large Town High School, and in 1987 added the duties of Large Town Community School District K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinator.

In addition to her positions in the public schools, the Teacher of the Year has been an Area Education Association English as a Second Language (ESL) consultant and a Title VII Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) Regional Consultant for several Iowa schools.

Becoming a teacher. Teacher C describes her entry into the teaching profession as an English teacher as one that was a process of coming to understand that maybe she could do it. She remembers those years saying:

About that time when I was moving to Iowa State, I knew that I would have to leave elementary education because they [Iowa State] did not yet have an elementary ed program. They had child development, but they didn't have elementary education certificates. I think it changed the year I came, actually. But in transferring there, I had to have a different major. I remember

that she was a very young freshman English teacher, but she encouraged me in the things that I wrote, and the things that I did to really believe that maybe I should go into English. Now, I don't know why it took me so long because I had always loved English, and I'd always done well and had thought that was probably my little niche, but it had--it seemed to have an aura to me that I didn't think I could live up to. So, maybe those two English teachers [a high school teacher and a university professor] inspired me to believe that I could. But again, they were heroines to me--they were higher and on a pedestal. That's why I didn't necessarily jump to be an English teacher. (Teacher C, Interview, #2, May, 1990)

Teacher of the Year award. In reflecting on the Teacher of the Year award, Teacher C shared that:

I don't think it changes the way you are in the classroom as a teacher. I think it's your public facade that changes or your ability to meet the public and to have something of substance to say so that you're two people. But I don't think it changes what you do with kids so much. I think that, by this time it [what we do with kids] is pretty well established for most of us. (Teacher C, Interview, 6, May, 1990)

Attitude toward teaching. When asked "do you see yourself as a missionary of some type?" Teacher C answered:

There's a lot, there's a lot of that. I do. Sometimes I think that's part of what we are. There is something about a mission in terms of changing the future. (Teacher C, Interview, #3, May, 1990)

When the researcher asked Teacher C about her conscience about equity issues, the Teacher of the Year replied:

Well, there is a real strong religious basis in my family and I think some of this caring and this fairness and interest in other people comes from that. Missionaries are concerned with each one of you, and I come from that. I must feel for other people. (Teacher C, Interview, #3, May, 1990)

## Summary

Personal and educational backgrounds. All three Iowa Teachers of the Year were native Iowans. Two of the three (Teacher B and Teacher C) were raised on farms, and Teacher A was raised in a small rural community. All three Teachers of the Year described close family ties with their parents and siblings. All three of the Teachers of the Year are presently married and one (Teacher A) has been divorced. Two of the three teachers (Teacher A and Teacher C) have children although there is a difference in ages of the children with Teacher A's daughters being pre-school and elementary aged and Teacher C's daughters are college-aged.

All three of the Teachers of the Year have been enrolled at Iowa State University. Two of them (Teacher B and Teacher C) received their initial degrees from Iowa State University. Teacher C's bachelor's degree in 1965 was prior to the formation of the College of Education; but she is a graduate of the Teacher Education program. All three of these teachers excelled academically in their undergraduate years as evidenced by the honors they received. Teacher A was graduated magna cum laude, Teacher B was graduated with distinction, and Teacher C was graduated as the highest scholar in the College of Science and Humanities at Iowa State University.

In addition, all of the teachers have pursued advanced degrees. Teacher A and Teacher B enrolled in the graduate program in the College of Education at Iowa State University. Teacher B plans to complete a master's degree at Iowa State University. Teacher A completed a master's degree at University of Northern Iowa before going to Iowa State University; then, she went back to University of Northern Iowa for her administrative

certification. Teacher C has completed a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and a second master's degree at the University of Iowa.

The three Iowa Teachers of the Year were raised in families where the parents valued education for their children. One of the Teachers of the Year (Teacher A) had teachers in her background with her mother and grandmother both having been teachers. Teacher C remembers the teachers in her family as "two aunts whom she admired." Two of the three recipients (Teacher B and Teacher C) came from homes where the father was a farmer and the mother a homemaker. In contrast, Teacher A comes from a background where her parents were both teachers. Teacher A's father left teaching to become a businessman but her mother was an secondary teacher.

Teaching experience. The three Teachers of the Year bring with them a combined full-time teaching experience of 45 years with Teacher C having taught the longest--19 years; Teacher A has taught 17 years, and Teacher B has taught nine years. In addition, Teacher B adds three years of substitute teaching to her teaching experience. The three teachers have varied experiences with two of them (Teacher A and Teacher C) having taught at the college level and worked with the State Department of Education in consulting roles.

Two of the three Teachers of the Year have taught out-of-state--Teacher A in Texas and Teacher C in Wisconsin. On the other hand, Teacher B's teaching experience has been confined to Iowa. All three of the teachers in this study have taught language arts at some level (i.e., Teacher A at the sixth grade level, Teacher B at the middle school level, and Teacher C at the secondary and post-secondary level). In addition, each teacher has a

special teaching emphasis with Teacher A's area of endorsement in math and science; Teacher B's area of endorsement in physical education, social studies and language arts; and Teacher C's endorsements in speech and English as well as teaching English as a Second Language (ESL).

Becoming a teacher. All three of the teachers provided specific reasons for why they became teachers. Two of the Teachers of the Year (Teacher B and Teacher C) pointed to specific persons in their backgrounds. For Teacher B, the reason she became a teacher included encouragement of elementary teachers, awareness of her public speaking ability and communication skills, and encouragement of her mother. In Teacher C's case, the reason she became a teacher was because of encouragement at home to get an education [Note: her assessment was that "the careers for women at that time were nursing or teaching"], and the encouragement of two specific teachers--her high school English teacher and a university English teacher at Drake. In contrast, Teacher A could point to no particular person who made a difference in influencing her to become a teacher but rather cited working with nine to eleven-year old children in a summer swimming program as the moment she discovered she could become a teacher.

Teacher of the Year award. When asked to comment on the influence of the Teacher of the Year award on their teaching, all three of the Iowa Teachers of the Year agreed that there had been an influence. Teacher A sees the award as an opportunity to "give something back to the community" and readily volunteers that there are several of her colleagues who could easily have been Teacher of the Year. Teacher B feels that too much is made out of the award and that anyone could be a Teacher of the Year. Teacher C

commented that the Teacher of the Year award does not change what the teacher does in the classroom but felt that the award may change the teacher's public persona.

### Key Individuals

This item addressed the issue of the key people influencing the Teachers of the Year, and how the three Iowa Teachers of the Year perceived that their teacher role identities (Crow, 1987) were influenced by family, friends, and former teachers. The Teachers of the Year were asked to: (a) describe who the key people were influencing them to become a teacher; (b) describe who the key individuals were in shaping the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Teachers of the Year; and (c) describe the support that they received from families and colleagues.

#### Teacher A

Key people. When responding to key individuals who had influenced her to become a teacher, Teacher A, a sixth grade teacher in Small Town, Iowa, said:

Well, I never set out to be a teacher. Some people their whole lives want to teach. And, I would say it was working with kids themselves that set me into being a teacher. Now, my mother was a teacher and my grandmother was a teacher and all that kind of thing, but I wouldn't say it was a life-long passion of mine. It certainly was not. . . . I can't point to one person and say well this is the person that influenced me. (Teacher A, Interview, # 2, April, 1990).

Attitudes, values, beliefs. When asked who were the key individuals in shaping the attitudes, values and beliefs of the Teacher of the Year, Teacher A acknowledged:

I wouldn't say kids shape my values; they just sort of give a focus to where we're going with some of the classes I teach . . . the values are still my own values. I wouldn't say I adopt the students' values, although you have to acknowledge those.  
(Teacher A, Interview, # 3, April, 1990)

Teacher A has a clearly formulated belief about how she will interact with pupils in a teaching/learning environment. Teacher A describes that expectation as one that is "fairly open" where they students feel free to come and talk to her. Teacher A also described how her attitude had changed over the years by saying:

. . . so I'm trying to model certain kinds of behavior. In other words, I think that's something I've developed over the past seven or eight years is that little things don't upset me too much anymore. You know, a kid will throw up, or just little things. I want the students to see that the little things are part of life, and they just go on. You just have to accept those and to try to stress the important things. So, I would say over the years probably the big, big things will really upset me—if a student lies, if they're unkind to somebody else. But small things, you know, if they don't have a pencil that day, I don't get all hyped up about it, I might have my first few years. I'd have given a big lecture about bringing your tools to class . . . . (Teacher A, Interview, # 3, April, 1990)

Teacher A's response is in sharp contrast to the literature that maintains that outstanding teachers have a mentor (Gehrke and Kay, 1984) who they can identify as a person who encouraged them to become teachers.

Support system. When reflecting on the support that the Teacher of the Year receives from families and colleagues, Teacher A had no trouble

listing those who were her support system. In addition, she added her opinion on the need for a support system stating:

Well, anytime you're teaching, or any job, you've got to have some kind of either spouse support or parent support or something like that. So I've had that, my husband's been encouraging me not only about teaching but going back to graduate school, and he doesn't mind taking over the role of the children. You have to have that or otherwise I think you would go bonkers. My children have always had me working. I have always worked. They know no other situation . . . and I've told you before, if I didn't have my folks to help me out, because there is a large part of time where I have to do things at night, and that's my choice, but I don't think I could do a good job of it if I didn't spend some evenings on it, so they [my parents] take the kids in the morning when I have meetings at school or something like that. (Teacher A, Interview, # 4, April, 1990)

When discussing the support system, Teacher A observed that there really is not a support system for colleagues (i.e., nothing formal). Teacher A continued with her reflection on the idea of a support system suggesting that "women sort of seek it out for themselves, but there's nothing formally there." In contrast, Teacher A felt that "we [the profession] have a lot of men frustrated and burned out, and we have no support for them whatsoever" (Teacher A, Interview, # 4, April, 1990).

Student's description. Teacher A provided a very succinct statement about what students would say about her if they were asked to describe their teacher. Teacher A thought they would say:

. . . I'm not a real funny person. In other words, I don't tell jokes. And I'm not a joking kind of person. Most of them say things like she doesn't get mad very often, she's patient, she doesn't raise her voice, she makes us do our homework. She explains things over and over if we need it. She's fair, and



doesn't play favorites and that kind of thing, the things that are important to kids. (Teacher A, Interview, # 5, April, 1990)

Community opinion. A final item on the initial list of interview items addressed the issue of what the community's opinion would be of the Teacher of the Year. In the case of Teacher A who had grown up in Small Town and attended all of her grade school and high school in that community, the question provided an opportunity for Teacher A to reflect on how the community would view her as a teacher. Teacher A conceded that "the community still thinks that you're probably picked out as the best teacher and you've got to dispel the idea that you're not the best of anything" (Teacher A, Interview, # 6, April, 1990). In addition, Teacher A noted that the community takes great pride in anyone who wants to come back home to teach. Teacher A said that, "This community does have a tradition of hiring back their graduates" (Teacher A, Interview, # 6, April, 1990).

### Teacher B

Key people. Key influences in Teacher B's decision to become a teacher included three elementary teachers and her family. Teacher B described the best teacher she ever had was Mrs. S\_\_\_\_, her third grade teacher. Teacher B described her Mrs. S\_\_\_\_ as follows:

And I didn't even know she was the best I'd ever had until I started teaching. She is probably not the one who influenced me to become a teacher, but now that I am a teacher I can see the things she was doing and why she was so successful is because she was a person who totally believed in active participation of the learner. You were never bored in her class. And she had all these hands on things for you to do. From making the murals

and making the bulletin boards to, you know, when we had units, we churned butter. I mean, I remember churning butter in third grade.

The other two were middle school teachers and I have a feeling that's why I ended up at the middle school level. One was the name of Mrs. J\_\_\_\_\_ she was a social studies teacher at the middle school level, and the other was Mrs. W\_\_\_\_\_ who was a reading/literature teacher. And I guess I respected Mrs. W\_\_\_\_\_ because she ran such a tight ship, and she taught me so many of the things I guess we don't teach kids anymore. We spent one day a week learning Latin root words. (Teacher B, Interview, # 3, May, 1990)

When Teacher B was asked to think further about any other person who may have influenced her to become a teacher she said, "I would have to say the other one would be my mother. Never a day goes by that I don't spew [sic] things out of my mouth that she said hundreds of times" (Teacher B, Interview # 3, May, 1990).

Attitudes, values, beliefs. The Iowa Teacher of the Year had no trouble determining where she received her attitude, values, and beliefs. Teacher B's family had a profound influence on her value system. Teacher B acknowledged that often what she hears herself saying in class is something her mother taught her. The Teacher of the Year cited as an example, "You know, you can be this and you can be that, but there's no excuse for not treating people decently." Teacher B described how she shared those values in her classroom:

Or saying "please and thank you." Or, just being plain old decent to other human beings. And that's what I hope I hear myself trying to teach kids. And trying to model for kids. . . . I understand that you are having a bad day, but this is the way you treat people. You don't say 'shut up' in my classroom . . . you people like that. You know, and that whole business of those values comes from her. (Teacher B, Interview, #3, May, 1990, p. 8)

Teacher B described herself as a "risk taker." She admitted that it was easier to take risks after receiving the Teacher of the Year Award, because as she explained, "Who's going to fire the Teacher of the Year?" (Teacher B, Interview, #7, May, 1990).

Another way that Teacher B's attitude is in direct contrast with the literature is that unlike Lortie's (1975) classroom teacher who seldom asked for outside assistance, Teacher B readily admitted that she did not hesitate to ask her colleagues for assistance. She explained:

Well see, I've always been that way because I started out as a substitute teacher, and I knew then that I was dependent upon the other people in the building when I had a question. And that things could go so much more smoothly for me if first thing in the morning if I looked at the lesson plans and if I had a problem finding something or if I didn't understand the schedule or whatever, that I knew I had the guts or whatever it is to go out in the hall and just ask. And the other thing that colored my perception because everybody feels sorry for the sub, and everyone is willing to help you. They don't think you're stupid for asking because you're the substitute. You're only there for one day and so it's perfectly okay if you ask. And so I guess maybe in that vein I was socialized a little bit differently than other teachers because I've never been afraid to ask. I'll just ask; I don't feel stupid at all, maybe I should. But I don't feel awkward about that at all. (Teacher B, Interview, #4, May, 1990)

Support system. Teacher B suggested that the more teacher and coaches she meets the more obvious it is to her that the support that those people received from their spouses is unique. Teacher B stated:

Those that have successful marriages and successful careers have very unique spouses who have the ability to spend a lot hours by themselves. Who can help those of us who coach and teach at

that intense level to put things back into perspective. So I would have to say that my spouse is one of those people that does that. (Teacher B, Interview, # 4, May, 1990)

Teacher B confirmed Lortie's (1975) observation about a cellular profession when she responded to this interview item stating that "one of the things that we're [teachers] are terrifically lacking in . . . is we're so isolated and we don't do anything to help each other out" (Teacher B, Interview, # 4, May, 1990).

Student's description. Teacher B was completing her first year in a new school so the item asking about the student's description of her as a teacher caused her to reflect on what they would say at the end of this first year. She thought they would describe her as follows:

I would hope that they would say, she's a little bit on the tough/strict side. She's not 'gonna' put up with any garbage, but she's kind of a teddy because she really does care. You know, hang in there through the first six weeks of barking and when she finally gets it organized the way she wants it, you're 'gonna' fly. I think they would say, a lot of them would say, she's nuts, she's crazy. She does the weirdest, stupidest things. But I think they would also says she's enthusiastic. She likes it here. She basically likes kids. But don't cross her. (Teacher B, Interview, # 5, May, 1990)

Community opinion. Teacher B felt that the community would have a "pretty good opinion" of her as a teacher. She summarized her ideas by offering an assessment that "they would perceive her as real ordinary." One of the ideas that she suggested as a part of the community's opinion would be that she works well with "difficult kids" and that some may suggest that "if you've got an ornery little devil, make sure that they get her, because

she'll handle it; she's not 'gonna' let the kid walk all over her and get in big bad troubles in middle school and junior high" (Teacher B, Interview, # 6, May, 1990).

### Teacher C

Key people. In responding to the interview item about key people influencing the Teachers of the Year to become a teacher, Teacher C responded without hesitation saying:

Well, one person who was very influential, not necessarily in telling me I should become a teacher, but in telling me that it was important to go on to school and that was my high school English teacher. She was a very dramatic, different kind of person from my other teachers. . . .She gave us a test or let us take a test that everybody was taking. If we could pass out of it, we didn't have to take the main core. And instead, and I think it was probably on her own time, I'm not sure how she did this, she would meet with us, and we'd read the classics, and we'd get into contemporary, issues and things that I don't think anyone in my school had ever thought about. It was just the most accelerated. It was AP English before they did AP English. . . . We always called her Mrs. D\_\_\_\_. . . this was in high school. (Teacher C, Interview, # 2, May, 1990)

In thinking about the key people who influenced her, Teacher C observed that her fear of secondary school teaching as opposed to elementary school teaching was somehow explained in the idea that "once you've been through elementary school, you already think you know that . . . of course, later you find out there's a lot more elementary teachers do than what you ever learned." In fact, Teacher C thinks that her family "probably expected her to be an elementary teacher. For some reason because they had more experience with those" (Teacher C, Interview, # 2, May, 1990). As she

recalled her family's influence on her decision she confided that she had a grandmother who was really a poet, "but she was just a poet because of her own interest in words and interest just in the language. Nobody had even trained her." The Teacher of the Year described her grandmother as:

. . . just a Pennsylvania Dutch little girl in Lancaster county who probably went to one-room schoolhouses through sixth or seventh grade, but she was even published, and they even wrote a booklet about her little poems. She wrote me a poem for my first birthday that's in my baby book. (Teacher C, Interview, # 2, May 1990)

It was not until Teacher C enrolled at Drake that she met the person who made her believe that she could be an English teacher. She describes this person as "a very young freshman English teacher, who encouraged her [Teacher C]."

Attitudes, values, beliefs. Teacher C remembers her family's influence on her thinking and describes how her dad was always interested in the world events and for fun he would tease his young daughters and call them "Chiang Kai Shek" when they were little. Teacher C recalls having no idea what the name meant, but knowing that it meant "there was a world out there that we didn't know about." Teacher C also credits her mother as a person who, although not formally educated, was "always investigating and always wanted to know about different new things." In reflecting on her adolescent years, Teacher C remembers that homework was very important, getting good grades, and parent-teacher conferences and "all of those things were very, very big in our family" (Teacher C, Interview #4, May, 1990).

Another major influence on Teacher C's attitudes, values, and beliefs came from her high school English teacher, Mrs. D\_\_\_\_. She described her influence stating:

She never let us get by with anything less than everything we could do. School and English, particularly, were easy for me, and I could've gotten by and at any time gotten a good grade. I remember getting B pluses on things that I thought were just as good as anybody else's, and they sometimes got A's, but she would say, "You can do more than that." (Teacher C, Interview, # 3, May, 1990)

An additional influence on Teacher C's belief system comes from the students with whom she works. The Teacher of the Year works with what she terms "special populations" (i.e., students from all over the world who are learning English as a Second Language). She sees her role in the classroom to help these students see that they can be successful. "We deal a lot with trying to build up self-esteem and to talk about all the things they're doing that other kids never do. Cheerleading and nursing and parenting [are part of our teaching]. All those things that are really counseling is a big part of it [our teaching]" (Teacher C, Interview, # 3, May, 1990).

Support system. Teacher C's response to the interview item on support from families and colleagues was tempered with her assessment of how the family reacted to her receiving the Teacher of the Year award:

Well, because I'm in a teaching family now (my husband's a professor at the [name of university] and my daughters are both in teacher training programs), this was just about the most exciting thing that could happen to mom . . . . It was truly a big thing for them and they've been wonderful all through it. My husband has gone with me to practically every place--to all of the

conferences and panels and group things that he can get away for and that's been nice 'cause we can share things. (Teacher C, Interview, # 4, May, 1990)

In reflecting about the persons who had been supportive, Teacher C included her superintendent and principal as persons who let her be excused to go to things. When she received the Teacher of the Year award, her colleagues ordered a cake, made a PrintShop banner, had flowers ordered and came in all day to congratulate her. "They've been real good, too, since that. Because it does get to be a little bit of a drag, I think, on everyone after awhile; you know, after they begin to have things change" (Teacher C, Interview, #4, May, 1990). In concluding her thoughts on the idea of support systems, Teacher C stated, "Oh, I think it takes strong relationships with everybody . . . I think teaching is such a force that it involves your whole self. . . I feel that I have my daughters and my husband supporting me" (Teacher C, Interview, # 4, May, 1990).

Student's description. Teacher C, an English as a Second Language teacher, who instructs ten students from eight different countries thought carefully about what her students would say to describe her. A warmth emerged in her voice as she offered the following description:

Well, they wouldn't know the words probably to say, but I think they would say something like, 'she's very concerned in how we do', or 'she asks us lots of things about ourselves, our families, our homes, our hobbies.' I think they recognize that I care. And that's not that they don't get that from other teachers, but in the larger classroom when they go to math and science, social studies, it's a lot more prescribed as to content. (Teacher C, Interview, # 5, May, 1990)



Teacher C sees her role as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor as needing to be someone who goes beyond the grammar lesson and helps her students understand this new culture in which they must function.

Community opinion. In responding to interview item number six, the Iowa Teacher of the Year from Large City helped define community by suggesting that a smaller community, perhaps the school district, would be a better descriptor. In answer to that item, Teacher C said that they would say "she is very involved." As if to give credence to that assessment, Teacher C began itemizing the committee assignments she had. Those assignments included: co-chair of Phase III plan for the district, involvement with the student standards committee, building representative for the local education association and serving previously on the district's equity committee and co-chair of the multicultural/nonsexist infusion committee. She added that, "They would see me as somebody who cares about our school, too." Added to her previous observation was the idea that "the community would see her in terms of dealing with foreign students and equity issues, and fairness, and dealing with minorities" (Teacher C, Interview, #6, May, 1990).

### Summary

The Iowa Teachers of the Year presented perceptions relating to the key individuals who influenced them. The purpose of this summary is to describe Iowa Teachers of the Year similarities and differences on their perceptions of each of the interview items. Teacher A is a sixth grade teacher

in Small Town, Iowa; Teacher B is a middle school teacher in Middle Town, Iowa; and Teacher C is a secondary teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Large Town, Iowa.

Key individuals. Teacher A could not identify any particular person who encouraged her to select teaching as a profession; Teacher B and Teacher C described influential teachers and included their parents as strong supporters of their career goals. Teacher B described her mother's particular influence, and Teacher C made special reference to her father's influence. In selecting teachers who had been important to their career decision-making process, Teacher B identified three elementary teachers; Teacher C selected a high school English teacher and a university English instructor.

Attitudes, values, and beliefs. All three Iowa Teachers of the Year agreed that their attitudes, values, and beliefs about what they do in the classroom came from a strong family background where values were emphasized. Two of the teachers, Teacher A and Teacher C, mentioned that the students they teach influence how they proceed in the classroom. Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C all described parental families who valued education and encouraged their daughters to get an advanced degree.

Support system. The Teachers of the Year were vocal about the lack of a support system for the teaching profession. One of the teachers, Teacher A, suggested there was more of a support system for the women than for the men in the profession. All of the teachers described very supportive immediate families as well as parents and grandparents. The three Iowa Teachers of the Year believed they had a responsibility to dispel the idea that being selected Teacher of the Year meant they were "the best." Each Teacher

of the Year described a very supportive spouse who had been influential in allowing her to spend extra time on school activities. The teachers supported Lortie's (1975) theory that teaching is a 'cellular occupation' and decried the fact that isolationism permeates the profession.

Student's description. The three award winners believed their students would see them as caring, enthusiastic, no-nonsense individuals. Two of the teachers, Teacher A and Teacher B, felt that their students would describe them as expecting them [the students] to do their best. One of the teachers, Teacher B, said her students would say, "you better not cross her." Because of the special population that Teacher C teaches, she felt her students might not know the words to say, but they would believe that she cared about them.

Community perception. The three recipients represent different sized communities within Iowa. Because of this fact, Teacher C, who is from Large Town, indicated she may have more difficulty assessing the community's perception and chose to focus on the school district as representative of community. Although there were differences in the size of the community, the Iowa Teachers of the Year agreed that the communities in which they teach would believe they are good teachers. One teacher, Teacher B, felt there were members in the community who would ask for her as their child's teacher because of her reputation of being "able to handle the difficult ones." Teacher C thought her community [the Large Town School District] would see her as a very involved person. Teacher A felt that the community takes great pride in one of their own (i.e., someone who was raised in the community and educated there), who became the Iowa Teacher of the Year.

In some respects, Teacher A believes that her award as Teacher of the Year is an affirmation of the community's investment in education. Teacher A also indicated that two Small Town teachers had received recognition through the Teacher of the Year program; the other person was a state finalist and Teacher A was, of course, the Teacher of the Year.

### Observed Ecological Characteristics of Classrooms

The classroom ecological system is the network of interconnected processes and events which impinge upon behavior in the teaching environment (Doyle & Ponder, 1975, p. 183). Items related to these observations are listed in the initial interview schedule (see Appendix C). In this section of the study, the Iowa Teachers of the Year were asked to respond to interview items that addressed their feelings about specific happenings in the classroom. These items included: (a) How the Teachers of the Year describe effective teaching; (b) What is the nature of the social organization in the Teachers of the Year classroom? (c) What verbal and nonverbal classroom interaction the Teacher of the Year display? (d) How do the Teachers of the Year perceive and interpret their actions in various contexts involving students of varying abilities? (e) How do students in the Teachers of the Year classroom and administrators of the school perceive and interpret the actions of the Teachers of the Year during lesson interactions? and (f) What circumstances or conditions of their work role do the Teachers of the Year perceive as encouraging and discouraging teaching excellence? How do the Teachers of the Year describe a 'good day?'

### Teacher A

Effective teaching. Teacher A's recent doctoral work at the University of Iowa and her own professional reading have made her aware of the effective teaching literature. When asked to describe effective teaching, Teacher A responded:

Well, of course I've said already you do have to be pretty organized and have some kind of a global plan. I mean you have to know what it is, where you want your students to go. The way you get there may take a detour . . . .

I think you have to have a sense of humor about yourself that you don't take yourself so seriously. . . [effective teachers] have high expectations for kids . . . . (Teacher A, Interview, # 7, May, 1990)

Teacher A describes herself as "well-organized" and says, "I am basically quite a structured organized person by nature" (Teacher A, Interview, # 6, May, 1990). The researcher was aware that during the lessons the students were very free to be unstructured. This posed a dilemma for the researcher in that what the teacher described was not what was observed. Teacher A explained, "I used to be really 'gung ho,' you can't do anything but read during this time, and I was realizing that I had kids frantic at the end of the day because they didn't have their homework ready. I've had to loosen up" (Teacher A, Interview, # 6, May, 1990).

Social organization. The more the researcher discussed interview items with Teacher A, the more aware the researcher became of Teacher A's explanation of her evolution as a teacher. For example, she talked about her earlier days in the classroom as "a very much a rows person (i.e., everybody sits in rows kind of thing)." Her explanation for changing the structure of

her classroom to a format where the students face one another was "to use the maximum class-time for actual instruction, not organization types of things." In reflecting on current research ideas on cooperative learning, Teacher A acknowledged that "she didn't buy into the high/low structure." Teacher A expressed her belief that there are other rules for heterogeneous groupings. She said, "I just want them [the students] to work with a lot of kids . . . so sometimes it's the luck of the draw." The researcher observed that this was the social organization in the sixth grade classroom at Small Town, and the students readily accepted it; no learning time was lost with extraneous directions on how to organize groupings, move chairs, or change groups.

Verbal and nonverbal actions. The atmosphere in Teacher A's classroom is one of a pleasant exchange of ideas. The room literally exudes respect for one another and respect for ideas as documented in the verbal and nonverbal interactions. An example of this is documented in the script-taping of a language arts class:

- T-A: 8:35 a.m. Listen carefully because you will have to argue, then you will have to switch roles.
- T-A: Ryan, are you for seceding from the Union?
- OBS: 8:36 a.m. Students begin discussion immediately. One young woman is presenting an idea; she shakes her finger, waves her pencils, pounds table -- really believes what she is saying. Students have written notes to support their argument.
- T-A: 8:40 a.m. STOP.
- OBS: Teacher gives direction. Has students move. Students get up and move. No one asks questions.
- OBS: 8:41 a.m. Students begin discussion. Teacher goes to overhead writes on board.

- OBS: 8:43 a.m. Teacher notices two students have not exchanged so she moves toward the two. Rest of class goes right on.
- T-A: 8:44 a.m. STOP. Begin group discussion of "why secede?"
- OBS: 8:46 a.m. T-A stands at overhead recording the ideas. Six hands up.
- KID: 8:48 a.m. "Hey, that's our social studies. What's boycott?" (Teacher A, Observation, #9, April, 1990)

Students of varying abilities. The Teacher A is conscious of the fact that she works with students of varying abilities and makes allowances for them. In describing a unit she did with magnets, for example, she explained:

Like when we did magnets, they just basically worked with magnets, I mean that's all they could do. Whereas I had top students doing things like, 'are the things that work with electricity also going to work with magnets?'

In science you are not running the whole show, but you're trying to help them do the learning. They're the ones learning. I'm not doing a dog and pony show in the front. Who is it said that 'teaching is the only profession where you have a bunch of adults get up in front of the room and act for a bunch of students who sit in the audience.' I mean that's not what we're after. We are after them being actively involved. (Teacher A, Interview, # 9, April, 1990)

Teacher A's observations about how she came to understand the teacher's role in the classroom proved to support the researcher's observation that a person who is named Teacher of the Year has evolved into this outstanding teacher. Teacher A confirmed that observation saying, "It [learning that you don't have all the information] comes gradually. . . you are always going to have a diversity of kids in the classroom, and I think that's one of the biggest challenges I still face is how are you taking care of all those needs?" (Teacher A, Interview #10, April, 1990).

The researcher also noted the respect with which the teacher treated the students. For example:

- OBS: Teacher A takes out copy of Across Five Aprils; it's like Kidder's statement, 'Arms everywhere'
- OBS: 8:17 a.m. 15 sec. increments; need a partner; all KIDs in desk telling ideas from books, KID walks in; is immediately assigned to a group; Teacher A walks around
- OBS: 8:20 a.m. switch; Teacher A pulls down overhead screen; interruption at door; Teacher A leaves room; KIDs keep right on talking; KIDs see no difference; KIDs keep right on
- OBS: 8:22 a.m. switch; KID takes charge; says to switch; Teacher A returns; 'stop'; has glasses on; slips glasses off; 'who will tell [name of kid] what we are doing?'
- OBS: 8:23 a.m. KIDs up at overhead; goes so quickly; 2 KIDs at overhead; Teacher A moves around room; stops at another desk
- OBS: 8:24 a.m. Teacher A asks questions; 'why no mister? How would Abraham Lincoln know that Jethro was a young man?' KIDs have hands up - 3 or 4;
- OBS: 8:25 a.m. All KIDs' eyes are on teacher; KID talks; KID behind Teacher A keeps waving hand; not noticed; KID points out the person behind Teacher A; Teacher A responds, "Thank you, [name of KID]."

Actions during lesson interaction. The major observation of Teacher A is that she just moves from one thing to another very calmly; there's no hyper-activity about her whatsoever. She's just very well organized, moves quietly, gets the job done. The parent/teacher conference she held after school lasted basically 15 minutes and she "covered so many topics" (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990).

Administrator/student perceptions. Teacher A felt that her students would describe her as a no-nonsense kind of person and one who is not very



funny. She added, "I mean I am not one who tells jokes" (Teacher A, Interview, #5, April, 1990). Teacher A believed that her principal would see her as a person who is interested in each child and as a person who is very interested in the "big picture" of education.

Work conditions. To Teacher A being an outstanding teacher means having some kind of vision of what education is and could be, and being willing to play with ideas. Teacher A volunteered that she has taught in schools where it was not good to go across the hall and ask for assistance on how to deal with five LD students she has in class. In Small Town Teacher A feels that she has colleagues who are willing to be supportive in those instances. One of the keys to creating the environment is that "we don't have a lot of staff turnover for one thing. We know each other pretty well, and we trust each other in that nobody's ever stabbed anybody in the back" (Teacher A, Interview, # 12, May, 1990).

In responding to the interview item about encouraging teacher excellence, Teacher A replied that "you've got to have some kind of autonomy . . . you've got to have the freedom to call the shots in the classroom." In addition, Teacher A described what she felt would encourage excellence by stating the following:

. . . the recognition I was talking about needs not only to come from your building administrators appreciating the job you do, it's nice to have parent support, too. . . . You've got to have the concern of the rest of your colleagues and staff members, and they care about you not only as a teacher but as a person -- some genuine caring for your work and your professionalism. . . . I think we should emphasize the positive. (Teacher A, Interview, # 12, April, 1990)

Teacher A's ideas on what discourages excellence were a reverse mirror of her answers about encouraging excellence. She noted that not having the support of the community, "that's really 'gonna' discourage you; or, if you feel like your administrators don't give you support" (Teacher A, Interview, #12, April, 1990).

As a final question the Teachers of the Year were asked to describe what for them would be a really good day. Without hesitation, Teacher A answered:

Oh, I would say active involvement by all the students so you can sort of see the lights go on in their eyes. So that I feel like every student has gotten something out of the day--that would be my idea of a great day. And hopefully I've learned something, too, it's not just the students . . . Maybe also, I still feel like so much of our subject matter is sort of fragmented. That maybe where they've sort of seen where everything sort of ties together, and how math applies to reading and some science in the spelling they're doing or something like that so they see some pertinence to their own lives. That would be a neat day. (Teacher A, Interview, # 12, May, 1990)

A bad day? Oh, the students just sort of sit in their seats and yawn and are bored and maybe one falls asleep. . . .Although they may have learned some mundane facts, the brain really hasn't been engaged that day or they haven't been in gear at all. That would be a bad day. (Teacher A, Interview, # 12, May, 1990)

### Teacher B

Effective teaching. Teacher B, a middle school teacher at Middle Town, Iowa, was asked to describe effective teaching. Teacher B answered:

To me it starts off with planning and deciding on what you're gonna teach and how you're 'gonna' teach it. And there's a

certain amount of preparation and planning that probably needs to be done. I think I probably plan more in advance and spend more time planning than a lot of people . . . . It means being sensitive to the class and knowing when you're losing them. . . . To me effective teaching is tied to the activity of the learner. You've got to keep that kid in the middle school level actively involved about what you're talking about . . . . For example, I am always trying something new and something different just to keep their interest. An effective teacher communicates that there is a care and a concern for students. You keep up on what is going on in education . . . . You keep going back and getting more education and seeing how you can apply in your classroom and you're not afraid to try new things. (Teacher B, Interview, # 7, May, 1990)

Effective teaching involves always "adding to my repertoire of what I am comfortable doing in the classroom" (Teacher B, Interview, # 7, May, 1990). Effective teaching also means knowing how to plan to take some of the burden off the teacher, according to Teacher B. A question that evolved from this discussion was, 'have you ever had the opportunity to go in and watch other people teach, in the classroom?' Teacher B answered saying she was going to "[name of town] next week. I have to do a principal's internship, so I get to go watch other people teach" (Teacher B, Interview, # 7, May, 1990).

Social organization. Teacher B's classroom has a traditional arrangement with the desks in rows, but during the lesson the students moved the desks to a cooperative learning format, although the teaching strategy used was not a cooperative learning. Teacher B described today's technique for deciding who is paired with whom by drawing from a deck of playing cards. The pairings were literally the luck of the draw.

Teacher B indicated that she felt she wanted a classroom where students would feel comfortable "just hollering answers out." Teacher B said that the classroom organization she chooses depends on the kids (Teacher B, Interview, # 8, May, 1990).

Verbal and nonverbal actions. Teacher B makes it clear that she expects students to answer the questions in her classroom; she expects students to participate. Teacher B mentioned that the thing the principal always comments on in her classroom is that "you involve every kid, everyday. I don't know how you do it, and I don't know how you can remember who have and haven't, but you touch bases with every kid, every day. And, yeah, I would hope so" (Teacher B, Interview, # 9, May, 1990).

Students of varying abilities. Teacher B feels that it is her responsibility to provide lessons that will touch every child in her classroom. Teacher B talks about what she calls "a crisis among today's youth," as she notices her students forced to deal with divorce, drugs, pregnancy and other problems.

She described one of her students as:

Probably the best thinker I have all day long. He's flunking everything. He's the brightest kid in the eighth grade class, I kid you not. He can think. You know, and you've got to respect him. He's just marvelously quick. And he brings up great viewpoints! There are two or three kids in that class who are flunking everything because they're non-conformists. They're not gonna follow the school rules and do all this stuff and they're gonna question you every step of the way. . . . And something inside me tells me that there is something wrong with the education system where those kinds of people flunk! (Teacher B, Interview, # 8, May, 1990)

Teacher B talks about the students in her classroom and confesses that:

The kids I seem to be drawn to, the kids that I remember, the kids that are special to me aren't the 'A' students; they're not the 'B' students; they're not the nice, quiet kids. The ones that I'm drawn to work with that I think of saying "hello" to in the hallway and say something to them in the lunch line and speak to at the drinking fountain . . . are the ones who don't have a decent home life, some really rough kids. (Teacher B, Interview, # 9, May, 1990)

Teacher B's description of the students she tries to help is also evidenced in the observations that the researcher made while in the Middle Town Middle School. Teacher B does, indeed, speak to everyone in the halls, but goes out of her way to single out the student who may be standing by herself or waiting alone at the drinking fountain by himself. She calls it "wearing my heart on my sleeve and taking the risk to get involved" (Bartusek, 1988, p. 4).

Students/administrators perceptions. Teacher B believes that her principal would say that she touches base with every student most days, every day. The principal would also describe Teacher B as enthusiastic and professional. If the principal were talking to someone about her teaching strength, the principal would describe how she checks for understanding when she's moving along through a lesson.

When asked, "What would your principal say about the pace of your lessons?" Teacher B seemed astonished and queried, "The pace of my lessons?" The researcher clarified, "For example, do you have any idea how long it takes you to take attendance and get the class started?" Teacher B answered, "No. I hope it would be a minute or less."

The researcher informed the teacher, "35 seconds." This exchange caused Teacher B to recall the first time she was ever evaluated as a beginning teacher. The principal had only one bad thing to say about her lesson, "she started too darn quick!"

The researcher asked, "Do you think that is how other people teach?" Teacher B responded, "I would always hope so, but I am one of those isolated teachers, and I don't know how people teach. I don't know what they do" (Teacher B, Interview, # 11, May, 1990).

Work conditions. For Teacher B the elements that encourage teacher excellence include the environment and the reputation of the school district that encourages you to be an excellent teacher. Teacher B continued, "This is a good principal; he knows how to evaluate teachers. He understands effective teaching, he understands how to work with kids this age. . ." (Teacher B, Interview, # 12, May, 1990). The Middle School teacher was able to list four things very quickly that to her were encouraging. She listed:

to have the principal take time to come in and evaluate me and talk about it and set goals - that's encouraging. It's encouraging to have good equipment. It's encouraging to walk in and be a brand new teacher and have four Apple IIGS computers in the back of your room. It's encouraging to have fall conferences and have not a minute to eat lunch all day long and have that kind of interest in eighth graders because usually by middle school, that's kind of dwindling. That kind of, those kinds of things are real encouraging. It's encouraging to have the opportunity to leave at 3:21 p.m. so that I can drive to class and to be able to do an internship to get that kind of professional growth that I need and to know that the school district is 'gonna' do that." (Teacher B, Interview, # 12, May, 1990)

On the discouraging side, Teacher B did not list the elements so quickly, but she did name one thing that bothers her. Teacher B said, "I guess the attitude among teachers that it's always somebody else's fault, or somebody else's problem, this kind of blaming somebody else" (Teacher B, Interview, #12, May, 1990). That feeling was a summary of Teacher B's idea of what was discouraging to teacher excellence.

In thinking about what was a good day, the Iowa Teacher of the Year stated:

It is a really good day when you've taught whatever lesson it is using whatever method you're going to use and you head out to lunch and you're running down the steps and everybody else is pushing and shoving, and heading for lunch, but the whole eighth grade class is still buzzing about what you have done today. (Teacher B, Interview, # 12, May, 1990)

Teacher B's conclusion about "good days" was not so much that you "had an impact so much in their lives, but you had an impact that day, and you're making them think" (Teacher B, Interview, # 12, May, 1990).

### Teacher C

Effective teaching. Teacher C's assignment as a part-time coordinator as well as classroom teacher gave the researcher the opportunity to ask more probing questions because the time factor was more relaxed. The factor of having control over one's time loomed before the researcher as an additional finding in the research when the teacher was discussing effective teaching. She described her own beliefs as:

I try to take the kids from where they are and move them ahead. But they don't always get the same place every year, and if I don't get everything done in the curriculum guide, nobody tells me I'm going to lose my job. (Teacher C, Interview, # 7, May, 1990)

Teacher C's comments about freedom and flexibility permeated her assessment of effective teaching. In fact, the researcher found that words like freedom and flexibility often were descriptors that this Teacher of the Year used in describing her role as a teacher, in describing her ideas in team teaching, and in describing her students.

Social organization. In the two classes that Teacher C teaches, the arrangements were very different. In the one classroom where she team taught, with English as a Second Language (ESL) and mainstreamed American students, the class was a traditional classroom with the desks in rows. In her English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom the desks were arranged more informally. One thing was constant in both classrooms and that was Teacher C's willingness to answer students' questions with respect and interest.

In the ESL classroom the classroom setting reveals three boys and six girls from countries all over the world. At 2:23 p.m. Teacher C taught in her ESL classroom. The social organization there was something similar to a miniature United Nations. The students sat in three rows; each introduced himself/herself to the researcher. The students in row one were from Iran, China and Japan. In row two the student in the front seat was from China, behind her was a student from Taiwan and then a student from Venezuela. In the third row the seating was similar, but interestingly all three students



were from Vietnam. The Vietnamese students in the front two seats were siblings (Teacher C, Observation, May, 1990).

Verbal and nonverbal interactions. Teacher C is very aware of the cultural differences among the countries and the language barriers that exist in the classroom as the students are enrolled in English as a Second Language. Teacher C generates a warm and caring attitude when the class begins asking the young people about the soccer game that night. When Teacher C is ready to give the students a practice test, she emphasizes, ". . . this is just a practice test." Teacher C stands at the front watching all students. She writes on the blackboard to explain ideas. She speaks in a very gentle, understanding tone of voice (Teacher C, Observation, May, 1990).

One example of the class climate in the team-taught course follows: at 1:39 p.m. the students are reading books and Teacher C and the other team teacher are planning. The room is so quiet! The two teachers speak in whispers as they plan for tomorrow's lesson. Another of class climate is: at 1:45 p.m. a student came in to show Teacher C a new T-shirt he had designed. The shirt said, "[name of school] Soccer; We Are The Chosen Ones!" She checked with him on the time of the game; smiled, nodded. The classroom is very quiet (Teacher C, Observation, May 1990).

At 2:01 p.m. Teacher C notices a student with his head down on the desk. She pats the student gently and says, "We need you." The student responds, "I'm awake. I'm reading" (Teacher C, Observation, May, 1990).

Students varying abilities. When Teacher C talks to her students about their journals, she speaks in terms of "choice." Her assignment for the students' journals included writing about "boys and girls and your

relationships, if you'd like." A second choice was "ways that you entertain yourself outside of school without spending money." Or, the students could "tell about their plans for summer." There was even a topic called, "you choose what you want to write about." It was obvious that because of the varying level of abilities within the classroom, the teacher had designed a homework lesson that would be possible for each student in the class (Teacher C, Observation, May, 1990).

As the students were moving toward getting their grammar books, there was friendly banter about an article they had seen in the Des Moines Register. Teacher C not only discussed content, but helped her class understand the idea of Charles Schulz's, "Peanuts" cartoon--"I had a dream last night. That little red-haired girl was in my dreams." Teacher C wanted to know if the students knew what it meant "to have a dream. Do you know the word fantasy?" she inquired (Teacher C, Observation, May, 1990).

Students/administrator's perceptions. Teacher C said she thought her students would know that she cared about them, that she expected them to do well, and that she was interested in them beyond the classroom. Teacher C thought her principal would see her as an advocate "for her kids," and as someone who was very involved in the school (Teacher C, Interview, #11, May, 1990).

Work conditions. Teacher C's perception of things that encourage excellence included community and student attitude. The added burdens of paperwork and constantly having to defend what you do would be examples

of discouraging excellence for her. Teacher C's idea of a good day is when the students go home with smiles on their faces, and a bad day is when one of her students has had yet another setback.

### Observation of Ecological Characteristics

The informants' activities in the classroom provided data for the confirmation or negation of their interview statements about how these three Iowa Teachers of the Year perceived their teaching actions. The following section describes researcher observations of the Teachers of the Year as the observation relates to the research item. In this section the researcher is only focusing on three interview items. The particular observations include: (a) appearance of the classroom and appearance of the teacher, (b) social organization in the Teachers of the Year classroom, and (c) verbal and nonverbal classroom interaction. In the section on the verbal and nonverbal actions, the researcher has grouped the observations according to the literature review of specific teacher actions (e.g., attitude toward students, questioning techniques, critical thinking skills, response to interruptions and the teacher's day). Finally, the interview data from the interviews with a community member [who may be a parent of a student in the classroom of the Teacher Of the Year] is included. This section is included to provide the researcher a lens for determining what is important and what is not important, and to determine the accuracy of the observations.

Teacher A

Appearance. Teacher A dresses in tailored clothing. Often during her interactions with students, she takes her glasses off. Perhaps her two most noticeable nonverbal gestures are when she questions a student, her face appears pensive and thoughtful, as if she is thinking with the student. Secondly, the removal of the glasses seems to be a habit.

Social organization. Teacher A's sixth grade classroom was arranged with individual student desks facing one another so that the students were sitting in pairs. There were 26 pupils in the room and students appeared to choose where they were seated. The boys tended to have another boy as a partner but there was no obvious pairing according to abilities. In fact, during the interview Teacher A explained:

... And we change desks fairly frequently, and I've used basically the draw-names-out-of-the-hat method, or get up in front of the room and everybody that has green socks get in one group and one with blue socks, now switch to a group that has the same eye color, now switch to a group that has birthday in the same month, and then I say, 'okay, you guys sit together, and you guys sit together.' (Teacher A, Interview, # 8, April, 1990)

No, they're not very accepting with each other. Um, and I hate to say it; this is gonna sound sexist isn't it? The boys are probably more accepting than the girls. The boys are kind of like, well, that's my luck so I'll take it, and the girls are, can be, kind of catty and nit picky, but I think it's due more to the age. (Teacher A, Interview, # 8, May, 1990)

Teacher A's classroom is organized; yet, the cupboards are full to overflowing. The room is large for an elementary room and has a sink in the back, an aquarium, two tables with Earth Day projects covering the table, a bulletin board that had as a title, "Eggs-citing Eggs" and another bulletin

board with a title of "Guess Who?" Pictures of the students covered the board. On the outside wall of the classroom there were individual student files, book shelves, and another work table. At the front of the room the traditional greenboard covered three-fourths of the room, a book shelf and another bulletin board covered with the teacher's button collection as well as an American flag covered the front. The teacher's desk sat somewhat isolated in the front stage right side of the room. An Apple computer and printer were at front of the room on a mobile cart. An overhead projector and a video recorder and television monitor were at the front.

The most unique item in Teacher A's classroom, other than the spaciousness [it appeared double the size of an ordinary classroom], was the way she had used the venetian blinds that covered the windows on the entire wall facing the street. The blinds were used for yet another bulletin board and under the windows were shelves filled with empty plastic containers, National Geographic magazines, and teaching supplies. In summary, Teacher A's classroom was a learning environment of organized relaxation as sixth graders moved about the room quickly and quietly emulating their teacher.

Verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns. The researcher was constantly aware of how quickly the teacher moved around the room. At one point the observation notes read, "it is like watching a symphony orchestra; I didn't see her move the overhead, and we are already into another facet of the lesson" (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990).

The first observation of nonverbal action is the teacher's movement in the classroom. There were times the Teacher of the Year moved so

quietly and quickly that the researcher did not notice what had happened. In one of the observation notes between 2:41 p.m. and 2:43 p.m., the researcher noted eleven different classroom interactions including the entrance and exit of another adult in the room.

The observation notes for that two minute period included:

OBS: 2:42 p.m. 2 students leave room  
 1 student goes to wastebasket  
 1 student goes to front of desk  
 1 student goes to teacher's desk  
 1 student picks up paper from Teacher's desk  
 1 student goes to get Kleenex  
 1 student goes to teacher for a pass..  
 Teachers signs pass. Student leaves room.  
 Three students at front desk. Students pick up papers  
 return to desk.  
 2:43 p.m. Adult comes in; leaves. (Teacher A,  
 Observation, #9, April, 1990)

In addition, the researcher noted the terms "quietly," "calm", "very quiet," and "so calm" eleven times from 2:28 p.m. until 2:45 p.m. as the researcher described the classroom.

A second observation involved questioning strategies. Teacher A's nonverbal cues model learning and questioning. In one of the observations the researcher noted:

OBS: 9:40 a.m. T-A listens carefully; asks how many have seen: all hands go up; T-A listens intently; has glasses off.  
 OBS: KID asks how to put # in calculator; T-A comes to student's desk; works with KID; T-A touches KID and says, 'Where are you writing yours?' (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990)

The other noticeable item in the observations was that Teacher A's classroom is a laboratory for questions. The students were reading Irene

Hunt's Across Five Aprils. In an observation period from 8:24 a.m. until 8:35 a.m. the students and their teacher had moved through twelve questions that were student generated and paused to answer them and argue about the answers. At one point Teacher A said to a student, "Are you confused?" The students appeared perplexed as they tried to answer. Teacher A volunteered, "Do you know what I mean when I say 'bureaucrats'?" Another young man chose to assist by saying, "I think it's confusing because they just keep changing . . ." (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990).

A third observation was the teacher's modeling of critical thinking skills. The sixth graders were discussing a potential field trip for the end of the school year. Teacher A used this discussion as an opportunity to teaching decision making skills and invited the students to "take out your ideas on decision making." Again, the students were involved in determining pluses and minuses about certain conditions of a field trip. The students responded with questions about the situation. For example, they asked, "Would students be made to go if they didn't want to?" "Could it [the field trip] be used as a reward for kids who stay out of trouble?" "Would kids get lost?" The students generated eight questions in two minutes and categorized them as a plus (+) or a minus (-) on the transparency that Teacher A was using at the front of the room (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990).

A fourth observation was the teacher's attitude toward students. Another observation that was made during the on-site visit was during a parent-teacher conference held after school at the parent's request. The

researcher observed that in the fifteen minute conference, Teacher A made five positive comments about the student and not one negative statement. For example, she said, "He is a very creative child; I know he is unsure of himself when he . . ." Another comment that was revealing was, "We need to weigh things out; I think he feels badly; we need to help him work things out" (Teacher A, Parent/Teacher Conference, April, 1990).

Another observation that gave insight into the attitude of the Teacher of the Year toward her students was found in phrases such as: "I seem to hear you saying it isn't fair to have kids along who fight? Or, when she was conducting a science class and asked, "How many of you have smokers in your family?" Twelve students raised their hands. Teacher A commented, "These people [pointing at those without hands raised] are kind of shocked, why is that?" Also, Teacher A always addressed her students with politeness and respect; for example, after she had been called out of the room, she said "Thank you for waiting" when she returned (Teacher A, Observation, April, 1990).

The fifth observation was the teacher's response to interruptions. That the researcher recorded was the interruptions that occurred in the Teacher of the Year classroom and the way in which those interruptions were handled. For example, on April 3 from 8:31 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. there were four interruptions of persons entering the classroom, and at 11:20 a.m. Teacher A was called to the phone. A college faculty person from across the state wanted to talk to her about a workshop. (The phone call was in time to coincide with her lunch hour which was from 11:06 a.m. to 12:00 noon.)



The sixth observation was the pattern of the teacher's day. At the beginning of the lunch hour, her duty was to collect lunch tickets to make certain her students could eat school lunch. In that time Teacher A took care of the phone call, ate lunch in the faculty lounge balancing a tray on her lap, checked on materials in the faculty lounge, went to the office to make another phone call, and by 12:00 noon was back in the classroom where class had started with a spelling lesson.

At 12:15 p.m. the students were involved in a role-playing activity with the teacher sitting on the side of the classroom. Science class had started. Students were called up to the front and given cards with particular roles to play. One of the scenarios read, "You are a teenage daughter. A group of your friends starts trying drugs. So far you don't try drugs." Teacher A encourages one student to be the teenager and the other student to be a friend. "What would they say?" The two sixth graders carry on a dialogue, the class watches intently and is ready to offer solutions to the problem. This is the teaching strategy for the lesson from 12:48 p.m. to 1:15 p.m., then the teacher switches gears again and has students hand in papers with questions they have generated.

At 2:28 p.m. the last class of the day begins. The researcher has not observed T-A sit down all day except for a few minutes at lunch. At 2:29 p.m. T-A sits at her desk and checks the milk list, then at 2:55 p.m. the class seemed to leave automatically. The day was over for the students. The Teacher of the Year had attended a faculty committee meeting, organized lessons for tomorrow, talked to a substitute teacher about plans for the days the Teacher of the Year would be gone later in the week, and planned to

have a dinner guest at her home that evening. She would go to bed shortly after 10:00 p.m. and the next day be at school at 7:15 a.m. to start the day (Teacher A, Observations, April, 1990).

### Teacher B

Appearance. Teacher B can be described as energetic. Depending on the day's agenda, Teacher B may wear "common sense walking shoes" because she is involved in the school's wellness program and walks before school in the morning generally from 7:00 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. Perhaps one of Teacher B's noticeable traits is that she smiles and speaks to everyone. In 'shadowing' her for two days, the researcher observed that Teacher B spoke to everyone in the building (i.e., cooks, custodians, bus drivers, principal, secretaries, colleagues, and students) on a very personal basis. She was interested in them as people.

Social organization. Teacher B's middle school classroom is located on the third floor of the middle school building in Middle Town, Iowa. The classroom has tile floors and is almost overwhelming in neatness and orderliness. The waxed tile gleams as if it were still September, and it is nearly the end of the school year. The desks are arranged in five neat, orderly rows of six chairs per row so that the classroom accommodates 30 students. Classes seem to be evenly divided in boy/girl composition with the 10:00 p.m. language arts class of 19 students with 10 boys and 9 girls. In one of the afternoon classes, for example, the class was composed of 11 boys, 10 girls. In another class the enrollment was 26 with 19 boys and 7 girls.

The teacher's very neatly organized desk is at the back of the room. Only a few items are on the desk and the lesson plans are open in plain sight. One item on the desk did attest to the teacher's sense of humor. The paper weight said, "Friday's coming." A cup that admonished, "Take Pride In Iowa Schools" held the scissors, pencils, and pens. A wooden pig and a wooden apple that proclaimed "#1 Teacher" were part of the neat array. A pencil on the desk was imprinted, "Pride Club Member -- You are Somebody."

Adjacent to the teacher's desk at the back of the room is a row of four work stations with Apple IIGS computers. Each computer has an individual work station and the researcher noted that the computers were in use during any "free time" that students were given. Each student seemed to use the computer to word process because they were publishing a book as part of their language arts requirement.

At the front of the room a blackboard that gave clues to the age of the building dominated the space. A computer PrintShop sign saying, "Expect the Best," covered the traditional 12 inch bulletin board space that ran along the top of the blackboard. Another PrintShop sign was attached to the blackboard. It had been student generated, and said, "Happy May Day!" The American flag hung on the left of the blackboard. A podium and small table provided a workspace at the front of the classroom.

On the wall adjacent to the outside hallway the board was covered with posters and sayings. There was nothing cluttered about the room.

Verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns. The first observation of nonverbal action is the teacher's movement in the classroom. Teacher B's classroom may be characterized as "never a wasted moment." In fact, often

the researcher was cognizant that perhaps what was being observed was "time on task" personified. Teacher B never stops teaching. One of the first observation notes reads:

- OBS:** 8:18 a.m. We walk through the hall. Teacher B never stops teaching. Guidance counselor comes into library consults Teacher B about a student who is absent, needs homework. In hall way student hits someone. She asks the young man if he will take that from the girl?
- OBS:** Walks along, sees a girl with water in her mouth from the drinking fountain.
- T-B:** Swallow.
- OBS:** The girl does. T-B walks into the classroom immediately begins dealing with students. Nine students are there.
- OBS:** 8:30 a.m. Begins class.
- T-B:** How many are in the chorus?
- OBS:** Eight raised hands.
- T-B:** You were really good. You may not realize how good you are because it is just expected in Middle Town, but you are really good.
- T-B:** While I am taking role you need to get out your discussion questions.
- T-B:** 8:31 a.m. You need 10 words. We'll check over by Friday. Who needs a partner? Here's what we are going to do today. Each of you needs to come up with discussion questions. What do you want to do? You'll ask people to discuss.
- T-B:** 8:35 a.m. Go see your partner and we'll meet again at 20 til ...
- OBS:** Students go quickly to partners. No time wasted; they just moved.
- OBS:** 8:35 a.m. T-B moves around room checking who has homework done. Checks it. Students moved to an arrangement where they were sitting in pairs facing one another. 20 students in class so 10 groups of partners.
- T-B:** 8:38 a.m. Stay next to partner, make big circle. Now here's what we are going to do. You are going to facilitate the discussion. . . .During discussion? no

right or wrong, no yes or no, two people could debate or argue about the question. Classroom is in a circle. (Teacher B, Observation, May, 1990).

A second observation involved questioning strategies. The discussion in Teacher B's classroom is lively as the students lead the discussion of review over a novel they had just finished reading. The book was Irene Hunt's Across Five Aprils and is a view of the Civil War. An excerpt of the discussion follows:

- T-B: 8:48 a.m. What do you think about that? Would that really happen in the 1990s? Some of you are saying, 'yes'.
- KID: Communism is just like slavery.
- T-B: What is apartheid? Does anyone know what it is? Now discussion focuses on South Africa . . . there are places that still have . . .
- T-B: Notice what Jay did? What did he do? He followed with another question.
- OBS: Student called on student.
- KID: How do you think people think of Lincoln?
- KID: 8:40 a.m. Why did they hate his actions?
- T-B: Did people in South hate him? Why didn't people like Lincoln?
- KID: Thought Lincoln was a coward.
- T-B: How would you describe Lincoln?
- KID: I don't know.
- KID: People in North dislike Lincoln because he was sending boys to war. I read. . . more men died in Civil War than any war since then.
- OBS: 8:55 a.m. Next question. (Teacher B, Observation, May, 1990).

At 9:07 a.m., as the teacher had promised, the class "switched gears." Now the students were instructed to write two essay questions with their partner. Teacher B told them, "For the next seven to eight minutes figure out 'What Teacher B is going to ask?'" In a follow-up discussion about the

lesson, Teacher B informed the researcher that she thinks it is important for students to learn to think about how to organize for an essay test. She moves around the room watching the students work on the questions, pauses, and comments, "What is life like in the 1800s? What did you learn? Sounds like a Teacher B question doesn't it?" At 9:14 a.m. the students placed the chairs back in rows. At 9:15 a.m. the teacher dismissed them saying, "Good job today. You are excused."

A third observation was the teacher's modeling of critical thinking skills. The following observation is a good example of how necessary it is to have a follow-up discussion with the teacher about the goal of the lesson. Teacher B's classroom modeled critical thinking skills, but the researcher was not certain if that was the goal for the class until discussing it with Teacher B. She confirmed that, indeed, critical thinking, not just acceptance of an idea, was what she was promoting. The dialogue takes place in a language arts class discussion of Across Five Aprils:

- T-B: 10:33 a.m. We have a unique problem. We don't have another race as a friend.
- KID: Some people will never think of you as equal.
- T-B: Do we think we do?
- KID: My dad was in Vietnam and he . . .
- T-B: 10:35 a.m. Most people share values of their family. Is it o.k. if . . .  
Who told the principal? Where does the rule come from?
- T-B: 10:35 a.m. Value of equality goes back to the 13th amendment.
- T-B: What did Sherman and his troops do that put the final touch on the war?
- KID: They scared everybody.

- T-B: You are right and how do you feel about that? Do you think it is right that they destroyed . . . how do you feel about that?
- T-B: You don't think it's right?
- T-B: So is war war? Or are there rules?
- KID: Pressure comes and people forget what they are doing.
- T-B: Are there rules?
- KID: 10:46 a.m. South had done so much damage.
- KID: Think if they had not done this . .
- T-B: How would this country be different?
- KID: Yes.
- T-B: Would we have a totally different society?
- KID: The North would have all plantations -- might be even a stupider society.
- T-B: [calls on a student] What do you think?
- KID: Some people would have slaves.
- KID: Sports would not be as big.
- T-B: Would our society be missing something? (T-B, Observation, May, #10, 1990)

A fourth observation was the teacher's attitude toward students. The researcher was constantly aware of how polite the teacher was to her students and how they seemed to respond in a similar manner. In one brief follow-up discussion to a class, Teacher B explained, "You don't say 'shut up' in my classroom. There are other ways of conveying that message." When a student hands the teacher a pass, she says, "Thank you." In the afternoon literature class, Teacher B constantly reinforced by positive comments. She asked a question and the researcher observed the following

- OBS: 2:17 p.m. T-B kneels down and shows kids how a person gets to their level.  
2:19 p.m. Kids read again  
2:24 p.m. class over
- T-B: 2:25 p.m. "Good idea, thank you!" (Teacher B, Observation, #9, May, 1990)

At the end of the class period, Teacher B dismisses the students. On one occasion a student was in a hurry and started to leave, Teacher B said, "scuze me." The student apologized. Teacher B said, "Thank you" and continued with the explanation.

Teacher B was also aware of the student's need to have some quiet time to study. She explained that, "this is my only time during the day and I need the time so I help them learn about time management." This was observed in the time designated as home room at 12:33 p.m. All the students were busy, four students at the computers, one was filing baseball cards, three were doing science homework, five seemed to be doing questions over the novel, Across Five Aprils. Teacher B sat at her front work table getting make-up work ready for a student who had been absent. At 12:55 p.m. class started. Later Teacher B explained that this was a time for her to work, also, and she consciously models time management.

A fifth observation was the teacher's response to interruptions. The interruptions from outsiders were minimal; in fact, the researcher only observed one phone call interruption. Teacher B calmly answered the intercom interruption that she would return the call at noon. During the class period, ten students may be asking questions, raising hands waiting for responses at one time, Teacher B moved very quickly to the individual students, smiled, asked them their question, helped them, and moved on. The researcher noticed the willingness of the teacher to get close to the students (i.e., lean down to their level when explaining an idea or squat down to be at eye level with the student who sat in the desk).



A sixth observation was the pattern of the teacher's day. Teacher B indicated that Tuesday, May 1, was a typical Tuesday. The researcher arrived at school at 7:10 a.m. and met Teacher B coming in from her morning walk. Teacher B had to be at a TABS (Team Approach to Better Schools) meeting at 7:30 a.m. in the library. At 7:25 a.m. she went down to the lunchroom, introduced the researcher to the kitchen staff, grabbed some Cheerios, talked to the custodian about a missing coffee pot and arrived at the library at 7:33 a.m. for the morning meeting. At 8:30 a.m. Teacher B met her first class of the day and repeated the 45 minute segments six times that day with on 45 minute preparation period in the morning, and a 11:55 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. break for lunch. The faculty ate in a separate dining room, but during the lunch hour three of the faculty were called to help the principal supervise the lunchroom. Teacher B was one of the three; a colleague volunteered, "Never mind, I'll do it for you." Teacher B suggested that was because her colleague knew that the researcher was there. School dismissed for the day at 3:21 p.m.. Students stayed after class to check out a book, but at precisely 3:30 p.m. Teacher B was in the car heading for Ames, Iowa, for her night class at Iowa State University. She made the return trip to Middle Town arriving home after 10:30 p.m. The next morning she would be at school at 7:00 a.m. to get ready for the day.

### Teacher C

Appearance. Teacher C could be described as a very warm, caring person. She is very gentle in her approach both in speech and in her

movement within the classroom. As a person she has a rare ability to make the people in her presence feel very comfortable almost immediately.

Teacher C's classroom was very small. It was about 20 feet by 30 feet. It was a very cheerful room. The concrete block had been painted green. On one wall the concrete block had been painted yellow. There were bulletin boards all around. One bulletin board said, "May is Asia Month. Is the war in Southeast Asia over? All kinds of pictures about Vietnam were on the board. On the back bulletin board there were things about the Chinese New Year. There were three rows of desks and three desks per row. When the students entered the classroom they seemed to sit in unassigned seats. Unlike some homogeneous classrooms in Iowa, this classroom's heterogeneous representation was immediately apparent. The young women sat together and the young men tended to cluster toward the back. The students were from Iran, China, Japan, Taiwan, Venezuela and Vietnam. Teacher C explained that she often has to think of the children's cultural needs in the arrangement of the classroom. For example, the young woman from Iran may feel more comfortable in the back of the room where she can have some personal space. The young woman from China who is eager to "become Americanized" may wish to sit in the front. In each case, the teacher tries to be sensitive to the needs of the students (Teacher C, Observation, #8, May, 1990).

The greenboard was covered with poems the students had written. The poems were in the students' handwriting with colored chalk reflecting the color of their poem. One of the poems read:

Excited is the color golden.  
 It is not [name of school] golden.  
 It is not Hawkeye golden.  
 It is summer sun golden. (Teacher C, Observation, #11, May, 1990)

Verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns. The first observation of nonverbal action is the teacher's movement in the classroom. The students do not appear hesitant about using their oral English, but they speak rather quietly except when talking about the soccer game that will be held that evening. The local paper has published a picture of many of the international students on the soccer team. Everyone is excited about the game. The lesson today is from Preparation for Writing: Grammar by Milton Wohl. The focus is on the perfect tenses. An excerpt from the observation follows:

OBS: 3:06 p.m. T-C listens to students  
 T-C: I spoke to you after I had spoken to [ name of student]. What's the difference?  
 OBS: T-C stands in front of room. Shows the students a chart.  
 T-C: 3:10 p.m. Asks what time is it?  
 KID: 3:10 p.m.  
 OBS: Everyone laughs.  
 OBS: T-C laughs also and continues with lesson, "He's walking. He will arrive."  
 T-C: 3:17 p.m. Read the sentence [statement to student].  
 OBS: 3:20 p.m. T-C has students do guided practice.  
 (Teacher C, Observation, #9, May, 1990)

A second observation involved questioning strategies. In contrast to Teacher A and Teacher B, the questioning strategies that Teacher C uses must be more literal because she is determining if students understand the language. Therefore, Teacher C's questions are, "Do you understand what is

meant by . . .? In addition, the questions are literal repetitions from the grammar text to help the students understand the perfect tense.

A third observation was the teacher's modeling of critical thinking skills. Critical thinking takes on a different dimension in Teacher C's classroom, also. In discussing the tenses with her students the following dialogue was observed.

- T-C: 2:41 p.m. The man died when the bullet struck him in the heart.  
 KID: Would you say that if he had a heart attack and then died from the bullet?  
 T-C: It's not likely that the story would read the man is dead and then someone shot him in the heart.  
 KID: But if it did, what tense would we use?  
 T-C: If your sentence said "when the man saw the gun" it would be a different sentence. Your sentence says, "When the bullet struck his heart, the man was dead." (Teacher C, Observation, #10, May, 1990)

A fourth observation was the teacher's attitude toward students. Teacher C expresses her attitude toward her students when she said in an interview after receiving the Teacher of the Year award, "It's a great learning experience for me, too, because these students bring a new attitude from different cultures and different perspectives" (Bartusek, 1989, p. 5). The researcher observed this same attitude in Teacher C's classroom as she displayed interest not only in their academic welfare but in their lives as newcomers to the United States. Two of the specific incidents that gave evidence of this concern was her willingness to go to the soccer game because she knew what it would mean to the young students in her class. A second observation was her choice of a restaurant for Tuesday evening's meal where she and the researcher went to a restaurant owned by one of Teacher

C's former students. Upon arrival there, the researcher and the teacher were treated like royalty with everyone being called from the kitchen with the words, "Teacher C is here."

The owner of the restaurant in Large Town is just one of the many success stories Teacher C can share about her students. In this case the young man escaped Vietnam with one of his older brothers and moved to Large Town in 1983. Although he is just 22, the former student has a life experience of escaping in April 1981 leaving behind his mother, two brothers, and one sister.

The student's story includes traveling on a large fishing boat with 85 others for three days and three nights before reaching Thailand waters only to have the boat captured by the Thais. Eventually, the student made it to a refugee camp in Thailand, and then to a camp in the Philippines. In 1982 the student moved to Large Town to live with relatives, but in 1983 the relatives moved to California. The student graduated from high school and from Teacher C's ESL program in 1986. An electrical engineering major at [university in Iowa], the student decided to take some time off to make money and purchased a restaurant which he opened January 13, 1989. When Teacher C walked into the restaurant he greeted her warmly and said to the researcher, "She is like a mother to me" (Teacher C, #5, Observation, May, 1990).

A fifth observation was the teacher's response to interruptions. Perhaps it was because of Teacher C's duties as the ESL coordinator as well as a classroom teacher, but it did not matter which building the researcher and

the teacher were in, there was a phone call for Teacher C. She handled those details quietly, took the messages, and added them to her list for the day.

A sixth observation was the pattern of the teacher's day. Teacher C's day began at 7:30 a.m. at the Central Administration Office when she co-chaired a meeting of the Phase III committee. The meeting was held in the Board room with six other individuals present representing the administrative office, a community representative, the Phase III coordinator, a junior high principal and the president of the Iowa Large Town Schools Education Association and the researcher. After the meeting Teacher C took care of administrative details and went to an elementary school to check on how the program was working there and to provide some support materials. At 11:06 a.m. we were at Large Town High School where she was to meet with another ESL instructor to prepare a year-end report and provide recommendations. Then, she would teach her two classes, go to the after-school soccer game and take the researcher to dinner. At 9:30 p.m. she would go home to review the videotape that she had her spouse tape from the local television station's live coverage of the local school board meeting that evening where they were discussing the future of the ESL coordinator's role. At 7:30 a.m. the next day she would be back at the administration office to begin another day.

### Summary

The Teachers of the Year presented perceptions of each of the six interview items that deal with ecological characteristics of the classroom. The purpose of this summary is to describe Teachers of the Year similarities

and differences on their perceptions of these interview items. Teacher A is an elementary teacher, Teacher B is a middle school teacher, and Teacher C is a secondary teacher.

Ecological characteristics of classroom. In the case of observable similarities, each of the teachers had cheerful rooms, decorated with informative bulletin boards, clear directions and classroom rules were posted; student work was the focus. Teacher A had the largest classroom. Her room was adjacent to the principal's office, and she was able to answer the many phone calls she received by going to the principal's office with a minimal amount of classroom disruption. In contrast, Teacher C's classroom was very small but had an innerconnecting door to a media center where a phone was immediately available for the inevitable phone calls. Teacher B's classroom, like Teacher C's, was up two flights of stairs to the upper level of the school, but unlike Teacher C's there was no phone nearby. In each case the teachers received at least two to three phone calls per day relating to outside commitments relative to their being a Teacher of the Year.

Effective teaching. The Teachers of the Year thought of effective teaching as having a plan for the classroom, being flexible and willing to take a detour in those plans. Teacher B and Teacher A both felt that effective teaching meant having a thorough grasp of the content you were teaching as well as a sensitivity to the student's needs. Teacher C felt that effective teaching was letting the students know you care. All three teachers talked about the importance of having the students involved.

Social organization. All three Teachers of the Year were aware of the need to have a pattern of organization for their classroom. Teacher A and Teacher B seemed to agree that a classroom should reflect a well-organized design both in the way students were assigned seats, as well as the way in which instructions were given and students were kept on task. Teacher C, on the other hand, felt that the cultural differences influenced the way she organized her classroom. Teacher C's classroom was also influenced by a smaller class size. The ESL class had ten students. On the other hand, Teacher A had 26 sixth graders and Teacher B had an average of 26 students in her classroom with the lowest number being 21 and the largest 32. All three teachers had different students at different hours of the day so that not one of the teachers taught in a traditional self-contained classroom.

Verbal and nonverbal interactions. The Teachers of the Year all believed in having their students actively involved. Coincidentally, two the Teachers of the Year (Teacher A and Teacher B) were teaching the same novel, Across Five Aprils, as part of their language arts unit. In both classrooms the students were active participants in the learning process with an emphasis on questions as a tool for dialogue. Teacher C's lesson was focused on grammar and the understanding of the perfect tenses in the English language. In Teacher C's classroom the lesson was student driven, also.

Students of varying abilities. The Iowa Teachers of the Year appeared committed to taking students where they are and challenging them to reach their best. Each teacher asserted that the self-esteem of students was paramount to reaching success in the classroom.



Students of the Teachers of the Year were supportive of their teachers. Teacher B's students described her as someone who expects you to work. Teacher A's students talked in terms of liking their teacher and liking the subject she taught. Teacher C's students said "their teacher was nice." "She wants us to learn," commented one youngster.

Student/administrator's perceptions. The Teacher of the Year felt that their administrator's were supportive and understood the need for the Teacher of the Year to be absent from the classroom because of the award. The Teachers of the Year felt that the administrators assist in creating a climate for teaching excellence.

Work conditions. The Teachers of the Year confirmed Lortie's (1975) research saying that a "good day" for them was when the students learned, when "light bulbs" went on in the students eyes or when class was over and the students were still discussing an idea from class. In each case the assessment of a good day was predicated on how the students had felt about the day.

Conditions that encouraged excellence for the Teachers of the Year were parental support, administrative support, having good students who want to learn, and some freedom and flexibility in their assignments. One teacher, Teacher B, commented that, "having equipment to use" encouraged her. Discouraging conditions were not as clearly defined. One teacher, Teacher B, felt that teachers' attitudes in general of wanting to blame someone else are discouraging. Teacher A indicated that it is discouraging if you do not have parent support. Teacher C observed that one of the things that discourages excellence is the growing need for more paperwork.

### Principal/Colleague/Community Observations

The reader is reminded that the observations and interview items presented in this section are purposely anonymous because the researcher did not want the Teachers of the Year to be able to identify the particular principal, student, parent, or colleague interviewed. This is an added precaution to protect the rights of human subjects in this research.

#### Principals' observations

When the immediate supervisor of one of the Teachers of the Year was asked to comment, the principal often talked in terms of the teacher's energy level. One of the principals commented:

I don't know how she does it. How does she get it all done and survive . . . lots of energy . . . a family (two girls). She spends as much time as anyone up here or more. She's gone a lot; hopefully that will be remedied in the fall. (Principal, Interview, #7, May, 1990).

Another principal reflected on what factor sets a Teacher of the Year apart saying:

She puts a lot of hours in on this job. Sometime I worry about her just personally, but you know, she's up here constantly. She's gone all of the time. I hear other teachers say she wants to be on every committee we have here. I think she does because she wants to learn different things all of the time. She has so little prep time.

She went on my Hunter training group earlier. She has lots of energy, never comes to work tired, complaining I got all this work to do. She's always got a smile, business--we're gonna do it, and she loves what she's doing.

She can be an administrator down the road. She's not a person who will want to do something for too long--many years. That's great--she always wants a challenge. And you know, she wants to find out what makes kids better students and what goes on. That's the drawing line; she'll spend an hour a night reading Educational Leadership or Phi Delta Kappa where some others won't. Where some others will read, she'll experiment with it; she will put it into practice. If it doesn't work, fine, but she's really heavy into it. She's really heavy into thinking skills right now. A thinking skills support group. She feels these things do work, and a lot of the time staff members are reluctant with change. They try something once and it doesn't work they say, 'OK, that's a new idea,' but she keeps at it; she sees the value of it." (Principal, Interview, #7, May, 1990)

A brief interview with another immediate supervisor provided insight into his perceptions of the Teacher of the Year. The principal's description of an outstanding teacher focused on relationship skills, that kids like being around the teacher, and the teacher likes being around the kids. The principal also commented that an outstanding teacher somehow models the idea of being a life-long learner and perceives herself as a scholar in her desire to continue to improve upon her own knowledge level and skill level that she has within her specific discipline (Principal, Interview, # 11, May, 1990).

When the principal was asked to think about "if there was something there that makes the Teacher of the Year go the extra mile?," he answered without hesitation, "I think, I think mostly it's intrinsic." Another factor that the principal was willing to discuss was the school climate saying, "You call it ethos, but I say the climate is not only created by faculty, but created by

the kids who come here and our parent community. You know high expectations, always--nothing very complacent around here" (Principal, Interview, # 11, May, 1990).

When discussing the strength of the Teacher of the Year, the principal stated:

I think she would go off the scale on communicating to her kids a real sincere, caring attitude toward what they do in school, and I think she goes off the scale in a positive direction toward convincing them through her actions that she really cares about what they do here not only in her classroom but beyond. And I think kids know that by how she responds to them both physically and verbally. I think she's--I see as I watch her teach and and I watch kids react with her. I see a real closeness that is unique.

...

The other think I think she has is the ability to have a lot of patience in dealing with those kids. She doesn't get upset with them when they fail, doesn't get angry with them, but really supports them in their efforts to become better skilled at least in the language. (Principal, Interview, #12, May 1990)

The principals were also asked to consider what the community's opinion of the Teacher of the Year would be. One of the principals offered:

Exceptional as a first year teacher. She's active in her church, on the tennis courts, avid walker, and she's not afraid to say 'hello.' I would guess she'd said hello to the gentlemen at Caseys. She presents a good image of the school as well as herself. (Principal, Interview, #6, May, 1990)

### Colleagues observations

A colleague suggested that she would describe the Teacher of the Year as "a very good friend." Another colleague said, "I would describe her as an iron hand in a kid glove" (Colleague, Interview, #4, May, 1990).

A further observation offered by a colleague of one of the Teachers of the Year suggested that to find out the essence of superlative teaching, members of the profession should look at the historical foundations of the art of teaching. The colleague observed:

Any one of twenty teachers in this building . . . in this school district itself could be a Teacher of the Year. This district makes you so [expletive] aware of what you are doing every minute that you must be good. You must not be less than what you are able to be; maybe she [the Teacher of the Year] picks up on the ethic of the place . . . I don't think we need Madeline Hunter to tell us how to teach. We need Aristotle and Socrates to tell us how to live; then we would know how to teach. (Colleague, Interview, #4, May, 1990)

Isolation of teachers was a subtle observation when one of the colleagues of a Teacher of the Year said, "I'm very impressed with [name of teacher]. I think I would enjoy watching her teach, if I had the time" (Colleague, Interview, #4, April, 1990).

### Community members observations

In contrast when community members were asked to give their insights, [the community members were also persons who were parents of a student in the Teacher's of the Year classroom] one parent was very definite in her opinion about the Teacher of the Year saying, "I think it's absolutely

wonderful and every time a good teacher gets it, I cry because they leave the classroom" (Parent, Interview, #6, May, 1990).

Another parent observed:

Works with a purpose; has her goals clear in mind; she is a professional. She projects what teachers would like to be thought of. She takes her job very seriously; is discrete with her peers. She is always there to help a fellow colleague and is exemplary.

[What sets a Teacher of the Year apart?] I would venture to guess that they possess an inner drive. They look at it as more than just a job—it's that extra inner spark and drive; that relentless search for the best.

[Do they have that expectation for themselves?] Yes, very decidedly, and in turn have high expectations of the students. For example, she gives the message to the students that 'I have my expectations. I know you can meet them, but you are going to have to work to achieve them.' (Parent, Interview, #6, May, 1990).

Parents appreciate the extra effort the Teachers of the Year expend in individualizing the classroom. One parent said, "She individualizes a great deal. I think she grades on potential. I've never heard her belittle a child; she never makes a negative comment about her students" (Parent, Interview, #6, May, 1990).

### Summary

Principals, parents, and colleagues perceived the three teachers as persons who had high expectations for themselves and for their students. One parent expressed a concern that the award of Teacher of the Year meant

that the teacher would be out of the classroom. Colleagues expressed a desire to see the Teacher of the Year teach, but admitted that there was always a problem of time and schedules.

### Additional Findings

#### Respect for students

One of the areas labeled additional findings that caused the researcher to return to the literature was the Teachers' of the Year attitudes of respect and manners that permeated the learning environment. For example in Teacher A's classroom, the use of "please" and "thank you" was second nature to the teacher and to the students. An awareness of respect for students was observed by the researcher as students left quietly to go to the bathroom, to walk the library, and to move to the other side of the classroom. When the researcher asked Teacher A about these actions, Teacher A explained:

... we try to make it so it's not disruptive to those who are sitting and reading. We try to keep it so that it is a natural movement, a quiet movement some kind of an organizational pattern. But realizing that there are other things that have to be done during that time. (Teacher A, Interview, #9, April, 1990)

This same observation was true in Teacher B's classroom. As the researcher watched Teacher B in an eighth grade language arts class at 9:08 a.m. The students began talking to one another and the following interaction was observed:

OBS: KIDS begin talking to one another; classroom is in circle; may want to know about major area; T-B is not walking around the room; T-B is walks over and asks KID if he is thinking; he has head down on desk.

T-B: 'You can sit up and think.'

OBS: T-B puts hand on his shoulder; says 'Can you sit up, cross your eyes, and think?' he laughs; she moves on to the next KID; walks around inside of circle. (Teacher B, Observation, #9, May, 1990)

Finally, in Teacher C's classroom, the researcher observed the respect for students exemplified in exchanges within the classroom. For example, when the teacher realized that the student was having trouble seeing the blackboard, she commented, "You probably should have your eyes checked. Do you get headaches?" The student responded, "No." Teacher C countered, "Well, that's good, because some people do when they don't use glasses . . ." (Teacher C, Observation, #9, May, 1990).

Teacher A's openness with her students was obvious as students stayed after school to talk to the teacher. When asked about all the abilities in her classroom and how she deals with them, Teacher A responded:

Well, of course that's one thing that partner type things does help. I have, maybe you noticed, a few students who stay after school. That's a deal that the parents and I worked out as far as getting homework done when nobody's at home after school to monitor them. Plus, that one young man has some questions he's not quite clear on. He's hesitant to ask in front of the students. Unless I go over to him, he won't ask them when other students are around. I have to ask him, sort of in private, 'do you understand this,' and he'll explain things to me. I have some other girls in there who are learning disabled and I just got through running some packets off this morning to send home for them to work fifteen minutes a night on, then they're 'gonna' come back and they sort of self-check their work and we can pinpoint where they need additional assistance there. You try to make assignments that have



enough diversity in them so that they challenge the top students and the bottom and, oh I'm thinking in Math class for example, often times I'll have a quiz. Last week I had a little quiz, and I said when you finish here's an extra credit assignment I put on the overhead. And it was pretty tough. The challenge, I had two students got part of it right, and then we talked about it today. So you tried to give assignments that are broad enough or open-ended enough, I guess you'd probably say that students can do something, the top students will do it better. (Teacher A, Interview, #10, May, 1990)

During the sustained reading in Teacher A's classroom, the researcher noted the respect for each person in the room. An observation of the twelve minutes of sustained reading time follows:

- OBS: 2:32 p.m. Classroom is absolutely quiet; every student has a book and is reading.
- OBS: 2:33 p.m. T-A at back of room reading Across the Miles.
- OBS: 2:33 p.m. KID goes to teacher; asks question; asks question; T-A nods; boy leaves room.
- OBS: 2:33 p.m. Two milk delivery people return; one moves around room delivering milk; children barely notice; student moves to each desk; give out milk.
- OBS: T-A stands at back quietly reading; milk delivery student goes to back to ask T-A a question; asks to go check milk lists; T-A nods; KID goes to teacher's desk and checks list; return with her own milk; takes box to corner.
- T-A: 2:35 p.m. Still at back reading; students all reading; not a fidget; just reading and drinking milk; KID to JMC right reading paper; looks like paper she has written.
- OBS: 2:37 p.m. Quiet; one student coughs; T-A continues standing at back reading; turns pages of her book.
- OBS: 2:38 p.m. KID goes to T-A; asks question; leaves room; door closes quietly.
- OBS: 2:40 p.m. KID moves out of desk; goes to corner.
- OBS: 2:41 p.m. KID goes to T-A; interrupts T-A; they whisper quietly; two KIDS leave room; one KID

goes to wastebasket; one KID to front of desk; one KID to teacher's desk; one KID picks up paper from T-A's desk; one KID goes to get kleenex; KID goes to teacher for a pass; T-A signs pass; KID leaves room.

OBS: 2:42 p.m. Three KIDs at front of desk; pick up papers; return to desk; T-A still standing at back, reading quietly; so calm, room is so quiet; everyone works at assignment of sustained reading.

OBS: 2:44 p.m. KID returns from outside; big grin; goes quickly to desk; picks up book; reads. (Teacher A, Observation, #8, April, 1990)

On the other hand, Teacher B made it clear that "please" and "thank you" were part of her personal value system. On-site observation in her classroom confirmed for the researcher that the students were not only polite to one another, but were also polite to the teacher. As Teacher B was working with reluctant readers, she asked, "What's USAF?" The class answered in unison, "United States Air Force." Teacher B, smiled, and said enthusiastically, "Whew! You guys are good!" Less than one minute later in the same lesson, Teacher B acknowledged a student's idea saying, "Good idea, thank you!"

Earlier that day, Teacher B had used the same polite attitude in making certain that the class knew that she was in charge of the dismissal as she brought the lesson to closure. Teacher B reminded a student that he was not to leave the room by simply saying, "'scuze me." The student responded by apologizing, and Teacher B said, "Thank you." The exchange was completed with minimal interruption in the flow of the lesson (Teacher B, Observation, #9, May, 1990).

Teacher C's attitude of respect and concern for the class was evident in her treatment of the students in her classroom as well as her response to students in the crowded corridor of a busy high school during passing time. Her teaching style was to ask the students their opinions and to give them choices. For example, she told the students their journals were ready and inquired, "Should I put them on the floor?" She explained to the researcher that she takes time to write personal comments on each journal entry because if the students take time to write their feelings and concerns, then she should comment in return. She also indicated the plan to place journals in front of the door for the students as they leave the classroom saying, "We stumble over them when we walk out so that we know we can't miss them." The emphasis on "we" gave the classroom an atmosphere of camaraderie and teamwork. The journal assignments also reflected the teacher's respect for her student's individual needs. The assignments included five choices, and if none of those seemed appropriate, then the student should write about something they chose (Teacher C, Observation, #10, May, 1990).

The students' response to the polite atmosphere in the classrooms and the teacher's respect for the students was best illustrated by a statement from a fourteen year old boy who confessed that school was not his favorite thing, but that he really liked to skateboard. The young man said of his teacher:

[Do you think she really 'expects the best' from her students?]  
The best we can possibly give to her, but it doesn't always happen. When it does, she lets us more or less know that she appreciates it. (Teacher B, Student Interview, #11, May, 1990)

### Summary

In the category of additional findings, the researcher discovered that the Teachers of the Year were very polite to their students. This atmosphere of respect was reciprocated by the students who spoke politely to their classmates and to their teacher. Teachers of the Year appeared to model respect for their students as an accepted practice in a classroom where students were expected to do their very best.

## CHAPTER V. FINDINGS, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the ethos of three Iowa Teachers of the Year. The two basic research questions addressed by this study were: (1) Who are the key individuals influencing the shaping of attitudes, values, and beliefs of these Iowa Teachers of the Year? (2) What are the ecological characteristics of the classroom that influence the behavior in the teaching environment for these Iowa Teachers of the Year? From these two questions, six open-ended questions for each research question were formulated to guide obtaining data by interviews, observations and artifacts. When necessary, sub-questions to the twelve questions were formulated.

The data were compared with theoretical and research based ideas concerning teacher effectiveness and characteristics of outstanding teachers who have been identified through the Teacher of the Year program. The reader is reminded that in Lortie's (1975) study, conservatism, individualism, and presentism were outlined as significant components of the ethos of the classroom teacher. In contrast, this study reveals that these Teachers of the Year characterize themselves as risk-takers, persons in need of a support system, and life-long learners.

### Eight Major Insights

Eight major insights were generated in the process of reviewing and analyzing the collected data in this qualitative study using a case study approach. The first insight relates to the basic question on key individuals, the next four

relate to ecological characteristics of the classroom and the remaining two relate to perceptions and descriptors of these three Teachers of the Year. A summary of the insights follows:

Key individuals. First, there is not a similar pattern among Iowa Teachers of the Year concerning the role of key individuals in influencing their teaching. Teacher C and Teacher B were highly influenced by their families in their decision to teach. In addition, the two teachers share the values that they received in their homes from their parents with the students in their classrooms. One teacher (Teacher A) could point to no particular person who influenced her to become a teacher, but she indicated that the students in her classroom had an influence on the values she holds for teaching.

Ecological characteristics. Second, the three Iowa Teachers of the Year indicated a lack of support systems for teachers. Teacher A indicated "there is nothing set up in the schools for some kind of structure, if you have frustrations, if you're feeling upset . . . I think we have a lot of men frustrated and burned out, and we have no support for them whatsoever" (Teacher A, Interview, April, 1990). The Teacher of the Year observed that men are conditioned not to complain about problems, but she suggested that women may seek out a support system informally. Teacher B suggested that teacher/coaches "receive support from their spouses that is unique" (Teacher B, Interview, May, 1990). Teacher C commented that teaching is so all encompassing that persons who teach must know that there is a support system in their immediate family.

Third, the Iowa Teachers of the Year are active agents as opposed to passive recipients in their teacher roles. Data from this study provide evidence

that teachers are not passive recipients of advice and suggestions. In the case of one teacher, Teacher B, the study documented her willingness to seek out advice and ask for help as a direct carry-over from her days as a substitute teacher. The researcher observed that all three Teachers of the Year were involved in committee meetings before and after school. In these meetings the Teachers of the Year asked for in-put, offered suggestions, and readily accepted advice from others. This finding is in contrast to Lortie (1975) who suggested that "teacher-teacher interaction does not seem to play a critical part in the work life of our respondents" (p. 192).

Fourth, these Iowa Teachers of the Year were influenced by the communities in which they taught. Excellence is expected in those communities, and teachers share in recognition of outstanding work. Although the teachers were reluctant to describe themselves as outstanding teachers, this study documents that the persons in the community perceived the selected teachers as "the best." Observations by the researcher in the Teachers' of the Year classrooms confirmed that they were not singled out for special treatment; rather, the Teachers of the Year had hall duty, lunchroom duty, and committee assignments equal to their peers' assignments. Community members provided insight into why they perceived the selected Teacher of the Year as "the best" or "outstanding." One parent observed: "I believe a child will put out as much as he is expected to. Teacher B makes her expectations very high . . . She individualizes a great deal . . . She expects a lot of students and faculty, but mostly herself" (Parent Interview, May, 1990). In describing the community's perception of the Teacher of the Year one observer offered, "Truthfully, deep

down, I don't think she gets the recognition she deserves in the community" (Principal Interview, #4, May, 1990).

Fifth, all of the Iowa Teachers of the Year were directly influenced by pupil responses to them as teachers. Positive pupil responses provided evaluative feedback for the teachers in terms of validating for them what a 'good day' had been. "Active involvement," "seeing the lights go on in their eyes," "students continuing to discuss an idea after class has been dismissed" were some of the specifics that the teachers suggested as a way of knowing that they had a good day. Conversely, a bad day was characterized as "students just sort of sit in their seats, and yawn, and are bored, and maybe one falls asleep" (Teacher A, Interview, April, 1990).

Additional findings. Sixth, all three Iowa Teachers of the Year in this study entered teaching because of a deep, long-term, personal desire to teach. For example, Teacher B was willing to go into debt, quit a job, and enroll in summer school after three years of substituting because "she really wanted to teach." Teacher B said, "I can not remember ever wanting to do anything else" (Teacher B, Interview, May, 1990). Teacher A entered teaching because "she discovered that she could combine her love of science and her enjoyment of children into a career choice" (Teacher A, Interview, April, 1990). Teacher C became a teacher because it was something "she admired in others whom she respected" (Teacher C, Interview, May, 1990).

Seventh, in presenting descriptors of what makes a teacher outstanding, the principals and selected colleagues suggested descriptors that had not been revealed in the literature. For example, terms such as "an inner drive," "choosing to use a high energy level," and "good work ethic" as well as "a



relentless search for the best," may help understand the sentiments and preferences of the Teachers of the Year. Two of the principals appeared perplexed about the excellence of the teachers admitting they worried about the Teacher of the Year "because they are constantly up here," and one "wondered how she gets it [all of her commitments] done." One principal suggested that "if there's an ethos that's created with that [recognition]--in the building with that-- I think it'd probably be something along the lines of making it OK to recognize people for outstanding performance" (Principal Interview, May, 1990) Another principal observed, "When they see how she deals with the young people and sees the concern that she has for education in general, to me that's a wonderful way for others to begin to emulate, you know, some of those characteristics" (Principal, Interview, #4, May, 1990).

Eighth, the researcher observed a pattern of politeness that permeated all three Teachers' of the Year classrooms. Teacher B stated that she did not allow students to say "shut up" in the classroom. Teachers A, B, and C all addressed students with "please" and "thank you" for the accomplishment of tasks as simple as handing a paper to the teacher.

#### Empirical Assertions

According to Erickson (1986, p. 146), to analyze data from qualitative studies is to "generate empirical assertions, largely through induction." In addition, Erickson (1986) suggests that "the researcher who wishes to establish evidentiary warrant does so by reviewing the data corpus repeatedly to test the validity of the assertions that were generated, seeking disconfirming evidence as well as confirming evidence" (p. 146).

Following this advice, the researcher repeatedly and thoroughly read the entire data record accumulated from the four sources of data: entrance interview, on-site observation, time-structured interviews, and artifacts. From this reading and the two major research questions with which the study began, the researcher derived five empirical assertions. No assertion was constructed from data generated by a single research method.

Finally, Smith and Shepard (1988) suggest as a means of establishing for the reader the validity of the assertions, excerpts from the data record are presented so that the reader may follow the logic of the analysis. The data record is presented in three forms: quotations from the Teacher of the Year, descriptions of the ecological characteristics of the classroom, and quotations from principals, teachers, students, and community members for disconfirming as well as confirming data.

Juxtaposing the theoretical orientations, the collected data, and the eight major insights, the researcher suggests five major empirical assertions generated from the two basic research questions pursued in this study. The five empirical assertions are:

Assertion 1. Teachers of the Year are influenced in their attitudes, values, and beliefs about teaching primarily by their parents.

Assertion 2. Teachers of the Year are committed to student success and have high expectations for their students.

Assertion 3. Teachers of the Year indicate that support systems are non-existent in the teaching profession.

Assertion 4. Teachers of the Year believe that the community's expectations contribute to their own attitudes and beliefs about excellence in the classroom.

Assertion 5. Teachers of the Year model a learning environment built on respect for all students exemplified in their polite treatment of those students.

### Comparisons of Findings and Literature

The findings from the present study are significant in light of they extend the body of knowledge. To give some perspective on the differences and similarities in this study, the researcher chose to provide a summary of the major points suggested in the literature and to provide a summary of how this study extends the understanding of the stated issue.

### Demographics

Findings in this study verify that the Iowa Teachers of the Year mirror the national findings with the three Iowa Teacher of the Year being in an age range of 31-46 (Wiedmer, 1983). On the national level the mean age was 44 years and the mean age for the Iowa Teachers of the Year was 38.6 years (McKay, 1990). Findings for this study show that all three Iowa Teachers of the Year were married, and one had been divorced. Two of the three Iowa Teachers of the Year had children, and one reported no children.

### Key individuals

The literature was replete with studies that suggest the importance of mentors and/or key individuals who influence teachers to become teachers.

Lortie's (1975) Five Towns study indicated that the surveyed teachers identified a strong role model as a former teacher. Easterly's (1983) study provided additional support with outstanding elementary teachers identifying other teachers as influencing their decision to become teachers. Findings from this study support that three Iowa Teachers of the Year had very strong family support as well as key persons in the public schools who were influential in the Teachers' of the Year decisions to become a teacher. Interview data document that two of the Iowa Teachers of the Year were strongly influenced to become teachers by close family members, former high school teachers, a university instructor, and in one case the "students themselves." Interview data also document that the Iowa Teachers of the Year teachers were also influenced on how to teach by of former teachers, parents, and past teaching experiences. None of the Teachers of the Year mentioned their student teaching experience as having influenced them as teachers in responding to the specific open end questions of this study. Only one teacher, Teacher B, mentioned the student teaching experience, and that was in passing, as she explained that it was in student teaching when she discovered "she did not want to spend her life in a gym."

#### Attitudes, values, and beliefs

McKay (1987) reported that Teachers of the Year believed that the classroom teacher who supervised the teacher's student teaching had the greatest impact on the teacher's success as a teacher. Lortie (1975) concluded that psychic rewards rotated around classroom events and relationships with students. Wiedmer (1983) asserted that Teachers of the Year credited their

teaching success to a love of learning, their own personal characteristics, and the support and encouragement of family members. Data from this study indicated that basic attitudes, values, and beliefs for themselves and for their students were often rooted in the family value structure of the Teacher of the Year. In addition, two of the Teachers of the Year pointed to former teachers as models for attitudes, values, and beliefs. For example, Teacher B, a middle school teacher, was aware of the fact she probably imitates her elementary social studies teacher. Teacher A, a sixth grade teacher, was aware of her belief that "we're after active involvement. . . and an awareness that we [the teachers] don't have all the information." Teacher C, a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL), was aware that her students need to learn more than content from her.

One of the attitudes of "high expectations for the students" was traced directly to parental influence by two of the three Teachers of the Year. Another value, "the importance of being a decent human being," was presented as a value that Teacher B had learned from her mother. Teacher C described a high school English teacher as being that person who "believed you can do better." Teacher C traced her own belief in "students being the best they can be" back to her high school teacher. In addition, Teacher A's attitude that outstanding teachers should be life-long learners comes from her experience in high school and college when she discovered that learning was stimulating. Teacher A suggested that an outstanding teacher "definitely had to have a vision of what education is and be willing to play with ideas."

The researcher observed these attitudes, values, and beliefs in the on-site visitations when Teacher A would say to a student, "I think you can do better." Or, Teacher B asked a student, "Are you sure that's the best you can do?"

Teacher C's belief in reaching potential was observed in the way she encouraged the students in her class to "do your best at the soccer game." Then, Teacher C took time from her schedule to attend the game because as she said, "They have been talking about it [the game] for a long time, and I think they're going to really be looking for me."

Data from this study support Easterly (1983), McKay (1987), and Wiedmer (1983) observations that outstanding teachers have strong role models who influenced them as teachers. However, what is significant in this study is that the Teachers of the Year tended to talk more about the values and attitudes they received from their parents than from specific role models within the school setting. One Teacher of the Year summarized her attitude toward the value of education saying, "Well, I think I got a lot of it from my parents, even though they weren't formally educated. It was very important in that it was of high value for them to know or to find out . . ." (Teacher C, Interview, #2, May, 1990).

### Support system

Lortie (1975) first described teaching as a 'cellular' profession and concluded that the very boundaries of a classroom that contribute to a teacher's individualism also contribute to the isolation factor in the public schools. One of the Teachers of the Year stated that "one of the things that teachers are terrifically lacking in" is a support system. Furthermore, the Teachers of the Year observed that "teachers don't do anything to help one another out." Findings in this study agree with Lortie's (1975) earlier observation, but one of the Teachers of the Year suggested that even though there is not a support system for colleagues, that "women seek it out for themselves, but that the

profession has a lot of men frustrated and burned out and there is no support for them whatsoever " (Teacher A, Interview, April, 1990). A second observation not found in the literature is the statement from one of the Iowa Teachers of the year was that those outstanding teachers who have successful marriages and successful careers "have very unique spouses who have the ability to spend a lot of hours by themselves" (Teacher B, Interview, #4, May, 1990). A third observation that surfaced concerning support systems was:

. . . if you're worried about other things, and you don't have the support of those people. I think teaching is such a force that it involves your whole self. When you're doing something, you have to give up everything else at the moment. . . .And I feel that I have my own daughters and my husband supporting me. Yes. Which means that when I'm upset, I can rely on them, or when things go wrong at school, I can talk to them about my work. (Teacher C, Interview, #4, May, 1990)

### Student's description

Brophy and Good (1984) have provided the profession a sensitive analysis of how teachers, principals, and supervisors can become more skilled at observation. These authors suggest that students are a source for relevant information about a teacher's skill (p. 373). Findings from this study support the notion that pupils in classrooms were powerful socializing variables in the socialization processes for three Iowa Teachers of the Year. This finding supports Lortie's (1975) assertion that positive feedback from students legitimizes the teacher's role identity. Dillon (1989) supports the idea that student's perceptions are important to their willingness to become active participants in a classroom. The findings in this study are consistent with the literature, but the findings extend the literature by stating that the student's

description is based on the things that are important to students, "being fair and not playing favorites." Another finding was that Teachers of the Year felt students would say of them, "She basically likes kids." In the case of the Iowa Teacher of the Year working with the students enrolled in English as a Second Language, the teacher observed that the students might not know the words to say, but they [the students] would see her as someone who cares. The researcher's field notes provide supporting data that students in the Teachers of the Year classrooms were actively involved in the lessons and their relationship with the teacher was one of trust and openness. Empirical evidence in this study is consistent with Dillon's (1989) assertion that the belief that "all students can be successful learners, leads to an open, risk-free learning environment" (p. 254.) Teachers of the Year readily accepted the idea that each student in their classroom had potential, and that they [the teacher] expected the students to do their best. One student in describing his teacher's expectations commented: "She expects the best we can give to her. It doesn't always happen. She asks that of us. When it does happen, she lets us know she appreciates it" (Student Interview, #11, May, 1990).

### Community perception

Wiedmer (1983) found that Teachers of the Year felt they had been selected for the award because of community, student, and administrative support. "Exemplary teaching practices and a true love of, dedication to, and enthusiasm for teaching" (Wiedmer, 1983, p. 186) were also listed by the award winners as reasons for their selection. Findings in this study are similar in that these Iowa Teachers of the Year are very involved in their communities, and



that they are perceived by their students, colleagues, and supervisors as life-long learners. Interestingly, one outstanding teacher felt that the community would see her as "pretty ordinary" and would want their children in the teacher's classroom because "she does not let kids walk all over her and get in big bad trouble in middle school" (Teacher B, Interview, #6, May, 1990). Additional empirical evidence for the inference from this statement was provided in a later interview with one of the parents at the middle school. The parent gave a corroborating statement suggesting that parents in the community "want teachers who will help students set values for the high school years" (Parent Interview, #6, May, 1990). Another statement that was not found in the literature was the concept that a community takes pride in "hiring back its own, the community had a tradition of hiring back their graduates." An unintended observation in this setting was that the Small Town community had had two Teacher of the Year finalists in the Iowa competition. One teacher was a state winner, and the other teacher was a finalist. This observation provided a basis for examining the influence the community's expectations have in creating an environment that will foster outstanding teaching as an accepted norm.

### Effective teaching

Teachers of the Year in this study had some different perceptions about effective teaching than are found in the present body of knowledge. Wiedmer (1983) reported that effective teachers possessed a variety of characteristics including: love of children, positive self-images, an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, knowledge and sense of humor. McKay (1987) added that Teachers of the Year in the ten state area identified good judgment as the key

factor in effective teaching. The three Iowa Teachers' of the Year believed that to be an effective teacher the students must be actively involved. The Teachers of the Year not only talked about believing in the importance of student involvement in their classrooms, but the researcher confirmed through on-site observations that the classrooms of the Teachers of the Year were active and student driven during lessons. In addition, numerous teaching strategies were used including role playing, debate, small group discussion, oral presentations, and visual expression coupled with written expression as a means of expressing an idea.

Findings from this study suggest that isolation was another concern for the three Iowa Teachers of the Year. The researcher observed that the Teachers' of the Year classrooms were accessible and in highly visible areas of the school; yet, when discussing isolation as a factor that infringes on effective teaching, they all indicated that they felt isolated. For example, all three Teachers of the Year commented that they had not seen one another teach; furthermore, two of the three teachers have not observed anyone teach since they left their student teaching experience. The one teacher who had had an opportunity to see others teach, Teacher C, had a part-time assignment in a supervisory capacity.

### Social organization

Teachers are certain that the organization of the classroom must promote an increased active participation and a reduces resistance to learning (Dillon, 1989, p. 239). Ducharme, Kluender, and Kluender (1986) addressed the question of how school environment can be enhanced so that dedicated teachers will remain in the classroom. Dillon (1989) perceived that the teacher she studied

[Appleby] had a strong commitment to student's feeling good about themselves . Teacher A indicated that in her classroom she wanted the students to work with a lot of students and have respect for one another. All three Iowa Teachers of the Year confirmed the work of Brophy and Good (1984) that students had to be actively involved. Teacher B recognized a need to add to her personal repertoire of what she was comfortable doing in the classroom. Perhaps, the one area that deserved further attention was the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust that Wiedmer (1983) had earlier documented as a characteristic of the Teachers of the Year.

#### Verbal and nonverbal actions/patterns

Some patterns of interaction within the classroom are too striking to ignore. Daniel (1983) concluded that organizational stability, instructional adaptability, and interpersonal flexibility were the factors contributing to teacher effectiveness. Dillon (1989) reinforced the concept stating that sensitivity to students and excitement about learning are clearly defined patterns in Appleby's classroom. Data from all three Teachers of the Year provide evidence that becoming a confident and knowledgeable teacher is a process that evolved over time. Teacher A expressed concern about "How to meet the needs of the diversity in your classroom?" whereas, Teacher B exhibited a genuine concern for the students who are non-conformists. The researcher observed that the Teachers of the Year were concerned about their students beyond the scope of the content being addressed in the particular lesson. For example, Teacher C in presenting the lesson discovered that one of the students appeared to be having trouble seeing the blackboard. The student said, "I may wear glasses. I mean

lenses." Teacher C responded "You probably should have them checked. Do you get headaches?" (Teacher C, Observation, #9, May, 1990).

Instructor flexibility was easily observed in the three classrooms. Teacher C gave an optional journal assignment that allowed the students to write about a soccer game that was so important to them. In the classrooms of Teacher A and Teacher B, the researcher observed a non-traditional seating arrangement as well as a commitment to the active involvement of the students. For example, in Teacher A's classroom the students were role playing, debating, generating questions and going to the front of the room to use the overhead and transparencies to facilitate their discussion. In Teacher B's classroom, the researcher observed students preparing for a test by conducting the review themselves with all students actively involved (Teacher B, Observation, #9, May, 1990). Finally, the teachers see themselves as risk-takers. Lortie (1975) had earlier written that persons drawn to education were not necessarily risk takers; thus, it may be a significant observation that Teachers of the Year see themselves as risk-takers. Teacher B indicated that it is easier to be a risk-taker after you have received the Teacher of the Year award. She observed that it was easier because, "Who's going to fire the Teacher of the Year?" (Teacher B, Interview, May, 1990).

#### Students/administrator's perceptions

Bridgewater (1983) completed an extensive review of the literature concluding that "the principal's evaluation of teachers is the mainstay of most evaluation systems" (p. 30). Yet, Wiedmer (1983) suggested that Teachers of the Year felt the need for more competent administrators. Findings in this study

document that the principal's leadership and the community's expectations are important in providing an environment for becoming an outstanding teacher.

One of the colleagues of the Teacher of the Year observed that:

Any one of twenty teachers in this building . . . in this school district itself could be a Teacher of the Year. This district makes you so [expletive] aware of what you are doing every minute that you must be good. You must not be less than what you are able to be; maybe she [the Teacher of the Year] picks up on the ethic of the place . . . I don't think we need Madeline Hunter to tell us how to teach. We need Aristotle and Socrates to tell us how to live; then we would know how to teach. (Colleague, Interview, #4, May, 1990)

Administrators and colleagues added to the researcher's understanding about the ethos of outstanding teachers by providing descriptors of the Teachers of the Year. The descriptors that surfaced were: "good work ethic," "high energy level," "chooses to use a high energy level," "inner drive," "well-rounded human being," "makes good judgments," "a caring person," "iron hand in a kid's glove," "don't cross her," "well-organized," "real strength is her personality," "loves what she's doing," "really loves to teach," "very involved," "well read in professional journals," "good listener," "not obnoxious, very pleasant," "a good person," "a decent person," and "within herself is that relentless search for the best."

### Work conditions

In the most comprehensive study done on Teachers of the Year, Wiedmer (1983) cited the principal as the key to raising teacher morale; concurrently, lack of cooperation and support from the principal was reported as contributing to low teacher morale. Other factors reported in the literature as a

concern to the teacher is the isolation factor, the average number of hours that constituted a work week, and the need to focus on classroom instruction.

(Lortie, 1975; McKay, 1987)

In this study, attention was also given to the teacher's perception of what constituted a 'good day'. Lortie (1975) reported for the Five Town teachers said a 'good day' was based on how things had gone in the classroom. Wiedmer (1983) reported for Teachers of the Year that the major satisfaction for them came from student appreciation, opportunity to influence young people and freedom and independence in their work.

Findings in this study are consistent with the literature and reaffirm that a teacher's perception of how things have gone is directly related to student achievement and student attitude. The in-depth methods of this study did provide additional insights and refinement to existing insights.

#### Major Contributions and Recommendations

Results from this study bring into question some of the variables and research that many researchers, administrators, and teachers hold for what makes one teacher more effective than another. Also, research methodology must provide quality answers to the research questions asked. A broad spectrum of procedures are necessary to address a concept as complex as teacher effectiveness. More importantly, the issue of the ethos of the outstanding teacher has largely been neglected in both theory and research.

Previous research, predominantly process-product research, had identified particular behaviors that are associated with effective teaching. These behaviors have been arranged on predetermined checklists used to assess teachers'

effectiveness. Furthermore, this study underscores Dillon's (1989) assertion that most of the dynamics of effective teaching and learning defy identification and quantification. One of those issues that lends itself to description is the ethos of the classroom teacher; however, little attention has been given to the ethos of outstanding teachers.

Therefore, this study had as its goal the understanding of the ethos of three Iowa Teachers of the Year. As indicated in the three subjects' responses and during the on-site observations, certain attitudes, values and beliefs became apparent. These attitudes, values and beliefs included a strong commitment to student success, the freedom to be risk-takers, a belief in the need for a strong support system, and a value for education that apparently is instilled in the home by the parents of the Teachers of the Year.

Role models who expected the best from their students were also important for the Teachers of the Year. Teacher A cited good high school math and science teachers as responsible for her interest in science. Teacher B credited three elementary teachers as role models. Teacher C described a high school English teacher and a freshman English teacher at the university level as role models. These teachers expected the best from the Teacher of the Year; conversely, the Teachers of the Year have high expectations not only for themselves, but for the students in their classrooms.

In fact studying the ethos of the Teachers of the Year may give us insight into a model for becoming an outstanding teacher that would have at its base developing positive relationships with students, believing in students abilities to learn, providing a learning environment based on mutual respect and trust, acknowledging the need for a formal support system for classroom teachers and

accepting life long learning as a vital component if one is to be judged outstanding.

### Recommendations for Study

Although this study of three Iowa Teachers of the Year appears to be limited in generalizability (Erickson, 1986), the study should provide a basis for future research on the ethos of outstanding teachers.

1. Outstanding teacher research should continue to focus specific attention on the role that individuals and groups play in the developmental process of becoming an outstanding teacher. Researchers should study the influences of a strong family environment as a means of nurturing individuals who are committed to excellence in the classroom. Findings from this study suggest that parents as well as strong family ties are significant influences in the teacher's expectations for themselves and ultimately for their students.

2. Researchers should further investigate the issue of support systems for teachers as a means of enhancing the profession. Coupled with this research area may be the issue of the teacher's perception that the community's expectations promote excellence in the classroom.

3. Researchers should continue to explore the issue of the active involvement of learners provided with meaningful experiences during classroom lessons as an ecological characteristic that is perceived by students, colleagues, administrators, and parents as an attribute of an outstanding teacher.

4. Researchers should examine the issue of politeness in the classroom as a means of fostering a positive learning environment.



### Summary

In conclusion, the goal of this study was to understand the ethos of three Iowa Teachers of the Year. The case study methodology allowed the researcher to have access to three very different classrooms (i.e., a sixth grade, a seventh and eighth grade, and a senior high English class). This in-depth observation offers information to researchers and practitioners on the processes involved when conducting a case study that uses different methods and techniques for gathering the data. Perhaps the most salient insight from this study is the continuing issue of isolationism that is apparent for classroom teachers as well as persons who have been honored as Teachers of the Year.

The ethos, then, of the three Iowa Teachers of the Year may be described as an antithesis of what researchers have described earlier as the ethos of the classroom teacher (i.e., conservative, individual and present-oriented). These findings will be helpful to practitioners and researchers who are interested in an in-depth and detailed description of three Iowa Teachers of the Year who were perceived effective by an outside jury [a committee appointed by the Chief State School Officer]. Further investigation directed toward exploring outstanding teachers as teachers committed to a vision of education that is based on student success is recommended. Exploring the acknowledged need for a formal support system for teachers, exploring the significance of risk-taking, examining the issue of politeness, and exploring commitment to life-long learning as keys to the ethos of Teachers of the Year will provide educators new insights into the elusive issue of what makes a superlative teacher.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my husband, Donald, and our two sons, Marc and Troy, I dedicate this study of outstanding teachers because they have made it all possible. Their own particular excellence has been patience, understanding, and love as they gave freely of their time and energy so I could pursue the study of others who had been acclaimed excellent.

When researching excellence, one becomes very aware of those individuals who have contributed to the field with his/her own educational excellence. The College of Education, Iowa State University, could have no finer mentor for excellence than my co-major professor, Dr. E. Ann Thompson. Her guidance, encouragement, and friendship are appreciated, but most of all Dr. Thompson's personal commitment to excellence in research and in teaching will always be a standard for me.

In addition, I am grateful to other members of my committee: Dean Virgil S. Lagomarcino for his willingness to challenge my thinking and for his continued faith in me; it has been an honor for me to have "The Dean" on my committee. To Dr. Theresa McCormick for encouraging me to embark on qualitative research and supporting this endeavor, to Dr. Richard Warren, my co-major professor, for his patience and ability to synthesize the data when it seemed totally unwieldy, and to Dr. William Wolansky for his careful reading and ready suggestions, I am humbly grateful. Although she was not on my committee, I feel a debt of gratitude to Dr. Donna Merkle, Assistant Professor, Elementary Education, who exemplified professionalism for me at moments when I wondered if the term had meaning anywhere.

This study could not have been completed without the willing participation of the three Iowa Teachers of the Year who opened their files, their classrooms, their personal and professional lives for my scrutiny. Without the three teachers' cooperation and complete openness this study could not have been conducted.

The three building principals and the students in the Iowa Teachers' of the Year classrooms deserve a "thank you," also, for allowing me to observe and to interview them in an attempt to gain greater insight into the essence of an outstanding teacher.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Terry Wiedmer, Bloomington, Indiana, who willingly shared her dissertation, current address files, and continued research in the area of Teachers of the Year.

Finally, in any undertaking of this scope there are so many persons who have been instrumental in my completing this project. I want to acknowledge my parents, Gene and Saxon Williams, who first believed that I could become a teacher; my sister, June Covington, and my friend, Dr. Janey Montgomery who encouraged me when I thought pursuing a doctorate was a lost cause; and that person who came into my life at the exact moment when I was struggling with "ethnography" vs. "case study" and brought meaning in more ways than she can ever realize, Dr. Kathryn Rae Petersen.

Others who have assisted in the completion of this project include: Fran Burns, Barb Dubberke, Mary Hayward, Julie Johnson, June Rhoades, Carolyn B. Tyler, and Lori Wheelock. Thank you.

APPENDIX A.

Human subject permission form

## Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects Iowa State University

(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project Iowa Teachers of the Year A Case Study

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

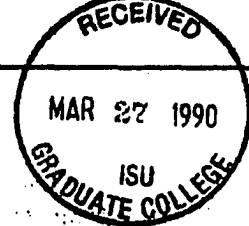
Joane W. McKay 3/22/90 Joane McKay  
 Typed Name of Principal Investigator Date Signature of Principal Investigator

Professional Studies E115 Lagomarcino Hall 294-7113  
 Department Campus Address Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of other investigators Date Relationship to Principal Investigator

Allen D. Thompson 3/26/90 Major Professor

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)  
 Faculty  Staff  Graduate Student  Undergraduate Student
5. Project (check all that apply)  
 Research  Thesis or dissertation  Class project  Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)
6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)  
3 # Adults, non-students     # ISU student     # minors under 14     other (explain)  
    # minors 14 - 17



7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

- A. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed description of the ethos of three Iowa Teachers of the Year. The study will involve collecting qualitative data on Teachers of the Year that describe the orientations, beliefs and preferences - the ethos of three outstanding teachers. Data collection methods utilized will include direct observation of each Teacher of the Year. During direct observation, the researcher will script-tape events and interaction in the classroom and will videotape classes taught by the Teacher of the Year for three days. The nature of the data collected will be descriptive and qualitative.
- B. One Teacher of the Year was selected in the State of Iowa. Because the person was selected as Teacher of the Year, he/she was selected to participate in this study. Teachers of the Year will continue with their teaching responsibilities as they are being observed.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:  Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)  
 Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)  
 Not applicable to this project.

9. **Confidentiality of Data:** Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

Assumed names will be utilized on anything written about the Teachers of the Year. No identifying codes will be used in this study. The unedited data collected will be available to the participant, but it will be strictly confidential; therefore, the superintendent, principal, and other teachers will not have access to "raw" data.

10. **What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)**

None.

11. **CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:**

- A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate  
 B. Samples (Blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects  
 C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects  
 D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects  
 E. Deception of subjects  
 F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or  Subjects 14 - 17 years of age  
 G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)  
 H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

**Items A - D** Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

**Item E** Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

**Item F** For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

**Items G & H** Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.

**Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule**

The following are attached (please check):

12.  Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
- purpose of the research
  - the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
  - an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
  - if applicable, location of the research activity
  - how you will ensure confidentiality
  - in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
  - participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject
13.  Consent form (if applicable)
14.  Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)
15.  Data-gathering instruments

## 16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

First Contact

9/89

Month / Day / Year

Last Contact

Contact is ongoing

Month / Day / Year

## 17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

Not applicable

Month / Day / Year

Upon completion of the analysis of the tapes to confirm my script-taping, the tapes will be erased.

## 18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

Date

Department or Administrative Unit

Larry H. Ebbert3/27/91Prof. Studies

## 19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

 Project Approved Project Not Approved No Action RequiredPatricia M. Keith

Name of Committee Chairperson

Date

Patricia M. Keith  
Signature of Committee Chairperson



**APPENDIX B.**

**Permission letters and consent forms**

Iowa State University *of Science and Technology* Ames, Iowa 50011



### TEACHER'S CONSENT FORM

Student Teaching Office  
College of Education  
E115 Lagomarcino Hall  
Telephone 515-294-3710  
FAX 515-294-0269

\_\_\_\_\_ I would prefer not to participate in your research study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to participate in your research study.

In consideration for appearing in a videotape of my class made by Joane McKay, College of Education at Iowa State University, I agree that:

1. I understand that I am to receive no compensation.
2. I understand that this videotape is for research purposes only.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City, State, and Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Telephone)

(This project is under the supervision of Dr. Ann Thompson, Associate Professor of Secondary Education, College of Education, Iowa State University.)

Iowa State University *of Science and Technology* Ames, Iowa 50011



### **PERMISSION FROM PARENTS**

**Student Teaching Office  
College of Education  
E115 Lagomarcino Hall  
Telephone 515-294-3710  
FAX 515-294-0269**

The College of Education at Iowa State University is cooperating with your school to research the characteristics of an outstanding teacher.

The College is asking permission to videotape classes in the school. (The principal and the teachers have been cooperating with us in this project.) A person from Iowa State will merely sit in the rear area of the classroom and operate a video camera during a class. Our experience with this technique has been quite acceptable to teachers, students, parents, and school administrators. There is virtually no disruption of normal class activities.

No one will know by name who the teacher is, who the students are, or where the tape was made. We are only interested in capturing a "window on teaching" as a substitute for live observation. A number of tapes are being made to provide a variety of settings for our research project. Taping will be conducted over a three day period.

While our request may seem rather simple, it is important that we acquire your permission, on behalf of your child. If you consent, please sign the form and return it to your child's teacher.

1. I consent to the appearance of my child in this videotape.
2. I understand that this videotape is for research purposes only.

---

(Signature)

---

(Date)

(This project is under the supervision of Dr. Ann Thompson, Associate Professor of Secondary Education, College of Education, Iowa State University.)

Iowa State University of Science and Technology Ames, Iowa 50011



Student Teaching Office  
College of Education  
E115 Lagomarcino Hall  
Telephone 515-294-3710  
FAX 515-294-0269

March 23, 1990

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We are currently involved in a study of the Iowa Teacher of the Year (TOY) recipients for \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of the study is to provide a detailed description of the ethos of three Teachers of the Year. We are writing to ask you to participate voluntarily in the study. We have consulted with your school superintendent and principal. They have agreed to let me observe you while you teach as well as collect data through audio and videotape recordings.

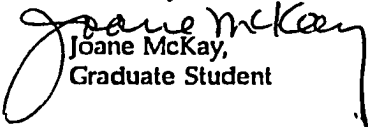
The specific procedures to be followed in this study are open-ended. The research design I have chosen is a case study. This study was predicated upon the idea that through a case study approach one could discover and describe the ethos of a group of teachers identified as Teachers of the Year.

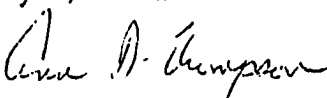
While you are teaching, I will spend time in your classroom observing your teaching style, your choices, and your interactions with students and other people in the environment. I will be videotaping your lessons from time to time, writing field notes about what I am observing, and tape recording conversations for analysis. The unedited data collected will be available to you as the participant, but it will be strictly confidential; therefore, the superintendent, principal, and other teachers will not have access to the "raw" data. I will use an assumed name for you when I write my results as part of the dissertation and/or in any further publications.

You are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the research without prejudice anytime during the research process. As the researcher, I will not interfere with your classroom teaching; however, during breaks and before and after class I will talk to students as part of the research. My focus will be on recording events as accurately as I possibly can while you are teaching.

Please consider my request for you to be part of my research study. In the event that you choose to participate, I will need to have your consent on the attached form and finalize arrangements for visiting your classroom prior to the end of the school year, 1989-90.

Sincerely,

  
Joane McKay,  
Graduate Student

  
Ann D. Thompson,  
Associate Professor  
Secondary Education

JM/AT/lb

Enclosure

Iowa State University of Science and Technology Ames, Iowa 50011



Student Teaching Office  
College of Education  
E115 Lagomarcino Hall  
Telephone 515-294-3710  
FAX 515-294-0269

March 23, 1990

Dear

This is to follow-up my recent phone call in which I inquired about using [redacted] Elementary School as a site for my research on the Teachers of the Year. My specific request involves [redacted] teacher in your school district. As I indicated on the phone, the purpose of my study is to present a detailed and comprehensive description of three teachers who have been selected as Teachers of the Year in Iowa.

The investigation is limited to the Iowa Teacher of the Year [redacted]. The three teachers in this category include: [redacted] middle school teacher, [redacted] Iowa, [redacted] Iowa Teacher of the Year; [redacted] secondary teacher, [redacted] Iowa Teacher of the Year; and [redacted] elementary teacher, [redacted] Iowa Teacher of the Year.

The case study method will involve in-depth observations over a three day period as well as a follow-up visit. The in-depth observation would include observing a formal classroom, formal and informal interviews with teachers and students, and the collection of teacher and student artifacts (e.g. lesson plans, textbooks, and assignments). In addition, the investigator will use entrance interview questions to provide a clearer understanding of the teacher's preferences, beliefs, and distinguishing attitudes.

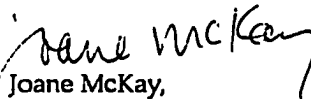
Finally, videotaped segments will be utilized as a means of confirming the observations. Audio tapes will be used in all sessions of observation and interviews. These audio tapes and videotapes are for analysis purposes only.

I am enclosing a permission slip for the teacher's use in securing the permission of the students and their parents. I am asking that the parent permission forms be returned to the child's classroom teacher.

The teacher involved in the study may be assured of complete confidentiality. The unedited data collected will be available to you as the participant, but it will be strictly confidential; therefore, the superintendent, principal, and other teachers will not have access to the "raw" data. I will use an assumed name for you when I write my results as part of the dissertation and/or in any further publications. The use of code names will be reported throughout the study; no actual names will be used for the teachers and students.

Please accept our thanks in advance for your cooperation and permission to visit your school for the purpose of conducting this research.

Sincerely,

  
Joane McKay,  
Instructor  
Secondary Education

Ann D. Thompson,  
Associate Professor  
Secondary Education

JM/AT/fb

Enclosure: Permission statements

**APPENDIX C.**

**Interview questions**



## EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Questions relating to key individuals

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the Iowa Teachers of the Year?
2. Who were the key people influencing the Teachers of the Year to become a teacher?
3. Who were the key individuals in shaping the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Teachers of the Year?
4. How would the Teachers of the Year describe the support they receive from families and colleagues?
5. How would the students of the Teachers of the Year describe their teacher?
6. What is the Teacher's of the Year perception of the community's opinion of them as a teacher?

### Questions relating to ecological characteristics of the classroom.

7. How do the Teachers of the year describe effective teaching?
8. What is the nature of the social organization in the Teachers of the Year classroom?
9. What verbal and nonverbal actions/pattern of action does the Teacher of the Year display as he/she interacts with students?
10. What do the Teachers of the Year perceive and interpret his/her actions in various contexts involving students of varying abilities.
11. How do students in the Teachers of the Year classroom and administrators of the school perceive and interpret the actions of the Teachers of the Year during lesson interactions?
12. What circumstances or conditions of their work role do the Teachers of the Year perceive as encouraging or discouraging teaching excellence?