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Students' Motivation to Learn

The Impact of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Skills on Students' Motivation to Learn

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University of Ottawa

March 17, 2010

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Canada

**The Impact of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Skills on Students' Motivation to
Learn**

Marla Spergel

M.A Thesis

Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to encourage high school graduates to voice on the impact past teachers had on their motivation to learn, and to determine if this impact has affected their post high school lives. Through a focus group strategy, 21 high school alumni participated in three separate focus groups. Participants discussed their former teachers' emotional intelligence skills that influenced their motivation to learn. On the review, teachers were identified as a major factor in a student's motivation to learn. This research was guided by Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory of Motivation* (1986) and constructs related to learning and motivation from Carl Rogers' *Humanistic Views of Personality* (1961), and from Brain Based Learning perspectives with a major focus on the area of Emotional Intelligence.

Findings revealed that the majority of participants identified teachers who most motivated them to learn and who demonstrated skills associated with emotional intelligence.

An important and disturbing finding was that some of the participants had negative experiences. Further work is recommended to expand this research in a post secondary education study to gain insight into the long-term benefits attributable to experiencing positive teachers and the negative impact teachers have on students' motivation to learn, specifically on student anxiety and learned helplessness.

Thesis Advisor: Professor Raymond LeBlanc

Committee Members: Professor Ruth Kane, Professor Cheryll Duquette

Date: March 17, 2010

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Impact of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence on Students' Motivation to Learn

I have come to a frightening conclusion.

As a teacher, I am the decisive element in the classroom.

It is my personal approach that creates the climate there.

It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyful.

I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal.

In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will escalate or de-escalate, and whether a child is humanized or de-humanized. (Ginott, 1972)

Overview

Understanding the critical issue of what impacts students' motivation to learn, has been ongoing and has led to a large body of literature which identifies many factors, such as parent involvement and extrinsic rewards. This study specifically examines the impact of one factor, teachers' emotional intelligence on students' motivation to learn. The motivation for this specific focus on the teacher as the factor in students' motivation to learn is my own personal and family experiences.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to enable high school graduates to reflect on the impact that past teachers have had on their motivation to learn, and to identify if this influence persists in their present lives. Quite often perceptions colour reality. What a teacher may believe motivates his or her students to learn may not in fact be perception of their students. As an outcome of this study, I intend to gain insight into what students

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perceive to be those teachers' emotional intelligence skills that motivate them to learn.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As Ginott (1972) so eloquently expresses, teachers should ideally have both interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills conducive to motivating students to learn. A teacher's job is to connect with each student, and to foster the passion and excitement to learn (Littky, Diaz, Dolly, Hemple, Plant, Price, Grabelle, 2004). A teacher should make a difference. A good teacher sparks a child's desire to learn: a great teacher boosts a spark and kindles a fire of possibilities that burns forever.

[When teaching a child] great care must be taken that it never be made a business to him, nor he look on it as a task....
I have always had a fancy that learning might be made a play and a recreation to children; and that they might be brought to a *desire* to be taught, if only learning were proposed to them as a thing of delight and recreation, and not a business or a task. (John Locke, 1693)

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to uncover which teacher emotional intelligence skills had an impact on participating students' motivation to learn. Wentzel and Wigfield (1998), state that teachers and students appear to differ in their opinions relating to which teacher behaviours are motivating. What a teacher believes to be a positive behaviour may not be how the students perceive it. As the old saying goes, there are always three sides to every story- yours, mine, and the truth. In fact, the side that matters most, in my opinion, is really that of the learners. If the learners' perception of the learning environment is negative, then emotionally they may feel humiliated, consequently experience anxiety, and consequently believe to be more or less motivated to learn. Such experience may negatively affect feelings towards learning, and will most

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likely result in a reduction in their motivation to learn. In other words, it is the students' perceptions that are crucial in determining which emotional intelligence skills motivate them to learn. We need to delve deeper into the students' perceptions, and then link these with positive teaching behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional skills, not the reverse.

1.3 Main Research Questions

Three main research questions guide this study which aims to determine which emotional intelligence skills students believe teachers must possess or master in order to be effective in their job as facilitators of successful learning opportunities. These are;

1. What emotional intelligence skills of teachers, do students perceive as motivating them to learn?
2. What positive emotions do students feel when they experience a teacher's positive emotional skills with respect to their motivation to learn?
3. How do these positive experiences with teachers affect students' lives today?

During the actual focus group sessions, related questions were introduced in order to uncover the stories and experiences that provided the context for understanding motivating encounters with teachers.

1.4 Rationale and Significance

The reality seems to be that a teacher possesses power over a student's well being to be able to either emotionally scar or empower a child to be motivated to learn. As well, I recognize the importance of having both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills courses (which are identified with Emotional and Social Intelligence skills) introduced to the

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curriculum or continue to be taught in order to provide teachers with the knowledge required to design and implement positive strategies.

As a university instructor of marketing for over 6 years, my focus is on the consumer and on understanding all aspects of the target consumer in order to effectively appeal to the consumer's mind. I personally observe that students benefit and appear to learn fully when teachers truly understand the whole student and then plan teaching around this understanding. Knowing a student means knowing what motivates him or her, and consequently knowing what strategies to use. A key consideration of this discourse is appreciating the effect the teacher has on the students' motivation to learn. As a member of the education field, my goal is to understand and recognize what motivates students to learn, and then recommend how teachers may be in a better position to be attuned to students' needs as learners.

My hope for the outcome of this study is that the reader will have a better understanding of Emotional Intelligence Skills. Goad and Justice (2005) indicate that there is a crucial benefit in introducing emotional intelligence courses into teacher preparation curricula to increase teacher retention and to improve learning experiences for students. One potential contribution of my study is to determine how students' emotions and perceptions agree with the EI (Emotional Intelligence) model. Previous research studies (Potter, 2005; Smith, 2004; Stottlemyre, 2002; Vela, 2003; Williams, 2004) connect emotional intelligence with academic success.

In a NACE (the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the USA) survey (2008), prospective employers identify that soft skills, better known as high emotional intelligence skills, are the most important performance dimensions currently

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being sought. When working with human beings, it is crucial to be able to relate and connect (establish a rapport) with each other. In the education field, a teacher must be able to connect with their students, in order for them [the students] to be more motivated in their endeavors. Good teachers establish connections with their students so they learn to weave a world for themselves (Palmer, 1998).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify, from students' reflective perceptions, teachers' emotional intelligence skills that impact on the students' motivation to learn. The literature review presented in this section will demonstrate that motivation and learning are reciprocally connected to the environmental influences (Richmond, 1990). I began my search on 'what motivates students to learn' specifically, how highly influenced students are by teachers using the University of Ottawa search engine as well as Google Scholar. These search engines led me to Scholars Portal, ERIC and from there to dissertation abstracts. Three major areas of literature will be highlighted (1) Student's Motivation to Learn, (2) How Self-Perceptions Impact on Motivation, (3) Teachers' Emotions -Emotional Intelligence Skills.

2.1. First Theme -Student Motivation to Learn-

Deci and Ryan (1985) identify that students entering their first year of elementary school are initially motivated to learn. They are resilient and continually attempt to master new skills, regardless of stumbling. Over time, intrinsic motivation to learn decreases and, at times, ceases to exist (Harter, 1981; Rigby, Deci, Patrick & Ryan, 1992; Pianta, 1999, Skinner & Belmont, 1993, Stipek, 1994).

Harter (1981) conceptualized that when three components of intrinsic motivation; challenge, curiosity and independent mastery were experienced, students were more likely to choose new and difficult tasks independent of their teacher. But, over time this intrinsic motivation decreases. In the book *Social Motivation: Understanding Children's School Adjustment* (Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996), Harter wrote a chapter focusing on the

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role of teachers as not only instructors but as conveyors of approval or disapproval for the child as a person. Teachers have a major impact on a students' motivation to learn.

Rigby et al (1992) agree that motivational factors that facilitate a high level of learning are tied to the perception that others- teachers- are actually interested in the students' learning process. They believe that when teachers are supportive of a student's autonomy, then this high level of learning will occur. If not the motivation to learn decreases.

Skinner & Belmont (1993) reflected that when children's learning environments exude an emotionally positive tone, children make the effort willingly to attempt a new task. But, if children are disaffected because of a teacher's emotionally negative tone, then they give up on attempting new tasks and possibly feel, anxious and depressed, and become passive. They may even become unruly towards the teacher.

Pianta's (1999) research reveals that it is possible to predict students' future success in school by grade three (1999), which certainly implies the necessity of providing young students with positive and supportive classroom relationships and learning experiences early in their education. Stipek (1984) found that students' confidence to achieve declines at the age of 6 and then recurs at the age of 12.

First Theme Summary -Student Motivation to Learn

The literature highlights the importance of the relationship with the teacher and the learning environment its impact on students' motivation to learn and that students' intrinsic motivation to learn lessens as time progresses in school (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

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2.2 Second Theme – How Self Perceptions Impact on Students' Motivation to Learn

This theme incorporates a review of three different areas of literature related to what affects students' motivation to learn: student voice, student self-perception of his or her learning environment and brain-based learning.

2.2.1 Student Voice

As the student's perception of what motivates them to learn is critical it is imperative that I examine key studies on 'student /learner's voice'. There is extensive research in this area (Angus, 2006, Arnot, McIntyre, Pedder, & Reay, 2003, Arnot & Reay, 2008, Commeyras, 1995, Cook-Sather, 2006a, b, c., Dewey, 1916, Erikson, 1987, Fielding, 2001a, b, Fielding, 2004 a, b, 2008, Mitra, 2009, Rubin and Silva 2003, Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck, J., & Flutter, J. 2004, Rubin, 2003, Silva, 2001,2003, Theissen & Cook-Sather, 2007). Dewey (1916) in Democracy and Education recognizes that actively engaging student voice is an ethical responsibility of educators.

Angus (2006) believes that it is the responsibility of the school to not merely consider in all dimensions of education not only in classroom matters for example reform education. He agrees with Fielding (2001), that this process must invoke mutual respect, where a student's voice is actually being listened to by teachers and other stakeholders, considered and acted upon when all stakeholders believe it is constructive and valid. Students will not offer their true feelings and ideas if they perceive that they are outsiders. Erikson (1987) believes that when students incur ongoing negative experiences with teachers that result in repeated failures, than the student disaffiliates himself or herself with the culture know as education.

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Arnot, McIntyre, Pedder and Reay (2003) discuss that when student voice is invited, only those who are best at articulating their thoughts and are the strongest academically are selected. Silva (2001, 2003) and Rubin (2003) criticize this process of pre-determined criteria based on the above conditions and express that it is crucial to include race, gender and social class to fully represent student voice in school reform. Arnot and Reay's (2008) research *on Consulting Students about Their Learning: Consumer Voices, Social Inequalities and Pedagogic Democratic Rights*, agree with Silva that the biggest challenge in student voice is equality for all social groups.

Cook-Sather focuses on the issue of reform in the schools. Students to want and be able to learn in inclusive settings invite students' voice. For Rudduck (2007), Director of The Consulting Pupils Project, views student voice is most successful when the students perceive themselves as valuable active participants/ members within the learning community and whose voice is respected and is used to make changes.

Many constructivists such as Commeyras (1995) argue that an inquiry approach where teachers listen to student questions, empowers students to be the centre of their learning, and, as well improves the educators teaching experience (1995). It is essential, though that the teacher ensures that the student perceives that they are being taken seriously, otherwise this approach will be ineffective in motivating the student to learn.

Fielding (2001, 2004, 2008) views students as potential radical agents of change. They are researchers involved in the transformation of the future of education and in shaping the lives of their peers. He established a framework to assess whether student voice is effectively being heard in the schools. He uses three main variables to determine this: listening, speaking, and skills (2001).

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Mitra (2009) believes that in order to improve student achievement, you need to gain the students' voice. By doing so students have the opportunity to share their views and collaborate with administrators in addressing significant problems within their schools. She also expresses that student voice initiatives do actually improve teachers' classroom practice as she had the opportunity to observe this first hand at Whitman High School. As a result of this reform, improvements were seen in student teacher relationship, student empowerment and better teacher instruction.

Rudduck and Flutter (2004), examined extensive historical as well as present research on student active involvement contributing to school reform. They found that it is the student who was most affected by school reforms therefore confirming that a student's perception is crucial in bringing change. Simply asking them what they think about school is probably one of the most effective ways of improving the learning environment.

Educational environments where teachers enable students' voice, empowers the student to feel that they are respected and are influencers in their own progression as an active learner. In turn, this has an impact on the students' motivation to learn.

2.2.2 A Students' Self-Perception

Maehr and Meyer (1997) express that the essential determinant of a student's motivation for learning is self-perception. If the environment is perceived to be negative by the student, then as Bandura's (1995) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy claims, a student's sense of self-efficacy will deteriorate and their basic needs for self-competence and self-actualization is denied. Students, who experience ongoing failure, fear the prospect of being humiliated again and thus will experience extreme anxiety and stress in

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the classroom (Ames, 1987; Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988). Unfortunately, these students often give up on new tasks, fall behind, and withdraw (Foreness & Kavale, 2001).

Research by Osher and Morrison (2003) reveal that 48% of students who experience negative teacher behaviours drop out of school between grades nine to twelve.

There is extensive research showing that students experience a wide variety of emotions in academic settings, which in turn affects their learning outcome (Mayring & von Rhoeneck, 2003, Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002, Schutz & DeCuir, 2002).

Emotion, cognition and action are fundamentally linked (Hargreaves, 2000). A student's ability to learn in class is affected by their emotional state.

There is neurophysiological evidence on how the brain regulates learning and how it is affected by emotions which in turn implies that a student's motivation to learn is determined by how students perceive their learning environment (Brannan, 1972, Gazzinangia, 1989, HeartMath, 2002, Vail, 1994, Vincent, 1990). Vincent (1990) states that when cortisol levels increase to high levels because of stressful situations, then neurons in the hippocampus, which are associated with learning and memory, can be damaged. It is this type of stress that can occur from a negative learning environment, will block a student's ability to learn (Gazzinangia, 1989). Vail (1994) writes about the 'on-off switch for learning', how positive and negative emotions affect brain functions. Positive emotions enhance learning where negative ones deplete intellectual energies (Vail, 1994). Biofeedback imaging technology, show that emotions drive attention, a key system for learning and memory, at a student's highest level (HeartMath, 2002). Brannan (1972) states that there is a strong correlation between teacher verbal abuses perceived by the student and the need for that student to adjust both academically as well as

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behaviorally, in adulthood.

Second Theme Summary –

How Self Perceptions Impact on Students' Motivation to Learn

Cocks and Watt (2001) conclude that teachers do have a role to play in nurturing high levels of students' self-perceptions of competence, and in encouraging intrinsic motivation for learning. The teacher sets the learning environment thus triggering the students' cortisol levels in the brain which directly affects students' emotions. This environment then determines whether the students learning behaviour-will be motivation to learn or not. In an interview with Education World, Dweck (2006) suggests that the most intriguing finding in all of her years of research is the importance of motivation- not only the desire for a student to achieve, but the love of learning, the love of challenge and the ability to thrive on obstacles – these were the greatest gifts to give students. Epiphany moments of intense motivation are identified by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as being in the flow, which occurs when students experience the enjoyment and intellectual stimulation about learning without the worry of failure. Students note in a study by Roeser, Midgley and Urdan, that the single most important predictor of experiencing a positive school affect occurs when students perceive a positive relationship with their teacher and a sense of belonging (1996)

2.3 Third Theme- Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Skills

Research in the field of emotional intelligence is continuously expanding and as a concept, it has evolved over the years. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso recently questioned whether emotional intelligence was a “new ability or eclectic trait” (2008, p.503). They identify that EI theories still have gaps. Their objective is to deal head-on with the more

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pop cultural definitions that they believe taint this construct. They believe that:

EI organizes a number of specific mental abilities having to do with identifying, understanding, managing, and using emotions; it is distinct from other constructs; it unifies a set of heretofore-diverse psychological processes for examination; and it makes practical, though modest, predictions about key interpersonal behaviours. (2008, p.12)

In 1990, Mayer and Salovey presented their initial framework for emotional intelligence (EI) defined as "...the *ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions*" (Salovey & Mayer, p 189, 1990). Boyd (2005) acknowledges that EI skills enable a person to understand his or her own feelings as well as others, which results in improved relationships. Although EI tends to be described in various ways, the basis of what constitutes an emotionally intelligent person tends to be consistent. Four 'branches' of mental 'abilities' which appear to be expressed by the various theorists are; perception appraisal and expression of emotion, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding and analyzing emotions; employing emotional knowledge, and reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Cobb, 2000, Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Many of the emotional skills that I describe in this paper, reflect the above description of Emotional Intelligence.

Teachers who model many of these emotional intelligent skills are characterized by intentional reflective (not reactive) behaviour, more flexibility, and assertive (not aggressive or passive) communication (Nelson, Low and Nelson, 2005). These teachers are also more optimistic and hopeful and rely on skills and positive habits (Goleman,

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1995). Sutton and Wheatley (2003) state that one must be cognizant that emotional intelligence is an essential component of a teachers' tool kit. Developing positive emotional skills is a necessity in order to remain successful in this highly emotional occupation, as sometimes it is those who are weak in this area that leave this career early (Maslach & Leiter, 1999; Tye, & O'Brien, 2002).

The American National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Standards Committee, 2006) identifies the need for teachers to exhibit human qualities, expert knowledge, and skills such as caring and nurturing as well as professional commitment. However, ironically, after reviewing admission requirements on-line (see appendix J) from many of the Canadian and American Bachelor of Education programs, teacher candidates were mostly being assessed on their grade point average, personal statement of experience, and sometimes reference letters. There were only a few universities that require an interview with applicants. It did not appear that these potential teacher candidates were pre-assessed for the very emotional skills required to excel in this profession. Dr. James Comer, who is the creator of a model of educational reform, is based on positive interrelationships impacting on student development, expresses the concern that pre-service teacher preparation only focuses on language, cognitive and physical qualities (Comer, Haynes Joyner, & Ben Avie, 2006).

Mills and Rouse's (2009) meta-analysis on whether or not there is a relationship connecting effective leadership and emotional intelligence verify, that there is a moderately strong relationship. In fact, they suggest that emotional intelligence should be included in the evaluation process for selecting school leaders because they believe that school leaders who understand their own emotional intelligence are better able to

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lead and interact with others more effectively. Murphy and Lick (2001) believe that all teachers should perform a leadership role within their classrooms, where understanding and exhibiting emotional intelligence is essential to for the teacher to be effective as a leader. At the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education conference in May 2009, Kremenitzers' paper supports the need for teacher candidates to demonstrate emotional intelligence abilities as the need for training. Many educational jurisdictions within the U.S and Canada have introduced character education into the curriculum. The goal of this initiative is to treat each other with care and respect. (Ontario Ministry of Education, Character Development Initiative, 2008) In the U.S, they recognize that essential skills such as communication, working in teams, resiliency amidst stressors in both private and working environments, are fundamental skills needed in the workforce. In fact, Brackett & Caruso (2005) have embarked on a full day educational workshop, *The Emotionally Intelligent Teacher (EIT)*. This full-day workshop "provides teachers of all grade levels with innovative strategies, tools, and techniques to increase teachers awareness of the importance of EI skills and enhances their ability to employ EI skills in their professional and personal relationships. Their goals are to "provide teachers with resources to create a safe, satisfying, caring, and productive school environment"(p.5). This is presently being offered in the U.S, but is being reviewed by a school in British Columbia. In Canada it is important that teachers embody the very same necessary characteristics that they are supposed to teach and model.

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Third Theme Summary- Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Skills

It has been identified within the research presented, those teachers' who demonstrate emotional intelligence skills have been found to be more resilient in their career and more successful in impacting a students' motivation to learn. As well, a paper presented by Kremenitzer (2009) at the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education conference supports the need for teacher candidates to demonstrate emotional intelligence abilities as the need for training. Character education has been a main focus in both Canadian and American elementary and secondary schools. These very skills must be continued to be taught or be introduced, if they are not taught to student teachers as well as working teachers.

2.4 Fourth Theme-The other side of the coin; The Negative Teacher Influences

A teacher who embarrasses or treats students unfairly often reinforces a passive aggressive behaviour or learned helplessness, where students avoid work because they anticipate failure (Seifert, 2004). This uncaring and unsupportive environment is certainly not conducive to learning, and thus becomes a developmental risk factor (Jessor et al, 1995). Kearney identified these negative teacher behaviours as 'teacher misbehaviours' and specifically identified them as offensiveness, incompetence and ethos that hinder instruction (1991). In 2002, Kearney et al, whose work focused on colleges, added incompetence to the definition of Teacher Misbehaviour Incompetence, and defined this as a group of behaviours that imply the teacher does not care about the course and/or the students. In fact, these teachers are not willing to help students succeed, and/or present poor lectures, which result in boring or confusing students (Kearney et al., 1991). This in itself is an unmotivating environment for student learning.

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Stipek (1984) recognized that students are intrinsically motivated to work when there is no significant threat of negative external evaluation by the teacher. Glasser (1990) conjectures that 'boss management' behaviour by the teacher that positions them, as a coercer of motivation, is not effective. What is required is an intrinsic motivation from the student, which comes from within. Hargreaves' (1998) findings reveal that unfortunately, the educational system employs many teachers who have difficulty in controlling their own negative emotions, which results in a stressful, threatening atmosphere that is not favorable to learning. Research findings by Stottlemyre (2002) indicate that the 'student factor' and his/her affective needs are not being included in the planning of instruction. Based on many unfortunate variables such as class time constraints and large class sizes, many teachers may be too preoccupied with the cognitive factors that may obstruct learning rather than focusing on creating a safe and nurturing environment. Such a setting does not seem to allow for the development of interpersonal relationships and thus is not conducive for the love of learning to take place.

2.4.1 Fourth Theme Summary-The other side of the coin; The Negative Teacher Influences

There is strong evidence that negative teacher behaviours can contribute to students not being motivated to learn. Another effect of this can be students' learned helplessness or passive aggressive behaviour. These teachers do not control their negative emotions and the students can and do recognize and react to this.

2.5 Literature Review Summary

Boyd's (2005) empirical research indicates that regardless of what a teacher

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believes his or her emotional intelligence skills to be, students' perceptions of those skills differ when asked. In fact, the factor that matters most, in my opinion, is the learner's perception. Some students are excellent judges of teacher behaviours, and the literature shows they respond to teacher traits by means of classroom engagement, hence I believe that it is key to this research to understand from the students' perception how teachers' emotional intelligence skills impacted students' motivation to learn.

We need to continue this trend to delve deeper into the students' perceptions, and then correlate these with what is defined as positive teaching behaviours, not the reverse. The order makes sense, for after all, it is the student who attends school to learn, and as such should enjoy primary consideration.

Researchers have identified a need for continued research about student-teacher interactions and their influence on student's motivation to learning (Mottet, Frymier, & Beebe, 2006; Nussbaum, & Friedrich, 2005; Simonds, 2001; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). There is some literature that focuses on what students want from teachers (Educational Leadership, 2008) but none specifically concentrate on a focus group discussion of high school graduates' reflecting and re-examining their relationship to perceptions about how their elementary and high school teachers' emotional intelligence skills impacted their motivation to learn.

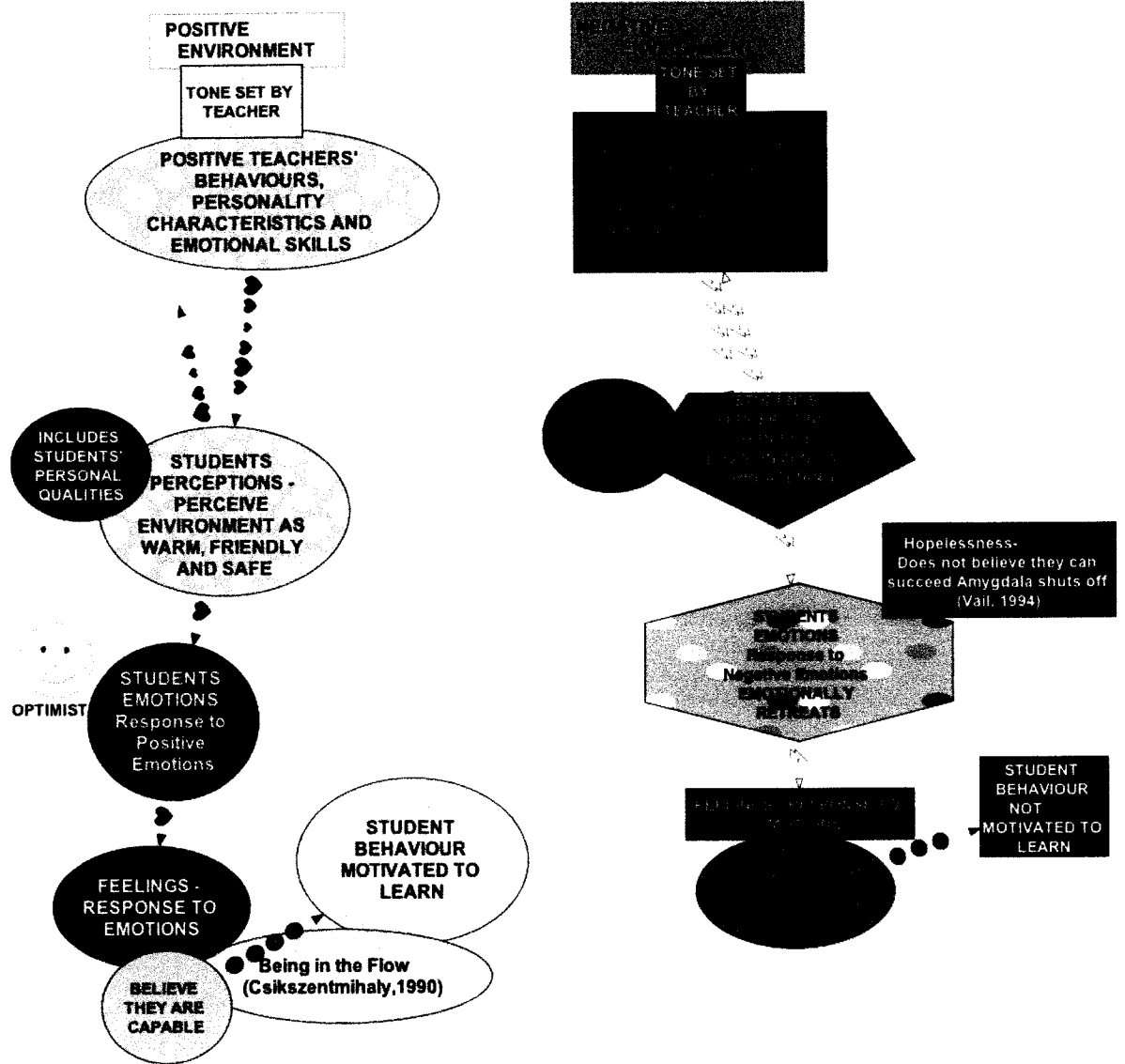
Recognizing the strong relationship between the teacher and their students' motivation to learn, it follows that the teacher has a responsibility to the students with respect to what learning environment has been provided. The teachers must remain resilient and persevere regardless of difficult situations or potential failures they might

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encounter as an educator, in order to impact positively on their students' motivation to learn (Bandura, 1995). As Eccles (2006) states in her research, it is imperative that teachers accept the responsibility of facilitating all students' motivation for learning and ensure that they prevent experiences that would demoralize students to engage in learning. As Deci and Ryan (1985) note, students' conceptual learning and creative thinking increases when learning environment conditions are created to facilitate a student's intrinsic motivation to learn.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1



2.6. Conceptual Framework

The framework in Figure 1 conceptualizes the dynamic and complex interconnectedness of how the environment- teacher’s behaviours, personality

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characteristics and emotional skills, (positive or negative) impact on the students' motivation to learn. Specifically, how the student's perceptions and their own personal qualities affect their emotions and then how they feel regarding the end result of their behaviour- motivation to learn. This interconnectedness also can affect the relationships in a loop- like experience. The more the teacher is negative, the more the student does not want to learn, and this upsets the negative teacher. Conversely, for the teacher who creates a positive environment, the positive loop emerges.

The students enter the classroom environment and the tone is set by the teacher's either positive or negative emotional intelligence skills. The students individually perceive this environment created by the teacher as either being positive or negative based on how they connect to the teacher. The students are individuals who bring their own personal qualities into the classroom. Based upon the perception and personal qualities and their beliefs, the students' emotions are affected. Does the teacher create a warm friendly, safe environment where he or she attempts to create a positive emotional relationship with his/her students? Do they (the teachers) invite students in an unconditional way, to believe they are capable and thus are motivated to want to learn and attempt new skills without the fear of humiliation and failure? Or, does the student emotionally retreat, believing they are incapable and thus feel anxious and fearful resulting in not being motivated to learn because the teacher is incompetent to connect emotionally with his/her students? I suppose that it is fair to assume that if teachers experience a student's unwillingness to learn, this would either create a circle of discontent and stress for all stakeholders in that classroom environment, or conversely where the teacher became resilient and did not give up, being determined to connect with

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this student in order to stimulate his/her motivation to learn.

2.7 Theoretical Orientation

This research was guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Motivation and constructs related to learning and motivation from Carl Rogers' Humanistic Views of Personality and from Brain Based Learning Perspectives with a major focus on the area of Emotional Intelligence.

Bandura's social cognitive theory postulates that there is a definite co-relationship between teacher and student. The teacher's personality had the ability to create a learning environment, which could motivate students to learn or hinder learning. His theoretical perspective exposes the links between the classroom environment and children's academic self-concept. Specifically, he argues that the 'belief' that students have about their capabilities in school, does, in fact, determine how they perform in school (Bandura, 1997). Because of his investigation of the link between self-concept and behaviour, Bandura, created the term 'self-efficacy', which he defines as ... "an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform a behaviour in a given situation" (1986, p.86). An individual's perception of self-efficacy, he believes, actually influences whether behaviour will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and whether behaviour will continue in the face of obstacles.

A student's self-efficacy is partly influenced by a teacher's perceived sense of self-efficacy (Pajares, 2000). Herbert, Lee, and Williamson, (1998, p.224) defines teacher efficacy as "teachers' beliefs in their ability to influence valued student outcome." It appears that a teacher who is efficacious offers students the environment to pursue mastery without the fear of humiliation.

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Carl Rogers (1951) humanistic learner-centered model is based upon establishing a teacher-student supportive relationship where learners are immersed in a safe and trusted learning environment (McCoombs, 2004) and where, according to Rogers, the teacher's primary role is to facilitate learning (1951). In "*Freedom to Learn*" Rogers (1969) states that all humans have the natural desire to learn. There are two categories of learning - cognitive and experiential. It is the positive personal experience that enables students to learn, and all learning occurs either cognitively or experientially.

Brain-based researchers identified that there exists a relationship between emotions, feelings and learning (Goleman, 2007, Kovalik and Olsen, 1998,). Emotions originate in the limbic system, (located between the brainstem and the cortex) which interprets and directs emotion and behaviour. The brainstem controls alertness and arousal and sends sensory messages to the cortex where most learning occurs.

Our feelings can "either enhance or inhibit the brain's ability to learn" (Goleman, 2007). Negative experiences conjure a reaction that causes the brain (the Amygdala) to shut off into a non-learning mode (Jolles, 2004). Student attention is detracted from the learning mode and remains preoccupied. Teachers' facial expressions and behaviours are easily open to interpretation by students', which in turn can cause a negative experience for learning (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Unfortunately, too often teachers' non-verbal cues are interpreted (or misinterpreted) by students and result in the latter's inability to focus and to learn.

Research shows that teachers who exhibit strong emotional- social intelligence skills are capable of creating an emotional tone that enables a fluid brain state for learning (Goleman, 2006). Researchers across many disciplines have connected

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emotional intelligence to academic achievement, productivity, personal health as well as leadership (Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Low, 2000; Nelson and Low, 1999, 2003, 2005; Sternberg, 1996; Weisenger, 1998;). Emotions drive learning (Nelson and Low, 2003). They actually trigger our attention, which in turn determines whether or not we focus on or remember a task or information. Thus, it is imperative that students experience positive affective experiences in order for learning to occur. Caine & Caine (2007) suggest that teachers engage learners' confidence. For example begin with what they already know and this way they are in no way threatened or feel helplessness, and consequently their brains will not register a maximum level of input.

2.8 Chapter Summary

Teaching and learning are emotional experiences. The conceptual framework will be framed with three theoretical orientations: Bandura, Rogers and Brain Based.

Bandura, through his social learning theory supports the fact there is a co-relationship between teacher and student. He links the classroom environment established by the teacher with children's self-concept, which will either impact positively or negatively on a student's motivation to learn.

Rogers looks at interpersonal relationships through his clinically based Humanistic Theory of Personality. It is based on the concept that humans have a built in mechanism that motivates them to do their very best (1961). His theory views that empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence are the 'core conditions' essential for a caring student-teacher relationship and a positive classroom environment for student motivation to learn. If there is an inconsistency, specifically, an incongruence between the students self perception and the actual negative experience that the teacher is

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exhibiting, than this would lead to confusion and tension, and result in the student not being motivated to learn.

Brain-based researchers identify that a relationship exists between emotions, feelings and learning (Goleman, 2007, Kovalik and Olsen, 1998,). Students' perceptions of their learning environment created by their teacher (their behaviours and facial expressions), will trigger the area of the brain known as the Amygdala to either turn on the brain's ability to learn or not. It has been reported that there is a connection between a teachers high level of emotional intelligence skills with a students perception of an emotionally positive learning environment, which creates a fluid brain state for learning.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the perceptions of high school graduates on teacher's emotional intelligence skills that have impacted their motivation to learn while in elementary and secondary school. This study follows a phenomenological tradition where the goal of this research is to capture the participants' experiences – their stories, in their own words, relating to how teachers' emotional intelligence skills impacted on their motivation to learn or not to learn, and analyze this narrative data.

Three main research questions guided this study of how their teachers emotionally affected their motivation to learn. Focus groups are the chosen strategy to collect the data. The learners were encouraged to explore their feelings, memories and emotions associated with their experiences. It is not the focus of this study to ascertain if a student acquires high grades. Using qualitative methods enabled me to improve my understanding of the processes related to the emotional experiences of the students, as well as the meanings they attached to their academic experiences (Perry, 2002; Pintrich, 1999; Schultz and DeCuir, 2002). As the learners reflected on and interpreted their experiences, both positive and negative, the underlying themes were identified and were then cross-referenced with the literature (Creanor, Gowan, Howells, and Trinder, 2006). Collective themes evolved from the three groups of participants.

This chapter describes the study's research methodology beginning with the rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach, followed by a description of

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research participants, and finally to describe the data collection and analysis procedure.

3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research enables the researcher to concentrate on an in-depth assessment of the phenomena. Patton (1990) explains that phenomenology is based on inquiring about experiences and its' meanings. Specifically, it involves the participant thinking deeply about the essence of his or her experience. This method investigates multifaceted questions, on the student's understanding of their motivation to learn (Huitt, W., 2006).

3.2 Recruitment of Participants

Through the on-line non-probabilistic method of snowball recruiting via Facebook the researcher initially contacted two informants, previously known to the researcher, from two separate high schools. These schools were conveniently selected specifically because of the geographic familiarity to the researcher. The informants were asked to network with other graduated alumni (via Facebook) as a means of recruiting other participants. Twenty-four graduated alumni, consisting of both males and females between the ages 18-22, were requested to participate and attend one of three different focus groups. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form prior to the discussion group sessions. Unfortunately, three withdrew at the last minute, resulting in a sample of twenty-one. All participants were Caucasian and ranged in age from 19-23 years

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

A focus group setting was used to gain the participants' experiences of the impact teachers have on their motivation to learn. Utilizing a focus group enables those whose voices are often not heard to create a social milieu of 'dialogical democracy', which

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Giddens (1994) defines as “the recognition of the authenticity of the other whose views and ideas one is prepared to listen to and debate”. (P.106) In this study, three focus groups were organized.

Focus group 1 was the largest group consisting of five females and five males. This group included one student who took time off after high school, one who is attending college and the rest are going to various universities. Focus Group 2 was composed of two males and five females who are all now attending university. The leader in this group designed a Facebook network invitation that is attached in Appendix G. Focus Group 3 had fewer participants than expected. Eight people initially made the commitment, but only five were able to attend, which included one male and 4 females. One of the participants already graduated from university and is presently employed, while the others are still in university or college. One of the female participants is now studying at McGill University to become a teacher.

In order to improve the methodological validity of this study, triangulation of data ensures that the study is dependable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The data was obtained by three separate focus groups totaling twenty-one participants. A focus group approach (Krueger, 1988) was used to help students reflect on their feelings and experiences as to what motivated them to learn during their elementary and secondary education. A focus on a teacher's emotional intelligence skills was targeted. This interactive approach aimed to construct a meaningful reality (Schnelker, 2006). I, the researcher, personally facilitated the focus groups, as I have previous experience in a marketing capacity with respect to concept testing in an advertising agency, as well as personally executing primary research for two business ventures. The focus groups enabled the researcher to

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gain participants' perceptions, thereby bringing out a diversity of views within the context of a dynamic group (Gibbs, 1997).

The initial goal was to listen to stories shared in a focus group setting, with a view to my being able to discuss their perceptions about the impact teachers had on students' motivation to learn during elementary and secondary school experience.

Prior to the focus group initial meeting, I established a personal relationship with each participant by casually conversing with him/her in a comfortable location. This was done in order to develop a level of trust with each participant, so that he/she would feel at ease in offering his/her true insights and perceptions of the issue. It was during that time the students were requested to sign their consent forms.

3.4 Instruments

3.4.1 The Movie "Freedom Writers" (2007)

The Purpose for Using the Film as an Instrument

The purpose for using this film (full length -123 minutes), was to gain immediate insight from the conversation of the group members, on how exactly these participants believed that Erin Gruwell succeeded in motivating her students. This way I was able to observe the movie together with the participants and gain a better of understanding of how they describe or identify skills of a teacher who appears to have strong emotional intelligence skills. I believed that Erin Gruwell exemplifies a teacher who proves to be successful in motivating students. She has set up the Freedom Writers Foundation, whose mission is to "promote acceptance and innovative teaching methods in classrooms across the country" (www.freedomwritersfoundation.org). One of her students explains that Erin

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Gruwell believed in him when no one did, instilling hope and belief in his own ability to learn.

Abstract of the movie

Freedom Writers is a film about the true story of Erin Gruwell, a recently graduated teacher who worked with so-called unteachable high school students, as referred to by the school administrators. They believed that these students were not capable of being successful learners. The system simply did not care. Working together with her students, Gruwell was able to overcome the negativism espoused by the school system. One day, as a result of a racist caricature of one of the African American students that floated around the class, she decided to connect the reality of Nazis Idealism. The students actually began to identify with this discrimination. Being tuned in to her students, she chose a strategy that would move them further. Gruwell introduced the book Diary of Anne Frank. The rationale behind this was to expose them to the notion that an individual can overcome this perspective. She never gave up on them and thus challenged them to write their own journals describing their own circumstances. In the movie, the real students, who described themselves as Freedom Writers, had their real life stories depicted in this film (cinematical.com, 2007).

Erin Gruwell Bio

Erin Gruwell graduated with a Masters Degree and teacher credentials from California State University in Long Beach California .She began student teaching in 1994, at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach. Her first teaching assignment was teaching the students who were ignored as they were identified as unteachable and at risk. To the surprise of the school administrators who perceived these students as future

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drop-outs, all 150 Freedom Writers graduated from high school. Some even went on to college. Her successful teaching methods and experiences were chronicled in the book *Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them* (1999). She won Teacher of the year twice as well as numerous teaching and humanitarian awards over her young lifetime. The film *Freedom Writers* (2007) was produced and was based on Erin Gruwells' journey. After her teaching career, she moved on to create The Freedom Writers Foundation whose mission is to aim to spread her method of teaching across the world. She has recently written a new book titled *Teaching Hope* (2009). Gruwells' altruism and passion for making a difference in students' lives has been the catalyst for creating the non profit organization *Tolerance Education Foundation*, of which she is the President.

Comments by viewers of the film

Emily, wrote in her blog, that “*Erin Gruwell cared about her class. Her goal was not to be successful herself, but to find success in her students. Erin took the initiative and focused on creating an environment where they could be themselves.*”

Maggie viewed the movie as “*touching and an incredible experience*”. It inspired her “*to want to help do kinds of things Ms. G did with her kids....this movie has been a life changing experience for me.*” (cinematical.com, 2007)

Sarah viewed Erin Gruwell as “*an amazing woman*”. She believed that Gruwell was “*willing to make a difference instead of just dreaming about it...she got her hands dirty and really lived the way she knew she should.*” (cinematical.com, 2007)

Students were only shown sections of the movie that did not include her husband, as those scenes only reflected their marital problems and did not offer valuable insight

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into her ability as a teacher. Participants watched approximately 45 minutes of the movie.

After this viewing the film ,students were asked the following questions.

1. What is it about the teacher, Erin Gruwell's behaviors, personality characteristics, and or emotional skills that you perceived to make the difference in motivating those students?
2. Have you ever experienced in your educational lifetime a teacher or teacher's who motivated you to learn? What did that feel like emotionally?
3. Can you be specific as to what positive behaviours, personality characteristics, and or emotional skills teacher/s exhibited when they motivated you to want to learn?
4. What does it mean for you to learn? What do you think learning involves?
5. Can you share specific stories and instances about those particular teachers who, in fact, made a positive impact on your life with respect to motivating you to learn?
6. What did those positive experiences with your teacher/s, mean to you today in your life? How does it make a difference to you at present?

3.5 Analysis and Procedure

The focus group discussions were recorded by audiotape, and these were transcribed word for word. These transcriptions were subjected to phenomenological analysis in accordance with Colaizzi's methodology (1978), which consists of six steps:

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1. The researcher examined the participants' word-for-word transcriptions gathered from the focus groups which included the students' reaction from watching the film "Freedom Writers" and discussing their interpretation of Erin Gruwell's behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional skills, as well as discussing their own experience with past teachers' ability to motivate them to learn.
2. Significant statements were extracted.
3. Meanings were formulated into themes.
4. Themes were organized
5. An exhaustive description of the phenomenon was established as a result of step #4.
6. The description was reduced to a statement of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon.

As a result of following Colaizzi's phenomenological method, statements were drawn from the in-depth descriptions by participants' lived experience and then provided themes. Based on the analysis and synthesis, I was able to formulate some conclusions and to develop practical and research-related recommendations.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study engaged in safeguards to ensure that all participants were informed of the study's purpose and that their rights were protected. A completed written consent form (Appendix F) was received from every participant to agree to voluntarily proceed in this study. The researcher made a commitment to ensure confidentiality by not divulging the names or identifiable characteristics of any participant or organization. The researcher was trustworthy and was the only one privy to any research-related records and data.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined as that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that make it noteworthy to audiences. Four criteria serve as measures of trustworthiness. Credibility, that is, the issue of the inquirer providing assurances of the fit between respondents' view of their life ways and the inquirer's reconstruction and the representation of the same. In this study I audio taped the responses of the participants, transcribed by verbatim their discourse, did a member check with the participants and charted the emergent themes, as close as possible to their voice. Transferability, that is, the issue of case-to-case transfer. I did both an intra and an inter-case analysis and linked my findings to teacher education issues. Dependability, that is, my responsibility that the process was logical, traceable and documented. In, my study I have been faithful to a rigorous and coherent method of documentation in data collection and analysis. A literature review of themes relevant to the topic of the thesis was done and a conceptual framework was done as frame of analysis. Confirmability, that is, linking assertions, findings and interpretations was done in discernable ways

3.8 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify from the learners' reflective perception, what teacher emotional intelligence skills actually impacted their motivation to learn. My reason for pursuing this research is to confirm or not that teachers do hold significant influence in making a difference in a student's motivation to learn, either in the short term or in the long term. The findings here presented are first of all significant

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statements and meanings, then categorized in five themes that will be simultaneously discussed.

This qualitative study follows a phenomenological tradition in that it explores the perceptions and meanings that students associate with how teacher's emotional intelligence skills motivates them to learn. The decision to use a snowball strategy in enlisting participants is an effective sampling method to reach this age group as this is where they gather and communicate- on Facebook. As a result of the researcher being respectful and engaging with the participants during the focus groups, students appeared to feel comfortable in recalling their past experiences in being motivated to learn. The film "Freedom Writers" was used as an instrument to set the stage for the participants' to express their perceptions of positive teacher behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional skills.

CHAPTER IV –PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify from the learners' reflective perception, teachers' emotional intelligence skills which impacted their motivation to learn. My reason behind pursuing this research is to examine that teachers do hold significant influence in making a difference in a student's motivation to learn.

4.2 Dwelling with the Data

The purpose of this section is to provide interpretative insight into findings that are gathered by reading and considering all the focus group transcripts and notes, as well as the relevant literature reviewed. The data is coded, analyzed and organized first by research question and then by themes. The study is based on the following three research questions:

1. What emotional intelligence skills of teachers, do students perceive to motivate them to learn?
2. What positive emotions do students feel when they experience their teachers' positive emotional intelligence skills with respect to their motivation to learn?
3. How do these positive experiences of students with teachers persist in affecting their lives today?

The findings presented attempt to describe what teacher emotional intelligence skills motivated students to learn. In the first step, significant statements and meanings were extracted from the responses to each of the 6 questions posed to participants of the focus groups. These were then organized into themes.

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4.3 Significant Statements

The significant statements of my participants were expressed in two ways, direct quotes from focus groups. Prior to my reformulating the data, participants approved the transcripts. The formulations reflected what they said.

Six detailed questions guided this focus group research.

4.3.1 Questions

Question#1: What is it about the teacher Erin Gruwell's behaviours, personality characteristics, and or emotional skills that you perceived to make the difference in motivating those students in the film?

After viewing sections of the movie that were directly related to Erin Gruwell's role as an educator, students were asked first to reflect on Erin Gruwell as a teacher. The participants unanimously identified behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional intelligence skills that contributed in Erin Gruwell motivating her students to want to learn. Specifically, the students stated in their own words, that they viewed her behaviour as "proactive" and characterized her personality as "hopeful"(FG3G1) and not "falling into the labeling theory"(FG3G1). The students stated that Gruwell refused to accept society's preconceived stereotypical opinion that disadvantaged students living in one of the country's most violent districts, South L.A., were not worthy of regular books and educational tools. A recurrent theme identified by the participants was that a good teacher did not pre-judge others. I interpreted this insight as Kohn's 'unconditional acceptance' (Kohn, 2005). Some students commented that teachers they had encountered actually had preconceived opinions of a student's ability based on discussions with other past teachers. One of the members of Focus Group 3 remembered a line from the film that illustrated how preconceived notions of students were unjust and unfair. Further, students

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commented that if a teacher felt it was not worthwhile to invest time in teaching, then why should students feel that it was worth their while to invest time in learning?

The participants recognized Gruwell's resiliency in order to provide her 'unteachables' the same opportunities to learn as the other students, regardless of roadblocks set up by the school's bureaucracy. In support of this, the participants described her as; "driven, goal-oriented, confident and optimistic" (FG3G2). "She wanted the students to want to learn, and needed to make sure that she achieved that" (FG3B1). "She was stubborn in a good way" (FG3G1). These descriptions fit into the theme of knowing and managing one's emotions, motivating oneself through a high sense of self efficacy/ resiliency (Ashton, & Webb, 1986).

Gruwell's acceptance of each of her students, exhibits behaviour of the category of 'confirming', which "permits people to experience their own being and significance as well as their connectedness with others" (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981, p.269). She comes across as "very calm and level-headed which provokes a lot of respect" (FG2G2), "she also laughs at herself and knows that its ok that she makes mistakes and doesn't come off as being perfect" (FG2G2). Participants believe that the south L.A students "could tell that she wanted to be there" (FG3B1).

The participants consider that "she connected with them [her students] on an individual level" (FG2B1) and express that this is "really important"(FG2B1) because it shows that she is interested in getting to know them individually.

Participants commented also that "by her wanting to be there, [this] made them [her students] want to be there and be more involved"(FG3B1). Their perception and thus interpretation of Gruwell's teaching is as being relatable and respectful, and consider

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that she is trying to appeal to her student's by "trying to understand the students' positions and then using those positions to appeal to them [her students]"(FG3G3). This is an excellent example of a teacher who exudes effective communication skills, recognizing emotions of others and handling relationships (Goleman, 1985). She is able to listen to the students, and create an atmosphere conducive to learning, and that motivated the students. Erin Gruwell's ability to avoid being intimidating enables the students to feel "welcomed instead of being scared by her"(FG2G2). By experimenting with pedagogical styles and engaging students with tools that will "catch their attention"(FG2G1), specifically, introducing the journals and using the novel by Anne Frank, she proves to be "flexible and adapted to their behaviours" (FG2G3).

In addition, she proves to be an engaging educator. The behaviours exhibited by Gruwell are identified by some of the participants as ones that encourage students to feel comfortable so that they could respond to her. "She was patient and gave them a chance to speak out so she could figure out what their problems were"(FG3B1).

Almost all of the participants recognized that a sense of trust must be established for learning to take place, and with trust comes respect, which cannot be demanded; it must be earned over time. In addition, the majority of participants identify Gruwell as being an "intuitive person who is open and didn't go into the situation pretending to know exactly what she was doing. She came in there and saw what her audience was like" (FG2G2). It becomes evident to me that students can tell when a teacher presents false praise and rewards, and they do not think highly of this.

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Summary –Focus Group Question # 1

Sharing the experience of viewing the movie *Freedom Writers*, which tells the story of a teacher who motivates her students to learn, with my participants, is an invaluable instrument to gather data. By doing so, as a researcher, I have the unique opportunity to experience, observe, understand and reformulate the students voice, their own perceptions about what emotional intelligent skills they identify in this teacher that have been used to motivate her students to learn. Students were able to describe Gruwell's behaviours, personality characteristics, and/or emotional skills that they perceive to make the difference in motivating those students in the film. Specifically, trust, respectfulness, establishing a safe learning environment, being engaging, flexible and adaptive, relatable, resilient, intuitive, empathetic, and having effective communication skills- all of which motivated the students to want to be there and learn.

Once the movie was over, the 'questions focused directly on the students' own personal experiences.

Question # 2: Have you ever experienced in your educational lifetime a teacher or teachers who motivated "you to learn"? What did that feel like emotionally?

Most participants had long term memories of experiencing a teacher who had motivated him or her to learn in their specific class, such as a teacher's improving a specific interest in an area of study or stimulating them academically, but most participants did not consider these experiences as life changing. In fact, the life changing experiences were as a result of teachers' negative behaviours. In Erin Gruwell's class, the teacher did impact lives in the long-term. In this research, a teacher's positive impact in educational experience was viewed to be short-term. However, an interesting

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phenomenon did emerge; negative emotional memories did resurface with some of the participants, which support Boyd's (2005) claims. In fact, one female participant began to cry. Ironically, the same teacher who was identified as having mentally scarred one participant in Group 3, positively motivated some of the other students in Focus Group 2. The following significant statement describes the damage to one participant.

“There's an enrichment program that is run at Carleton University that I now work at every year, but when I was in grade eight I had to apply for the program and Mr. W basically read my application letter and said it was terrible, and that I wasn't smart enough to go to the program and that he wasn't going to recommend me. I bawled my eyes out because he said it in front of all my friends too, and I was mortified” (FG3G3).

Based upon informal discussions with participants during the focus group sessions, it became apparent that some of the students in Group 3 were not as strong academically as those in Focus Group 2. This appeared to impact their motivation to learn in a particular teacher's class. Two separate groups of students perceived the same teacher differently. This situation illustrated to me that each student does bring to the classroom his or her individual background and experience. Thus, the importance of teachers gaining knowledge of their individual students, especially those who are experiencing difficulty, can enable the teacher to adapt lessons accordingly. This factor may be seen, therefore, as a catalyst for the students' motivation to learn.

In an optimistic vein, students in Focus Group 1 experienced emotions of enjoyment in class when reflecting on Mr. G:

“We discussed things. You could ask questions that applied to what you were

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learning” (FG1G1).” He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the classroom” (FG1B5) and “he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly, he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path, he would put you on the one going the right way” (FG1G2).

Participants identified Mrs. R as a teacher who was determined that her students be successful learners, which instilled a sense of hope and belief in a student's ability. She never gave up. “Then there are teachers like Mrs. R who would call home if a student skipped one class. I missed one class in a full year with her and she called my cell phone. So there are teachers like that who care...”(FG1G2). “Mrs. R was relentless for not giving up on students.” “She will drill you until you understand”(FG1G2). “If you weren't strong in a certain area she would help you. She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic performance or not”(FG1B5) “I had her for three years and I found like I could talk to her about anything and we got along really well. I found that she would give me a lot more time and that I could succeed in her class”(FG1G1).

One comment from Focus Group 2 reflects a teacher's ability to think out of the so-called box, and although successful in connecting with his students to learn, the students perceived that the school administrators thought poorly of this, and restricted his engaging style of teaching. A teacher, Mr. W is mentioned consistently in Focus Group 2. “That was Mr. W. He had a really unorthodox way of teaching and he was actually frowned upon by the board and all the parents because they didn't like his teaching styles. They actually gave him a curriculum and told him he had to follow it and he wasn't allowed to teach the way he wanted to” (FG2G2).

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Summary –Focus Group Question # 2

Students seemed to feel good when teachers believed in them and exuded positive emotions in the class. They had fond long-term memories when prompted to reflect, but none were as life changing as they were for Erin Gruwell's students.

Question # 3: Can you be specific as to what positive behaviours, personality characteristics, and/or emotional skills teacher/s exhibited when they motivated you to want to learn?

Focus Group1 participants believe that “there were a lot of teachers who you felt really comfortable talking to because they were really down to earth,” (FG1B1). I asked the student what makes a teacher someone you can relate to? A male in the group responds with “I think their personality, their character, how you connect with them, the way they judge ...” (FG1B5) or don't judge. A caring attitude was key in the students' motivation to want to learn: “I like when they ask questions about me. It shows that they care” (FG1G3).

Students appear to feel motivated to learn when they are given a second opportunity to finish an assignment, or when the teacher is flexible. The participants believe that “a lot of teachers have unrealistic expectations,”(FG1B5) and “Teachers that compromise are the best. Let's say I can't hand a paper in on time, instead I could do a make up assignment to get the grade”(FG1B4). I asked the group how they felt when a teacher gave special attention to a separate individual by giving him/her extra chances? One male responded affirmatively, and explained that when this happened to him, he felt “ like you should put an extra effort into learning and to do a good job on your report or paper”(FG1B3). This illustrates that students do recognize the emotional intelligence

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skills that some teachers exhibit to motivate students to learn. However, a few of the group members expressed a concern with making this a normal practice, and felt that “there should be a valid excuse for handing a project in late...otherwise people start taking advantage of it if there isn't a consequence”(FG1G4). Thus, students are able to differentiate between a teacher's need for compassion and his/her being an ‘easy mark’.

It is extremely important for students to feel safe, not to be humiliated when discussing what is being learned in class, so that the “class wasn't just a set”(FG1G1). This enables the students to “ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning”(FG1G1). “They [the teachers] have to be approachable and willing to help students. Somebody you can go up to if you are having problems in class. You aren't afraid to ask questions and you aren't afraid to wait after class and tell them that you didn't understand.”(FG1G1)

They [the participants] describe a particular teacher as “always smiling” (FG1B2), “having a “good sense of humor, is always in a good mood (FG1B1),” easy going” (FG1B2) and “optimistic” (FG1B3). These characteristics make the student smile back and feel better when that teacher is present in the classroom. Another student noted that this motivating teacher genuinely “wanted students to do well and he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way”(FG1G2) Some of the students expressed concern that perhaps this action did not properly prepare students for university. As was evident here, not all students are be satisfied with some specific characteristics of a caring teacher, but certainly the majority of students feel that they are motivated to learn with such a teacher, -a teacher to whom you could relate, with whom

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you feel safe and comfortable to ask questions, is optimistic and easy-going, has realistic expectations, considers the student as an individual, and is flexible with respect to second chances.

Being passionate is an essential characteristic of a teacher who motivates his/her students: "Any teacher can present a subject, but when they are passionate and excited about it you actually want to follow along and it reverberates around the room. It's a better learning experience in the long classes. It's not just sitting in a boring classroom copying down notes. Having a great teacher makes a huge difference. Having great teachers at N was crucial. The feeling of going from a boring teacher to a good teacher was so good"(FG1B1). "If the teacher does different exercises in class and gives you material that is actually interesting, you're going to want to learn more" (FG1B3).

Focus Group 2 did not identify as many positive attributes of teachers as the other two groups. They did, though, identify positive behaviours of the Erin Gruwell character and then reflected on the fact that they held those behaviours as ones that would motivate them to learn. Participants felt that teachers must have a strong knowledge of the course material, and this is imperative, especially in high school, or else "you don't respect them if you don't think they are telling you the truth and they are just reading out of a textbook, but at the same time, you don't want them to think that they are above you and they know everything and you are just students in their class who have to learn from them"(FG2G4).

Another observation made by participants is the importance of a teacher providing positive reinforcement. This skill creates a learning environment where the students feel supported. The participants state that if the teacher gives positive reinforcement, this will

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motivate them to learn as opposed to the teacher outwardly telling them what they did wrong: “they (the teacher) thinks positively about me or reflect a positive notion”(FG3G2). Positive reinforcement would be defined as giving encouraging words that were authentic and significant. Students expressed an appreciation and a sense that they were cared for by the “teachers who really challenged” (FG3G2) them to work harder, and stated that they were the teachers whom they respected to this day. When a teacher challenges his/her student, it is done with the belief that the presented material can be handled by the student, but presented in an interesting way that is more understandable by the student. It was interesting to hear a student say that if they receive a bad grade or didn't perform well in a class where a teacher showed an interest in their ability, than they believe that they would disappoint that teacher, and would, in turn, disappoint themselves. The students want to do well when they feel respected by their teacher. One female participant in Focus Group 2 highlights the positive impact of a teacher who took the time to get to know her, and explained that, in turn, this made her believe in herself more. “Mrs. Z, she kept me behind after class one day and told me that I could do better. So, she met me every single morning for about two weeks and I started to believe that if someone could make that time for you then you should be able to make it for yourself”(FG2B1).

Summary –Focus Group Question # 3

Students were consistent with their descriptions of Erin Gruwell's positive teaching behaviours, characteristics and emotional skills and their own teacher's positive behaviours, personality characteristics, and/or emotional skills that motivated them to learn.

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Question # 4: What does it mean for you to learn? What do you think learning involves?

As this study focuses on a student's motivation to learn, I felt it crucial to question the participants about what learning meant to them as individuals. The participants had a difficult time explaining their perception of learning. What came out of this discussion was that the participants expressed different views. Some believe that learners must be able to "retain and think about it (the material being taught) in their head and make sense of it and break it down ...in a way that that suits different individuals"(FG1G1)... "be able to apply things (learned) to real life" (FG2B2) in order to learn. Research by Purdy, John & Douglas (1996) which looked at students in both Australia and Japan with respect to their conceptions of learning found both students attached "understanding" with the concept of learning.

One of the participants in Focus Group 3 dwelt more on the meaningfulness of learning, specifically that it must make sense to the student. She eloquently states "Learning, I think, is making a connection between something that you don't already know and taking it in and conceptualizing it and being able to somehow relate it to something you already know" (FG1G4). This participant's comment closely parallels Piaget's (1963) definition of assimilation, which states,

"Intelligence is assimilation to the extent that it incorporates all the given data of experience within its framework...There can be no doubt either, that mental life is also accommodation to the environment. Assimilation can never be pure because by incorporating new elements into its earlier schemata the intelligence constantly modifies the latter in order to adjust them to new elements" (p. 6-7).

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An interesting reflection from a participant was that “learning has multiple factors. Of course, there is the teacher, but if you aren't psychologically in a great state, or if you don't feel comfortable in the class, your mind won't be set on taking in any information and you will feel overwhelmed and you won't be able to learn what is being taught” (FG1G4). This comment connects well with an aspect of my conceptual framework, namely, how the student's perceptions and his/her own personal qualities affect his/her emotions and, in turn, then affects how he/she feels regarding the end result of his/her behaviour as it applies to his/her motivation to learn. Research on “*Students' Conceptions of Learning, the Classroom Environment, and Approaches to Learning*” identified that strong associations exist the students' concept of learning and the approaches to learning. The implications of the findings are that the way the teacher's function and the learning environment they create affect how students conceive learning (Dart, Burnett, Purdie, Boulten-Lewis, Campbell & Smith, 2000).

Summary –Focus Group Question # 4

The participants had a difficult time identifying how they know they are learning. In fact, only one participant in group 1 responded. Some other participants expressed that it involved multiple factors, some of which include, understanding the material and how the teacher teaches. Those who participated tended to agree that the teacher is a key mediator to learning. As Marshall McLuhan stated “ The medium is the message” (Gordon, 2002) and in the classroom, that medium is the teacher.

Question# 5: Can you share specific stories and instances about those particular teachers who, in fact, made a positive impact on your life with respect to motivating you to learn?

The participants did not offer many stories of teachers who positively impacted on

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their life. The word 'impact' means, to have an effect on, but also as make a difference, causing a change in one's life. The question does not only refer to a short-term impact but also something that may be life changing. I assumed that every participant would have had at least one story to tell. However, that was not the case, perhaps because it is part of human nature to sometimes forget the mere pleasant experiences in life. Nonetheless, there were a few participants who were able to briefly describe moments when the actions of teachers enabling. A repetitive theme tended to be the teacher who was persistent in the way he/she refused to give up on the student: "I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn't going to. No teacher has ever done that"(FG3G1). Along with the persistence by a teacher to help a student to learn, was the teacher's belief in the student's capability to learn: "In mine he said that I had potential and I needed to take the time to realize it, and I didn't understand it then or the words he used, but it just felt good" (FG2G2). Thus, a teacher's belief in a student is extremely important, as it impacts on the student's confidence in his/her own ability. Another female in Focus Group 3 highlighted the collaboration of her father and his teacher to motivating her back into schoolwork, which she expressed as "very validating"(FG3G2) for her. Parent involvement was not often mentioned in the focus groups.

Summary –Focus Group Question # 5

Experiencing an impact on one's life as a result of a positive experience with a teacher was not a common response. They could recall experiences, which shows that they did remain in their memories, but did not necessarily become life changing. These

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experiences were more specific to their course experience. It was during this question that some students painfully described how teachers' negative behaviours impacted their motivation to learn and had a lifelong effect on them psychologically. Some students began crying about teachers who humiliated them to the point that it impacted some choices in their education direction and increased their personal anxiety later in their lives.

Question #6: What previous positive experiences with your teacher/s, mean to you today in your life? How had it made a difference to you presently?

Consistent throughout this research were participants' memories of appreciating their teachers' emotional intelligence skills. Based on the participants' comments, the impact did not appear to be life-changing for most, but rather a memory, a momentary influence in their lives as students within the context of their life at that time. The teacher either was successful in motivating the student to learn, or was not.

The ability to compromise and to challenge students is strongly supported by most of the participants. In addition, it is noted that optimism, an easygoing temperament, and sincerity, both as a teacher and as a person, are important characteristics for a teacher. Students recall fondly those teachers who always smiled, were enthusiastic, passionate, straightforward in expectations, and who made class fun. "I think so. We read Shakespeare with him in grade seven and a few years later I went to see the play and wanted to write a letter to him right after I saw it. He was the first person I wanted to tell that I saw that play"(FG2G3). "They made me work harder. They'd give me marks and tell me I could do better, instead of those teachers who just don't care" (FG3B2).

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Summary –Focus Group Question # 6

The purpose of this question is to discover if their positive experience holds meaning to participants. Some students expressed that they realized that they like to be challenged while others appreciate the ability to be given a second chance.

4.4 Themes Uncovered

The most often used terms used by the participants in the three focus groups to describe the emotional intelligence skills of teachers, which they believed motivated them to want to learn included being a caring person, having understanding, displaying patience, being sincere, communicating hopefulness, and acceptance, being respectful, being able to connect, be open, resilient and flexible, displaying calmness/level headedness, enthusiasm, driven, passion, engagement and knowledge, being inspiring and fun and not being judgmental. The statements and meanings attached to the perceptions and experiences of participants in the three focus groups uncover five themes that will now be discussed; a caring teacher, teacher confirmation, unconditional teaching, teachers' personal intelligence skills, and teachers negative emotions. It may appear that the aforementioned themes of Emotional Intelligence are incongruent with common understanding of EI. Research in this area has two distinct perspectives. One reflects the ability model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), which is typically assessed by intelligence type of tests. The other is the trait model (Petrides & Furnham, 2003), which is evaluated by personality type questionnaires. The actual construct overall refers to "individual differences in the perception, processing, regulation and utilization of emotional information"(Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczac & Hansenne, 2009).

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Theme 1 - A Caring Teacher

Teaching is a caring profession. Teven and McCrosky (1997) confirmed that there was an association between perceived caring and increased affective learning. Researchers such as Noddings (1995), Noblit (1995) and Wolfgramm (1995) recommended that this positive behaviour should be taught as a major requirement of teacher preparation programs. Noddings a strong proponent of the importance of a caring teacher on student motivation espouses that caring is reciprocal. She believes that it is mandatory that teachers be responsive to students' needs and feelings (2001).

A study published in 1974 by Aspy and Roebuck found that grade school teachers who measured high in empathy, congruence (psychological integrity), and positive regard produced students who had high attendance and scored better in standard tests. Freedman and Goldstein (2003) believed that it is imperative to prepare pre-service teachers about the importance of a caring teacher, as it typically enables a positive student-teacher interaction. Zembylas (2004) recognized that teachers' emotions can either "expand or limit possibilities in teaching" (p. 122). It appears that in order to experience a long-lasting successful career in education, teachers must exude specific positive behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional skills.

Students perceived teachers as being caring, when they asked questions, showed concern, were welcoming, took the time to get to know them, were sincere, thought positively about them, gave them a second chance, were willing to believe in their capabilities, ensured they understood the educational material, were approachable, were willing to listen to their problems, and who put a concerted effort into teaching

A caring teacher was a very central theme in determining whether or not a student

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was motivated to learn: "I think getting to know your students and caring for them is important"(FG1G3). "She (Erin Gruwell) genuinely and sincerely cared about her students" (FG1G3). I believe that as human beings we need to feel connected on a personal level. In the classroom this translated into a teacher actually taking the time to know the students and the mechanism of how they learn: "Ask questions about me"(FG1G3); "I like when they ask questions about me. It shows that they care" and "I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me, I'll learn" (FG3G2). One student believed that a teacher who took the time and effort to get to know him influenced him to believe that he was capable: "I think that their getting to know you makes you believe in yourself more"(FG2B1).

Caring did not only imply empathy or compassion, but actually involved a teacher exhibiting behaviour that demonstrated to students that they believed in them enough to challenge them: "Teachers who really challenged me... made me work harder"(FG3G2)"She doesn't give up at all. She will drill you until you understand"(FG1G2) and finally, "For example, in math class, I was horrible. One time in math class with Mrs. Z, she kept me behind after class one day, and told me that I could do better. So, she met me every single morning for about two weeks and I started to believe that if someone could make that time for you, then you should be able to make it for yourself" (FG2B1).

Theme 2-Teacher Confirmation

Another theme contributing to learning motivation is 'teacher confirmation'. This occurs when the teacher actively acknowledges a student's existence, recognizes a relationship with them, openly accepts the worth of the student as an individual, and is

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supportive of the student's self-experience (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981). When the student senses this, they know that the teacher is approachable. Another theme contributing to learning motivation is that "They really took the time to get to know you"(FG2B1). "Somebody you can go up to if you are having problems in class. You aren't afraid to ask questions and you aren't afraid to wait after class and tell them that you didn't understand"(FG1G1). Part of being always there for them was the teacher's ability to listen calmly and with interest, without having the student feel like he/she was wasting your time: "Really patient. She gave them a chance to speak out so she could figure out what their problems were"(FG3B1). When a teacher was approachable, students felt comfortable enough to ask questions: "There were a lot of teachers who you felt really comfortable talking to"(FG1B1).

The ability of a teacher to allow him or herself to be seen as a human being with imperfections, enabled students to experience an interpersonal connection as a person. Ellis (2000) identified this teacher behaviour as a process where educators communicate with their students that they are valuable and significant. Participants in this study defined these confirming characteristics as the teacher being able to, "be really down to earth, calm, genuine, and personable, able to have a conversation beyond the academic realm and is open to talk about them" (Combination from focus groups). Goodboy and Myers (2008) research reinforced the importance of the impact of effective teacher confirmation behaviours on learning, and advised that instructors should not only "consider whether their classroom behaviours are confirming, but should implement and utilize the technique of teacher confirmation behaviours in their classrooms"(p.174).

When teachers felt comfortable enough with themselves to demonstrate

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confirming behaviour, students connected with them. The participants connected, both from their interpretation of the document about Erin Gruwell as well as their own experiences with teachers and students: "Be able to have conversation with them sometimes. They are willing to talk about normal things" "Really down to earth. Personable"(FG1G1). "Easy going"(FG1B2). These teachers were transparent in terms of revealing their true selves to the students. They were upbeat and open. "He has a great sense of humor. He is always in a good mood"(FG1B1). They radiate an "openness." "She [Erin Gruwell] didn't go into the situation pretending to know exactly what she was doing"(FG2G2)"She came in there and saw what her audience was like"(FG2G2). "Very calm and level headed. She never loses her cool with them, which provokes a lot of respect. It seems like it would be really easy to lose your cool with them"(FG2G2)."She also laughs at herself. It's okay that she makes mistakes and doesn't come off as being perfect"(FG2G2). These teachers wanted to get to know their students, and this was evident to the students: "Genuinely wants to be there"(FG2G1); "Wanted to connect with people"(FG2G1); "Connected with them on an individual level"(FG2B1).

Theme 3-Unconditional Teaching

The third theme, unconditional teaching is a term coined by Kohn (2005, p.8). Even when taking risks, students express the need to feel safe even when taking risks without the consequence of experiencing humiliation. This type of teaching occurs when teachers do not pre-judge students. Within this atmosphere, students believe teachers who motivate them to learn "don't judge them, give them respect and think positively about them"(FG1B4). The teachers create an environment conducive to learning: "If you don't feel comfortable in the class, your mind won't be set on taking in any information and

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you will feel overwhelmed and you won't be able to learn what is being taught"(FG1G4). Research results gained from Watson's (2003) book *Learning to Trust*, a case study of an inner city classroom, highlights that importance of "the foundation of the community of partners which is based upon a solid trusting student-teacher relationship"(p. 30). Reflecting on the Gruwell persona, the focus groups believed her behaviour created an ideal learning environment, regardless of any pre-judgments made by the administration: "She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic performance or not"(FG1B5).

Students did not want to be prejudged, especially when it pertained to their relationship with their successful older siblings:

"In high school, some teachers chose who was going to do well and who wasn't going to do well. It felt like teachers would talk about you whether or not you did well in their classes"(FG1B1). "If you had siblings and they were smart, then you were expected to be that way"(FG1G1). "Or, it's the reverse. If teachers held high expectations about a certain student, it wasn't necessarily a good thing"(FG1G2), because, "they would give you a good mark when they shouldn't"(FG1B1). "People who did well generally did well throughout their courses if they had a great academic reputation amongst the teachers"(FG1G2).

Theme 4- Personal Intelligence Skills

Effective teachers display strong communication skills, recognize the emotions of others, handle relationships well and attempt to understand their students in order to connect with them (Goleman, 1985). In addition, they are self-aware in terms of how their emotions can affect others.

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Students identified teachers who exhibited good communication skills as being able to relate and connect with them, specifically with respect to the content taught and the interpersonal relationships being developed. They believed that these teachers listened, and were trying to understand the student's position. Passion, enthusiasm and the ability to be flexible, were also apparent in such a classroom. "Flexibility and adaptability are so important too. They have to realize that every student is different and you have to be able to treat them all fairly"(FG3G4). "Any teacher can present a subject, but when they are passionate and excited about it you actually want to follow along and it reverberates around the room" (FG1B1). Goleman (1998) in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence* stated that at "Xerox Corporation, John Seeley Brown, also known for his work in using technology to facilitate communities of learning, hired only people who had well grounded intuitions and had a **passion** for making an impact "(p. 45)

They [the participants] expressed that it was critical to have a good teacher in order to feel motivated to learn. "Having a great teacher makes a huge difference and was crucial. The feeling of going from a boring teacher to a good teacher was so good" (FG1B1).

They found that when teachers would present the course material in an engaging way, it was more enjoyable and interesting:

We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things. You could ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning. He talks about courses that are really interesting and that relate to everyday life. I was never interested in English. I took politics with Mr. G and it related to the world.

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They would have to really like what they are doing and be excited to show you new ways and easier ways to do things (FG1G2).

When the participants viewed the movie *Freedom Writers*, they felt that Ms. Gruwell “saw where they [the students] came from and used their background in order to relate to them. This way she was able to connect with them”(FG2G2).

Knowing and managing one's emotions, (Ashton, & Webb, 1986; Goleman, 1995) is essential in order to motivate others. When teachers know to leave their problems and stress out of the classroom, they are less likely to exhibit negative emotions and thus are able to increase a student's motivation to learn.

Successful teachers are often self-motivated and display a high sense of self-efficacy/ resiliency, which is an essential skill in order for them to be willing to persevere, regardless of roadblocks. The students were inspired by Erin Gruwell's perseverance with so-called 'unteachable' at-risk students. She did not exhibit negative emotions such as anger or frustration and thus did not give up. In this way the participants viewed her behaviour as “resilient”, believing that “she doesn't give up at all”(FG1G2). “She wanted to be proactive and she was hopeful”(FG3G1). They found her to be “extremely dedicated” (FG2G2).

They believed through her high sense of self-efficacy, she “really saw where they [the students] came from and used their backgrounds to teach them”(FG2G2), which they believed enabled her to “really... connect with them”(FG2G2). The participants viewed her as resilient and goal-driven, when she would not back down from what she believed was the right thing to do, and was flexible enough to use tools that she identified as better to be “able to relate to them on their level”(FG2G4). One of the participants pointed out

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the opinion of the Vice Principal who prejudged these difficult students: "...Why would they waste their time trying to learn? They know that we are wasting our time trying to teach them" (*Freedom Writers*). This contrasted with Gruwells's perspective on her students. "Her commitment to make a difference was inspiring. So she kind of made that statement be completely opposite and put all of her effort into it. She made it her life and so by her putting all of these expectations on them, they felt like they needed to reciprocate and try..." (FG3G1).

Theme 5- Negative Emotions as an Emergent Theme

Interestingly, some participants displayed negative emotions. One student in fact, began to cry.

I cried. This is a really embarrassing story, but I got my period in class and I was really embarrassed about it. So when I got back to class, I sat in the back and my teacher asked me to come pick up a paper from the front of the class. I really didn't want to get up so he put it on the ground and told me to come pick it up. So I asked someone in the front to pass it back to me and they did and he just screamed at me telling me I disrespected him and that I had to stay after class. So I stayed and just started bawling and he told me I disrespected him. So I pretty much called him an asshole after I told him what had happened. After that I did not like him. He would be really nice one day and he would come in another day and just be a complete jerk. You never knew what to expect with him (FG1G1).

If as a result of external negative pressures from a teacher, the student experienced negative emotions, then the motivation to learn in that class most likely would decrease. Students felt that "A lot of teachers have unrealistic expectations" (FG1B5), while others

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do not consider their students' abilities and backgrounds. Frustration from one boy in Group 1 was evident when he asked his fellow participants, "Did anyone ever try to ask Ms. M a question? She barely listened" (FG1B2), and boy 2 replied with: "You would barely get a response. It would stress you out and the rest of the classroom"(FG1B1). As a result, the negative emotions expressed were painful. Students felt "embarrassed, stupid, not appreciated"(FG1B5, FG1B4, FG1G4).

Another young man had a negative experience that impacted on his career aspirations in finance:

In C's commerce program you don't have to declare a major until second year. So, I was in limbo and didn't know which course I wanted to focus on and I thought finance may have been a good way to go, and the teacher I had just completely ruined it for me. He wouldn't get to know anyone. He would have an attendance list and pick a name at and if you didn't get an answer right you would have to sit there until you got it. The whole class would watch and he would watch. It was really embarrassing. It tarnished my view of finance (FG2B1).

It is possible that this particular student perhaps was not suited for finance and the teacher's behaviour exacerbated the poor fit. However, based on the repetitive nature of this teacher's behavior with all student interactions, it is unlikely that it was the student's capability to succeed in finance that was the real issue.

Unfortunately, the impact could be long term and life changing. There have been many adults who mention past incidences of verbal abuse by the teacher as the most overwhelming negative experience in their lives (Brannan, 1972). In a long-term study that spanned 17 years, students who experienced verbal abuse by teachers during

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childhood encountered ongoing educational problems. Specifically, these students experienced behavioural problems as well as a higher probability of dropping out of high school (Brendgen, Bukowski, Tremblay, Wanner & Vitaro, 2007). A study published in 2006 in the *Pediatrics in Review*, indicated that verbal abuse by the teacher is a highly stable phenomenon for at-risk children (Brendgen, Wanner & Vitaro, 2006). These teachers consider such students as threats. As a result, their hostility perpetuates a cycle of negative interactions. Another disturbing fact was that 15% of children were at high risk of verbal abuse by their kindergarten teachers as well their teachers throughout elementary school and beyond. It appears that both males and children with both attention and antisocial behaviour problems were also at risk from a of teacher's negative emotions.

Interestingly, the findings from Brendgen et al. (2006) study implied that students who were identified as well adjusted (it is not certain what criteria were used to decide this), were not typically singled out as targets of a teacher's verbal abuse (Brendgen, Wanner and Vitaro, 2006). The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (1995) has reported some success on changing teacher behaviour with respect to the improving quality of teacher-child relationships.

Based on the results of these focus groups, it became apparent that students intuitively knew what to expect when it came to a teacher's personality characteristics, as well as to teachers' negative behaviours. They recognized when a teacher did not love to teach. "If they don't want to be there, then why should I be there? Why should I put in any effort if they aren't putting in any effort to teach me? With this one teacher in high school, Madame M, you could tell she just didn't want to be there. She just sort of looked

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like, why am I doing this? It felt like she resented us. She never put the effort into wanting to make us learn”(FG2G1). One student, who as a matter of course asked help from his teacher in order to improve his ability, was turned down.

I had an opposite experience with a teacher who didn't really care even though I really wanted to do well. I kept going to him to try to get help but he just seemed to think that I was a lost cause and my marks in my other courses were pretty high so my parents got worried. I ended up having to get a tutor because I needed the help and he wouldn't help me at all (FG2G1).

This particular student was not motivated to learn in the classroom by his teacher, but was committed to be a successful learner and thus reached outside the classroom to gain the support. Other students depending on their own emotional reactions might have just given up.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the researcher with interpretative emotional insights from the participants/students/learners, by analyzing three focus group conversations, transcripts and notes as well as relevant literature. Statements were drawn from the descriptions supplied by participants who lived the experience as a student/learner. Data gathered included using the movie *Freedom Writers* as a research instrument. The decision to use this enabled me to gain real-time insight from participants' comments on, and interpretations of Erin Gruwell's actions in the film. In real life, she exemplified a teacher who was successful in motivating students pre-judged by the school administrators as being unteachable, to be excited to learn.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand from the students'

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perspective, what teacher behaviours, personality characteristics and emotional skills actually had an impact on their motivation to learn. Data from three different focus groups were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. As a result, the phenomenon of student motivation to learn became clear as it relates to the impact that a teacher plays in this equation. Specifically, a teacher holds a powerful position as to whether a student is motivated to learn. In fact, the negative emotional behaviour of a teacher can have a long-term impact on a student's academic as well as personal life.

After reviewing the literature and the findings, it became clearer to me that when a student learns with a: *caring, understanding, patient, sincere, hopeful, positive, accepting, respectful, connected, open, resilient, flexible, calm/level headed, enthusiastic, driven, passionate, engaging, knowledgeable, inspiring, fun and not judgmental teacher*, the student will be motivated to learn.

Negative teacher behaviours' as they impact motivation, have been infrequently studied (Anderson, Gumus & Edmonds, 2005). When I began this study, I was not so sure that students could be negatively affected by a teacher's unsatisfactory behaviour. I was caught up in the belief that a good teacher could motivate a student to learn without considering the other side of the issue, namely, that a teacher could negatively impact on a student so as to deter, or even discourage the joy of learning. Ironically, the positive long-lasting experiences expressed in the focus groups, were far and few between. Most stories of teachers' behaviours towards students produce a short-term effect on motivation. While this sample was small, negative experiences recounted did have a long-lasting impact. The narration of these poignant events became the catalyst for adding an extra theme to the document- *Negative Emotions as an Emergent*. Simply put,

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negative experiences resulted in an emotional upheaval for students, and affected them long term. It not only impacted on their ability to learn academically but hit at the core of their emotional and social wellbeing.

It may seem unclear that that the themes identified in this paper, do not appear to be congruent with the basic abilities of EI skills as introduced in this report. But, in fact they are. Evidence of this comes from a program that two well-known EI researchers, Brackett & Caruso (2005), who have designed an educational workshop whose goals are to “provide teachers with resources to create a safe, satisfying, caring, and productive school environment”(p.5).

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

5.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

The findings of this study underline the importance of understanding student perceptions of teacher emotional intelligence skills that boosted their motivation to learn. It became evident that an individual's perception with respect to their academic capability, (such concerns as whether they are gifted or "learning disabled", impacted how they viewed their own personal well-being. In other words, the students' perceptions of their academic environment as personified by teachers, are addressed here. Responses to all questions posed by this study as to whether students are motivated to learn, were analyzed with a view to gaining insight into the student's perceptions of teachers:

1. What emotional intelligence skills of teachers, do students perceive as motivating them to learn?
2. What positive emotions do students feel when they experience a teacher's positive emotional skills with respect to their motivation to learn?
3. How do these positive experiences with teachers affect students' lives today?

A case in point occurred when student Sample Groups 2 and 3 both experienced the same teacher, Mr. W, yet disagreed about their perceptions of his ability to motivate them to learn. Group 2 appeared to be stronger academically-indeed some, in my opinion, seemed to be gifted and this group viewed Mr. W favourably. Specifically, they identified him as someone who positively motivated them to want to learn. However, in Group 3, some of the students who had mentioned they had learning

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difficulties, experienced negative learning encounters with the same Mr.W. He did not appear to be a teacher who took the time to understand his students as individuals, and thus was unable or unwilling to revise his pedagogical style to respond to their different learning backgrounds. The perceptions of these participants were that he consistently taught the same way regardless of the differences in his students. This behaviour is consistent with the findings of Brendgen et al. study (2006). There are some teachers who identify some students as being 'at risk' and consider them as threats [to the teacher]. As a result, teachers behave hostilely to such students, and hence the cycle of negative interactions is continuous.

The most often-used terms by the participants in the three focus groups to qualify emotional intelligence skills, were *caring, understanding, patience, sincerity, hopefulness, being positive, accepting, respectfulness, connectedness, open-mindedness, resilience, flexibility, calm/level-headedness, enthusiastic, driven, passionate, engaging, knowledgeable, inspirational, fun and non-judgmental*. These words typically describe a person who exhibits high emotional intelligence. When students connected emotionally with such a positive teacher, they felt a sense of hope. They felt confident and optimistic enough to attempt mastering any challenge because they perceived that their learning environment is comfortable, safe and accepting. In other words, they felt motivated to want to learn.

Despite the small sample of 21 graduated students, there is evidence having a special teacher deeply affected their motivation to learn in the short term. The students claim that the impact was not long-term; although it is possible that many teachers who have a strong sense of emotional intelligence may have touched and changed many

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students' lives. With respect to this study, what stood out were the negative pressures on motivation. School and learning should be pleasant, safe and enjoyable, whereas excruciatingly painful and repeated humiliation cannot provide the safe learning environment in which students flourish.

5.2 Contributions and Implications for Future Research

Participants expressed appreciation for the actions and behaviours of their teachers that motivated them to learn. Most were characteristic of abilities and skills of emotional intelligence. Where a teacher affected the students' desire to learn in a positive way, the positive effect was usually memorable and effective in motivating students to learn during the school course. But did not appear to be life changing. However, these experiences were not reported as life changing. Nevertheless there are examples of life – changing encounters influenced by teachers such as those exemplified by Erin Gruwell in her role as a teacher. Unfortunately, what this study seems to indicate is that the experiences that seemed to have the most life long impact were those involving negative emotions and negative behaviours, which in turn resulted in a decrease in motivation to learn. (Brannan, 1972, Brendgen, et al. 2007). Bandura postulates that the co-relationship between the teacher and the student in this negative situation creates a classroom environment that hinders learning. This affects the students' belief on their ability to learn in that class (Bandura, 1997)

Participants were in full agreement that a teacher was the major influence in their motivation to learn. Rogers (1951) confirms that when a teacher- student supported relationship is created in a safe and trusted environment, a student is more likely to be motivated to learn. Before beginning this research, I also believed that the teacher was an

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important figure in the motivation to learn, but was uncertain about the mechanism. The data showed that in fact, it is the ability of a teacher to be highly skilled in the area of emotional intelligence (which includes a myriad of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that constitute emotional intelligence) that creates a safe learning environment and enables the teacher to connect with their students thus motivating them to learn.

We cannot overlook the role of an individual's perception or worldwide view on educational direction and behaviour. A student's perception affects both how a teacher is perceived, as well as how well that teacher is able to connect effectively with the student. Perhaps some teachers are better suited to teach older students, or more academically gifted students, such as Mr. W, while others are more skillful to teach younger or at risk students.

With respect to recruiting new teachers and reviewing current teachers, Cooks-Sather (2007) believes that a part of the hiring process should highlight those candidates "who have experienced some form of active student involvement in their preparation. We would have teachers creating a learning environment that was perceived to be positive by students, who would then feel confident and safe to be motivated to learn. By making such experiences an explicitly desirable quality in an applicant, more such projects might emerge within the contexts of teacher preparation programs" (p.358).

The relationship between the teacher and his/her students is of primary importance for ensuring that a positive learning experience will occur. I believe that my research reinforced this need for a positive emotional connection between the teacher and student. Without it, the student remains simply an impersonal entity, hardly worthy of

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teaching. Once the teacher understands who their students are, and employs positive skills, then the student will more likely be motivated to learn.

I believe that in order for effective learning to occur, both the teacher and the student need to grow and develop, and it is the emotional intelligence skills of the teacher that are critical, if learning is to be a positive experience.

An overview of this study strongly indicates that students are able to identify the characteristics of a teacher who is able to motivate students to learn. In fact, the students' answers to the questions I asked in this study matched most of what the empirical research and learning theories predicted. They were able to recognize that such a teacher must be knowledgeable in the subject matter. But, knowledge is not enough- a teacher must create an environment which is inviting, one which is safe and friendly. A caring and dedicated teacher may gain his/her students' trust and respect- both of which are recognized as being important for learning. With this environment in place, a teacher can, with passion for not only the subject matter, but also for the students, motivate them to learn. But to learn what? As the participants recognized, they are eager to learn not only about themselves, but also to learn the skills necessary to understand about the world, to push themselves to be the best that they can be, both today and in the future. The participants in these focus groups were unanimous in their ability to recognize these emotional intelligence skills.

This study recognizes the need for continuing and possibly increasing the development of our teachers' emotional intelligence. One possible result of my study will be to determine how students' perceptions agree with the EI (Emotional Intelligence) model.

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I hope that my research will influence both future teachers and experienced teachers. Specifically, I hope that it will strengthen the need to stress the importance of ensuring that the selection processes of teacher candidates include a measure of emotional intelligence skills and that emotional intelligence skills courses continue to be as part of the Bachelor of Education curriculum. As for teachers who are now in the educational system, re-education of those who do not possess a high level of emotional intelligence skills identified in this study may be necessary because they are important prerequisites for motivating a student to learn. There may also be a need for upgrading or developing courses that will enhance or introduce emotional intelligence skills into the Bachelor of Education Curriculum. Finally, with respect to assessing new Bachelor of Education applicants, I would recommend that the use of an incremental EI assessment tool be warranted, to measure whether the future applicant, does in fact, exhibit strong emotional intelligence skills. Teachers are leaders of education in the classroom, and it follows that there is a need that these skills be demonstrated. The present Ontario Ministry of Education certainly stresses the importance of students gaining these skills in school through the Character Education Initiative:

Ontario's Character Development Initiative emphasizes the importance of equitable and inclusive schools in which all students are welcomed and respected, feel a sense of belonging, and are inspired to achieve to the best of their ability. Our focus on reaching every student requires high expectations for all students in learning, academic achievement and citizenship and character development.

(Ontario Ministry of Education, p.4, 2008)

As the Ministry specified that; "*Ontario teachers and all education workers play a pivotal role in the success of character development in our schools*", I cannot see why the very educator who is to espouse this knowledge should not be skillful in developing

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the same. I believe that this should be the responsibility of the Provincial Ministries of Education, as well as the governing bodies within the College of Teachers.

Marc Brackett, Associate Director, Health, Emotions & Behaviour Laboratory Department of Psychology, Yale University, was in communication with me regarding educating teachers on the subject of Emotional Intelligence. At present (see appendix E) he has been involved in a program, titled "Emotionally Intelligent Schools" <http://www.ei-schools.com/eischools/myweb.php?hls=10061>. The objective is "to create caring, productive, and engaging learning environments so that all stakeholders in the educational community can thrive at school, at home, and in the community" (Brackett, 2008). I had asked him if he is working with any Bachelor of Education Programs and he informed me that UBC is examining the issue, and that some schools are using SEL (social and emotional learning) frameworks, but that very few are actually using EI assessments.

With regards to future research, I feel that the following four areas should be investigated:

1. Further research should be pursued regarding the issue of the negative impact that teachers can have on students' motivation to learn, focusing specifically on student anxiety and learning helplessness.
2. An in depth study of model teachers who have been renowned for their motivational life stories.
3. An Investigation into the relationship between teachers with negative emotions and student dropout or disinterest in learning.
4. An expansion of this research to include students' experience in post-

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secondary education with respect to the impact of the emotional intelligence skills of university and college faculty on students' motivation to learn.

CHAPTER VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A more in-depth and longitudinal study would have been the ideal strategy, as positive life-long memories were not abundant. A second limitation was the memory factor in the sense that it was a reconstruction of these experiences that were not necessarily fresh in the minds of some of the participants. Third, it was difficult to measure the impact, if any, of having viewed the film on their recollections. Another limitation to the validity of results was the absence of prior gathering historical information about the participants such as gaining knowledge about any learning disabilities, drug problems, family trauma or school drop-out, as these variables could have influenced their perceptions and/or their interpretations.

All participants were Caucasian and most attended post secondary institutions, which is a very different group of students than those in the film. These students may have had strong support from their parents.

Students were supplied notebooks to record their thoughts during the film, but not all participants bothered to keep such notes, which was unfortunate as such records could have been helpful.

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Appendix A

Analysis of Participants By Focus Group - - Demographics

Below is a table breaking down the demographics of the focus group participants.

I felt it important to supply some semblance of who these participants are as it may have reflected on how they responded to the questions.

Focus Group	Age s 19- 23	F	M	Caucasian	Presently attending University	Presently attending College	Graduated University College	Took time off after High School
Group 3								
Girl #1	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #2	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #3	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #4	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Boy #1	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Group 2								
Boy #1	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Boy #2	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Girl #1	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #2	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #3	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #4	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl #5	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Group 1								
Boy#1	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Boy#2	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Boy#3	✓		✓	✓				✓
Boy#4	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Boy#5	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Girl# 1	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl# 2	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl# 3	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl# 4	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Girl# 5	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Totals	22	14	8	22	19	1	1	1

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Appendix B

Direct Verbatim Responses by Focus Group

FG1B1 Focus Group 1 Boy 1	FG1G1 Focus Group 1 Girl 1	FG3B1 Focus Group 3 Boy 1
FG1B2 Focus Group 1 Boy 2	FG1G2 Focus Group 1 Girl 2	FG3G1 Focus Group 3 Girl 1
FG1B3 Focus Group 1 Boy 3	FG1G3 Focus Group 1 Girl 3	FG3G2 Focus Group 3 Girl 2
FG1B4 Focus Group 1 Boy 4	FG1G4 Focus Group 1 Girl 4	FG3G3 Focus Group 3 Girl 3
FG1B5 Focus Group 1 Boy 5	FG1G5 Focus Group 1 Girl 5	FG3G3 Focus Group 3 Girl 4

Legend ID Codes

FG2B1 Focus Group 2 Boy 1	FG2G1 Focus Group 1 Girl 1
FG2B2 Focus Group 2 Boy 2	FG2G2 Focus Group 1 Girl 2
	FG2G3 Focus Group 1 Girl 3
	FG2G4 Focus Group 1 Girl 4
	FG2G5 Focus Group 1 Girl 5

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Appendix C

Participant Responses to Questions

Question 1-

What is it about the teacher, Erin Gruwell's personality characteristics, behaviors, emotional intelligence skills, which you perceive made the difference in motivating her students?

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1B1 "Relate them to their learning subject"</p> <p>FG1G1 "She was trying to teach them in a different way than any else had. It allowed them to be involved"</p> <p>FG1G2 "I think she was trying to unify them"</p>	<p>FG2G1 "I think her desire to teach and the fact that she wanted to connect with people is good. She's not there just to get paid to do it; she genuinely wants to be there"</p> <p>FG2G2 "I also think she understood that she needed to gain respect from them. She knew she wasn't just going to be given it at the beginning. So with the journals for instance, it took a while for her to introduce the journals and then they all allowed her to read them. This obviously came with the fact that they respected her."</p> <p>FG2G3 "She just didn't demand it from them. She wasn't like, "I'm your teacher you have to respect me." She let them take the time to gain her trust."</p>	<p>FG3G1 "It felt like she was proactive, she wanted to be proactive and she was hopeful. She didn't fall into the labeling theory and she made her own opinions of people and didn't base it on other peoples"</p> <p>FG3G1 "She was stubborn but in a good way."</p> <p>FG3B1 "She was very goal oriented. She wanted the students to want to learn. She wanted to teach them, She needed to make sure that she achieved that"</p> <p>FG3B1: "Yes they could tell that she wanted to be there. So by her wanting to be there made them want to be there more and to be more involved."</p> <p>FG3G1: "She made it her life and so by her putting all of these expectations on</p>

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	<p>FG2G2 “extremely dedicated”</p> <p>FG2B1 “I think she connected with them on an individual level and that was really important because they are all seen in the movie as a group. They were sitting as Cambodians, as Blacks, as the white guy and instead she got to know each person individually and was able to see similarities and grouped them together from what she saw.”</p> <p>FG2G2 “I think she really saw where they came from and used their backgrounds to teach them. That really helped her connect with them.”</p> <p>FG2G4 “Okay, and she realized more importantly than following a set curriculum that she would be able to relate to them on their level”</p> <p>FG2G2 “The fact that she’s not intimidating. She welcomes them instead of being scared by her.”</p> <p>FG2B1 “If I had to choose two characteristics to describe her they would be desire and equality. She wanted to teach and she picked that particular group for a reason because she wanted the challenge and</p>	<p>them, they felt like they needed to reciprocate and try.”</p> <p>FG3G3 “She tried to understand their positions and she tried to use those positions to try to appeal to them. At first she didn’t really understand them so she kept doing these weird exercises and she slowly began to understand them and what they were about and why they were upset why she was teaching them. She used this to her advantage in the way that she tried to relate to them.”</p> <p>FG3G3 “More flexible. She adapted to their behaviors”.</p> <p>FG3G2: “Driven. Confident. Optimistic”</p> <p>FG3B1: “I thought she was really patient. She gave them a chance to speak out so she could figure out what their problems were.”</p> <p>FG3B1: “At first she wasn’t like them at all and they didn’t think that she could speak about the things she was speaking about because she hadn’t experienced it. She therefore let them give out their experiences so she could better understand and better facilitate discussions to further help</p>
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	<p><i>she wanted to make an impact on a group that other people were disregarding and saying it couldn't be done. She does it and she treats them like equals. She doesn't look down on them and she tried to punish the students for speaking out early on but later on they begin to...</i></p> <p>FG2B1 <i>"I was going to say persistent and perseverance"</i></p> <p>FG2G2 <i>"She's very calm and level headed. She never loses her cool with them, which provokes a lot of respect. It seems like it would be really easy to lose your cool with them. She also laughs at herself. It's okay that she makes mistakes and doesn't come off as being perfect."</i></p> <p>FG2B2 <i>"A certain level of respect"</i></p> <p>FG2G2 <i>"I don't know if this is a skill, but she promotes active and collaborative learning"</i></p> <p>FG2G1 <i>"She is also very engaging when she was talking to them and she uses engaging examples that are going to catch their attention. And the fact that she chose Anne Frank was really good because if she had chosen some gang</i></p>	<p><i>them"</i></p> <p>FG3G3: <i>"And she really made her rewards sincere. At the beginning she sort of used mockery a bit when she talked about gangs she tried to build them up and then she would throw them back down. She would let them know when they were wrong but when they were right, they really knew they were right that she wasn't just feeding them compliments for no reason."</i></p>
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	<p><i>related book about a certain gang it still would have divided the class. The fact that the entire class came to this and they all looked at the story of Anne Frank from the same perspective without knowing anything prior and without having an emotional connection to the characters.”</i></p> <p>FG2G2 <i>“I think intuitive. Also openness. She didn’t go into the situation pretending to know exactly what she was doing. She came in there and saw what her audience was like.”</i></p>	
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Question 2-

"Have you ever experienced in your educational lifetime a teacher or teachers who motivated you to learn? What did that feel like emotionally?"

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1B1 "Mr. G"</p> <p>FG1G2: "Definitely. We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things. You could ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning."</p> <p>FG1B5: "He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the classroom."</p> <p>FG1G2: "And he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way."</p> <p>FG1G2: "Then there are teachers like Mrs. R who would call home if a student skipped one class. I missed one class in a full year with her and she called my cell phone. So there are teachers like that who care..."</p> <p>FG1G2: "She doesn't give</p>	<p>FG2G2: "That was Mr. W. He had a really unorthodox way of teaching and he was actually frowned upon by the board and all the parents because they didn't like his teaching styles. They actually gave him a curriculum and told him he had to follow it and he wasn't allowed to teach the way he wanted to. : He used different kinds of word choices. If we didn't really work hard on an assignment he called it a "Micky-von-mess-jobby-wabby." We put on this play where we would each have to recite a monologue at the beginning and he wrote them out for each of us and based them on our personalities."</p> <p>FG2G2: "There were twenty-four of us. He took the time to write out twenty-four monologues based on each of our personalities."</p> <p>FG2G2: "I didn't understand mine, but it was the fact that it was for us each individually that made me feel like he actually took the time to know me..."</p>	<p>FG3G3: There's a enrichment program that is run at Carleton that I now work at every year but when I was in grade eight I had to apply for the program and Mr. W basically read my application letter and said it was terrible and that I wasn't smart enough to go to the program and that he wasn't going to recommend me. I bawled my eyes out because he said it in front of all my friends too and I was mortified. Then I went to Mrs. B and she told me I was a very smart girl and that she would recommend me for the program and that made my day that she said that to me. It taught me to not speak negatively to people and give them encouraging words instead of negative ones."</p> <p>FG3G4: "I think that Mr. W was a completely uncensored teacher. There was no way he should have been teaching in that environment where there were children. He didn't know how to deal with students who had the mental capacity of thirteen-year</p>

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<p>up at all. She will drill you until you understand.”</p> <p>FG1B5: “If you weren’t strong in a certain area she would help you. She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic performance or not.”</p> <p>FG1G1: “I had her for three years and I found like I could talk to her about anything and we got along really well. I found that she would give me a lot more time and that I could succeed in her class. I also felt like if you knew her and got along with her, you would get more sympathy from her.”</p> <p>FG1G1: A lot of my professors were really personable and really enthusiastic. I would stay after class and just joke around with them. Everyone loved their classes. It was such a change from our other courses because we’d enjoy it and people wanted to hang around. Some would make you want to do better.</p>	<p>FG2G3: “...and he knew more than you knew yourself. Then one he wrote for me I don’t remember now but I remember when I was reading it I thought, wow, this does relate to me.”</p> <p>FG2G2: “In mine he said that I had potential and I needed to take the time to realize it and I didn’t understand it then or the words he used but it just felt good.”</p> <p>FG2G3: ...”We read Shakespeare with him in grade seven and a few years later I went to see the play and wanted to write a letter to him right after I saw it. He was the first person I wanted to tell that I saw that play.”</p> <p>FG2G3: “What I found about him was that even in grade seven he would give us these poems that I still probably wouldn’t understand now but he changed my way of thinking in general. Originally you look at something like that, a poem or a Shakespeare play and you think that you are completely incapable of doing it but he kind of changed our attitudes about that. He helped us to try and tackle it and work through it and I think that has</p>	<p>olds-, which is what we were. He would have made a way better university professor.”</p> <p>FG3G3: “A lot of the things he did were really smart but I only understand them now. I had no idea what was going on at the time.”</p> <p>FG3G3: “He would do play-on-words and puns. His mind was always going.”</p> <p>FG3G1: ...”So after three weeks when we had the drop opportunity, I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn’t going to. No teacher has ever done that.”</p> <p>FG3G1: “I was pleased that he actually thought of me to the point that he called my house to ask me to come back to the class. I felt kind of guilty but I just couldn’t learn in that environment.”</p> <p>FG3G2: “Grade-eleven biology with Mr. P, great guy but I was not doing well. I had a thirty-five in</p>
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	<p><i>followed me throughout all of my schooling. Instead of looking at something and thinking I am completely incapable of doing it I'll look at the task and work through it. That has definitely followed me."</i></p> <p>FG2G3: <i>"He was older. He carried a briefcase and he was pretty eccentric."</i></p> <p>FG2G4: <i>"He didn't know what he was talking about half the time. I think he would be more suited for high school or university than he is for middle school."</i></p> <p>FG2G3: <i>"He actually did exercises with us at the beginning of class. He seemed so excited to be there and he loved what he was doing. I went back recently and saw two of my other teachers that were there and they asked me what I wanted to do in life and I told them I'm not sure yet, and they actually told me to not become a teacher and to trust them on it."</i></p> <p>FG2B1: <i>"I have a negative example. In C's commerce program you don't have to declare a major until second year. So, I was in limbo and didn't know which course I wanted</i></p>	<p><i>his class and high school was not my brightest moment but after half way through the year I would leave the class almost crying everyday. At the time I was sort of embarrassed and really angry at him for doing this but after class he held me back and he asked me how bad my depression was and if he needed to call my family and he was so concerned for my well-being. Obviously I wasn't depressed but every time I got a bad grade I thought, wow I'm so depressed, I hate my life. He took it literally and he was so nice and compassionate. Then I was really mad at him and I dropped the class but thinking back now I think that it was great."</i></p> <p>FG3G2: <i>"I have another one Mr. L in grade-twelve biology. I stopped going to class and actually got a drop form and I gave it to my dad. He said I wasn't dropping it and secretly met with my teacher after I had stopped going to class for a week and the teacher agreed that I was smart enough and that I was going to stay in it. It made me feel great that they believed in me and I was smart enough to do it. So I stayed in the class and caught up with all the work I missed and I</i></p>
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	<p><i>to focus on and I thought finance may have been a good way to go, and the teacher I had just completely ruined it for me. He wouldn't get to know anyone, he would have an attendance list and pick a name at random and if you didn't get an answer right you would have to sit there until you got it. The whole class would watch and he would watch. It was really embarrassing. It tarnished my view of finance."</i></p> <p>FG2B1: "It's definitely a factor."</p> <p>FG2G2: "I do but I also think it's kind of unrealistic to expect so much from a teacher. I think that it's necessary that even without forming individual relationships with students, that the teacher can inspire and respect students without necessarily getting to know them one on one. Some students may not want to share their personal life with their teacher but can still learn a lot from the teacher and be really engaged in the classroom setting. It is also important for teachers to leave their issues out of the class. I had one teacher who got dumped by her fiancé and after that she just wasn't the same. She wasn't as happy."</p>	<p><i>didn't do that great but I passed. That was so validating for me."</i></p> <p>FG3G1: "When I finished at "H" and came to "B" I was pretty sheltered at that point and I went into an art class but for some reason it seemed like the most ghetto art class ever. There were like sixteen black kids, six Arabs and five Chinese people and me. It was the scariest class I've ever been in. I'd been in the class for two weeks and we had to hand in an art assignment and all the ghetto kids threw out my project because I was Jewish and they put it in the garbage. So after three weeks when we had the drop opportunity, I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn't going to. No teacher has ever done that."</p>
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Question 3-

“Can you be specific as to what positive personality characteristics, behaviours and/or skills that teacher/s exhibited that motivated you to want to learn?”

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1B1: “There were a lot of teachers who you felt really comfortable talking to because they were really down to earth.”</p> <p>FG1B5: “I think their personality, their character, how you connect with them, the way they judge ...”</p> <p>FG1B4: “...or don't judge.”</p> <p>FG1G1: “Or if you had them for a coach. They really took the time to get to know you.”</p> <p>FG1G3: “It's better when they don't just walk in the classroom and tell you what you will be doing. I like when they ask questions about me. It shows that they care.”</p> <p>FG1B1: “I find there are two kinds of teachers. The ones who do it by the book and the ones who don't do it by the book. There are ones who tell you to meet a deadline and if you don't they just say its not their</p>	<p>FG2G4: “I think that is especially true in high school because you don't respect them if you don't think they are telling you the truth and they are just reading out of a textbook.”</p> <p>FG2G5: “At the same time you don't want them to think that they are above you and they know everything and you are just students in their class who have to learn from them.”</p> <p>FG2B1: Mrs. Z, she kept me behind after class one day and told me that I could do better. So, she met me every single morning for about two weeks and I started to believe that if someone could make that time for you then you should be able to make it for yourself.”</p> <p>FG2B1: “I think that their getting to know you makes you believe in yourself more.”</p>	<p>FG3G2: “I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me.”</p> <p>FG3B3: “All the good teachers I can think of are all nice people.”</p> <p>FG3G2: “They all have warm smiles.”</p> <p>FG3B3: “A lot of the time it depends on the subject matter, whether you are actually interested in it or not. The teacher can heavily influence that. If they just read you the materials and how they teach it to you is really boring, you're not going to be interested and you're not going to want to learn it. So if the teacher does different exercises in class and gives you material that is actually interesting, you're going to want to learn more.”</p> <p>FG3G3: “Yes. But she still wants to be authoritative to get our respect. She taught us that you want to be an authority figure but you also</p>

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fault."

FG1G1: "They [the teachers] have to be approachable and willing to help students. Somebody you can go up to if you are having problems in class. You aren't afraid to ask questions and you aren't afraid to wait after class and tell them that you didn't understand."

FG1B5: "A lot of teachers have unrealistic expectations."

FG1B4: "Teachers that compromise are the best. Let's say I can't hand a paper in on time, instead I could do a make up assignment to get the grade."

FG1B1: "Yes because they are giving you a chance. Some teachers don't give you those chances."

FG1B3: "Yes because it feels like you should put an extra effort into learning and to do a good job on your report or paper."

FG1G3: "I feel the opposite of that though because if you did something and handed it in on time, you hated how other people were getting extra days to do it."

FG1B4: "That's why its

want to learn a line of the hierarchy when there is a teacher standing and all the students sitting before her or him. So, there is a balance that you have to set and you have to be persistent and warm and flexible and adaptive. It's a lot of characteristics to take on and I think you are aware of it initially when you step into the classroom but it's definitely hard to keep track of all of them. We had to do teaching experience every year and I've gone to private school all my life and this year I walked into a public school in Montreal for three weeks and thirty percent of the school is below the poverty line. Some students in my class were evicted when I was there and coming to school filthy and the teacher had to talk to them in a way that wasn't embarrassing to their classmates, giving them soap and a towel. It was really hard for me to relate and I had to look at the way I dressed before I went because I wanted to look professional but it was really hard. There were a lot of different things to take into account from a teacher's perspective and I think that adaptability and being able to relate to your students is the most important and relating to the class as a whole and

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<p><i>good to have that compromise though. It's like you can hand it in a few days late but you're going have to do a bit extra."</i></p> <p>FG1G4: <i>"And you should have a valid excuse for handing it in late."</i></p> <p>FG1B1: <i>"I agree because sometimes people start taking advantage of it if there isn't a consequence."</i></p> <p>FG1G1: <i>"Definitely. We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things. You could ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning."</i></p> <p>FG1B2: <i>"Easy going."</i></p> <p>FG1B3: <i>"Optimistic."</i></p> <p>FG1B1: <i>"...a great sense of humor. He is always in a good mood".</i></p> <p>FG1B3: <i>"Always smiling."</i></p> <p>FG1B5: <i>"...made you feel better when you were in the classroom."</i></p> <p>FG1G2: <i>"... really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were</i></p>		<p><i>individually is important. That is essentially what learning means."</i></p> <p>FG3G1: <i>"It kind of makes you feel like they are putting an effort into me so I may as well put an effort back."</i></p> <p>FG3G2: <i>"I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me."</i></p> <p>FG3B3: <i>"Yes. I think they need to make it available for you to be able to connect with them by giving some kind of office hours where you can go talk to them and they can better understand you."</i></p> <p>FG3B4: <i>"I think they have to be enthusiastic. Not dull at all. And wanting to learn and they would have to be eager and excited."</i></p> <p>FC3G1: <i>"Positive attitude."</i></p> <p>FC3G3: <i>"And have a passion to want to help other people."</i></p> <p>FC3G2: <i>"And help motivate students. Not just be like, I'm really smart and I know what I'm doing."</i></p> <p>FG3G3: <i>"Not cocky".</i></p> <p>FG3G2: <i>"Like the teacher from the movie. She starts getting them to write in the journals and gives them the</i></p>
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<p><i>doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way."</i></p> <p>FG1B1 "Any teacher can present a subject, but when they are passionate and excited about it you actually want to follow along and it reverberates around the room. It's a better learning experience in the long classes. It's not just sitting in a boring classroom copying down notes. Having a great teacher makes a huge difference. Having great teachers at N was crucial. The feeling of going from a boring teacher to a good teacher was so good"</p> <p>FG1G3 "I think getting to know your students and caring for them is important"</p>		<p><i>option for her to read them or not. That one woman said that they didn't want them to learn, they just wanted them to obey. She (the teacher) didn't tell them to obey her she gave them the option. When you're given the option you're more likely to go down the right route. When you're forced to do something you're not going to do it."</i></p> <p>FG3G4: "Flexibility and adaptability are so important too. They have to realize that every student is different and you have to be able to treat them all fairly."</p> <p>FG3G3: "Apparently teachers have class lists with numbers from one to four so the teachers who have the students the following year read this ranking system and automatically know how that particular student did and marks them according to that. And that shows students that if they are a B student they may as well just keep trying to get B's." <i>"Mrs. B in high school. I loved the class and I never did my homework and I never studied and so she asked me to come in everyday after class and she helped me through everything and taught me</i></p>
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		<i>everything and I ended up failing the class with a forty-five but she was so impressed with my effort that she ended up passing me”</i>
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Question 4- “What does it mean for you to learn? What do you think learning involves?”

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1G1: “To learn is the ability to retain information after it is taught. I truly feel like I understand when I can sit back and re-think about it in my head and make sense of it. Therefore, to learn is to retain and break down information from a source, in a way that suits different individuals/”</p>	<p>FG2B2: “Being able to apply things to real life. Important skills are the ones that you’re going to need after school when you need to raise a family, when you go to work, when you are outside of school. It’s those things that they should be teaching because that’s what learning is to me.”</p> <p>FG2B2: “I remember information transferred from a credible source which can be applied to real-life scenario’s, It made me feel smart”</p>	<p>[when students were asked if a teacher</p> <p>FG1B3: A lot of the time it depends on the subject matter, whether you are actually interested in it or not. The teacher can heavily influence that. If they just read you the materials and how they teach it to you is really boring, you’re not going to be interested and you’re not going to want to learn it. So if the teacher does different exercises in class and gives you material that is actually interesting, you’re going to want to learn more.</p> <p>Marla: So do you think that the teacher is sort of the main catalyst for you to want to learn in class?</p> <p>FG1B3:” I mean sometimes it’s just hopeless. When I took calculus I had</p>

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		<p><i>no interest in the course material so it's tough to want to learn. Although, I had a great teacher in that class who kind of forced me to want to learn and helped me out (talking about Mr.M)</i></p> <p>FG1G4: <i>"Well I think learning has multiple factors. Of course there is the teacher but if you aren't psychologically in a great state, or if you don't feel comfortable in the class, your mind wont be set on taking in any information and you will feel overwhelmed and you wont be able to learn what is being taught."</i></p> <p>Marla: <i>"So the word "Learn," what does that mean to you guys?"</i></p> <p>FG1G4: <i>"Learning I think is making a connection between something that you don't already know and taking it in and conceptualizing it and being able to somehow relate it to something you already know."</i></p> <p>FG3G2: <i>"I was going to say that the way you learn changes a lot when you're in school, I'm sure a lot of you had Mr. B who would mumble, but they teach you something, you memorize it and then you can spit it out. But I think when you go on to university, learning is</i></p>
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		<p><i>more what you can teach yourself and it's all about self-motivation. Anyone can take the exact same course and come out with completely different results. Some of them will go home and take out extra books and learn something more and read and others will go to class, read the textbook and do the test."</i></p>
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Question 5- *"Can you share specific stories and instances about those particular teachers who, in fact, had made a positive impact on your life with respect to motivating you to learn?"*

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1B1 "Mr. G"</p> <p>FG1G2: "Definitely. We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things. You could ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning."</p> <p>FG1B2: "Easy going."</p> <p>FG1B3: Optimistic.</p> <p>FG1B1: He has a great sense of humor. He is always in a good mood.</p> <p>FG1B2: Always smiling.</p> <p>FG1B5: "He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the</p>	<p>FG2G2: "There were twenty-four of us. He took the time to write out twenty-four monologues based on each of our personalities."</p> <p>FG2G2: "I didn't understand mine, but it was the fact that it was for us each individually that made me feel like he actually took the time to know me..."</p> <p>FG2G3: "...and he knew more than you knew yourself. The one he wrote for me I don't remember now but I remember when I was reading it I thought, wow, this does relate to me."</p> <p>FG2B1 "They really took</p>	<p>FC3G3: There's a enrichment program that is run at Carleton that I now work at every year but when I was in grade eight I had to apply for the program and Mr. W basically read my application letter and said it was terrible and that I wasn't smart enough to go to the program and that he wasn't going to recommend me. I bawled my eyes out because he said it in front of all my friends too and I was mortified. Then I went to Mrs. B and she told me I was a very smart girl and that she would recommend me for the program and that made my day that she said that to me. It taught me to not speak negatively to</p>

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<p>classroom.”</p> <p>FG1G2: “And he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way.”</p> <p>FG1G2: “Then there are teachers like Mrs. R who would call home if a student skipped one class. I missed one class in a full year with her and she called my cell phone. So there are teachers like that who care but there are other teachers who couldn't care less if you weren't there.”</p> <p>FG1G2: “She doesn't give up at all. She will drill you until you understand.”</p> <p>FG1B5: “If you weren't strong in a certain area she would help you. She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic performance or not.”</p> <p>FG1G1: “I had her for three years and I found like I could talk to her about anything and we got along really well. I found that she would give me a lot more time and that I could succeed in her class. I also</p>	<p>the time to get to know you.”</p> <p>FG2G2: “In mine he said that I had potential and I needed to take the time to realize it and I didn't understand it then or the words he used but it just felt good.”</p> <p>FG2G3: ... “We read Shakespeare with him in grade seven and a few years later I went to see the play and wanted to write a letter to him right after I saw it. He was the first person I wanted to tell that I saw that play.”</p> <p>FG2G2: “They (The school administration) treat him like crap though.”</p> <p>FG2G3: “What I found about him was that even in grade seven he would give us these poems that I still probably wouldn't understand now but he changed my way of thinking in general. Originally you look at something like that, a poem or a Shakespeare play and you think that you are completely incapable of doing it but he kind of changed our attitudes about that. He helped us to try and tackle it and work through it and I think that has followed me throughout all of my schooling. Instead of</p>	<p>people and give them encouraging words instead of negative ones.”</p> <p>FC3G4: “I think that Mr. W was a completely uncensored teacher. There was no way he should have been teaching in that environment where there were children. He didn't know how to deal with students who had the mental capacity of thirteen-year olds-, which is what we were. He would have made a way better university professor.”</p> <p>FC3G3: “A lot of the things he did were really smart but I only understand them now. I had no idea what was going on at the time.”</p> <p>FC3G3: “He would do play-on-words and puns. His mind was always going.”</p> <p>FC3G2: “I have another one. Mr. L in grade-twelve biology. I stopped going to class and actually got a drop form and I gave it to my dad. He said I wasn't dropping it and secretly met with my teacher after I had stopped going to class for a week and the teacher agreed that I was smart enough and that I was going to stay in it. It made me feel</p>
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<p><i>felt like if you knew her and got along with her got more you would get more sympathy from her.”</i></p> <p>FG1G1: <i>A lot of my professors were really personable and really enthusiastic. I would stay after class and just joke around with them. Everyone loved their classes. It was such a change from our other courses because we'd enjoy it and people wanted to hang around. Some would make you want to do better.</i></p>	<p><i>looking at something and thinking I am completely incapable of doing it I'll look at the task and work through it. That has definitely followed me.”</i></p> <p>FG2G3: <i>“He was older. He carried a briefcase and he was pretty eccentric.”</i></p> <p>FG2G4: <i>“He didn't know what he was talking about half the time. I think he would be more suited for high school or university than he is for middle school.”</i></p> <p>FG2G3: <i>“He actually did exercises with us at the beginning of class. He seemed so excited to be there and he loved what he was doing. I went back recently and saw two of my other teachers that were there and they asked me what I wanted to do in life and I told them I'm not sure yet, and they actually told me to not become a teacher and to trust them on it.”</i></p> <p>FG2B1: <i>“I have a negative example. In Carleton's commerce program you don't have to declare a major until second year. So, I was in limbo and didn't know which course I wanted to focus on and I thought</i></p>	<p><i>great that they believed in me and I was smart enough to do it. So I stayed in the class and caught up with all the work I missed and I didn't do that great but I passed. That was so validating for me.”</i></p> <p>FC3G1: <i>“When I finished at H and came to B, I was pretty sheltered at that point and I went into an art class but for some reason it seemed like the most ghetto art class ever. There were like sixteen black kids, six Arabs and five Chinese people and me. It was the scariest class I've ever been in. I'd been in the class for two weeks and we had to hand in an art assignment and all the ghetto kids threw out my project because I was Jewish and they put it in the garbage. So after three weeks when we had the drop opportunity, I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn't going to. No teacher has ever done that.”</i></p> <p>FC3G1: <i>“I was pleased that he actually thought of me to the point that he called my house to ask me to come back to the class. I</i></p>
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	<p><i>finance may have been a good way to go, and the teacher I had just completely ruined it for me. He wouldn't get to know anyone, he would have an attendance list and pick a name at random and if you didn't get an answer right you would have to sit there until you got it. The whole class would watch and he would watch. It was really embarrassing. It tarnished my view of finance."</i></p> <p>Marla: "And you feel today that you didn't want to pursue finance because of that situation?"</p> <p>FG2B1: "It's definitely a factor."</p> <p>Marla: Do you think that teachers can affect your life down the road negatively? Do you think that it's really important for teachers to have that ability to see you guys and connect with you to help you in a positive way?</p> <p>FG2G2: "I do but I also think it's kind of unrealistic to expect so much from a teacher. I think that it's necessary that even without forming individual relationships with students, that the teacher can inspire and respect students without necessarily getting to know them one on one. Some</p>	<p><i>felt kind of guilty but I just couldn't learn in that environment."</i></p> <p>FC3G2: "Grade-eleven biology with Mr. P, great guy but I was not doing well. I had a thirty-five in his class and high school was not my brightest moment but after half way through the year I would leave the class almost crying everyday. At the time I was sort of embarrassed and really angry at him for doing this but after class he held me back and he asked me how bad my depression was and if he needed to call my family and he was so concerned for my well-being. Obviously I wasn't depressed but every time I got a bad grade I thought, wow I'm so depressed, I hate my life. He took it literally and he was so nice and compassionate. Then I was really mad at him and I dropped the class but thinking back now I think that it was great."</p> <p>FC3G2: "I have another one. Mr. L in grade-twelve biology. I stopped going to class and actually got a drop form and I gave it to my dad. He said I wasn't dropping it and secretly met with my teacher after I had stopped going to class for a week and the teacher agreed that I was smart</p>
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Students' Motivation to Learn

	<p>students may not want to share their personal life with their teacher but can still learn a lot from the teacher and be really engaged in the classroom setting. It is also important for teachers to leave their issues out of the class. I had one teacher who got dumped by her fiancé and after that she just wasn't the same. She wasn't as happy."</p>	<p>enough and that I was going to stay in it. It made me feel great that they believed in me and I was smart enough to do it. So I stayed in the class and caught up with all the work I missed and I didn't do that great but I passed. That was so validating for me."</p>
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Question #6: What previous positive experiences with your teacher/s, mean to you today in your life? How had it made a difference to you presently?

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
	<p>FG2G3: "I think so. We read Shakespeare with him in grade seven and a few years later I went to see the play and wanted to write a letter to him right after I saw it. He was the first person I wanted to tell that I saw that play."</p> <p>FG2G3: "I think he left actually. What I found about him was that even in grade seven he would give us these poems that I still probably wouldn't understand now but he changed my way of thinking in general. Originally you look at something like that, a poem or a Shakespeare play and you think that you are completely incapable of doing it but he kind of changed our attitudes about</p>	<p>FG3G3: "It taught me to not speak negatively to people and give them encouraging words instead of negative ones."</p> <p>FG3G2: "I actually, last week, wrote my prof thanking him for a great semester and he wrote me back saying its students like you that make teaching fantastic. A sentence like that really motivated me to want to learn more and appreciate all the work they put in."</p> <p>FG3G2: "It's just so positive. It makes me realize that the effort I put into class and everything I do not only affected me and how I learned but it also affected him and made him</p>

Students' Motivation to Learn

	<p><i>that. He helped us to try and tackle it and work through it and I think that has followed me throughout all of my schooling. Instead of looking at something and thinking I am completely incapable of doing it I'll look at the task and work through it. That has definitely followed me."</i></p>	<p><i>realize that people were getting something from what he was teaching. It made me feel good that he was happy with his teaching and happy with his students."</i></p> <p><i>I have had teachers who really challenged me and those were the teachers I respect to this day.</i></p> <p>FG3B2: <i>"They made me work harder. They'd give me marks and tell me I could do better, instead of those teachers who just don't care."</i></p>
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Students' Motivation to Learn

Appendix D

**Positive Teacher Behaviours, Personality Characteristics
and Emotional Intelligence Skills**

Positive teacher behaviours personality characteristics and emotional intelligence skills	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
<p>Caring, empathy, Compassion (Teven.J, &McCrosky.J, 1996; Noddings (2005);</p>	<p>FG1G1: <i>Ask questions about me</i></p> <p>FB1B1 <i>I think somebody with the heart of Mr. G is great. You meet the deadlines because you really want to.</i></p> <p>FG1G2: <i>“And he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way.”</i></p>	<p>FG2G1 <i>“I think her desire to teach and the fact that she wanted to connect with people is good. She’s not there just to get paid to do it; she genuinely wants to be there”</i></p> <p>FG2G2 <i>“The fact that she’s not intimidating. She welcomes them instead of being scared by her.”</i></p> <p>FG2G2: <i>“There were twenty-four of us. He took the time to write out twenty-four monologues based on each of our personalities.”</i></p> <p>FG2B1 <i>“They really took the time to get to know you.”</i></p> <p>FG2B1 <i>I think that them getting to know you makes you believe in yourself more. For example, in math class, I was horrible. One</i></p>	<p>FG3G2: <i>“They all have warm smiles.”</i></p> <p>FG3G1: <i>“It kind of makes you feel like they are putting an effort into me so I may as well put an effort back.”</i></p> <p>FG3G2: <i>“I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me.”</i></p> <p>FC3G3: <i>“And have a passion to want to help other people.”</i></p>

Students' Motivation to Learn

	<p>FG1G2: “She doesn’t give up at all. She will drill you until you understand.”</p> <p>FG1G1: They really took the time to get to know you.”</p> <p>FG1G3 “I think getting to know your students and caring for them is important</p> <p>FG1G1: Somebody you can go up to if you are having problems in class. You aren’t afraid to ask questions and you aren’t afraid to wait after class and tell them that you didn’t understand.</p> <p>FG1G3 I like when they ask questions about me. It shows that they care.</p>	<p>time in math class with Mrs. Z, she every single morning for about two weeks and I started to believe that if someone could make that time for you then you should be able to make it for yourself</p>	
<p>Confirming which “permits people to experience their own being and significance as well as</p>	<p>FG1B5: “He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the classroom.”</p> <p>FG1B1: “There</p>	<p>FG2G2 “I also think she understood that she needed to gain respect from them. She knew she wasn’t just going to be given it at the beginning. So with the journals for</p>	<p>FG3G3 “She tried to understand their positions and she tried to use those positions to try to appeal to them. At first she didn’t really understand them so she kept doing these weird exercises and she slowly began to understand them and what they were about and</p>

Students' Motivation to Learn

<p>their connectedness with others" (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981, p.269)</p>	<p>were a lot of teachers who you felt really comfortable talking to because they were really down to earth."</p> <p>FG1B5: "I think their personality, their character, how you connect with them, the way they judge</p> <p>FG1G1: A lot of my professors were really personable and really enthusiastic. I would stay after class and just joke around with them. Everyone loved their classes. It was such a change from our other courses because we'd enjoy it and people wanted to hang around. Some would make you want to do better.</p> <p>FG1G2: "Definitely. We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things.</p>	<p>instance, it took a while for her to introduce the journals and then they all allowed her to read them. This obviously came with the fact that they respected her."</p> <p>FG2G3 "She just didn't demand it from them. She wasn't like, "I'm your teacher you have to respect me." She let them take the time to gain her trust."</p> <p>FG2G2 "She's very calm and level headed. She never loses her cool with them, which provokes a lot of respect. It seems like it would be really easy to lose your cool with them. She also laughs at herself. It's okay that she makes mistakes and doesn't come off as being perfect."</p> <p>FG2B1 "If I had to choose two characteristics to describe her they would be desire and equality. She wanted to teach and she picked that particular group for a reason because she wanted the challenge</p>	<p>why they were upset why she was teaching them. She used this to her advantage in the way that</p> <p>FG3G1: I'd been in the class for two weeks and we had to hand in an art assignment and all the ghetto kids threw out my project because I was Jewish and they put it in the garbage. So after three weeks when we had the drop opportunity, I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn't going to. No teacher has ever done that</p> <p>FG3G4: "Flexibility and adaptability are so important too. They have to realize that every student is different and you have to be able to treat them all fairly."</p> <p>FC3G2: "I have another one. Mr. L in grade-twelve biology. I stopped going to class and actually got a drop form and I gave it to my dad. He said I wasn't dropping it and secretly met with my teacher after I had stopped going to class for a week and the teacher agreed that I was smart enough and that I was going to stay in it. It made me feel great that they believed in me and I was smart enough to do it. So I stayed in the class and caught up with all the work I missed and I didn't do that great but I passed. That was so validating for me."</p>
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Students' Motivation to Learn

<p>Knowing and managing one's emotions, motivating oneself- high sense of self efficacy/ resiliency (Ashton, P. T. & Webb, R. B. (1986);</p>	<p>FG1B5: "He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the classroom."</p> <p>FG1G2: "And he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way."</p> <p>FG1G2: "She doesn't give up at all. She will drill you until you understand."</p>	<p>FG2G2 "The fact that she's not intimidating. She welcomes them instead of being scared by her."</p> <p>FG2B1 "If I had to choose two characteristics to describe her they would be desire and equality. She wanted to teach and she picked that particular group for a reason because she wanted the challenge and she wanted to make an impact on a group that other people were disregarding and saying it couldn't be done. She does it and she treats them like equals. She doesn't look down on them and she tried to punish the students for speaking out early on but later on they begin to..."</p> <p>FG2B1 "I was going to say persistent and perseverance"</p>	<p>FG3G1 "It felt like she was proactive, she wanted to be proactive and she was hopeful. She didn't fall into the labeling theory and she made her own opinions of people and didn't base it on other peoples"</p> <p>FG3G1 "She was stubborn but in a good way."</p> <p>FG3B1 "She was very goal oriented. She wanted the students to want to learn. She wanted to teach them, She needed to make sure that she achieved that</p> <p>FG3B1: "Yes they could tell that she wanted to be there. So by her wanting to be there made them want to be there more and to be more involved."</p> <p>FG3G1: "She made it her life and so by her putting all of these expectations on them, they felt like they needed to reciprocate and try."</p>
<p>Unconditional acceptance (Kohn, 2005)</p>	<p>FG1B4: "...or don't judge</p> <p>FG1G2 She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic....</p>	<p>FG2G1 "I think her desire to teach and the fact that she wanted to connect with people is good. She's not there just to get paid to do it; she genuinely wants to be there"</p>	<p>FG3G2: "I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me."</p> <p>If you don't feel comfortable in the class, your mind wont be set on taking in any information and you will feel overwhelmed and you wont be able to learn what is</p>

Students' Motivation to Learn

<p>Effective communication skills, recognizing emotions of others and handling relationships (Goleman, 1985)</p>	<p>FG1B1 "Relate them to their learning subject"</p> <p>FG1G1 "She was trying to teach them in a different way than any else had. It allowed them to be involved"</p> <p>FG1G2 "I think she was trying to unify them"</p>	<p>FG2G1 "I think her desire to teach and the fact that she wanted to connect with people is good. She's not there just to get paid to do it; she genuinely wants to be there"</p> <p>FG2G2 "I also think she understood that she needed to gain respect from them. She knew she wasn't just going to be given it at the beginning. So with the journals for instance, it took a while for her to introduce the journals and then they all allowed her to read them. This obviously came with the fact that they respected her."</p> <p>FG2G3 "She just didn't demand it from them. She wasn't like, "I'm your teacher you have to respect me." She let them take the time to gain her trust."</p>	<p><i>being taught.</i></p> <p>FG3G3 "She tried to understand their positions and she tried to use those positions to try to appeal to them. At first she didn't really understand them so she kept doing these weird exercises and she slowly began to understand them and what they were about and why they were upset why she was teaching them. She used this to her advantage in the way that she tried to relate to them."</p> <p>FG3G3 "More flexible. She adapted to their behaviors".</p> <p>FG3G2: "I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me."</p> <p>FG3G2: "I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me."</p> <p>FG3B3: "Yes. I think they need to make it available for you to be able to connect with them by giving some kind of office hours where you can go talk to them and they can better understand you."</p>
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Students' Motivation to Learn

Appendix E

Negative Experiences-Direct Verbatim Responses by Focus Group

<u>Focus Group 1</u>	<u>Focus Group 2</u>	<u>Focus Group 3</u>
<p>FG1B5: A lot of teachers have unrealistic expectations</p> <p>FG1G1: Some teachers will just say do this and go. It's the worst method of teaching.</p> <p>FG1B2: Did anyone ever try to ask Ms. M a question? She barely listened.</p> <p>FG1B1: You would barely get a response. It would stress you out and the rest of the classroom.</p> <p>Marla: When she would stress out the classroom, how would that make you feel?</p> <p>FG1B5: Embarrassed.</p> <p>FG1B4: Stupid.</p> <p>FG1G4: Not appreciated.</p> <p>FG1B1: You know how a lot of math teachers are really hard to get. They understand math so much that they don't know how to explain it sometimes.</p>	<p>FG2G3: If they don't want to be there, then why should I be there? Why should I put in any effort if they aren't putting in any effort to teach me?</p> <p>FG2G1: With this one teacher in high school, Madame M, you could tell she just didn't want to be there. She just sort of looked like, why am I doing this? It felt like she resented us.</p> <p>FG2G2: She never put the effort in to want to make us learn. And she had a lot of favoritism.</p> <p>FG2G3: I mean I had a teacher at B who would spend the first half hour talking about the Harris Government and how hard it was to be a teacher.</p> <p>FG1G1: I cried. This is a really embarrassing story, but I got my period in class and I was really embarrassed about it. So when I got back to class, I sat in the back and my teacher asked me to come pick up a paper from the front of the class. I really didn't want to get up so he</p>	<p>FG3G4: I think that Mr. W was a completely uncensored teacher. There was no way he should have been teaching in that environment where there were children. He didn't know how to deal with students who had the mental capacity of thirteen year olds- which is what we were. He would have made a way better university professor.</p> <p>FG3G4: I've had good teachers but nothing outstanding. I can tell that it's hard for teachers because they have to embody so many different things to be a good teacher. I had a professor who got terrible reviews and you can tell she's really passionate about teaching but she just didn't know how. She'd come to class and make jokes and was really encouraging about office hours but she didn't know about to properly teach the students. She didn't appropriately connect with students.</p> <p>FG3B1: What happened to me is once that happens you just lose interest and you just start talking to people</p>

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FG1G2: *And they don't understand how you don't get it.*

FG1B1: *Exactly. I wanted to go into some type of field that needed math. I wanted to do industrial design at one point but then for some reason all of these teachers that I had just couldn't explain concepts to me. I understood everything else about the career that I wanted to get into but I couldn't because math was so hard.*

In high school, some teachers chose who was going to do well and who wasn't going to do well. Some students wouldn't do well solely based on his or her academic background. It felt like teachers would talk about you and whether or not you did well in their classes.

FG1G1: *And if you had siblings and they were smart then you were expected to be that way.*

FG1G2: *Or it's the reverse. If teachers had a high expectation about a certain student it wasn't necessarily a good thing.*

FG1B1: *They would give you a good mark when they shouldn't.*

put it on the ground and told me to come pick it up. So I asked someone in the front to pass it back to me and they did and he just screamed at me telling me I disrespected him and that I had to stay after class. So I stayed and just started bawling and he told me I disrespected him. So I pretty much called him an asshole after I told him what had happened. After that I did not like him. He would be really nice one day and he would come in another day and just be a complete jerk. You never knew what to expect with him,

FG2G2: *He chose favorites too. If you weren't his favorite you wouldn't get good marks.*

FG2B1: *I have a negative example. In C's commerce program you don't have to declare a major until second year. So, I was in limbo and didn't know which course I wanted to focus on and I thought finance may have been a good way to go, and the teacher I had just completely ruined it for me. He wouldn't get to know anyone, he would have an attendance list and pick a name at random and if you didn't get an answer right you would have to sit there*

around you and the teacher gets mad at you and you get kicked out or you get in trouble. Then you just get upset and you won't want to learn what they are teaching you if you are upset.

FG3G4: *I had a teacher at B named Ms. E and I left that class three times. I would yawn when I was in her class and I'm usually not disrespectful but it was the most boring class. I had her three years in a row too. The only thing that she knew how to do, was put a sheet on a projector and tell you to do work in the book. It's such a waste of time and it is the worst teaching method.*

FG3G1: *And she was so dull.*

FG3G2: *Do you remember Mrs. B? Well she really didn't like girls. I had really good grades in university and I'm not saying that I'm smart but I'm saying that I have grades men ship and I always go to my teachers office hours and I talk to them all the time. I don't know what it was with her but I guess I got some answers wrong and I have no shame. If I don't know the answer I'm going to answer it anyway. I would*

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<p>FG1G2: People who did well generally did well throughout their courses if they had a great academic reputation amongst the teachers</p> <p>FG1B1: The kids who think that high school doesn't really matter are just setting themselves up for failure because teachers notice that.</p>	<p>until you got it. The whole class would watch and he would watch. It was really embarrassing. It tarnished my view of finance.</p> <p>FG2G1: I had an opposite experience with a teacher who didn't really care even though I really wanted to do well. I kept going to him to try to get help but he just seemed to think that I was a lost cause and my marks in my other courses were pretty high so my parents got worried. I ended up having to get a tutor because I needed the help and he wouldn't help me at all.</p>	<p>raise my hand in her class and she just wouldn't answer me. That was really discouraging. Not only that but when you answered wrong you would know it right away.</p> <p>FG3G2: It felt awful.</p> <p>FG3G1: You're not going to raise your hand again.</p> <p>FG3G2: Yes, I would dread going to her class. My grades plummeted.</p> <p>FG3G1: I went from an eighty-five to a sixty in the first semester with her.</p>
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Students' Motivation to Learn

Appendix F

Definitions of Key Terminology Used in This Study

(Some definitions were not available via *The Dictionary of Psychology, Penguin Reference Third Edition, 2001* and were also sourced from the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, The Free Dictionary* and *answers.com*

Approachable: capable of being approached: accessible; specifically: easy to meet or deal with <friendly and approachable people

Challenge: A test of one's abilities or resources in a demanding but stimulating undertaking: a career that offers a challenge.(answers.com, 2008) (Pg. 19, 47)

Collaborative learning: “Collaborative learning fosters the development of critical thinking through discussion, clarification of ideas, and evaluation of others’ ideas. However, both methods of instruction were found to be equally effective in gaining factual knowledge. Therefore, if the purpose of instruction is to enhance critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, then collaborative learning is more beneficial. For collaborative learning to be effective, the instructor must view teaching as a process of developing and enhancing students’ ability to learn. The instructor’s role is not to transmit information, but to serve as a facilitator for learning. This involves creating and managing meaningful learning experiences and stimulating students’ thinking through real world problems.” (Gokhale, 1995)

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Connect- connection: Any link or bond between the Stimulus-Response.

(Reber, 2001) (Pg. 17, 18, 20)

To establish a rapport or relationship; relate: The candidate failed to connect with the voters. (the free dictionary.com. 2008)

“ Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves.” (Palmer, p.11, 1998)

Driven: (drive, acquired or secondary)

Any drive the motivating properties of which are learned, through, it is assumed, association with a primary drive. The classic example is the drive for money (Reber, 2001). (Pg, 40, 50)

1: having a compulsive or urgent quality <a *driven* sense of obligation>

2: propelled or motivated by something —used in combination <results-*driven*>

Motivated by or having a compulsive quality or need: a driven person (Merriam- Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)

Emotion: An integrated feeling state involving physiological changes, motor-preparedness, cognitions about action, and inner experiences that emerges from an appraisal of the self or situation.

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- Empathy:** A cognitive awareness and understanding of the emotions and feelings of another person. In this sense the term's primary connotation is that of an intellectual or conceptual grasping of the *affect* of another (Reber, 2001). (Pg. 20, 50)
- The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2008
- Engaging:** To draw into; involve (the free dictionary, 2008) (Pg.30)
- Equality:** (judgment of) Quite literally, the judgment that two or more stimuli are equal (Reber, 2001). (Pg. 90)
- Flexibility:** characterized by a ready capability to adapt to new, different, or changing requirements (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)
- (Pg.23, 55)
- Hopeful:** 1: Having qualities which inspire hope <hopeful signs of economic recovery> (Pg. 23, 40)
- 2: full of hope: inclined to hope
- (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)
- Impact:** The power of making a strong, immediate impression:
- (the free dictionary.com, 2008) (Pg. 16, 17)

Students' Motivation to Learn

- Intuitive:** A mode of understanding or knowing characterized as direct and immediate and occurring without conscious thought or judgment (Reber, 2001). (Pg. 42, 60)
- Knowing or perceiving by intuition: possessing or given to intuition or insight <an intuitive mind>
- (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)
- Persevere (Persistence):** Similar in meaning to perseveration in that it reflects a behavioural tendency to persevere or persistence. In this senses, persistence is used to refer to process, which continue in time after the stimulus that initiated them is no longer present. (Reber, 2001)
- To persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counterinfluences, opposition, or discouragement
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2008) (Pg. 17, 30)
- Proactive:** Generally, descriptive of any event, stimulus or process that occur subsequently (Reber, 2001).
- Relating to, caused by, or being interference between previous learning and the recall or performance of later learning <proactive inhibition of memory>: acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)
- Relatable:** To have relationship or connection <the readings relate to his lectures>: to have or establish a relationship: interact <the way a child relates to a teacher>(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008)
- (Pg. 27, 30)

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Self-Efficacy: Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes.

A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills, which are acquirable. They approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression.

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- ??Sincere:**
1. Not feigned or affected; genuine: sincere indignation.
 2. Being without hypocrisy or pretense; true: a sincere friend.

(the free dictionary, 2008) (Pg.50, 51)

Welcoming: Very cordial; "a welcoming smile" hospitable - disposed to treat guests and strangers with cordiality and generosity; "a good-natured and hospitable man"; "a hospitable act";

(the free dictionary.com, 2008)

Easily approached: accessible, approachable, and responsive.

(answers.com, 2008) (Pg. 51, 100)

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Home Inbox 2723 messages Search: "marc brackett" Re: Emotional Intelligen
Delete Reply Forward Spam Move Print More Actions

Re: Emotional Intelligence Measurement used for teachers colleges

Marc Brackett

To: MARLA SPERGEL

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- Inbox (151)
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Hi Marla,

There are a number of schools using SEL frameworks, etc. but few who are using EI assessments. I'm working on some projects with Teachers College that will incorporate EI assessments.

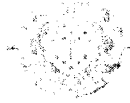
I also know that UBC is interested...

All the best,

Marc

MARLA SPERGEL wrote:

- > Hi Marc,
- > I recently finished my research with 24 graduated high school students
- > and the skills, behaviours that they identified with teachers who
- > motivated them to want to learn are definitely identifiable as
- > Emotional Intelligence Skills. I am analyzing the data further and
- > will be finishing my Thesis this summer. I am just wondering if you
- > are aware of any Faculty of Education using EI measurements on their
- > B.Ed students?
- >
- > Regards,
- > Marla



Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

Services de subventions de recherche et de bourses / Research Grants and Ethics Services

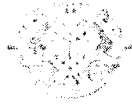
HEALTH SCIENCES AND SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This is to certify that the University of Ottawa Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee has examined the application for ethical approval of the research project entitled **The Impact of Teacher's Behaviours, Personality Characteristics and Skills on a Student's Motivation to Learn (File #02-08-24)** submitted by Marla Spergel and supervised by Dany Laveault from the Faculty of Education of the University of Ottawa. The Board found that this research project met appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement and in the Procedures of the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Boards, and accordingly gave it a Category 1a (approval). This certification is valid one year from the date indicated below.

Leslie-Anne Barber
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Peter Beyer, Chair of the Social
Sciences and Humanities REB

May 2, 2008
Date



Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

Service des publications de recherche et de la vie étudiante / Research Grants and Ethics Services

May 2, 2008

Dany Laveault
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Marla Spergel

Object: The Impact of Teacher's Behaviours, Personality Characteristics and Skills on a Student's Motivation to Learn (File #02-08-24)

Dear Professor Laveault and Mrs. Spergel,

You will find enclosed the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee ethical clearance for the abovementioned study.

During the course of the study, any modifications to the protocol or forms may not be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. You must also promptly notify the REB of any adverse events that may occur.


This certificate of ethical clearance is valid until May 1, 2009. Please submit an annual status report to the Protocol Officer in May 2009 to either close the file or request a renewal of ethics approval. This document can be found at: http://www.rges.uottawa.ca/ethics/application_dwn.asp.

A copy of this approval will be sent to research services, if necessary.

If you have any questions, you may contact the undersigned at the number

Sincerely yours,

Leslie-Anne Barber
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Peter Beyer, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

Consent Form for Students (Participants)

Title of the study: The Impact of Teacher's Behaviours, Personality Characteristics and Skills on a Students' Motivation to Learn

Researcher: Marla Spergel, M.A Graduate Student, Faculty of Education University of Ottawa

Supervisor: Professor Dany Laveault, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above mentioned research study conducted by Marla Spergel M.A Graduate student from the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to identify, from a students perspective, teacher behaviours, personality characteristics and skills that actually impact a student's motivation to learn. We need to delve deeper into the students' perceptions, and then correlate that with what is defined as positive teaching behaviours, not the reverse.

The underlying objective of gathering this necessary data is to identify and thus create curriculum for teachers in order for them to become resilient and proactive with respect to stressors, as well as be affective with student learning within this chosen career.

Participation: Participants will be part of a focus group that will be audio taped with external high quality microphones, ideally for each participant, will be used in a quiet room, minimizing distractions and later transcribed. Participants will be asked to view pre-selected scenes from the movie Freedom Writers, the true story of teacher Erin Gruwell who persevered with so called "unteachable at risk students" motivating them to learn. After this viewing, participants will be asked questions that will delve deeper into their emotions with respect to their perception of how Teachers behaviours, Personality characteristics and skills impacted their motivation to learn. Participants will be contacted after the audiotape is transcribed, to confirm that in fact their comments were accurately represented.

Benefits: This research can be used in the future to impact teacher selection and teacher education curriculum with respect to those behaviours, personality characteristics and skills identified by the students/participants to impact positively, student motivation. As

when, impact the educational strategic directives with respect to focusing on students' love of learning.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential, although, other participants in the focus group will be aware of individuals' contributions thus limiting, to a certain extent, the researcher's guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity.

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 11/24/08

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Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature:

Date: 2/14/20

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: May 14, 2008

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: May 14/08

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: 12/14/11

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 12/14/11

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: May 4 2001

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: May 4 2001

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Researcher's Signature: _____

Date:

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Participant's signature:

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature:

Date: 12/8/14/2017

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: 10/12/08

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 10/12/08

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Participant's signature:

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature.

Date: My 12/10

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Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 12/12/16

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 12/08

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Participant's signature:

Date: July 12, 2008

Researcher's Signature:

Date: [Signature]

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: Nov 27 2008

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 12/1/08

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: May 12/08

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: May 12/08

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Date: May 12th 2008

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: May 12/08

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Participant's signature:

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature:

Date: 11/2/05

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Date: _____

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Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be deleted.

Acceptance: I, _____ agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Marla Spergel of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, which research is under the supervision of Professor Dany Laveault.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5 Tel.: (613) 562-5841 Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____

Date: 11/04/15/16

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 11/14/15/16

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Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential, although, other participants in the focus group will be aware of individuals' contributions thus limiting, to a certain extent, the researcher's guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity.

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: 2008/05/08

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: May 15/08

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Participant's signature: _____

Date: 1/30/07

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: 1/30/07

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Participant's signature:

Date: May 15/06

Researcher's Signature:

Date: May 15/06

Home > Profile > Events > Education Focus Group at Starbucks!

Education Focus Group at Starbucks! | 16371571301

Education Focus Group at Starbucks!

Enjoy free starbucks drinks and snacks and help shape the future of education!

Host: Marla Spergel
 Type: Education - Study Group
 Network: Global

Start Time: Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 1:00pm
 End Time: Monday, May 19, 2008 at 10:00pm
 Location: Starbucks at Pinecrest
 City/Town: Ottawa, ON

Description

I am assisting Marla Spergel, a Masters student who is working on her thesis at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. She is interested in gaining insight into student perspectives on what teachers behaviours, personality characteristics, and skills actually impacted your motivation to want to learn over your lifetime in school. There will be 7 other Sir Robert Borden graduates that will be involved with you in a focus group. It will be an informal event held at the Pine Crest Chapters and Starbucks coffee and snacks will be served. It should take about 2 hours. You will be audiotaped, but when the audio is transcribed you will only be identified as a number. After the information is transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review your comments to ensure its accuracy.

If you are interested in participating, please RSVP attending to this event and you will be contacted shortly regarding dates and times!

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Chat 5

Focus Group #1- Professor Marla Spergel

Boy1: There were a lot of teachers who you felt really comfortable talking to because they were really down to earth.

Marla: What makes a teacher someone you can relate to? What makes them relatable?

BOY 5: I think their personality, their character, how you connect with them, the way they judge ...

BOY 4: ...or don't judge.

GIRL 1: Or if you had them for a coach. They really took the time to get to know you.

GIRL 3: It's better when they don't just walk in the classroom and tell you what you will be doing. I like when they ask questions about me. It shows that they care.

Marla: It's interesting that you're all talking about connecting. So if you had to give a definition of what it means when somebody connects with you, what would you say?

Boy 1: I find there are two kinds of teachers. The ones who do it by the book and the ones who don't do it by the book. There are ones who tell you to meet a deadline and if you don't they just say its not their fault.

BOY 5: A lot of teachers have unrealistic expectations.

BOY 4: Teachers that compromise are the best. Let's say I can't hand a paper in on time, instead I could do a make up assignment to get the grade.

Marla: So when they give you the chance to do some extra stuff, do you feel that they are taking you into account as a separate individual?

Boy 1: Yes because they are giving you a chance. Some teachers don't give you those chances.

Marla: And does that make you feel like you're more motivated to learn?

BOY 3 Yes because it feels like you should put an extra effort into learning and to do a good job on your report or paper.

GIRL 3 I feel the opposite of that though because if you did something and handed it in on time, you hated how other people were getting extra days to do it.

BOY 4: That's why its good to have that compromise though. It's like you can hand it in a few days late but you're going have to do a bit extra.

Girl 5: And you should have a valid excuse for handing it in late.

Boy 1: I agree because sometimes people start taking advantage of it if there isn't a consequence.

Marla: So do you think that those people take advantage after one time or that they end up more motivated to hand in things on time now?

Peter: I think it's more of a slippery slope.

GIRL 1: I agree.

BOY 4: Some people just want to get by. They just want to pass.

GIRL 3: And sometimes people do have a legitimate excuse.

Marla: When you guys were in elementary school or high school, were there teachers like that who were lenient?

Everyone: yes.

Marla: Or was there somebody that made you want to learn more in his or her classroom?

Boy 1: Mr. Goodsir,

GIRL 1: Definitely. We learned more in his class because it wasn't just a set. We discussed things. You could ask questions to things that applied to what you were learning.

Marla: Personality wise, how would you describe him?

Peter: Easy going.

BOY 3: Optimistic.

Marla: Was he young?

BOY 4: Yes.

Boy 1: He has a great sense of humor. He is always in a good mood.

Boy 3 Always smiling.

BOY 5: He made you smile and he made you feel better when you were in the classroom.

Girl 2: And he really genuinely wanted people to do well. If you were doing poorly he would go out of his way to make sure you understood what you were doing wrong. If you were on a wrong path he would put you on the one going the right way.

Marla: So you guys totally believe that this guy really cared about you and wanted you to do well.

Boy 2 : But also sometimes a pushover.

BOY 4: A lot of kids took advantage of that.

BOY 5 Also at the same time he sets you up to succeed in his class but he doesn't really prepare you for university. He was a little too generous sometimes.

Marla: Okay let me ask you, do you think those kind of teachers make it comfortable to learn in fact weren't duplicated in teachers who have in university?

GIRL 3: It depends what program you're in. I'm in Kinnesiology so we have classes of about 30 students and sometimes we don't even have professors. We would have real estate agents and volleyball coaches.

Boy 1: I've never been in a class with less than 300 people.

GIRL1: Me neither.

Girl 3: Me neither.

Girl 5: Ya me neither so you don't talk to the teacher. You don't even know their first name. It's a really formal relationship.

GIRL1: A lot of my professors were really personable and really enthusiastic. I would stay after class and just joke around with them. Everyone loved their classes. It was such a change from our other courses because we'd enjoy it and people wanted to hang around. Some would make you want to do better.

Marla: What would he do to make you want to do better?

GIRL 1: He would make the classes fun. He would have jokes and he'd be really enthusiastic about everything we did.

BOY 5- Was he straightforward as well? I find that when teachers are more straightforward and tell what they expect, it makes you want to succeed more because you know that you can. Everything is laid out for you. Some courses, especially in university tell you that you need to be responsible for everything that's in the textbook so you don't know how far to go and how much you actually need to study.

Marla: Okay, now I have to take you guys back to high school. Did you find that your teachers were straight up and clear as to what you needed to do? Was there guidance?

Boy 2: Absolutely.

GIRL 1: Yes. They would never really throw stuff at you.

Girl 2: I thought grade 12 English was really rough.

Boy 1: Me too. There is something due almost every day in Grade 12 English and you get it done but it was so hard to remember. There was so much on your plate. In accounting with Mr. Goodsir, he was really lenient and really laid back and I remember the most from his class because we had assignments due with lots of notice.

GIRL1 : Ya. He talks about courses that are really interesting and that relate to everyday life. I was never interested in English. I took politics with Mr. Goodsir and it related to the world.

Marla: Would there be ways that teachers that you've had in the past make the class more fun/interesting.

Boy 1: I think somebody with the heart of Mr. Goodsir is great. You meet the deadlines because you really want to.

Marla: Does being passionate in a topic really makes a difference?

BOY 5: Any teacher can present a subject, but when they are passionate and excited about it you actually want to follow along and it reverberates around the room. It's a better learning experience in the long classes. It's not just sitting in a boring classroom copying down notes. Having a great teacher makes a huge difference. Having great teachers at Nepean was crucial. The feeling of going from a boring teacher to a good teacher was so good.

Marla: If you were going to have one type of teacher that had a behavior and a certain set of skills to communicate things, how would you define that person from all the teachers that you've seen and could make them into one person, how would he/she be?

Girl 4: Like the best teacher ever?

Marla: Not necessarily the teacher who's class you got the best mark in but the class that you felt the most keen about learning. You were excited to go to that class. If you had to combine different teachers to and duplicate that person what would you say?

GIRL 1 They would have to be enthusiastic.

BOY 4: And passionate.

GIRL 1 They would have to really like what they are doing and be excited to show you new ways and easier ways to do things. They can't just say this is how you do it, begin. They have to be approachable and willing to help students.

Marla: By approachable, what do you mean? I have a definition of what I think approachable is but what do you guys think?

GIRL 1: Somebody you can go up to if you are having problems in class. You aren't afraid to ask questions and you aren't afraid to wait after class and tell them that you didn't understand.

BOY4: And also be able to have conversation with them sometimes. They are willing to talk about normal things.

Marla: And by talking about the normal things do you guys feel like you can connect better with them?

Everyone: Yes.

GIRL 1: Some teachers will just say do this and go. It's the worst method of teaching.

Peter: Did anyone ever try to ask Ms. Matthews a question? She barely listened.

Adam: You would barely get a response. It would stress you out and the rest of the classroom.

Marla: When she would stress out the classroom, how would that make you feel?

BOY 5: Embarrassed.

Boy 4: Stupid.

Girl 5: Not appreciated.

Boy1: You know how a lot of math teachers are really hard to get. They understand math so much that they don't know how to explain it sometimes.

Girl 2: And they don't understand how you don't get it.

Boy 1: Exactly. I wanted to go into some type of field that needed math. I wanted to do industrial design at one point but then for some reason all of these teachers that I had just couldn't explain concepts to me. I understood everything else about the career that I wanted to get into but I couldn't because math was so hard.

Marla: That's really interesting because there's this story about a real estate agent who in high school did so poorly that she was petrified to take her real estate exams because there was math in it. It ended up that she did okay and all these years in her late 20's and

early 30's she just thought she couldn't do math because she did so poorly in high school classes If there is a teacher with negative traits are you afraid to ask questions?

Steve: Sometimes if a teacher acts like they think I can't do it sometimes I want to sort of prove them wrong but some people aren't like that. But obviously I think it's better if you are supported.

Marla: So why do you think she's been doing all this stuff. Why do you think she ended up going to the Holocaust museum?

Boy 1 It was a better way than just shoving books in front of them and telling them what to do. It wasn't working. She thought that doing the physical learning was better.

Marla: Can you identify a behavior that she did for that? What do you think she was trying to do?

Boy 1: Relate them to their learning subject.

GIRL 1: She was trying to teach them in a different way then any else had. It allowed them to be involved.

Marla: So nobody else was really able to reach them?

GIRL 1: And nobody even tried.

Girl 2: I think she was trying to unify them.

Marla: And when you heard the principal talking about the fact that they don't even give them second thoughts, it's almost as if they wrote them off already. Were there any kids that you went to school with or any of you guys that teachers sort of wrote you off and then somebody else came through and turned it around?

GIRL 1: Like in what class?

Marla: What class or over the years that you were at school?

Boy 1: It's not 99% of students who get completely written off but there usually is about 1%.

Girl 2 : In high school, some teachers chose who was going to do well and who wasn't going to do well. Some students wouldn't do well solely based on his or her academic background. It felt like teachers would talk about you and whether or not you did well in their classes.

GIRL 1: And if you had siblings and they were smart then you were expected to be that way.

Marla: That's interesting. You sort of felt that you were advantaged or disadvantaged before you even got in? So if you came in with a learning disability or you had something going on that you were predisposed to doing poorly and that's just the way it was.

Girl 2: Or it's the reverse. If teachers had a high expectation about a certain student it wasn't necessarily a good thing.

Boy 1: They would give you a good mark when they shouldn't.

Girl 2: People who did well generally did well throughout their courses if they had a great academic reputation amongst the teachers.

Marla: So take that person with the great academic reputation. Let's say they had a family issue that happened and all of a sudden they weren't doing so well. Or let's look at another situation. Let's say there was a kid who came from a bad family and his brothers and sisters didn't do well in school and teachers wrote them off and something bad happened. Now you have this other kid who did well all through school and something bad happened to them at the same time. Who had better potential of surviving through this thing?

Boy 2: Definitely the kid who did well.

Girl 2: Always.

Boy 1: The kids who think that high school doesn't really matter are just setting themselves up for failure because teachers notice that.

Girl 2: Then there are teachers like Mrs. Ryan who would call home if a student skipped one class. I missed one class in a full year with her and she called my cell phone. So there are teachers like that who care but there are other teachers who couldn't care less if you weren't there.

Marla: How would you define Mrs. Ryan as a teacher?

Girl 2 She doesn't give up at all. She will drill you until you understand.

BOY 5: If you weren't strong in a certain area she would help you. She treated everyone the exact same whether you had good academic performance or not.

GIRL 1 I had her for three years and I found like I could talk to her about anything and we got along really well. I found that she would give me a lot more time and that I could succeed in her class. I also felt like if you knew her and got along with her got more you would get more sympathy from her.

Marla: So you were saying there was sympathy but would you also say there was empathy? Empathy means you go into somebody else's shoes and you can see where they are coming from.

Focus Group 2

Marla: I'm talking about the excitement, the motivation to want to learn. What do you think about her as a person who is teaching (from Ghost Writers) that you would identify with some of those aspects?

Girl: I think her desire to teach and the fact that she wanted to connect with people is good. She's not there just to get paid to do it; she genuinely wants to be there.

Girl 2: I also think she understood that she needed to gain respect from them. She knew she wasn't just going to be given it at the beginning. So with the journals for instance, it took a while for her to introduce the journals and then they all allowed her to read them. This obviously came with the fact that they respected her.

Marla: ...and it took a long time to gain that kind of respect.

Girl 2: Yes.

Marla: What did she do, do you think, to gain their respect. What about her did she do to make them be okay with her?

Girl 3: She just didn't demand it from them. She wasn't like, "I'm your teacher you have to respect me." She let them take the time to gain her trust,

Marla: Do you remember parts of the movie where she saw into their life and then she made some changes. Do you remember the scene where they were divided by their groups and then she took back the classroom. What do you think about that?

Boy 1: I think she connected with them on an individual level and that was really important because they are all seen in the movie as a group. They were sitting as Cambodians, as Blacks, as the white guy and instead she got to know each person individually and was able to see similarities and grouped them together from what she saw.

Marla: The word connect. Do you think it's important to connect with a student or do you think they can just get up there and teach and it's irrelevant?

Girl 2: I think she really saw where they came from and used their backgrounds to teach them. That really helped her connect with them.

Girl 4: Okay, and she realized more importantly than following a set curriculum that she would be able to relate to them on their level.

Marla: They seemed unreachable. When you see the beginning and you see the end, these are not the same relationships that were present before. If you had to describe her personality, what about it would be something I could take back to identify a teacher that really impacts students to want to learn?

Girl 2: The fact that she's not intimidating. She welcomes them instead of being scared by her.

Marla: Is she someone that is more approachable as a personality? Is she someone who comes in and is above you looking down at you guys, or is she a real person who the students are able to relate to?

Boy 1: If I had to choose two characteristics to describe her they would be desire and equality. She wanted to teach and she picked that particular group for a reason because she wanted the challenge and she wanted to make an impact on a group that other people were disregarding and saying it couldn't be done. She does it and she treats them like equals. She doesn't look down on them and she tried to punish the students for speaking out early on but later on they begin to...

Marla: Would you call her resilient?

Boy 1: I was going to say persistent and perseverance.

Girl 2: She's very calm and level headed. She never loses her cool with them, which provokes a lot of respect. It seems like it would be really easy to lose your cool with them. She also laughs at herself. It's okay that she makes mistakes and doesn't come off as being perfect.

Marla: Do you find that is a good characteristic for a teacher to have?

Girl 2: Yes definitely.

Boy 4: It depends if they can pull it off or not.

Marla: What makes someone be able to pull that off or not?

Boy 4: A certain level of respect.

Girl 2: I find that some teachers aren't able to admit when they are wrong and when you call them on it they get mad at you.

Marla: How does that make you feel?

Girl 2: Annoyed. There's no point in trying.

Marla: Does it feel like you are sort of hitting a wall and nobody is listening?

Boy 4: That's definitely a certain level of it but I guess you kind of have to balance it out. A professor I had this year for a business course told us straight off the bat in the first lecture that he didn't know everything, He said, I know some stuff but I don't know it all so I'm not going to stand up here and teach it like I am some sort of expert. But as the course progressed I didn't have a high level of respect for him. I think he was maybe on that focus too much.

Marla: Do you feel that the knowledge of the course that the person is teaching is important as well? Do you think in high school and elementary school that was important as well?

Girl 4: I think that is especially true in high school because you don't respect them if you don't think they are telling you the truth and they are just reading out of a textbook.

Girl 2: At the same time you don't want them to think that they are above you and they know everything and you are just students in their class who have to learn from them.

Marla: If you could formalize an ideal personality, what kind of teaching skills would the person have based on what you've seen with her (from the film)? What kind of skills did she have from someone in that profession? Not personality or behaviors but actual skills.

Girl 2: I don't know if this is a skill but she promotes active and collaborative learning.

Marla: Okay so she has some form of communication skills and teamwork skills. That is a form of emotional intelligence skills, they are called the soft skills. Do you think that those types of skills are important to have?

Girl 1: She is also very engaging when she was talking to them and she uses engaging examples that are going to catch their attention. And the fact that she chose Anne Frank was really good because if she had chosen some gang related book about a certain gang it still would have divided the class. The fact that the entire class came to this and they all looked at the story of Anne Frank from the same perspective without knowing anything prior and without having an emotional connection to the characters.

Marla: So she totally understood who those kids were and because she took time to understand who they were, she was capable of introducing something to them.

Girl 2: Even though when she started out the result was fighting and stuff. She showed them something that was completely neutral to all of them.

Marla: Do you think that that would be intuitive? That it would be empathetic? Would it be any of those words to describe her actions?

Girl 2: I think intuitive. Also an openness. She didn't go into the situation pretending to know exactly what she was doing. She came in there and saw what her audience was like.

Marla: So she was flexible and adaptable. When we get back to the teachers you've had, we will discuss what your experiences have been. (Wraps up first part).

Marla: I have an underlying theory that kids actually come to school intrinsically motivated to learn. This means that you want to learn because its enading you that you are excited to learn and that by the ages 6-9 the intrinsic motivation to learn gets stomped on. The kids have had negative experiences in school. So my theory is that until you get to university or college, there is eventually something that you are really passionate about and you don't need your mom and dad to tell you what to do, you don't need your teacher to tell you. You are doing it because you want to do it. I think in the middle, that elementary and high school should be places that you actually have a safe environment that is enjoyable to learn. That you're not afraid to make a mistake in that kind of scenario. Therefore, I feel it is even more imperative for people who are teaching to have skills and characteristics that you guys all define. You are defining skills over these focus groups that I am going to be using to go to the next step. So the next question is, have you ever experienced in your educational lifetime, a teacher or teachers who in fact motivated you to learn and if so what did that make you feel like emotionally?

Girl 2: Does it have to be from Sir Robert Borden?

Marla: No.

Girl 2: Because I didn't have any inspirational teachers at Borden. I had very inspirational teachers from Hillel Academy.

Marla: Could you identify him?

Girl 2: That was Mr. Wilson. He had a really unorthodox way of teaching and he was actually frowned upon by the board and all the parents because they didn't like his teaching styles. They actually gave him a curriculum and told him he had to follow it and he wasn't allowed to teach the way he wanted to.

Marla: What did Mr. Wilson do?

Girl 2: He used different kinds of word choices. If we didn't really work hard on an assignment he called it a "Micky-von-mess-jobby-wabby." We put on this play where we would each have to recite a monologue at the beginning and he wrote them out for each of us and based them on our personalities.

Marla: Wow, he took the time to do that?

Girl 2: Ya and there were twenty-four of us. He took the time to write out twenty-four monologues based on each of our personalities.

Marla: How did that make you feel when he did that?

Girl 2: I didn't understand mine, but it was the fact that it was for us each individually that made me feel like he actually took the time to know me...

Girl 3: ...and he knew more than you knew yourself. The one he wrote for me I don't remember now but I remember when I was reading it I thought, wow, this does relate to me.

Girl 2: In mine he said that I had potential and I needed to take the time to realize it and I didn't understand it then or the words he used but it just felt good.

Marla: Do you think that he actually changed your life? When you look back now and the decisions that you've made, did he impact you in your future life?

Girl 3: I think so. We read Shakespeare with him in grade seven and a few years later I went to see the play and wanted to write a letter to him right after I saw it. He was the first person I wanted to tell that I saw that play.

Marla: So is he still there?

Girl 2: I think so. They treat him like crap though.

Girl 3: I think he left actually. What I found about him was that even in grade seven he would give us these poems that I still probably wouldn't understand now but he changed my way of thinking in general. Originally you look at something like that, a poem or a Shakespeare play and you think that you are completely incapable of doing it but he kind of changed our attitudes about that. He helped us to try and tackle it and work through it and I think that has followed me throughout all of my schooling. Instead of looking at something and thinking I am completely incapable of doing it I'll look at the task and work through it. That has definitely followed me.

Marla: So was he older or younger?

Girl 3: He was older. He carried a briefcase and he was pretty eccentric.

Marla: That's interesting. Do you think that his eccentric personality was best to click with you guys at that age because he was that way and not like everybody else?

Girl 4: He didn't know what he was talking about half the time. I think he would be more suited for high school or university than he is for middle school.

Marla: Did he make you want to come to class? Did you feel like it was important?

Girl 3: Definitely. He actually did exercises with us at the beginning of class. He seemed so excited to be there and he loved what he was doing. I went back recently and saw two of my other teachers that were there and they asked me what I wanted to do in life and I told them I'm not sure yet, and they actually told me to not become a teacher and to trust them on it.

Marla: This is interesting. Having those teachers you didn't like, how would you define them as people? And as students, could you tell when a teacher walked in the room and they were bitter and didn't want to be there?

Everyone: Definitely.

Marla: And what did that feel like? If you are just sitting there and you have an hour to spend with this person?

Boy 2: You don't want to be there.

Girl 3: If they don't want to be there, then why should I be there? Why should I put in any effort if they aren't putting in any effort to teach me?

Marla: So in other words, if the teacher that you saw made the effort and you saw that they were passionate, would that be one of those positive aspects? That's why I like to talk about facial expressions. We are very in tuned to everything around us. If you see some teacher walk in and you see a grumpy looking face or you see somebody with a warm kind of happy face, it affects you. Over the years, have you had teacher walk in with facial expressions like that?

Girl 1: With this one teacher in high school, Madame Murelle, you could tell she just didn't want to be there. She just sort of looked like, why am I doing this? It felt like she resented us.

Marla: And when you sat there did she ever call on you to speak in class or to do stuff?

Girl 1: No, we just watched movies.

Girl 2: She never put the effort in to want to make us learn. And she had a lot of favoritism.

Girl 3: I mean I had a teacher at Borden who would spend the first half hour talking about the Harris Government and how hard it was to be a teacher.

Marla: So that wouldn't be a good characteristic of someone coming in and complaining about stuff. You're there to be students. What do you guys think the teacher's job is? Do you think they are there just to give you information and then make sure that you get it or are you there to waste time? It appears that there are some teachers who feel that their job is just to baby sit, to pass the time. What do you think a teacher's job is?

Girl 2: I think that you won't retain everything they teach you in their class but it's more that they should be teaching you how to learn and how to work hard and to want to learn is more important.

Girl 3: And when a teacher also marks your work, it is really tough to get a terrible grade when you worked really hard on something. You think, what is the point of me working hard when you are giving me bad grades?

Girl 1: If you want them to learn you need to give positive reinforcement as opposed to telling them what they did wrong.

Marla: That's a really good point. Do you think that it's important for the teacher to understand the strengths of all their students and looking at each student to understand who they are instead of focusing on them as group and that some will be bright and some won't and that's just the way it goes?

Boy 2: I think that kind of depends on age too. A teacher should be teaching information but they should also be teaching their students about themselves. I have had teachers who really challenged me and those were the teachers I respect to this day.

Marla: So how did they challenge you?

Boy 2: They made me work harder. They'd give me marks and tell me I could do better, instead of those teachers who just don't care.

Marla: Okay so what you felt is that those teachers challenged you and that they were caring and they actually cared about your ability to do well rather than you just being a number. I'm trying to grasp these characteristics because in the end I think there will be a way of analyzing personalities and behaviors and skills before the teacher actually gets into a classroom or how to advance skills for teachers who are already in school. What does it mean to you guys to learn? What does learning mean? It can mean different things to different people.

Boy 2: Being able to apply things to real life. Important skills are the ones that you're going to need after school when you need to raise a family, when you go to work, when you are outside of school. It's those things that they should be teaching because that's what learning is to me.

Marla: How often in your past life have you felt that you were learning?

Boy 1: I've had teachers in the past that I've wanted to do well for. You felt like if you got a bad grade or if you didn't perform well that you would disappoint them, which would in turn disappoint you.

Marla: When you wanted to do well, why did you want to do well?

Boy 1: There was respect because I felt like I respected most of my teachers. I had a bond with one particular teacher at Borden but that also could have just been because he was the coach of the football team.

Marla: If you had to come up with an answer, what was important about them getting to know you personally? Is that something that you think is important for teachers to do?

Girl 3: I think that them getting to know you makes you believe in yourself more. For example, in math class, I was horrible. One time in math class with Mrs. Zoray, she kept me behind after class one day and told me that I could do better. So, she met me every single morning for about two weeks and I started to believe that if someone could make that time for you then you should be able to make it for yourself.

Marla: And emotionally, how did you feel when she was doing that for you?

Girl 3: It was great. You do start to believe in yourself. She was extremely dedicated. You feel proud when you finally get a good mark and you want to show them that you can do it.

Marla: You said that she believed in you. On the reverse end, has anybody ever been humiliated in class?

Girl 1: Yes.

Marla: What did that feel like?

Girl 1: I cried. This is a really embarrassing story, but I got my period in class and I was really embarrassed about it. So when I got back to class, I sat in the back and my teacher asked me to come pick up a paper from the front of the class. I really didn't want to get up so he put it on the ground and told me to come pick it up. So I asked someone in the front to pass it back to me and they did and he just screamed at me telling me I disrespected him and that I had to stay after class. So I stayed and just started bawling and he told me I disrespected him. So I pretty much called him an asshole after I told him what had happened. After that I did not like him. He would be really nice one day and he would come in another day and just be a complete jerk. You never knew what to expect with him,

Girl 2: He chose favorites too. If you weren't his favorite you wouldn't get good marks.

Marla: Do you find that a lot of teachers from high school had favorites?

Girl 2: Yes.

Girl 3: Yes.

Boy 1: Yes and in university too.

Marla: Do you feel like when a teacher in elementary or high school makes a connection with you, is that something that makes you want to learn more in their class?

Girl 3: I have two examples of that. One is the good side and one is the bad side. When my grandfather died I went to a few of my teachers and told them I had to go to Montreal and one teacher I had that day gave me a zero on the test we were supposed to have and I wasn't allowed to retake it because he thought it was an excuse. Then I had another teacher who came up to me and stayed with me for half an hour to make sure I was okay and she e-mailed me while I was in Montreal to make sure I was okay. When I came back she was just very understanding where as with this other teacher I had to go to the principal and go above him to make sure I could retake the test. And then he failed me on it anyway.

Marla: Do you think that teachers can affect your life down the road negatively? Do you think that it's really important for teachers to have that ability to see you guys and connect with you to help you in a positive way?

Girl 2: I do but I also think it's kind of unrealistic to expect so much from a teacher. I think that it's necessary that even without forming individual relationships with students, that the teacher can inspire and respect students without necessarily getting to know them one on one. Some students may not want to share their personal life with their teacher but can still learn a lot from the teacher and be really engaged in the classroom setting. It is also important for teachers to leave their issues out of the class. I had one teacher who got dumped by her fiancé and after that she just wasn't the same. She wasn't as happy.

Marla: (re asks questions). Now that you look at your life today, back then did they make a difference in your life today?

Boy 1: I have a negative example. In Carleton's commerce program you don't have to declare a major until second year. So, I was in limbo and didn't know which course I wanted to focus on and I thought finance may have been a good way to go, and the teacher I had just completely ruined it for me. He wouldn't get to know anyone, he would have an attendance list and pick a name at random and if you didn't get an answer right you would have to sit there until you got it. The whole class would watch and he would watch. It was really embarrassing. It tarnished my view of finance.

Marla: And you feel today that you didn't want to pursue finance because of that situation?

Boy 1: It's definitely a factor.

Marla: Anybody else?

Girl 2: I was thinking about the skills you were talking about like critical thinking, I didn't really learn about critical thinking until first year university in my human rights course. Before that I kind of just took everything as it was and in university especially, professors are more open to hear what you have to say and look at both sides.

Marla: And in high school are they more rigid?

Girl 2: Also in high school, I had Mr. Mcleish and I took functions and relations with him which I struggled in and I was supposed to spend every day after school before a test and he would help us for half an hour every day. He would teach us to look at a problem and work through it. It changed how I approached it.

Girl 3: And his approach was if you didn't want to learn, he couldn't care less about you. But if you wanted to learn, then he would spend an indefinite amount of time with you.

Girl 4: I had a math teacher like that too. He wouldn't go out of his way to make an appointment with you but if you did he would do it.

Girl 1: I had an opposite experience with a teacher who didn't really care even though I really wanted to do well. I kept going to him to try to get help but he just seemed to think that I was a lost cause and my marks in my other courses were pretty high so my parents got worried. I ended up having to get a tutor because I needed the help and he wouldn't help me at all.

Marla: What did he do that told you he didn't care?

Girl 1: He told me he wouldn't give me extra help because nobody else was getting extra help, even though I went to him after school and asked him to help me with something.

Girl 2: I had the same thing with another teacher who was replacing my existing teacher because she had to leave. He just didn't care because he felt like it wasn't his class to

begin with and he was just sitting in for her. He would just sit there quietly and sometimes he wouldn't even be there. He really didn't care. He was just there because he felt like he had to be there.

Marla: This is very interesting. I'm going to tell you what I have in here from research I have done. This is the positive stuff from all of the literature reviews that I've done. So, caring is important, do you agree with that? Empathetic. Show compassion. Confirming (meaning real people who can make mistakes and things go wrong sometimes), knowing and managing ones emotions, motivating oneself, high sense of self efficacy, unconditional acceptance and effective communication skills. Those are the behaviors and characteristics of what I have researched.

Focus Group 3

Marla: If you had to define Ms. Grewall's personality, the characteristics or behaviors, or skills that she had, that impacted the students to learn, what would you say? Do you agree that she impacted the students to want to learn?

Girl 1: It felt like she was proactive, she wanted to be proactive and she was hopeful. She didn't fall into the labeling theory and she made her own opinions of people and didn't base it on other peoples.

Marla: Would you call her resilient?

Girl 1: She was stubborn but in a good way.

Boy 1: She was very goal oriented. She wanted the students to want to learn. She wanted to teach them, She needed to make sure that she achieved that.

Marla: Do you think the students felt that from her?

Boy 1: Yes they could tell that she wanted to be there. So by her wanting to be there made them want to be there more and to be more involved.

Girl 1: One of the lines that she said was, "...why would they waste their time trying to learn? They know that we are wasting our time trying to teach them." So she kind of made that statement be completely opposite and put all of her effort into it. She made it her life and so by her putting all of these expectations on them, they felt like they needed to reciprocate and try.

Marla: Any other descriptions of her at all?

Girl 2: Driven. Confident. Optimistic.

Girl 3: She tried to understand their positions and she tried to use those positions to try to appeal to them. At first she didn't really understand them so she kept doing these weird exercises and she slowly began to understand them and what they were about and why they were upset why she was teaching them. She used this to her advantage in the way that she tried to relate to them.

Marla: Would you describe that as somebody who is rigid or more flexible?

Girl 3: More flexible. She adapted to their behaviors.

Marla: Any other comments?

Boy 2: I thought she was really patient. She gave them a chance to speak out so she could figure out what their problems were.

Marla: When she was patient, how do you think they interpreted that?

Boy 2: At first she wasn't like them at all and they didn't think that she could speak about the things she was speaking about because she hadn't experienced it. She therefore let them give out their experiences so she could better understand and better facilitate discussions to further help them.

Marla: But she gained their respect by listening to them?

Boy 2: Yes.

Girl 3: And she really made her rewards sincere. At the beginning she sort of used mockery a bit when she talked about gangs she tried to build them up and then she would throw them back down. She would let them know when they were wrong but when they were right, they really knew they were right and that she wasn't just feeding them with compliments for no reason,

Marla: That's interesting. What does it mean to you guys to want to learn?

Boy 3: A lot of the time it depends on the subject matter, whether you are actually interested in it or not. The teacher can heavily influence that. If they just read you the materials and how they teach it to you is really boring, you're not going to be interested and you're not going to want to learn it. So if the teacher does different exercises in class and gives you material that is actually interesting, you're going to want to learn more.

Marla: So do you think that the teacher is sort of the main catalyst for you to want to learn in class?

Boy 3: I mean sometimes it's just hopeless. When I took calculus I had no interest in the course material so it's tough to want to learn. Although, I had a great teacher in that class who kind of forced me to want to learn and helped me out (...talking about Mr. Mcleish).

Marla: When you go to school, are you excited to want to learn? What does learning enable you to do down the road? Does it have any futuristic kind of impact?

Girl 4: Well I think learning has multiple factors. Of course there is the teacher but if you aren't psychologically in a great state, or if you don't feel comfortable in the class, your mind won't be set on taking in any information and you will feel overwhelmed and you won't be able to learn what is being taught.

Marla: So the word "Learn," what does that mean to you guys?

Girl 4: Learning I think is making a connection between something that you don't already know and taking it in and conceptualizing it and being able to somehow relate it to something you already know.

Girl 2: I was going to say that the way you learn changes a lot when you're in school, I'm sure a lot of you had Mr. Becky who would mumble, but they teach you something, you memorize it and then you can spit it out. But I think when you go on to university, learning is more what you can teach yourself and it's all about self-motivation. Anyone can take the exact same course and come out with completely different results. Some of them will go home and take out extra books and learn something more and read and others will go to class, read the textbook and do the test.

Girl 5: Especially in university, it's really different and it's not as concentrated as high school. Most of my classes this year were two hundred to five hundred students in lecture courses in political science. A lot of classes were huge so you really had to motivate yourself and it's just really different because you are teaching yourself how to learn as opposed to when you are thirty people in a small classroom it's easier to hear the information and understand it. You feel like you are a number when you're in a class of five hundred students. There is no attention being paid to you as an individual student so your focus has to be something that you want to have.

Girl 3: I think the bottom line for me personally is that if I'm not interested in it, I don't care. You don't want to waste your time. I had so many university classes that I really didn't care about. With some profs, they just read off slides and I wonder how that is supposed to be interesting. You go to study for your exam and you think, wow, I'm really not interested in this. That's why so many people change majors and change their classes.

Marla: (talks about definition of skills) Skill wise, from teachers that you've had, which ones seem beneficial to make you want to learn in class?

Girl 2: I think if they think positively about me or reflect a positive notion about me.

Marla: (talks about connecting, how thesis professors didn't fully understand what it meant to connect). Do you think it's important for a teacher to be able to connect? Even if

there are two hundred or five hundred in a classroom, they may not be able to connect with you individually but a connection has to be made somewhere. Do you agree?

Boy 3: Yes. I think they need to make it available for you to be able to connect with them by giving some kind of office hours where you can go talk to them and they can better understand you.

Marla: And do you think that in order to learn that you need to be connected at some point?

Boy 2: Not always. In some big classes especially in business I don't feel like I need to have a direct connection with the professor as long as I understand what they're talking about.

Marla: I'm going to go back to elementary school, where there were smaller classes. You went to Hillel right? Yesterday there were some students who talked about some teachers from Hillel who were very good at connecting with their students.

Girl 1: I can't think of any.

Marla: Can you share any stories about specific teachers who had a positive impact and a negative impact and then how did it make a difference in your life today from the positive or the negative?

Girl 3: There's an enrichment program that is run at Carleton that I now work at every year but when I was in grade eight I had to apply for the program and Mr. Wilson basically read my application letter and said it was terrible and that I wasn't smart enough to go to the program and that he wasn't going to recommend me. I bawled my eyes out because he said it in front of all my friends too and I was mortified. Then I went to Mrs. Bryer and she told me I was a very smart girl and that she would recommend me for the program and that made my day that she said that to me. It taught me to not speak negatively to people and give them encouraging words instead of negative ones.

Girl 4: I think that Mr. Wilson was a completely uncensored teacher. There was no way he should have been teaching in that environment where there were children. He didn't know how to deal with students who had the mental capacity of thirteen year olds- which is what we were. He would have made a way better university professor.

Girl 3: A lot of the things he did were really smart but I only understand them now. I had no idea what was going on at the time.

Marla: So when you say he was smart, what was he doing?

Girl 3: He would do play-on-words and puns. His mind was always going.

Marla: So would you say that he wasn't emotionally connected? Or empathetic?

Girl 3: No. I think he assumed a little bit too much and his expectations were a little bit too high. He never gave anybody the opportunity to ask a question. He just sort of expected you to know.

Marla: Think about the positive teachers that you have had, let's talk about personality characteristics, facial expression, from the teachers that you've had. What would you define as positive characteristics of their personalities?

Boy 3: All the good teachers I can think of are all nice people.

Girl 2: They all have warm smiles.

Marla: Facial expressions can really do a job on people as well. Has anyone ever had a nasty person walk in the class who didn't look very happy, or somebody who doesn't look like they really want to be there? It's interesting because you all come to class with different backgrounds and you wonder if it's important for teachers to have some kind of

training, almost like a social work kind of training because kids come in with some many different backgrounds now.

Girl 2: I have a roommate who is in teachers college at Western and it's been really interesting to watch her because she had to do a lot of mandatory things like mandatory psychology and lots of psychological courses which I think is a really good framework because it's a lot more complex now as opposed to back then when we just didn't know. She was a replacement this year with students who were all from the ghetto of London, Ontario, where the majority of kids lived in subsidized housing and these kids really impacted her. They were in grade eight and had the reading comprehension of grade four.

Marla: And that's reality. What have the teachers been like that you've had in teacher's ed (asks girl who is currently in teacher's college)? Have they been positive?

Girl 3: Yes. But she was still wants to be authoritative to get our respect. She taught us that you want to be an authority figure but you also want to learn a line of the hierarchy when there is a teacher standing and all the students sitting before her or him. So, there is a balance that you have to set and you have to be persistent and warm and flexible and adaptive. It's a lot of characteristics to take on and I think you are aware of it initially when you step into the classroom but it's definitely hard to keep track of all of them. We had to do teaching experience every year and I've gone to private school all my life and this year I walked into a public school in Montreal for three weeks and thirty percent of the school is below the poverty line. Some students in my class were evicted when I was there and coming to school filthy and the teacher had to talk to them in a way that wasn't embarrassing to their classmates, giving them soap and a towel. It was really hard for me to relate and I had to look at the way I dressed before I went because I wanted to look professional but it was really hard. There were a lot of different things to take into account from a teacher's perspective and I think that adaptability and being able to relate to your students is the most important and relating to the class as a whole and individually is important. That is essentially what learning means.

Marla: It's interesting having your opinion from teacher's college because those are really important ends. When you had positive experiences at school as a kid in elementary school and high school, what did that make you feel like when it was a positive experience? Did it actually make you want to learn based on your teacher?

Girl 1: It kind of makes you feel like they are putting an effort into me so I may as well put an effort back.

Marla: So would you not put an effort back if you weren't going to get it from them?

Girl 1: I'm graduating next month and I just had my last exam last week and it's only right now that I really want to learn. I relate it to running. I love running and I can run for ten kilometers straight without a break but whenever I enter a race and somebody is beside me, I stop and I panic and I can't do it. It's almost as if the grading at school and writing the papers and taking tests at a certain time puts pressure on me and it makes me not want to learn. In a lot of my classes I get a mandatory grade so if I write the paper I'll get an automatic B and if I do better I'll get an A+ or whatever and that to me is amazing because I have to do the paper anyway but I'm not going to have the pressure of getting a good grade.

Marla: That's interesting I've heard of some teachers doing that. Any other stuff about emotions at school that you've had an experience connecting with a teacher and you really wanted to learn and you're excited about being there. What did that feel like?

Girl 4: I've had good teachers but nothing outstanding. I can tell that it's hard for teachers because they have to embody so many different things to be a good teacher. I had a professor who got terrible reviews and you can tell she's really passionate about teaching but she just didn't know how. She'd come to class and make jokes and was really encouraging about office hours but she didn't know about to properly teach the students. She didn't appropriately connect with students.

Marla: How could she have connected with students in a better way?

Girl 4: She would read off the slides and it was a two-hour lecture class twice a week and she would always just read. You can tell that she knows a lot but for some reason she doesn't rely on her own abilities to teach properly. She did this thing that was ten percent of a participation mark and she would randomly take attendance, which was pretty much the only reason I went to class. She just didn't understand all the things that went along with teaching and it was sad.

Marla: It's very common at university. A lot of the professors haven't a clue how to connect and that's a whole other thing I'm interested in.

Girl 2: If they are just going to read off the slides, what's the point in going to class? You can just get them online.

Marla: That's a really good point. Now let's go back in your past. Did you ever have teachers who would read off of projectors?

Boy 1: I had worse.

Marla: Okay so now you're back in elementary school and high school and you have a teacher doing that. Did that turn you on to learning? Did that turn you off to learning?

Boy 1: What happened to me is once that happens you just lose interest and you just start talking to people around you and the teacher gets mad at you and you get kicked out or you get in trouble. Then you just get upset and you won't want to learn what they are teaching you if you are upset.

Marla: Did you have a lot of teachers like that at Hillel or Borden?

Girl 2: I don't think Hillel can afford overhead projectors.

Girl 4: I had a teacher at Borden named Ms. Ends and I left that class three times. I would yawn when I was in her class and I'm usually not disrespectful but it was the most boring class. I had her three years in a row too. The only thing that she knew how to do was put a sheet on a projector and tell you to do work in the book. It's such a waste of time and it is the worst teaching method.

Girl 1: And she was so dull.

Marla: Do you in fact agree that the teacher is a major focal point of your learning?

Girl 1: Definitely.

Girl 3: Definitely.

Marla: And now, if I had to make this picture of the perfect teacher, and I'm not talking about looks, we're talking about everything from facial expressions etc. If you could take from what you saw (teacher from the movie) to reflect back on your past, the ideal personality and behaviors of a teacher to truly impact a student. In general, if you were hiring a teacher for your high school or your elementary school, what in fact would you look for in that person?

Boy 4: I think they have to be enthusiastic. Not dull at all. And wanting to learn and they would have to be eager and excited.

Girl 1: Positive attitude.

Girl 3: And have a passion to want to help other people.

Girl 2: And help motivate students. Not just be like, I'm really smart and I know what I'm doing.

Girl 3: Not cocky.

Marla: So someone who truly believes they want to be there.

Girl 2: Ya. Like the teacher from the movie. She starts getting them to write in the journals and gives them the option for her to read them or not. That one woman said that they didn't want them to learn, they just wanted them to obey. She (the teacher) didn't tell them to obey he,r she gave them the option. When you're given the option you're more likely to go down the right route. When you're forced to do something you're not going to do it.

Marla: Having choices or being given some way to choose impacts you as a learner.

Girl 2: And it kind of validates the students as something more than just high school students that are going through an education system.

Marla: It shows them that they are real people and not just numbers.

Girl 4: Flexibility and adaptability are so important too. They have to realize that every student is different and you have to be able to treat them all fairly.

Girl 3: Apparently teachers have class lists with numbers from one to four so the teachers who have the students the following year read this ranking system and automatically know how that particular student did and marks them according to that. And that shows students that if they are a B student they may as well just keep trying to get B's.

Marla: Have you ever experienced anybody in your classes who had that kind of experience and then somebody believed in them and turned it around for them? Any friends of yours, or if you have had that experience? You were affected negatively and then someone saw that you had the potential and they were there to turn things around for you.

Girls 2: There are always people out there who are kind of willing to take a chance on you.

Marla: Have you ever experienced a teacher like that for you?

Girl 2: Mrs. Barker in high school. I loved the class and I never did my homework and I never studied and so she asked me to come in everyday after class and she helped me through everything and taught me everything and I ended up failing the class with a forty-five but she was so impressed with my effort that she ended up passing me.

Marla: Emotionally, how did that make you feel?

Girl 2: Great but kind of guilty. But my entire life I wanted to go back and re do that class to prove to her and prove to myself that I can do it. At the moment it makes me feel like she believed in me enough to pass me.

Marla: Anybody else have anything? Like when you were struggling and the teacher really gave you a second chance?

Girl 2: I have another one. Mr. Laphier in grade-twelve biology. I stopped going to class and actually got a drop form and I gave it to my dad. He said I wasn't dropping it and secretly met with my teacher after I had stopped going to class for a week and the teacher agreed that I was smart enough and that I was going to stay in it. It made me feel great that they believed in me and I was smart enough to do it. So I stayed in the class and caught up with all the work I missed and I didn't do that great but I passed. That was so validating for me.

Girl 1: When I finished at Hillel and came to Borden I was pretty sheltered at that point and I went into an art class but for some reason it seemed like the most ghetto art class ever. There were like sixteen black kids, six Arabs and five Chinese people and me. It was the scariest class I've ever been in. I'd been in the class for two weeks and we had to hand in an art assignment and all the ghetto kids threw out my project because I was Jewish and they put it in the garbage. So after three weeks when we had the drop opportunity, I dropped the class and my art teacher who was like the nicest man ever, called my house and he asked me to come back to the class and I remember answering the phone and saying I wasn't going to. No teacher has ever done that.

Marla: So how did you feel when he did that?

Girl 1: I was pleased that he actually thought of me to the point that he called my house to ask me to come back to the class. I felt kind of guilty but I just couldn't learn in that environment.

Girl 2: Grade-eleven biology with Mr. Potvin, great guy but I was not doing well. I had a thirty-five in his class and high school was not my brightest moment but after half way through the year I would leave the class almost crying everyday. At the time I was sort of embarrassed and really angry at him for doing this but after class he held me back and he asked me how bad my depression was and if he needed to call my family and he was so concerned for my well-being. Obviously I wasn't depressed but every time I got a bad grade I thought, wow I'm so depressed, I hate my life. He took it literally and he was so nice and compassionate. Then I was really mad at him and I dropped the class but thinking back now I think that it was great.

Marla: So you said the word compassionate, do you think compassion is an important personality characteristic?

Girl 2: I think getting to know your students and caring for them is important.

Girl 1: And showing concern for them is important.

Marla: When you are one person sitting in that chair and your teacher doesn't have some kind of relationship with you or doesn't show any kind of caring, you get kind of lost. And if you're really not good at that subject, and they don't pick up on it you're not going to turn around.

Girl 2: Do you remember Mrs. Byron (Burns?). Well she really didn't like girls. I had really good grades in university and I'm not saying that I'm smart but I'm saying that I have gradeshmanship and I always go to my teachers office hours and I talk to them all the time. I don't know what it was with her but I guess I got some answers wrong and I have no shame. If I don't know the answer I'm going to answer it anyway. I would raise my hand in her class and she just wouldn't answer me. That was really discouraging. Not only that but when you answered wrong you would know it right away.

Marla: And how would you feel when she did that?

Girl 2: It felt awful.

Girl 1: You're not going to raise your hand again.

Marla: Did you totally turn off wanting to be there at that point?

Girl 2: Yes, I would dread going to her class. My grades plummeted.

Girl 1: I went from an eighty-five to a sixty in the first semester with her.

Marla: From most people I talk to, they feel like they are doing better in university than they did in high school, unless it's an A+ student all the way through. A lot of the time I don't think high school students would necessarily go visit a teacher about their marks.

Sometimes there's fear to go up to the teacher because nobody wants to embarrass himself or herself. Let me ask you this. How did those positive experiences with your teacher or teachers impact you today? How did it make a difference to you now? Now we're looking at happy thoughts.

Girl 2: I actually, last week, wrote my prof thanking him for a great semester and he wrote me back saying its students like you that make teaching fantastic. A sentence like that really motivated me to want to learn more and appreciate all the work they put in.

Marla: So what about him saying that clicked with you?

Girl 2: It's just so positive. It makes me realize that the effort I put into class and everything I do not only affected me and how I learned but it also affected him and made him realize that people were getting something from what he was teaching. It made me feel good that he was happy with his teaching and happy with his students.

Marla: Does anybody have any stories from elementary school or from high school?

Girl 4: I had a really good English teacher in grade eleven and twelve in high school. Her name was Ms. Auger and she either works at Ottawa U or Carleton now. She was definitely the best teacher I've ever had. She genuinely and sincerely cared about her students. She always offered a re-test option of tests and quizzes. At the time it felt juvenile to be offered a second chance but at the same time it's really important.

Boy 1: She also put a lot of trust into the students because we marked our own tests.

Girl 3: When you are given respect you are less likely to act out.

Marla: It makes me think back to that movie. Because those kids in that movie were expected to ruin things, they expected themselves to do that.

Girl 3: I don't know if this had anything to do with what you want but if you look at marks and the conflict theory it's almost like all of these groups and gangs were like the proletariat and the bourgeoisie trying to get above each other and in the end it's almost as if Marx's prediction of a revolution kind of came and all these gangs came together and rose above and sort of became one level.

Marla: That makes me think of Israel and the Palestinians.

Girl 4: The French Revolution.

Girl 3: It makes you think if it'll ever happen. Probably not in our lifetime. It's not like they went to Communism, which is what Marx predicted, but they all thought that the others were above them in the hierarchal chain and they came to realize that they were all at the same level.

Marla: It's a matter of connecting and coming out on equal ground. (Shows picture and explains learning qualities on the triangle).