# AN EXAMINATION OF EFFECTIVE TEAM PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS ON MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL.

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Educational Administration

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May, 1995
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KEY WORDS: Teaming, Effective teaming, Motivation, Middle School, Team Perception, Team Action, Teaming Practices

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to examine effective team perceptions and actions on motivating students to learn in a middle school. In this study, an effective team is a group of two to five teachers responsible for sharing a common group of students in the core subjects -- mathematics, science, language, and social studies, share common planning, have teamed together three or more years, and have teaming training. In this study, motivation is the acts or intentions that cause student engagement in classroom activities. This study examines teachers perceptions and actions for motivating students to learn within a theoretical framework.

Three teams at a Virginia middle school were examined by survey, interview, observation, and review. Analysis of qualitative descriptive data revealed that the three teams at the study site motivate students to learn in four theoretical patterns and one pattern outside the theoretical framework. (1) In the team context, the teams motivated students to learn using task oriented motivational constructs. (2) In the class context, the teams motivated students to learn using task

oriented motivation. (3) In the individual student context, the teams motivated students to learn using ability performance motivational constructs. (4) In the whole school context, these three teams motivated students to learn using ability performance motivational constructs. In the findings clarification review, these three teams reported a fifth pattern. This pattern involved effective teacher practices for motivating students to learn which were influenced by effective administrative practices.

Acknowledgements

This study represents the collective support and generous effort of many kind and thoughtful people. Dr. Steve Parson, Dr. David Parks, and Dr. Jerry Niles gave so much of their patience, teaching, skill and vision in my association with them over the past four years. Dr. Bob Madigan and Dr. Thomas Gatewood gave unselfishly of their time and expertise as members of my committee. Students are products of their experiences and choices they make in the learning experience, I deeply appreciate this team of educators for the full and rich experiences they shared and in their guidance for helping me make good choices throughout this study process.

My wife -- Sara and children -- Beth, Jay, and Tyler provided much needed encouragement while I worked too long and too often away from them. I am grateful for the dedicated and committed effective teams of teachers who have shared their experience, time, and stories with me. Above all, inspiration came from my parents, whose dedication and caring inspired me to understand diligence and commitment. I am reminded by all these friends and family that life is best lived one day at a time enjoying all the wonders of that experience.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Background of the Study

Anyone fortunate enough to spend time and share space in a middle school with early adolescents and the effective teams that serve these students will quickly notice two things. Young adolescents are driven by a need to belong and a need to discover their identity. Effective teams address these needs through shared belief systems that nurture individual student self-esteem and motivate students to learn. The purpose of this study was to examine this relationship in an attempt to describe how effective teams motivate students to learn.

Teaming has been advocated by middle level experts as the key feature of effective middle level programs (Alexander & George, 1981; Carnegie, 1989; Epstein & Mac Iver, 1990; Erb & Doda, 1989; George & Oldaker, 1985; Johnston & Markle, 1986; Merenbloom, 1986). In this text, teaming is defined as the organization of two or more teachers from different disciplines who share the same group of students and share the responsibility for the curriculum, instruction, and evaluation of that group (Alexander & George, 1981; Erb & Doda, 1989).

Effective teams are defined as being well organized, using attention to students as their central focus, sharing responsibility and growth opportunities, and coordinating

curriculum and instruction. The research of Erb and Doda (1989) and Gibson (1994) has formalized the development and interaction of effective teams into four domains:

Domain 1 - organization

Domain 2 - attention to students

Domain 3 - sharing responsibilities and growth

Domain 4 - coordinating curriculum.

There are a series of practices exhibited by effective teams within each domain (See Table 1).

Effective teams of teachers serving students on small teams personalize the school day, connect the relevancy of subjects to other subjects and the real world, and develop student to teacher trust through day to day individualized contacts (Newman, 1993). Newman stated "when students are teamed, the needs of adolescents are addressed individually and communally" (p. 126).

This is accomplished because students spend longer periods of time with teachers in formal and informal activities that are focused on collaboration, extended contact and task oriented relationships (Newman, 1993). Effective teams redefine traditional student to teacher relationships by focusing on the child rather than the subject.

Table 1:
Effective Team Practices

| Domain | "Practices" |
|---|---|
| Organization | holds regular, scheduled meetings<br>uses guidelines for conduct at meetings<br>keeps a file with copies of meeting agendas<br>appoints or elects a member to keep notes<br>follows through on team decisions<br>evaluates team functioning<br>clarifies and resolves disputes in meetings |
| Attention to students | prepares for student/parent conferences<br>uses the same discipline in classes<br>recognizes student accomplishment<br>meets with special needs teachers<br>has and uses guidelines for student change<br>meets to resolve student problem<br>takes students on team outings |
| Shares growth and responsibility | shares information<br>pools information when calling parent<br>shares ideas about classroom practice<br>has each member keep records for students<br>decide as a group how to spend funds<br>make suggestions to administration |
| Coordinates curriculum and instruction | teaches cross subject skills in all classes<br>coordinates test and homework due dates<br>members are aware of units taught by other<br>recommend purchases considering instruction<br>introduce new instructional techniques<br>plan interdisciplinary units<br>teach interdisciplinary units |

Note:

Adapted from Factors present during the development of exemplary interdisciplinary teams in middle level schools. P. K. Gibson, 1994 (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1993). Reprinted with permission.

The research of Midgley, Maerh, & Urdan (1993) proposes motivating students through task motivation. This type of motivation means mastering tasks and learning for purely intrinsic reasons. At the opposite end of this spectrum is ability motivation. This type of motivation means learning in order to outperform others. (See Table 2). Motivation in this text means the reason for doing something, committing to a course of action, and becoming a primary factor in determining student levels and quality of engagement in the classroom (Anderman & Maehr, 1994).

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine effective team perceptions on motivating students to learn and to examine effective team actions on motivating students to learn. These purposes gave rise to one major question and two sub questions for this study:

1. How do effective teams motivate students to learn?
    a. What are effective team perceptions on how to motivate students to learn?
    b. What are effective team actions in motivating students to learn?

Table 2:

Definitions of Task and Ability Motivating Constructs

| **Team Perception** | **Task Motivation** | **Ability Motivation** |
|---|---|---|
| Views student success as: | developing through effort and improvement | being inherited and fixed |
| Motivating by encouraging students: | to take risks | to avoid failure |
| Instilling student satisfaction in: | progressing and improving | being the best student in class |
| Uses student work and performance: | as a measure of growth and potential for learning | as a measure to establish grade distributions for class |
| Views student effort for: | trying for meaning of activity | trying to show one's worth & being the best in class |
| Uses evaluation for: | evidence of progress | Norms, social comparison |
| Views student error as: | as a part of the growth process and is informational | as failure & lack of ability or worth |
| Views student competence as: | developing through effort | as ability based, inherited & fixed |

Note:

Adapted from Motivation and schooling in the middle grades. E.M. Andermann and M.L.Maehr 1994. Review of Educational Research, 64, p. 295. Copyright 1994 by the American Education Research Association. Adapted by permission.

## Procedure

A perspective on effective teaming behaviors will be used as the framework for selecting a sample of effective teams in a middle school. See Table 1. This study utilizes the four domains for effective teaming established by Erb and Doda (1989) and further tested by Gibson (1994) as a basis to identify a sample for study. After the sample is selected, the teams will be examined to determine how effective teams perceive and act on motivating students to learn.

This research will identify convergent patterns (how effective teams use task motivation) and divergent patterns (how effective team use ability performance motivation) through qualitative inquiry (Guba, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1990). This procedure and the theoretical basis for this methodological approach is shown in Table 3.

## Significance

Effective teaming cannot benefit students until the teaching team progresses beyond the stress of early organization and turns to activities affecting students (Gibson, 1994). The significance of this study lies in the commitment this school has made to teaming at this middle school. Such a commitment should be

Table 3:

Methodological Approach for Research.

| Step | Research Basis |
|---|---|
| 1 & 2: | |
| Collection and analysis of data on effective teaming. (teacher survey) | Erb & Doda, 1989<br>Gibson, 1994 |
| 3: | |
| Collection and analysis of data on motivation for student learning. (Teacher interview, observation, and review) Convergent/Divergent Pattern & Themes | Anderman & Maehr, 1994<br>Guba, 1978<br>Miles & Huberman, 1994<br>Patton, 1990 |
| 4: | |
| Analysis of convergent and divergent patterns, negative case discussion, and follow up with participants for findings accuracy and clarity. | Guba, 1978<br>Lincoln & Guba, 1985<br>Miles & Huberman, 1994<br>Patton, 1990 |
| 5: | |
| Findings and Conclusions review. (member checks) Verification, clarification, and accuracy | Guba, 1978<br>Lincoln & Guba, 1985<br>Miles & Huberman, 1994<br>Patton, 1990 |

based on research that identifies that teaming enhances positive and appropriate benefits for students.

## Assumptions

The main assumptions for this study are inferred from previous educational research. The first assumption is that effective teams enhance student learning. The second assumption is that effective teaming leads to motivational strategies that use task motivation.

## Limitations

The sample to be used in this study is limited. It is a small sample developed to focus on a limited area of study. The constraints of using a small sample in a systematic identification process impedes generalizing to other schools or school divisions. The sample includes only effective teams which do not include all variables associated with middle level practice variables such as core subjects, block schedules, planning arrangements, and advisor-advisee programs.

More research is needed on less effective teams, teams not having all characteristics in the definitions used in this study, and those teams that have ceased to operate as teams. More research will be needed on variations in motivation strategies among effective teams.

It is possible that positive conditions affecting effective team beliefs on motivating students to learn in this school might be negative conditions in other schools. Variables such as demographics, school climate, finances, leadership, student age range, social norms, and legislation may impact differently on the results in different study sites.

## Overview of Subsequent Sections

This study includes existing and new research on teaming and student learning in middle schools. Chapter 2 contains an overview of the literature on effective teaming characteristics and theoretical foundations for motivating students to learn. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the procedures for gathering data, identification and selection of samples for study, analysis procedures for discussion and categorization of data, and procedures for establishing credibility, validity, and reliability features of the study.

Chapter 4 includes a discussion of the sample selected, analysis of data collected on convergent and divergent patterns of effective team strategies for motivating students. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the conclusions drawn from descriptive analysis of the patterns for motivation, implications of the research, and recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teaming is a way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning (Erb & Doda, 1989). Though varying in composition and size, teams are generally comprised of two to five teachers who represent diverse subject areas, share common planning and instructional time with common sets of students.

Erb and Doda (1989) reported that team organization is deceptively simple. When teachers take advantage of teaming, their work life and the productivity of the learning environment are fundamentally and positively changed. Communication patterns change instruction. The needs of students are better served. Findings have emerged to suggest that effective teams have higher expectations of students, are more student oriented, and have increased task related interaction with peers and students.

## Effective Teaming

Effective teaming is one answer to the call of "effective schools" researchers for more personalized instruction of early adolescents. Two models form the basis of research for this study on how effective teams actually work in schools.

In the first model, Erb and Doda (1989), based on close observation of a large group of teams (100 identified exemplary middle level teams), propose a four-domain model, with many specific conditions which they believe characterize effective teams. The domains shown in Table 1 include:

1. organization
2. attention to students
3. sharing growth and responsibility
4. coordinating curriculum

Erb and Doda contend teams become expert in one domain and then turn attention to other domains, showing less activity on the domains already mastered. Gibson (1994) tested Erb and Doda's model and defined the practices of effective teams shown in Table 1.

Gibson (1994) tested the Erb and Doda (1989) model in a random sample (n= 30) of 156 of Virginia middle schools serving grades six through eight. Gibson studied 7 small schools, 15 medium sized schools, and 8 large schools. The population of schools serving grades six through eight ranged from 50 students to 1900 students with a mean population 700 students. A total of 19.3% of Virginia schools, serving grades six through eight, made up the sample.

This sample included 12 schools that had teams made up of 2 to 5 teachers, teaching core subjects which included language, math, science, and social studies, sharing common

students and planning, with half of the team members operating two or more years on the team, and team teaching experience of five or more years. The population of students served by these twelve schools came from a variety of socio-economic and cultural groups, lived in a variety of neighborhoods, and were supported by parents in a variety of livelihoods.

At the twelve schools Gibson surveyed 71 teams and found 16 to be effective based on the definitions used by Erb and Doda (1989). Gibson discovered four trends in the use of effective teaming:

> One group of the sample (7 of the 16 teams studied) concentrated their energy in administrative activities scheduling or organizing: Domain 1, organization.
>
> The second group (5 of the 16 teams studied) focused on transitional activities changing teaming practice to address student needs: Domain 2, attention to students.
>
> The third group (4 of the 16 teams studied) worked primarily in reflecting about curriculum and instructional practice: Domain 4, coordinating curriculum.
>
> All the sample had reported activity in the four domains, but the sample reflected the high value put on factors initiated by administrators or the interaction of the team members resulting in a branching of effective teaming within Domain 3, sharing responsibility and growth.
>
> (Gibson, 1994, p. 169, 170)

An important conclusion in this study is the teachers in this sample agreed with theorists on the developmental factors for effective teaming, but there was no textbook approach for the emergence of effective teams (Gibson, 1994).

The underlying assumption in these studies was effective teaming practice leads to enhanced benefits to students. Although this assumption was present in the studies, it was not part of the research. In the studies, the researchers found a positive connection of teachers to students. Erb and Doda (1989) cited a pervasive sense of caring by teachers for students that led to higher expectations and more support for students. Gibson (1994) suggests achievement increased as team effectiveness increased. These findings support the assumption that effective teaming leads to positive student outcomes.

This assumption is not supported fully by current literature. Arhar, Johnston and Markle (1988) found mixed results when studying teaming and achievement in their review of the literature. George and Oldaker(1985) reported that 62% of schools organized in teams, noted that achievement gains were associated with effective teaming, particularly in the area of mathematics. This study however was based on the view of principals who had limited knowledge of what was occurring in classrooms.

The clearest results of teaming appear in the studies of affective areas. Discipline improves, attendance improves, grades improve, and parent contact improves. (Alexander & George, 1981; Arhar, Johnston & Markle, 1989; George, 1982, George & Oldaker, 1985; and Metz, 1986).

Some students handle early adolescence more successfully than others. For those who cannot cope with all of the changes and demands they encounter, "the engagement of many youth in learning diminishes, and their rate of alienation, substance abuse, absenteeism, and dropping out of school begins to rise"(Carnegie, 1989, p.9). School organizational features like teaming should increase student engagement and motivate students to learn through redefining teacher beliefs in reasons for student performance. This core of team behaviors is essential in allowing early adolescents to find their identity and sense of belonging (Calabrese & Seldin, 1987).

## Effective Team Perceptions for Motivating Students to Learn

Middle schools are populated by early adolescents, students age 11 to 15, in a period heightened by an awareness of emerging adulthood. Motivation at this level has a special sense of urgency, as well as, certain degrees of problems (Anderman & Maehr, 1994). Many commission reports, including Carnegie's Turning Points (1989) and the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk (1983) call for addressing "the problems of motivating the adolescent".

Motivation has recently been studied by middle level experts examining the organizational arrangements and belief systems that minimize alienation and develop affiliations with others. Teachers grouped in teams develop the thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions held by the team as a whole. (Erikson, 1968; Newman, 1981; & Weiner, 1991).

Effective teams build social bonds that motivate students to learn through four elements established by Hirschi (1969) and further discussed by Finn (1989):

- Attachment as a concern of the opinions of others.
- Commitment as a rational decision to behave in acceptable ways because of gratification of immediate and long-term goals.
- Involvement as the expenditure of time and energy in institutionally encouraged behaviors.
- Belief as a view that principles encouraged by the organization are valid.

(Hirschi, 1969 & Finn, 1989).

Using these domains for research within the team context, researchers recently have focused primarily on two types of motivation: task and ability motivation. In combination these motivational strategies can have qualitatively different effects on many types of behaviors (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Legget, 1988; Maehr, Pintrich & Zimmerman, 1993).

Task motivation can create an environment of higher expectations, more caring, and more effort. Task motivation

is framed in the following eight strategies which served as a focal point for examining team perceptions and actions in motivating students to learn in this study:

1. The team motivates students by encouraging the students to take risks.

2. The team motivates students by using evaluation as evidence of student progress.

3. The team motivates students by encouraging students to try.

4. The team motivates students by using student work and performance as indicators of student potential for learning.

5. The team motivates students by instilling in students to seek satisfaction in improvement.

6. The team motivates students by viewing student error as a part of the growth process.

7. The team motivates students by viewing student competence as developing through effort.

8. The team motivates students by viewing student success through student effort.

(Anderman & Maehr, 1994)

Teams views are not present in the current literature on using task strategies to motivate middle school students. Establishing a base for how teams ought to motivate middle level students gives the researcher a framework for determining team actions on motivating students. The question "How do effective teams percieve they motivate students ?" can be answered by determining team perspective held collectively by each individual teacher operating on the team.

## Effective Team Actions for Motivating Students to Learn

It has been in the last 25 to 30 years that the systematic study of motivational processes has yielded useful information for educators about motivating students to learn. Through sociological analyses, researchers and teachers have been able to identify social factors (group behavior, social roles, and teacher to student interrelationships) in the classroom.

These social factors have a strong influence on the learning and motivation of students. Johnson and Johnson (1985) described student motivation in the cooperative classroom social situation; the tasks of students are so interrelated a student can achieve the goals only with mutual cooperation and assistance from all the members of a class.

Team structures accentuate effort as the cognitive element leading to proactive, intentional action (Ames, 1978; Covington, 1984; Covington & Omelich, 1979; Nichols, 1986; Stipek, 1984). Cooperative situations tend to be improvement and progress settings; and although performance outcome is important, unlike competitive situations, an individual's performance must be interpreted within the context of the group performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1985). Sanctions established by the team arrangement put obligations for effort in place to assure group success (Slavin, 1983).

Effective team frameworks are influenced by motivational factors that involve the concept of "ought": that one ought to put forth effort, to contribute, and to satisfy peer norms and sanctions. Inherent in teamed structures, then, is a concept of shared effort, the positive interdependence among teachers and students that implies shared goals and rewards. Effective teams should motivate students within a team context using task oriented goal motivational constructs (Ames, 1981).

Perceptions of positive and negative achievement orientation are reinforced in competitive and individualistic structures. Students who are motivated through the belief that they have the ability to achieve, do so. Likewise, students who are motivated through the belief that they have no ability, do not achieve. Competitive structures accentuate the salience of ability and student satisfaction through perception of ability. In this setting, ability motivation is utilized. Effective team settings should serve to minimize the operation of competitive structures and the use of ability motivation (Johnson & Johnson, 1985).

In a major study conducted by the John Hopkins University Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools (CREMS) in 1990, the research team found in a random sample of 156 middle school principals that the use of heterogeneous grouping in the middle grades is widespread; roughly two thirds of middle-grade principals surveyed reported that their

schools use the practice in at least some academic subjects, while more than one fifth said that their schools do so in all subjects (Braddock, 1990, p.4). This strategy results in a more integrated approach to the subject matter and a greater consistency of effort on the part of normally low achieving students.

But the CREMS (1990) study reported that the majority of teams used norm-referenced assessment. When norm-reference means of assessment are used, students compete with others just as surely as if the room were filled with ability-alike students in the basic struggle to get the best score or finish first. Additionally, a vast majority of middle grades schools give students letter or number grades for academic performance in each subject. Again, according to the research of the CREMS study, while performance grades provide a means for schools to monitor and evaluate the attainment of basic skills, performance grades accentuate the ability of the student and not the effort of the student.

While performance grades are standard, grades for progress and effort are rare. Only about one fourth (26%) of the schools that contain grade 7 give separate grades for effort in each subject. Still fewer schools (18%) recognize student improvement, effort, or progress in each subject (p. 441).

A further motivational issue that can be affected by effective teaming is a different approach to evaluation in particular and the reward structure of the school in general. Simply stated, once a child gets to the middle school, the game of grades can change dramatically from counting the questions answered correctly to marking those that are wrong. Although this sounds simplistic, the results can be quite complex (Ames, 1984).

Just when the curriculum becomes more difficult, with more sophisticated subjects, and teams have greater expectations for mastery of complex problems, students find themselves graded by a different set of rules. They may no longer be rewarded for effort or partial correctness, but, instead be penalized for not getting all the information at the required level of understanding. At the same time, opportunities for higher-level, cognitive problem solving may decrease because of an emphasis on limited content mastery. Grades often go down because grades are motivating factors for young adolescents, if an adolescent perceives they cannot attain the highest grade they often do not try at all (Thomason & Thompson, 1992, p. 284).

It is important to note that team motivation perceptions and actions can be overshadowed by the whole school environmental context. Using the expectancy x value framework, Eccles and her colleagues (Eccles et al., 1993)

argue that there is a mismatch between the motivational needs of early adolescents and types of environments that most schools provide. The typical middle school environment is characterized by few opportunities for students to make decisions, excessive rules and discipline, and poor student-teacher relationships.

These issues and factors are things that increase as a child moves into the middle school years: increased size, increased departmentalization, and increased rigor in grading. There are factors that decrease with the same move.

First and foremost, is the decrease in continuous and close personal contact between student and teacher. With an increase in size there can be a decrease in personalization. Cawelti (1988) studied the impact of "home bases" (grouping of students with one teacher for a short period of time to provide advisor-advisee relationships) in several middle school sites. The four schools he studied averaged a student population of 750 students, two of the four schools were small (less than 500) and two of the schools were large (more than 1,000). Cawelti discovered after viewing home base activities at all four sites that these strategies do much to reduce the sense of isolation and anonymity many students feel, particularly in large schools (Cawelti, 1988, p. 57).

In summing up, the way teaming benefits students is in need of further definition. The literature supports the assumption that effective teams develop within the four domains of organization, attention to students, sharing responsibility and growth, and curriculum planning. The literature supports the assumption that early adolescents are best motivated using task motivation.

What a team believes and uses for motivating students to learn needs to be examined. As a working construct, this can be defined as the knowledge that a group shares; and then informs, imbeds, shapes, and accounts for routine patterns and themes in what effective teams perceive and do in motivating students to learn. This study will begin to provide some definition to effective teams and their perceptions and actions on motivating students to learn.

# CHAPTER III

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to examine effective team perceptions and actions on motivating students to learn. This study identified effective teams at the study site using the four domains of effective team behaviors utilizing Gibson's (1994) survey. This study identified effective team perceptions and actions of motivating for student learning utilizing qualitative inquiry through focus group interviews, observation of team meetings, classroom teaching, and review of team artifacts. The pre study theory model is illustrated in Figure 2:

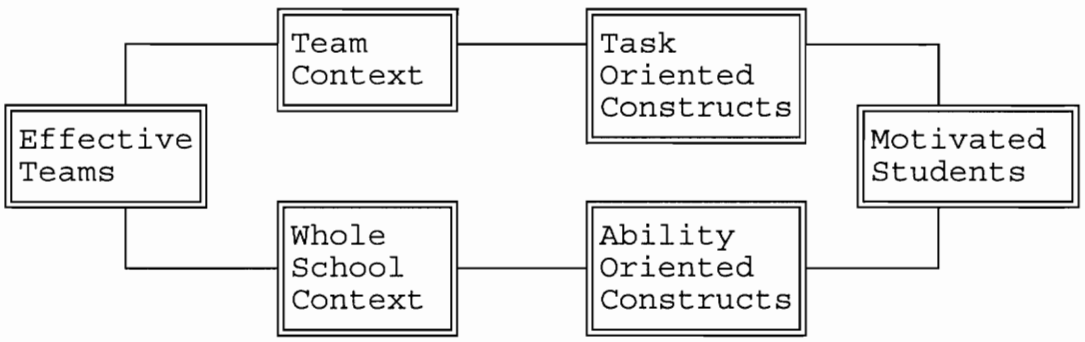


Figure 1:

Pre Study Theory Model

A school site was selected for study that met the criteria established in the Gibson (1994) study. The school had teams of two to five teachers responsible for instructing a common group of students in the core subjects (math, language, science and social studies) during a four to five period block of time daily, and having a daily period for team planning in addition to individual planning time. Experiences in the practice of teams includes supporting demographic conditions from the Gibson study.

Since this research was being conducted by a participant researcher who was also principal of the school, all efforts to keep the individual team member data anonymous were made. Research protocol was established and followed as outlined by the Virginia Tech Institutional Research Board (See Appendix A). Surveys and questionnaires were returned unsigned. Focus interviews were conducted by recording team leader led discussions of the survey. The recordings were erased immediately following transcription. Teachers, the team, and the school were not identified in the study.

The model for this study was based on two previous studies: Erb and Doda (1989) and Gibson (1994). Gibson's model used a validated survey to determine levels of team self-reporting within four domains of effective team practices established in theory and research. Replicating the Gibson model provided this study with descriptive data

which describes effective team practices and relates this study to theory and previous research. Erb and Doda's qualitative inquiry was heuristic in nature and provides important relationships of method and understanding of team perceptions and actions. The design of the study is mapped in Figure 2.

## Sample Selection

The school site selected is a middle school serving 6-8 grade students with a population of 730 students; there were two four member core teams serving 220 eighth grade students, three teams with three teachers serving 250 seventh grade students, and three teams with three teachers serving 260 sixth grade students. The school reflected the same demographic criteria reported in Gibson's (1994) sample.

The sample for this study was three effective teams of teachers. These teams were selected based on characteristics drawn from the literature on middle school teaming. The team self reported team practices on a replication of Gibson's (1994) survey. Team selection was also based on the team demographics. Each team had to share students and planning. Each team member had to have three or more years of teaching experience. Half of the team members had to be a member of the team for two or more years. The researcher also used the performance indicators of student attendance, behavior, teacher grades, and parental contacts for selection.

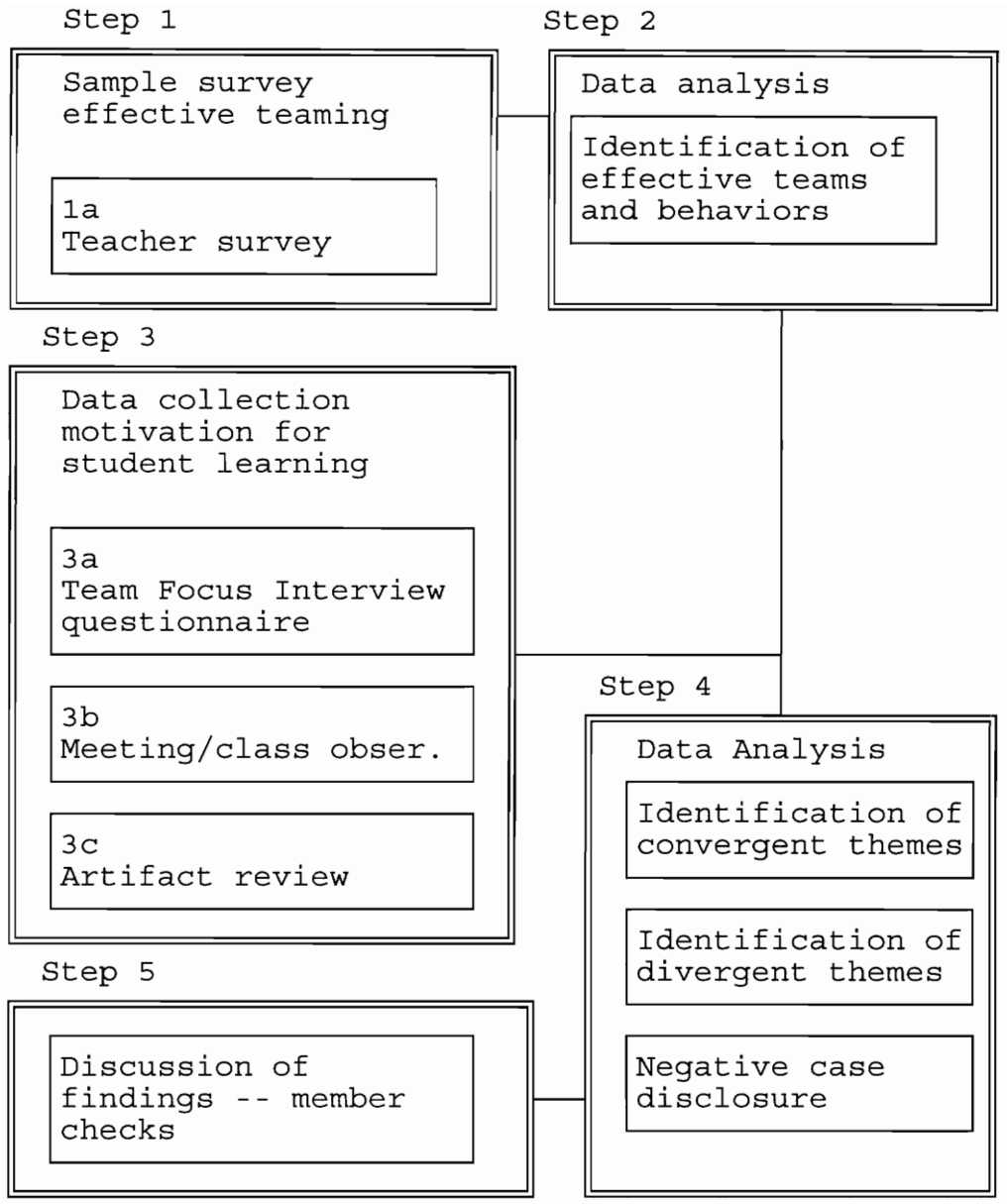


Figure 2:
Design of the study

Each team member had to have some type of teaming training and had to be certified for middle level instruction. Sample selection included teams based on the analysis of the results from the effective teaming survey (See Appendix B).

Only those teams reporting frequent or very frequent activity in a majority of items within a domain in three of the four domain areas and met the demographic criteria for teams outlined in section I of the survey were selected for further study. The teams also had to outperform other teams at each of the three corresponding grade levels in the performance indicator areas.

The qualitative approach to sampling is quite different from that of quantitative approaches. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985):

> The qualitative researcher is likely to eschew the random or representative sample in favor of purposive or theoretical sampling because he or she thereby increases the scope or range of data exposed as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered.(p.40)

As described by Bailey (1992):

> Qualitative research uses sampling which is idiographic, focusing on the individual or case study in order to understand the full complexity of the individual's experience. From this perspective, there is no attempt to claim an ability to generalize to a specific population findings.(p.30)

## Data Collection - Effective Teaming Survey

All the teams (n=11) at the study site were surveyed using Section I and II of Gibson's (1994) teacher Survey of Interdisciplinary Teaming Activities in Virginia Middle Level Schools. The survey was a replication, with permission, of Gibson's Survey of Interdisciplinary Teaming Activities in Virginia Middle Level Schools. The purpose of Section I of the survey was to describe sample selection according to demographics. It contained short answer questions to determine if respondents represented an effective team according to the definition of the literature. The purpose of Section II of the survey was to gather data to determine the activity level for each domain of team operation. The section contained 29 questions, seven in each of three sub-tests and eight in a fourth sub-test representing domains of Erb and Doda's (1989) model of team operation as outlined in Appendix C.

The directions indicated that the respondents should circle the number following each activity which best indicates how often the team participates in that activity. The scale was as follows:

0 = never 1 = infrequently

2 = frequently 3 = very frequently

Survey validation was conducted by Gibson by surveying middle school teams classified as active by experts in all the domains and middle school teams classified as active by experts in only one or two domains. Gibson (1994) discussed the survey questions with each group after they had completed the surveys. Using the group input, wording was changed to clarify, eliminate, and add questions.

The pilot groups answered 80 questions. The questions were divided so that two questions represented each of ten activities indicative of team functioning at each of the four levels. As a whole, questions in the survey successfully distinguished team operating levels. Two pairs of questions were eliminated because respondents' answers were inconsistent, and two pairs were eliminated because they did not indicate team expertise. From each remaining pair of questions, the one which most consistently predicted team expertise was selected for the final survey. An additional seven questions were eliminated because of overlap with other questions. Average time for the pilot group to complete the survey was 10 minutes. After the pilot session, data were analyzed to establish how patterns would appear. (Gibson, 1994)

## Data analysis: effective teaming survey

Analysis of responses to the survey included computations of scores to determine mean scores by team on each item, item mean scores were sorted into domains on each of the four sub-scales. The purpose of these data was to indicate the team activity level in each operational domain. (See Appendix C to determine which questions compose the sub-test representative of each level for the sample of effective teams.) The scoring method of the survey was as follows:

1. Recorded scores on the following scale for each response:

   0 = never  1 = infrequently

   2 = frequently  3 = very frequently

   (In most cases an answer of "3" represented team activity at a high level. To discourage automatic response, some of the questions were reversed, so that an answer of "0" represents very frequent team activity at that level. See Appendix C for the items in this category.)

2. The scores were entered into NumberCruncher (Hinz, 1992), which provided item mean scores.
3. Using these scores, teams were sorted into order within each domain for determining team activity in that domain (See Appendix D).

4. Teams were determined as effective if they reported very frequent activity in three domains on a majority of items and their score indicated frequent activity in the fourth domain.
5. Team data was collected on student performance indicators for attendance, behavior, achievement, parent contacts from The School System (1994).
6. Effective teams were selected to participate in the next step of the study.

## Motivating Students to Learn

### Data Collection

In the third step of the study, data was collected over a six week period to examine team perceptions and actions on motivating students to learn. Data was collected through a three step process: team focus group discussion survey on a semantic differential scaled questionnaire; observations in meetings, classrooms, and artifacts; and follow up interviews.

The team focus group discussion questionnaire was given to elicit teacher perceptions on motivating students to learn. The questionnaire used eight semantic differential scaled questions. (See Appendix E). The team was asked to discuss and reach consensus on scaling team perceptions on motivating

students to learn. The session was tape recorded by the participants and then transcribed. Individual responses of the team members were kept anonymous. The response survey was scored according to the following scale: Each blank in each item was numbered 1 - 9 from the ability oriented side of the scale to the task oriented side of the scale (items 1,2,3,6,7, and 8 are numbered right to left; numbers 4,5, were numbered left to right) the closer the team marked the item to the task oriented construct side of the differential the higher the score. The team scores were collated and a mean determined for each of the eight constructs.

Validation of the interview questionnaire was conducted by field testing the process in a middle school team classified as effective by practitioners and experts in the field. The survey questions were discussed with the group after they had completed the surveys. Using the group input, wording was changed to clarify, eliminate, and add questions.

The pilot group answered 16 questions. The questions were divided so that two questions represented each of eight activities indicative of semantic differential rating in team beliefs of the motivational constructs. As a whole, questions in the survey successfully distinguished pilot team belief perception levels. Questions were eliminated because respondents' answers were inconsistent. From the remaining

questions, the one which most consistently predicted team beliefs in a construct area was selected for the final survey.

Particular attention was given to the directions for the exercise. It is often difficult to give concise written directions for semantic differentials, especially to respondents unfamiliar with rating scales. Discussion with the pilot group clarified points of confusion. Directions and methods for giving the directions were determined at this time including the input of the pilot sample. The time for the pilot group to complete the survey was 45 minutes. Data was analyzed to establish how patterns would appear.

The transcripts were examined for patterns in the data. Convergent themes of how these patterns fit within the constructs of task motivational constructs were identified and coded. Divergent themes of how these patterns relate to the ability motivation constructs were identified and coded. Negative case examination was identified and coded in this analysis (See Appendix F).

Observation of meetings and classes served to determine teacher behavior while interacting with peers and students. The purpose of this component was to identify evidence of teacher links between focus group discussion survey responses and team meeting and classroom actions for motivating students to learn. The observations were conducted in team meetings and individual teacher classrooms over the six week period.

Data were logged on meeting and classroom contact summary forms modeled after the meeting and contact summary forms presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) (Appendix G & H). The data were sorted into salient points and coded within themes of the motivational constructs. Themes not falling within the motivational constructs were logged, documented and coded.

Artifact review served to determine the written plans, messages, and directions teams provide for motivating students to learn. This data collection was less obtrusive but provided clarifying information about teaming and motivation. Lesson plans, meeting notes, and team newsletters were reviewed. Data were collected on a artifact summary form modeled after the document summary form presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) (Appendix I). Data were organized into descriptions, coded for importance within the motivational constructs. A time table for the contacts with the participants in the study is provided in Appendix J.

## Data analysis

In this component of the study, analysis addressed the context of obtaining and analyzing data, providing member checks and audit trails for coding and establishing patterns and themes, and for disclosing negative cases to open discussion for rival explanations. Findings were reviewed by participants for accuracy and clarity.

## Findings and Conclusions

Findings and conclusions were developed using the following tactics for generating meaning in the data collection and analysis: (1) Noting patterns and themes, (2) identifying convergent and divergent themes, (3) and disclosing negative cases. (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the findings, patterns and themes of effective teaming perceptions supported by team actions that motivate student learning were detailed into patterns of process. In the findings, negative case studies were disclosed and discussed.

In noting patterns and themes, the examination revealed patterns of variables and process. Descriptions of similarities and differences, connections of time and space within the context were presented. This technique helped organize the search and manage data. After analysis, collation, and description of the data, a review of the findings by the participants was conducted to verify accuracy and to determine clarity.

## Validity, Reliability, and Credibility

The issue of trustworthiness is a general term representing what conventional researchers think of as validity, reliability, and credibility. The pursuit of trustworthiness in such research is dependent upon the use of

acceptable process for the collection and analysis of data. In order to create the element of trust, this study has several safeguards to protect the project's integrity.

The data collection was tested through method triangulation. Data sources included teacher perceptions reported in focus group interviews and actions observed in meetings and classrooms, and in review of artifacts. Participants in the study were used for data collection and to review the findings in the study.

The researcher also maintained a journal throughout the research process. The purpose of this journal was to establish data logs, to date and log research process information, and to reflect on patterns and themes that emerge in the review of transcripts, observations, and artifacts. The researcher in this study, as a participant researcher, agreed to fully protect the anonymity of the participants and to make exhaustive efforts to minimize any and all risk for the participants.

This qualitative study was more than a technical matter. As a participant researcher, the consideration of fairness in relation to the team being studied was considered. For that consideration, the researcher has been careful to follow the ethical framework of the study within Flinders (1992) views of types of ethical considerations. This included:

- use of informed consent of all participants;
- keep participants, teams, and the school anonymous;
- provide participant checks to maintain accuracy and clarity of findings;
- conduct the research to support the participants for educational and professional growth.

# CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

During this study, time and space were shared with effective teams of teachers. Team perceptions of how they motivated students was examined. What these teams did to motivate students in the classroom, in meetings, and in the artifacts used was observed. This chapter contains the story of these three effective teams and is presented in five parts.

Part one consists of data which supports the selection of the three effective teams. Demographics, effective team activity levels, and performance indicators of each of the effective teams are presented in this segment of the findings.

Part two is a presentation of the effective teams perceptions gathered in the focus group interview sessions for each team. These data were arranged into a discussion of patterns of convergence and divergence through the themes introduced in the teams' consensus discussion. Findings in this segment of the study identified a benchmark of how the team perceives it motivates students to learn within the constructs of either task oriented or ability performance motivation.

Part three consists of data collected in observation of classrooms, meetings, and in artifacts used by the effective teams. These data were also arranged into patterns of

convergence and divergence. Themes introduced in part two were examined in relationship to what is actually done in the classrooms. New convergent and divergent themes emerging in this segment of discovery were identified. Patterns of process were identified for the patterns and themes found in parts two and three of the data collection.

Part four consists of the findings in the participant follow up segment of the study. This segment includes participants' clarification of findings in parts one, two, and three; negative case examination of the difference in team consensus reporting on item 8 in the focus group interview; the whole school influence on motivation, and the "principal as researcher" influence on the study; team discussion on motivating students; and, a follow up survey for the semantic differential presented in the original focus group interview.

Part five is a discussion of post study and ancillary findings. The segment concludes with new patterns of process emerging from the participant follow up portion of the study and a recommended model for further research.

This "road map" is visually presented in figure 2. The design of the study was to identify effective teams, determine how they perceived they motivated students, observe what the teams did to motivate students, to include participants in findings clarification, and to disclose accurate information.

## Effective Teams Selection

Three teams were selected for examination because the teams met the definitions of effective teaming practices detailed in Gibson's (1994) study of interdisciplinary teaming practices. Performance outcome indicators were also used to determine team effectiveness at the school study site. Each of the teams met all the demographic criteria as defined in the Gibson study for effective interdisciplinary teams. These demographics are illustrated in Table 4.

The team reported in the Effective Team Survey (Section II Appendix D) frequent or very frequent activity on a majority of items in the effective teaming domains of organization, attention to students, sharing responsibility and growth, and coordination of instruction.

Table 5 details how the teams' reported activity level was ordered in each domain. Column one defines the domain and the total number (N) of items measured in each domain, column two defines the activity level, and the last three columns report the number of items each team reported for each sorted activity level.

Because each of these three teams reported either a majority of frequent or very frequent activity levels for a majority of the items in each of the domains, they were identified as effective teams according to the definition of this study.

Table 4:

Effective Team Sample Demographics

| Item | Team Response | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| 1. Number of Teachers on team | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 2. Core subjects taught by team | yes | yes | yes |
| 3. Shares common students during four to five period block | yes | yes | yes |
| 4. Two planning periods one for team planning, one for individual planning | yes | yes | yes |
| 5. 50% of team members have been members for past two full academic years | yes | yes | yes |
| 6. Training has been received on teaming | yes | yes | yes |
| 7. Average number of years members have taught | 21 | 11 | 18 |
| 8. Years the team has operated as a team | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Demographic criteria met for effective team** | **yes** | **yes** | **yes** |

Table 5:

Sample Reporting of Activity Within

Domains of Effective Teaming Practices

| Domain | Activity Level | Team Reporting | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Organization | Very Frequent | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| N = 7 | Frequently | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | Infrequently | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Never | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Attention to | Very Frequent | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| students | Frequently | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N = 8 | Infrequently | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Never | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Sharing growth | Very Frequent | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| & responsibility | Frequently | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| N = 7 | Infrequently | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Never | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Coordinating | Very Frequent | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Instruction | Frequently | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| N = 7 | Infrequently | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Never | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The team also met performance outcome indicators determined by the researcher in the area of student attendance, behavior, achievement as reported by teachers on report cards, and parental contacts made. By compiling data from The School System (1994), it was found that through September 7, 1994 and December 1, 1994: Students on these teams come to school at a higher rate (Table 6), are sent to the office at a lesser rate (Table 7), receive failing grades at a lower rate (Table 8), and have a higher team contact rate with parents (Table 9) than the students have on the other teams at each corresponding grade level.

Sample teams 8-2, 7-3, 6-3 were selected for study because the teams meet the criteria of the demographics for effective teams, report team behaviors and practices that meet the behaviors and practices according to the definition in this study, and operate effectively according to the performance outcomes determined by the researcher in this study.

Table 6:

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

| Average Daily Attendance (ADA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Team 8-2 | Team 7-3 | Team 6-3 | Total School |
| 95.7%* | 96.3%* | 97.2%* | 94.4%* |
| Other Team | Other Teams | Other Teams | |
| 94.2%* | 95.7%* | 96.1%* | |

* denotes per cent of students present daily

Table 7:

Discipline Referral Rates

| Referral Source: | Referrals |
|---|---|
| Sample Team 8-2 | 9 |
| Other 8th grade team | 46 |
| Other Areas* | 23 |
| Sample Team 7-3 | 4 |
| Other 7th Grade Teams | 18 |
| Other Areas* | 33 |
| Sample Team 6-3 | 1 |
| Other 6th grade teams | 13 |
| Other Areas* | 27 |

* denotes areas such as physical education, related arts, and special education classes

Table 8:

Teacher Assigned Grade Distribution

| Team | % of students making | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | KW* |
| Sample Team 8-2 | 34 | 46 | 21 | **9** |
| Other 8th grade teams | 29 | 28 | 35 | **18** |
| Sample team 7-3 | 31 | 32 | 33 | **4** |
| Other 7th grade teams | 27 | 38 | 24 | **11** |
| | 15 | 21 | 33 | **18** |
| Sample Team 6-3 | 35 | 32 | 23 | **10** |
| Other 6th grade teams | 28 | 35 | 25 | **12** |
| | 20 | 27 | 31 | **12** |

* KW means the student made less than a 76 numerical average (non passing) student keeps working.

Table 9:

Team Parental Contacts

| Team: | % of Parental Contacts made by team |
|---|---|
| Sample team 8-2 | 87 % |
| Other 8th grade team | 68 % |
| Sample team 7-3 | 97 % |
| Other 7th grade teams | 94 % |
| Sample team 6-3 | 100 % |
| Other 6th grade teams | 92 % |

## Effective Team Perceptions on Motivating Students to Learn

As a result of data collection and analysis, four patterns were identified on how these teams motivate students within the constructs proposed by Anderman and Maehr (1994). Effective teams in this middle school setting used task oriented goal motivation while operating within the team context and in the classroom context. While operating within individual student context and in the whole school context, the teams used ability performance goal motivation. Themes within these patterns determined the description of team perceptions and actions on motivating students in a middle school setting. A post study model was developed and is illustrated in Figure 3. This model displays the arrangement of the patterns within the study.

Team perceptions were gathered in a focus group interview where the team members were to discuss and report their consensus on eight questions modeled on the eight constructs of Anderman and Maehr (1994) for motivating students to learn. Team 8-2 spent 54 minutes in discussing and deciding on a team consensus on the semantic differential survey form; Team 7-3 spent 44 minutes; and Team 6-3 spent 42 minutes. The results of the teams' consensus on each of the semantic differential scaled questions for each construct is detailed in Table 10. A sample of the Focus Group Interview transcript is provided in Appendix E.

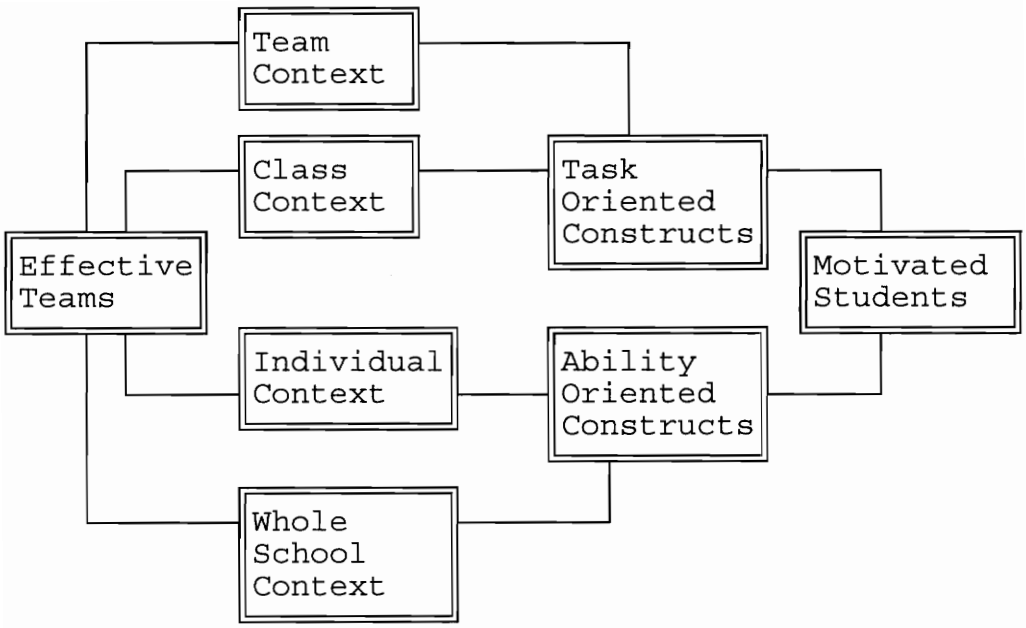


Figure 3:

Post Study Model

Table 10:

Focus Group Interview - Survey Response of Teams

| Item | Team | | | All teams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-2 | m |
| 1. Team motivates by encouraging students to take risks. | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8.66 |
| 2. Team motivates by using evaluation as evidence of student progress. | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8.66 |
| 3. Team motivates by encouraging students to try. | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 4. Team motivates by using student work and performance as indicators of student potential for learning. | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| 5. Team motivates by instilling satisfaction in students for improvement. | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8.66 |
| 6. Team motivates by viewing student error as a part of the growth process. | 8 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| 7. Team motivates by viewing student competence as developing through effort. | 7 | 9 | 7 | 7.66 |
| 8. Team motivates by viewing student success through student effort. | 9* | 5 | 5 | 6.33 |

* See participant findings clarification for difference in team reporting levels for this item.

This established the team perspective and became a starting point for the examination of actions taken by the team to motivate students.

Emerging from the discussion are four patterns of motivation within different contexts:

**Team context**, defined as what the team believes as a team on how it should motivate students in a middle school setting

**Class context**, defined as how the team motivates within the classroom setting

**Individual context**, defined as how the team motivates individual students

**Whole school context**, defined as how the team motivates in relationship to school policy, practice, or administrative emphasis.

The teams reported use of task oriented goal motivation within the team context and the class context in the following construct areas:

- encouraging risk taking;
- encouraging students to try;
- evaluation as evidence of progress;
- using student work as potential for learning;
- instilling in students a satisfaction for improvement.

Patterns of Convergence:

Team context was reported as how the team should motivate students in a middle school setting. This pattern emerged during the interview session. The teachers in the interview session spoke frequently of **"what we do, what we believe, and what we ought to be doing (Focus Group Interview, 11/14/94)."** In the teachers dialog on reaching consensus, themes emerged as specific examples on how the teams operated using task oriented goals within the team context.

Class context was reported as how the teams motivated students within the classroom setting. This pattern also emerged during the interview session. The teachers gave examples of things they did during class that motivated students within these constructs. These themes are shown in Table 11. Table 11 shows the construct examined, the themes given by the teams, and the theme point of origin.

Encouraging Risk Taking

In order to encourage student risk taking, math teachers spoke of using problem solving as the way they encouraged students to take risks: **"I would rather see students try to take a risk even if they get a problem wrong, attempt it (8-2, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

Table 11:

Convergent Theme Identification

within Team and Class Context

| Construct: | Theme: | Team | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Risk Taking | problem solving | x | x | x |
| | giving opinions | x | _ | x |
| | classroom set up | _ | x | x |
| | writing exercises | x | x | x |
| Evaluation as evidence of progress | assessing individuals | x | x | x |
| Encourage student effort | requiring all students | x | x | x |
| | goal setting | x | _ | _ |
| | homework | _ | x | _ |
| Uses work & performance as potential for learning | assignments | x | x | x |
| | re-doing work | _ | x | x |
| Satisfaction in improvement | mid reports | x | _ | _ |
| | student conferences | x | x | x |

x indicates at least one team member mentioned theme.

- indicates no team members mentioned this theme.

Language and social studies teachers spoke of encouraging risk taking by using exercises that encourage students to give opinions: **"That is what I do when I use predictions in class. It is OK to be wrong, just as long as you are involved in the book and have an opinion (8-2, Member 4, 11/14/94)." "In social studies, I ask how can we learn from it? I encourage them to give their opinion. That is risk taking for them (7-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

The teams reported the way classrooms are set up to facilitate student risk taking. Teachers spoke of the classroom as the place where students feel safe in taking risks: **"I think the way we have set up our classrooms we make it comfortable for children to take chances. And if they fail, we have made them realize we are not going to chastise them, or that they will not be criticized openly (7-3, Member 3, 11/14/94)."**

Writing exercises are designed to encourage risk taking through allowing the student to express feelings or opinions and then rewrite and sharpen the point of view through redrafting their written thoughts: **"In my class, I encourage them to take a topic and go for it. They have opinions and feelings, they express them (6-3, Member 1, 11/14/94)."**

Encouraging Students to Try

The teams reported encouraging students to try by requiring effort: **"We require all students to do all the**

**assignments. We require their effort and do not accept non effort (7-3, Member 1, 11/14/94)."**

The team reported goal setting as an important way for encouraging students to try: **"I know that in home base and the activity was setting goals and on a note card we wrote down our goals and _____ wrote down that his goal was to come to school everyday last week. So today when we went back over our goals he did do it. He was so pleased (8-2, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

A method for using homework to encourage effort was described in the following manner: **"I don't grade for accuracy, but for effort. They can earn a 100% if they have attempted all the problems. But we are encouraging them to try, to make the effort (7-3, Member 3, 11/14/94)."**

Tests are also used to encourage effort as reported by the teachers: **"Like on a short answer test question I have told them many times put down something. When you leave it totally blank I don't know what you have learned (7-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

Using Evaluation

The teams reported they use evaluation as evidence of student progress within the team context and the class context. The teams reported that in evaluating students they use techniques that show how far students come along based on the student's performance level and progress, or in the words

of one teacher: **"It is when you look at students going from point A to point B. I use evaluation to see how much they progress (8-2, Member 3, 11/14/94)."** Another teacher reported: **"I try and see if they are learning the goals and objectives we have set forth rather than how they are doing compared to others of the same age (7-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

Using Student Work and Performance

The teams discussed two themes of how they use student work & performance as evidence of progress as potential for learning. The first theme was described by a teacher as assignments : **"I would say that the work that they do is evidence of potential learning whether it be a journal, notebook, predictions, homework, classwork. It is an indicator. That is why we use them, that is why we have assignments, that is why we have homework (8-2, Member 1, 11/14/94)."** A second theme was reported by a teacher as re-doing work: **"I think anytime they do something more than one time and they see progress in it... we compare (6-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

Instilling satisfaction:

The teams reported that while instilling satisfaction for student improvement they utilized mid term reports and student conferences to inform students where they are currently and where they need to get to: **"I think that goes into the realm of evaluation of what we do with mid six weeks reports,**

**talking to the people, student conferences (8-2, Member 1, 11/14/94)."** Teacher interaction in conferences was cited as important to instilling satisfaction: **"I always think about what you tell them when they leave a conference with the team, that we like you but we don't like your current performance or behavior. They know we believe in them and that they can improve (8-2, Member 4, 11/14/94)."**

Patterns of Divergence:

Patterns of divergence are those patterns which did not fit into task oriented motivation. These patterns served to "flesh out" the meaning of the teams and add other dimensions in the way the teams perceived they motivated students. The teams reported use of ability performance goal motivation within the individual context and whole school context in the following construct areas:

- viewing error as not learning the objective;
- viewing student competence as ability based;
- viewing student success as being determined by ability.

Individual context was reported as how the team motivates individual students. Whole school context was reported as how the team motivates in relationship to school policy, practice, or administrative emphasis. These patterns emerged during the

interview session. The themes generated include how the teams assign grades, view individual student ability, the grading policy, and the honor roll. These themes are shown in Table 12. Table 12 shows the construct examined, the themes given by the teams, and the team or teams point of origin for each of the themes which is marked by (x).

An explanation of the different contexts teams operate within while motivating students was discovered in a follow up interview. Effective teams perceive, philosophically, that student error is a part of the growth process and that student competence develops through effort. In the reality of the classroom, teams develop this philosophy to a certain point. The point that impedes further development comes when the individual student's performance level or the school or division requirements dictate a shift in the context by which students are motivated. This point was described as the ability of the student, the social environment of the student, the parent's expectations, or the expectations of the school to which the student matriculates: **"When we're working at developing these students through a growth process and through avoiding failure, even though they might not have highly developed thinking skills and strategies other children might have. They develop individually. We are required to give them a grade on that development. They come to us with**

Table 12:

Divergent Theme Identification

within Individual and the Whole School Context

| Construct: | Theme: | Team | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Error as part of the growth process | assigning grades | x | x | x |
| | ability | x | x | x |
| Competence develops thru effort | ability | x | x | x |
| Success as effort | grading policy | x | x | x |
| | honor roll | x | x | x |
| | ability | x | x | x |

**different ability levels and we are required or expected to get all of them to a particular point in the same period of time. This is when we look at how we ought to do something and change to fit the mold as expected by the students, the administrators, their parents, and teachers in higher grades (8-2, Member 1, 12/14/94)."**

View of Error

When assigning grades the teams reported what the student has done in terms of the school's grading policy: **How do we assign grades? How do you give A's and B's? We are giving grades (7-3, Member 3, 11/14/94)."** The teachers also reported that the grading policy influences the view of progress: **"I think if we were going to make a big deal about progress we would not say: 5 people got A's, 5 got B's, 5 got C's, the rest of you got KW's. We do follow the school's grading policy and we do give grades (8-2, Member 4, 11/14/94)."**

Evidence of the team's use of ability motivation emerged when addressing the team's view of student error as part of the growth process:

**"I don't care for the word failure in this sentence, but sometimes I do think it is a lack of ability. When we see a paper from_____, we see he doesn't try or when he does try we see it, or when _____, he can't do it (7-3, Member 3,11/14/94)."**

View of Competence

The teams view competence as developing through the student's ability much the same way they viewed student error: **"You know that you know _____ was born with a certain amount of ability and you are upset with her because she did not give her best effort based on her ability (8-2, Member 3, 11/14/94)."** Another teacher supported this view with this report: **"I think we sometimes joke around with inherited ability and we shouldn't. The other day at lunch, I joked and compared _____ to her brother. I know I shouldn't have done that but still you look at where some kids come from and you know (8-2, Member 2, 11/14/94)."** This view is not localized to the eighth grade level, sixth grade teachers also stated: **"I think social environment has a lot to do with it. Not just an inherited quality. I mean the level these kids come in on. In math by the time they get here, it is fixed by what they learned in the feeder schools (6-3, Member 3, 11/14/94)." "You see it in their speech. They speak incorrect English or correct English for ever and ever. And they say that is the way my mom says it or my dad says it (6-3, Member 1, 11/14/94)."**

The teams also reported they used report cards and the grading policy as evidence of student progress and to clarify the team's view of competence. These two themes were ability performance motivation and identify the point which teams

begin to use ability performance to motivate students: **"We use report cards, looking forward to it. Kids are always saying what's my grade, what's my grade? We say we'll give them at the end of the six weeks. Wait until then (7-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."** **"All right let us take projects for instance. I know some of the students took ... did ... maybe ... a half hour on their project. Did a play or something. That kind of a project, she probably threw it together in an afternoon. She could have done better. I grade the effort based on ability (8-2, Member 4, 11/14/94)."**

View of success:

The teams point to the use of the honor roll as evidence of student success in the school: **"We still have the honor roll, we still have grades. We pick our student of the week or of the month based on grades don't we? (8-2, Member 4, 11/14/94)."** **"You know we are required to give grades. We have to have some way of establishing a grade. Sometimes the grade does not indicate what they have learned. Kids who test poorly usually do not have very good grades. They don't make the honor roll. (7-3, Member 2, 11/14/94)."**

The teams reported four variable patterns of motivating students: team context, class context, individual context, and classroom context. Teams perceived they motivated students within task oriented motivation when the team context and the

class context were considered for the constructs of encouraging risk taking, using evaluation as evidence of progress, encouraging students to try, using work and performance as evidence of potential for learning, and instilling in students satisfaction for improvement.

When individual student context and the whole school context were considered, the teams motivated within the ability performance constructs of viewing student error as not learning, by viewing competence as ability based, by viewing student success as achieving grades.

Teams reached consensus and marked the semantic differential to the left (to the task oriented side) of the middle in all of the constructs. The dialog revealed that the teams had less tendency to use task oriented motivation in some construct areas than reported on the differential. The next phase of the study involved clarifying the variable patterns and themes, identifying patterns of process within those variable patterns, and revealing rival explanations for this reporting pattern through negative case examination.

Effective Team Actions on Motivating Students to Learn.

The focus interview established the teams' perspective on motivating students to learn and provided a basis for four variable patterns. Further clarification of these variable patterns and the identification of patterns of process emerged in the field study. The field in this case was the classrooms, the meetings, the conferences, and the artifacts generated by the teams.

During a six week period between November 14, 1994 and December 21, 1994 each team was observed in classrooms, team meetings, conferences. Artifacts (assignments, tests, lesson plans, meeting notes, newsletters, and correspondence) were reviewed. The patterns of motivating students differently in the settings of the team context, the classroom context, in individual context, and in the whole school context continued to emerge in this phase of the study. The data collected supported the information reported by the teams.

Each team member's classroom was visited three times during the study; a total of thirty classroom observations were made for the three teams. Observation of team meetings was conducted, each team was observed five times in team or student conference meetings. Data were noted on a classroom or meeting contact summary form and salient points coded with the patterns and themes established in the interview

transcripts. Artifact review of lesson plans, assignments, tests and newsletters were documented on a artifact summary form and salient points coded within the patterns and themes. Salient points that emerged in the observation and review data collection stages that had not previously emerged in the interview process were coded as convergent and divergent themes. Samples of these data collection tools and results can be seen in Appendix G, H, I. A summary of contacts is shown in Appendix J. This summary serves as a time frame for how the data on team actions for motivating students to learn was collected and analyzed.

## Patterns of Convergence

The teams utilized task oriented goals in the class context. During the observation period, the themes presented by the teams in the interview were practiced in the classrooms. Table 13 details the themes observed in the classrooms. Each construct and the themes within that construct are shown, each team and whether or not the theme was observed in each class is indicated by a yes or no. The themes examined in this setting were examined for convergence. Also new themes emerged in this context and are shown in the table and are marked with an asterisk. These themes support the team's reporting on utilizing task oriented goal motivation within the class context.

Table 13:

Convergent Theme Observation

Sample Classrooms

| Construct: | Theme: | Team | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Risk Taking | problem solving | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | giving opinions | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | classroom set up | Yes | No | Yes |
| | writing exercises | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | *cooperative learning | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Evaluation as evidence of progress | assessing individuals | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | *using students as evaluators | No | Yes | Yes |
| Encourage student effort | requiring all students | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | goal setting | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | homework | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | *varying instruction | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Uses work & performance as potential for learning | assignments | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | re doing assignments | No | Yes | Yes |
| Satisfaction in improvement | mid reports | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | student conferences | Yes | Yes | Yes |

* indicates the emergence of a new theme not reported previously by the teams.

Encouraging Risk Taking

The teams mentioned that to encourage student risk taking they used problem solving, giving opinions, writing exercises, and classroom setup to motivate the students to learn in the classroom setting. Observation of the classes revealed the variety of strategies used within teams.

In the 8-2 algebra and pre algebra class, the two groups of students organized by subject area interacted openly with each other and the teacher in solving problems. Both groups of students discussed the different possibilities for solutions as the teacher worked one on one with students in front of the class. This informal but structured method gave all the students opportunities in understanding problem solving. Many times the students would present alternative problem solving solutions that were accepted by the class. The teacher nurtured this interaction by supporting the opinions offered by individual students through including the suggested solutions in the problem solving strategies. (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2: Member 2, 11/21/94)

The 7-2 math classes were more traditionally structured, however, problems and their solutions were openly presented for all the students, the teacher constantly checked for student understanding. Discussion was supportive and free of criticism as the students worked with dividing fractions. Again students offered alternative solutions that were

discussed by students and teachers.(Classroom Observation Summary, 7-3: Member 2, 12/16/94; Artifact Summary, 7-3: Member 3 Lesson Plans, 12/17/94)

Math and science in 6-2 classes were involved in cooperative learning exercises, peer mentoring, and direct student to teacher interaction. Much of the activity observed in these math and science classes was incorporated through open student discussions that were nurtured by encouraging responses by the teacher. (Classroom Observation Summary, 6-3: Member 3, 12/1/94)

All social studies classes and language classes were full of opportunities for student opinion giving. The teams had reported these activities in the interview. In 8-2 language, students were being read to from the novel "Clover". Periodically, the teacher would stop and ask the students to sum up and then predict what had happened and what they expected to happen next in the book. These activities were supported by student writing which encouraged them to give their opinions and maintain a log of the students perceptions of what they felt about the book. (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2: Member 4, 11/30/94; Artifact Summary, 8-2: Member 4 Assignment, 12/3/94)

The 6-3 language class focused on writing exercises that gave students opportunity to express themselves. The emphasis on writing was parallel to the team's emphasis on preparation

for the Literacy Passport Test. The written portion of the test emphasizes student initiative in developing thoughts and ideas within a certain topic. The writing exercises were supported by student debates and student opportunities to read their ideas in class. In all the social studies classes, student discussion prevailed during the observation periods. Students normally talked more than the teachers. (Classroom Observation Summary, 6-3: Member 1 & Member 2, 12/1/94; Artifact Summary, 6-3: Member 1 & 2 Lesson Plan, 12/17/94)

The way classes were set up and conducted presented an atmosphere of nurturing environments. The arrangement of seating facilitated group discussions and group work settings. One class had students facing students, as half the chairs were grouped on one side of the class facing the other half of chairs grouped on the other side of a class. A language class used tables instead of individual student desks. Some classes were arranged in traditional rows but all these classes broke the row rank and moved the chairs into groups as the lesson or cooperative learning exercise dictated. (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2: Member 2, 11/30/94)

All the classes were brightly decorated with bulletin boards and student learning centers individually nested about each room. Student work was displayed in the classrooms, in hallways, and in other high traffic points such as the library. Class rules were displayed in each classroom.

Reading centers were evident in all the language rooms. One social studies class had an easy chair matched with an end table and plant placed strategically in front of a window. (Classroom Observation Summary: 8-2: Member 1, 11/21/94) This station was used for what the teacher described **"as a place for student and teacher reflection (8-2: Follow up Interview, Member 1, 12/14/94)."** It was used more often by students than the teacher during the observation period.

In the 6th and 7th grade classes, cooperative learning scoreboards highlighted each room. Scores and team rosters were current. Computers in each room were used frequently by the students in the classrooms.

One classroom observation on how a task oriented motivated classroom was set up in this seventh grade setting is described as follows:

> **As I entered the classroom, the students were buzzing about the room engaged in all kinds of activities. The teacher sat at her desk talking with one student who was standing. Together they examined a paper in the child's hand. Other students sat in groups and individually throughout the class. As I walked about the room, I noticed some children were reading from the book "A Family Apart", other students were working on language assignments, and others worked on Christmas decorations. Each child was engaged in some type of activity. One**

student explained to me that this was catch up day. I quickly assumed that this was a reprieve for work not yet done, a way to allow the shirkers in the class to get up to par with their peers, and a way for the teacher to regroup. Christmas music played on a record player.

The teacher at her desk stood and said "all right class it is time to leave, please get everything in order". Amazingly each child without hesitation assembled their work, went straight to storage areas and put away books, crayons, paper, and such. Each child had a job and did it quickly, one student turned off the record player. The chairs in much disarray earlier were rearranged to tight even rows. The teacher then called out five student names and told each student to record a number on the team charts around the room. Each child sat patiently waiting to be dismissed.

When the students left the room, the teacher returned to her desk behind a mound of language papers, reading questions, vocabulary lists, and Christmas art. She explained that catch up day was started by the students. On occasion, she would put the objectives for the day on the board and the students worked individually or in groups to complete the objectives. Students could catch up or get ahead in some cases. She could work individually with students on problem areas of study. If

**the class remained orderly they could listen to music and do art or crafts if they successfully completed all the objectives. The ritual at the end of the class was a daily routine and each and every child had a specific role in getting the class in order. The points were given to each team that worked expediently to get the class in order, all the groups this day had been rewarded. Groups and teams change each six weeks, the teacher explained.**

**As I proceeded to my next observation, I couldn't help but think I had just witnessed the inner most workings of a beehive and the domain of superior worker bees. She and the student bees had just given me a look at a truly task oriented goal classroom. (Classroom Observation Summary, 7-3: Member 1, 12/6/94; Research Journal: Entry 12/6/94)**

A theme observed on how students are encouraged to take risks which was not mentioned by the teachers in the interview session was the use of cooperative learning strategies. The teams all used some type of a formal or informal cooperative learning structure during the observation period. The strategies included Think-Pair-Share, Roundtable, Teams-Tournament-Games. In all these cooperative learning strategies, the focus was on student collaboration and experimentation with the learning activities. These environments encouraged student risk taking. (Artifact

Summary, 8-3, 7-3, 6-3: All Members Lesson Plans, 12/1/94, 12/17/94, & 12/22/94)

Encouraging Students to Try

The teachers reported that in order to encourage student effort, they design learning activities that require all students to perform. Activities are high interest that provide students with opportunities for choices. The activities also accentuate basic skills. The varied instructional techniques used by the teams also emerged as a new theme in encouraging student effort. The following example typifies the activities used to encourage student effort.

During the observation period, students on team 8-2 participated in the Great American Mail Race, a letter writing campaign to other middle school students throughout the United States. When letters were answered, students would mark the geographic area the letters were returned from on a map of the United States. All the students participated in the exercise. A proud student displayed her letter from the White House in the library. Students chose the areas to send letters. The lesson was on letter writing and was one part of an interdisciplinary unit called "the intensive learning fortnight". (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2: Member 4, 11/30/94; Artifact Summary, 8-2: Member 4 Lesson Plan,

Assignment, & Miscellaneous, 12/17/94 & 12/18/94) Evaluation was based on getting the letter out and a return letter back.

Using Evaluation and Using work

Within the classroom context, evaluations of students are used as evidence of progress, and student work and performance were used as indicators for potential for learning. These data support the teams' report that they use task oriented motivation for these constructs within the class context.

Often, students acted as peer mentors and evaluators of student work and presentations. In a seventh grade social studies class, students had prepared and performed a song about leaders during the American Revolution. The final product was presented before the class who evaluated the presentation. It was video taped, and then later reviewed by students in other social studies classes. Evaluation was based on the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation coupled with student evaluators suggestions for improvement. Students eagerly awaited fellow student input and would retape the presentations to improve the quality of the video tape. The teacher evaluation served only to direct and guide the student groups for improved products. (Classroom Observation Summary, 7-3: Member 2, 12/13/94)

This evaluative procedure was also evident in the 6th grade team. Student presenters in social studies and language

offered projects and writings for total class review on two occasions that observations were being made. In the math and science classes, students would teach lessons. Evaluation of what the students were doing during these session was based on student improvement and progress to do better. (Classroom Observation Summary, 6-3: Member 1 & 2, 12/16/94)

Instilling Satisfaction

The teachers reported using midterm reports and student conferences to instill satisfaction for improvement. Mid term reports are given to all students. In most cases the reports show how the student has improved in an area based on marks received at the last grading period. Teachers also work with students who receive KWs and try to resolve and change the grade by the mid term report date. The teams used a computerized grading system "Greater Grader" to document their efforts. (Artifact Summary, Teams 8-2, 7-3, 6-3, Miscellaneous, 12/4/94, 12/23/94, 12/18/94)

Student conferences were also cited by the teachers as important venues for motivating students through improvement. During the study period all the teams were observed in student and parent conferences. In all three conference, strategies to help the student improve performance were an integral part of the conference. (Student Conference Observations, Teams 8-2, 7-3, 6-2, 11/21/94, 12/19/94, 12/5/94)

In Table 14, a summation of the patterns of process observed in the classroom context and identified within the convergent themes as observed in classrooms, meetings, and follow up interviews. The patterns of process identified specific activities the teams utilized to motivate students within the class or group setting at this study site. This information supported the teams reporting that they used task oriented motivation within the contexts of the team and of the class.

Patterns of divergence:

The teams were observed utilizing ability performance motivation in the individual context and in the whole school context. During the observation period, the themes presented by the teams in the interview were practiced in the classrooms. Table 15 details the themes observed during the observation of the classrooms. Each construct and the themes within that construct are shown, each team and whether or not the theme was observed in each class is indicated by a yes or no.

The themes examined in this setting were examined for divergence because although the teams reached consensus to the task oriented side of the differential, they revealed ability performance motivation in the dialog for reaching consensus.

Table 14:

Observed patterns of process within the team and class context and convergent themes reported by teams

| Theme: | Process: | Team: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Risk Taking | - introduction of complex ideas | yes | yes | yes |
| | - environment of security and acceptance | yes | yes | yes |
| | - stimulating intellectual growth | yes | yes | yes |
| | - providing cooperative learning opportunities | yes | yes | yes |
| | - introduction of open ended problems | yes | yes | yes |
| Evaluation as evidence of progress | - concrete learning experiences | yes | yes | yes |
| | - mastery of core skills and knowledge | yes | yes | yes |
| & | - consolidation of basic skills | yes | yes | yes |
| Using work & performance as indicators for potential for learning | - evidence of varied developmental levels adaptive instruction | yes | yes | yes |
| | - use of peer evaluation | yes | yes | yes |
| Encouraging student effort | - using hard work for student self efficacy | yes | yes | yes |
| | - requiring effort of all | yes | yes | yes |
| Instilling in students a satisfaction for improvement | - acceptance of students by staff through focus on student self esteem | yes | yes | yes |
| | - goal setting strategies | yes | yes | yes |
| | - evidence of short and long range planning | yes | yes | yes |
| | - student responsibility initiatives | yes | yes | yes |

Table 15:

Divergent Theme Observation

within individual and whole school context

| Construct: | Theme: | Team | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Error as part of not learning the objective | assigning grades | yes | yes | yes |
| | ability | yes | yes | yes |
| Competence viewed as being fixed | ability | yes | yes | yes |
| Success as determined by ability | grading policy | yes | yes | yes |
| | honor roll | yes | yes | yes |
| | ability | yes | yes | yes |

Observed themes support the teams reporting on utilizing ability motivation within the individual and whole school context. Negative case examination was also conducted in this segment.

The team was observed using ability performance motivation in the following construct areas:

- viewing error as not learning the objective;
- viewing student competence being ability based;
- viewing student success determined by ability.

Individual context was reported as how the team motivates individual students. Whole school context was reported as how the team motivates in relationship to school policy, practice, or administrative emphasis.

View of Error

All the teams were observed using ability performance motivation when assigning grades to individual students for work and performance. Assignments, projects, tests and homework were graded on a scale set by school policy. The scale is as follows:

A - 93 to 100
B - 86 to 92
C - 76 to 85
KW - 76 or below*

* On receiving a KW, the student receives a non passing grade and an improvement plan developed by the teacher giving the KW. The plan suggests student strategies for improvement, suggests how the parent can help the student at home, and how the teacher will help the child at school. The plan is signed by the teacher, the student,

> the parent, and the grade level administrator. All plans are reviewed and signed by the grade level administrator. All plans are returned to the teacher. (Artifact Review, 8-2, 7-3, 6-3: Miscellaneous, 12/1/94, 12/17/94, 12/22/94)

This grading and improvement policy was designed with the intention of stimulating student effort to improve and progress. The practice of using this scale and assessment is different when applied in individual student context. As one teacher noted in a follow up interview: **"I view the KW as non effort, I mean a student has to do nothing in my class to receive the grade. They are really failing when this occurs. Seldom is the KW resolved by these types of students (Follow up Interview, 7-3: Member 2, 1/6/94)."**

The type of activities students do on an individual basis in the classroom (assignments, tests, homework, reports, and projects) contain closed ended questions, problems that have one answer, or tasks with one right way for proceeding. Reliance on textbooks in mathematics and language instruction in all three grade level settings supports the notion the teams in these core subject areas use ability performance motivation in the individual context. The texts are used to support and assess how the individual students progress. (Artifact Review Summary, 8-2, 7-3, 6-3: Lesson Plans & Miscellaneous 12/1/94, 12/17/94, 12/22/94)

Grades are given based on the school grading scale and students are assigned or sorted on this basis. Students who

perform the best are rewarded with special recognition: honor roll with the student name in the newspaper and posted on lists in the cafeteria or outside the homebase door; or, student of the week recognition with picture and student biography posted on the bulletin board or in front of the office. Students who do not perform well on these types of assignments are given KW's and a plan for doing more work. (Artifact Review Summary, 8-2, 7-3, 6-3: Lesson Plans, Miscellaneous 12/1/94, 12/17/94, 12/22/94 & Class Observation Summary, 8-2. 7-3, 6-3: 12/5/94, 12/16/94)

The artifacts revealed that the team viewed competence as ability based. The teams' planning records indicate that much of the instructional basis for checking student progress focuses on the Literacy Passport Test (criterion referenced test) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (norm referenced test). The Virginia Standards of Learning were benchmarked in most lessons. (Artifact Review Summary, 8-2 & 7-3 & 6-3: All members, Lesson Plans, 12/1/94, 12/17/94, 12/22/94)

View of Competence

The observation of classes and meetings also supported the team's view that competence is ability based rather than effort based. On occasion, when students were asked closed ended questions (questions with just one right answer), students would raise their hands and compete with one another for the attention of the teacher to respond correctly. In

some instances, teachers would choose students who could answer the question correctly, especially if the question was difficult. Children selected for answering were often chosen based on the level of the child's ability. (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2: Member 4, 12/5/94; Classroom Observation Summary, 7-3: Member 3, 12/13/94; Classroom Observation Summary, 6-3: Member 3, 12/16/94)

Data collected during student conferences at all three grade levels revealed that when the teams met with students or students and parents, ability was also introduced into each session. Comments made by teachers or parents contained reference to ability: **"Mother: 'I know _____ can do better, he has the ability to make A's in math and makes KW's for you. His ability indicates he can do better in math.'" Teachers: 'We agree.' (Meeting Observation Summary, 6-3: 12/3/94)."**

A student's behavior problem at the 8th grade level was viewed based on the ability of the parent: **"Teacher: 'I knew the mother in school, we went to school together, she was a lot like him, talks a lot, does little. I don't know how much support we'll get from her. She cares but she doesn't get any help from her husband.' (Meeting Observation Summary, 8-2: 11/21/94)."**

A seventh grade conference tied a student's behavior with the behavior of the mother. Both were in counseling. The

conference concluded with the agreement: **"if the mother carries out her objectives, then _____ will be successful. (Meeting Observation Summary, 7-3: 12/19/94)."** The faculty felt the ability of the student to become successful actually depended on the ability of the parent to carry out some specific tasks. These statements taken by themselves out of the context of a thirty minute conference are poignant points for determining the teams' view of competence as ability based.

View of Success

Teams were observed viewing student success through ability performance motivation constructs. The teams were influenced greatly by the whole school context when defining student success for individual students. The grading policy was used to determine student recognition. All students recognized during the observation period at all three grade levels in the school student recognition program were honor roll students. Honor Roll lists were posted in all the sixth and seventh grade classrooms and in half of the eighth grade classrooms. (Classroom Observation Summary, 8-2 & 7-3 & 6-3: All observations 11/14/94 through 12/21/94)

In the focus group interview, one team discussed succinctly how student projects from poor students were viewed through the ability levels of a good student: **"Member 3: 'What if you had gotten a project from _____ (poor**

**student) that would have looked like _____ (good student). How would you have felt?' Member 4: 'I would have been surprised.' (Focus Group Interview, 8-2: 11/14/94)."** In other words, teacher expectations surpassed by poorer achieving students are surprises. Expectations are presorted on the ability levels of the students.

In a seventh grade social studies class, a presentation was taped again because one student in the group, an extremely bright boy but one who consistently performs below ability level and has numerous behavior problems, had made some last minute changes in the presentation which were not well received by the other students in the group. The request by the teacher for doing the presentation over was as follows: **"_____ (good student) would you like to do it over without _____'s (poor student) changes. Maybe it will go better (Classroom Observation Summary, 7-3, Member 2, 12/13/94)."**

In the eighth grade letter writing campaign, mentioned earlier in the study, the teacher drafted an accompanying letter for the student letters. Included in the letter was an explanation of the view of ability when viewing student success: **"My students are on very different ability levels. The letter included in this envelope may reflect either end of the spectrum or anything in between. Please take this into consideration when reading the letter. (Artifact Review**

**Summary, 8-2: Member 4 Assignment, 12/4/94)."**

In Table 16, a summation of the patterns of process is presented as observed in the individual context and whole school context identified within the divergent themes in classrooms, meetings, and follow up interviews. The patterns of process identified specific activities the teams utilized to motivate students as individuals or because of the whole school influences at this study site. This information supported the teams reporting that they used ability performance motivation within the individual context and the whole school context.

Table 16:

Observed patterns of process

within the individual context and whole school context

| Theme: | Process: | Team: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Assigning grades | - use of schoolwide grading policy | yes | yes | yes |
| | - use of close ended questions for individual assignments, homework, projects and tests | yes | yes | yes |
| | - KW viewed as failure | yes | yes | yes |
| Ability | - use of criterion reference and norm reference tests as basis for instruction | yes | yes | yes |
| | - ability of parents used as indicator of potential for learning | yes | yes | yes |
| Recognizing Success | - use of honor roll | yes | yes | yes |
| | - competitive based assessment | yes | yes | yes |
| | - grades for recognition | yes | yes | yes |
| | - ability seen as reason for failure | yes | yes | yes |

## Participant Follow Up Interview

After the findings were written, the participants reviewed the findings for accuracy and clarity. The participants reviewed the findings for a week and then met with the researcher in a follow up group interview. A tape recorder and transcriber were present in the session and collected the data from the discussion.

The follow up focus group interview was held January 27, 1995 from 9:00 am. until 11:00 am. The researcher opened the session by outlining the study and briefly presenting the findings for the group. The participants were then asked to interact on a number of items:

- Participants were asked to share corrections and clarification notes for the researcher.
- Participants were asked to discuss two areas for negative case examination and disclosure:

  Participants discussed the difference in the team reporting on the semantic differential on item eight of the original Focus Group Interview Questionnaire (See Table 10).

  Participants were asked two questions dealing with negative case examination and disclosure.
- Participants discussed the question "How do you motivate students?"

Participants also answered the semantic differential individually without discussing their responses with other members. This activity ended the session. A full outline and the questions asked during the session are presented in Appendix K to provide the scope and sequence of the session.

## Participant Clarification of Findings

The participants agreed the findings of the study were clear and accurate as written. There were four areas the participant's pointed out as needing corrections and are listed as follows:

- Team member 6-3,1 asked that Table 13 on page 66 reflect that team 6-3 does have students re-do assignments.

- Team member 7-3,2 pointed that the comment on page 54 credited to team member 7-3,3 was made by team member 7-3,2.

- Team member 7-3,1 requested that "carols" be changed to "music", and "boys and girls" to "class" on page 71.

- Team member 8-2,4 requested that the word "do" be deleted from the second quote on page 60 and also change the quotation from team member 8-2,3 to 8-2,4.

These corrections were made by the researcher and are reflected in the original findings as requested by the participants.

## Negative Case Examination

### Point One - Item 8: Focus Group Interview:

The teams had reported a difference in how they view student success. The sixth and seventh grade teams reported they viewed success in the middle of the differential, viewing effort and achievement equally. The eighth grade team had reported viewing success through effort only. The teams were asked to discuss the difference. (See Table 10). In the explanation, sixth and seventh grade members explained that in motivating students they placed equal importance on effort and achievement, an ability motivation strategy.

The eighth grade reported that they too viewed success on effort and achievement equally. Because of a lack of effort on the part of some students this school year, the team was emphasizing effort this year in motivating the students. They reported that the results on the Focus Group Interview in

November reflected that emphasis: **"The effort is the journey that leads to achievement (Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 1, 1/27/95)." "We need to see more effort in our students this year. We have to deal with getting them to put forth more effort in the first place. (Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 4, 1/27/95)."**

Point Two - Whole school influence on motivation:

The teams had reported a shift in motivating differently in the individual and whole school context. The teams reported using ability performance motivation within these contexts. A point for negative case examination was determined in this area and the participants were asked to discuss this point collectively.

**Researcher: How much influence do traditional policies and practices (such as the grading scale, the honor roll, principal interaction, and state mandates) have on the way you motivate students?**

In explaining the influence of grades, the teachers described a traditional view by students, parents, and teachers as the basis for the strong influence of grades on motivation: **"Grades have been stressed to students by parents and teachers as important. Students will ask me, 'Is this going to be a grade?' You get the impression that if it is not, then they are not going to do it (Clarification**

**Interview, 7-3, Member 1, 1/27/95)."**

The teachers explained that the honor roll is a measure of success and an important motivational influence: **"Grades are important. I have had kids come to me for the first time saying 'I made the Honor Roll for the first time in my life and I am so proud' (Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 3, 1/27/95)."**

The teachers explained administrative influence is vital in the way teachers and teams motivate students. The participants reported on innovation, atmosphere, teaming, and leadership vision: **"I think administration influences the entire school atmosphere, when it is upbeat and positive. It affects everyone (Clarification Interview, 6-3, Member 1, 1/27/95)." "It filters down from the top. The way we interact with the principal as a part of the team. That helps with the way we feel about ourselves. When schools are large, a lot of teachers might not feel a part of the team. The time spent with us makes us feel a part of the team. I worked for a negative, top down principal once. No one in that school was motivated to do one thing.(Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 3, 1/27/95)."**

The teachers explained that the state mandate, the Literacy Passport Tests had an impact on the way they motivate students. The teachers reported that in preparation for and in remediation of the tests, they feel self imposed stress and

pressure from the administration for the students to do well. **"We are so focused on bringing up scores and so focused on the outcome that we are down. The whole first semester is just blah (Clarification Interview, 6-3, Member 2, 1/27/95)." "I can't stop thinking, that I can't wait until the LPT is over so we can start having fun. We feel like failures if they don't pass(Clarification Interview, 6-3, Member 1, 1/27/95)." "I taught at the sixth grade and found the pressure overwhelming for the students. It was intense, too intense to be motivational (Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 2, 1/27/95)."**

Point Three: Principal as Researcher in the Study

Because the researcher in this study was also the principal of the school, examination of the principal and teacher relationship was considered. The participants were asked to discuss if they changed anything in their normal practice as a result of participation in the study.

**Researcher : How did your teams do things differently because you were in this study?**

**"We didn't change. (Clarification Interview, 8-2, Member 1, 1/27/95)."** Others in the group interview nodded agreement with member 8-2,1.

Participant Discussion: Motivating Students

The participants were asked to discuss how they motivated students. The teachers reported that they get students involved by getting to know them and letting the students know them, by being friendly and excited about teaching, by making them confident in what they do, by laughing at themselves, by showing them different ways to do things, and by uniting them into a common group. Each member's response is included in the following dialog from the clarification interview on 1/27/95:

**6-3,1: By getting students involved. I try to get to know my kids. I try to find out one thing personal about the kids. That way you share something personal just with that one kid. You try to get to know them personally and try to get to know them one on one. They really like to meet your family, because my daughter does SODA with my kids and that fascinates them.**

**6-3,2: With our relationship with them. I tease them sometimes and say off the cuff comments that let them know that teachers are human. School is serious, but also fun.**

**6-3,3: In college they teach you not to smile and do not let them know anything about you. Do not to get personal. That's what they want to know right off the bat first thing, "What is your first name?" They were amazed to find out that I had a son that taught.**

**7-3,1: By being friendly with kids at times when not teaching, for example,in the halls. One of my favorite expressions is, "It is not 11:00 yet." It is a way I let them know I am not a morning person. They use it often.**

**7-3,2: By being excited about what I teach.**

**7-3,3: Approach students with confidence. Say to them, "You are going to learn and be good at it." I have students who are convinced that they are not good at math when they walk through that door. I do not tolerate that attitude. I say, "You will be good at math. You may not feel like you are good at math, but you can be good at math." And pretty soon, they think they are. Laughing at yourself as a teacher helps a lot too.**

**8-2,2: By showing them a different way to do something. By showing them more than one way to do something.**

**8-2,4: We are human. They need to know that teachers have a life and they enjoy finding out personal things about you, for example, the fact that I have a dog and he came here, and he is a goofy dog. We are also interested in the total class community. We do not want factualism. We all came from different schools. You are the class of' 99 and act that way. The high school is going to be so much fun, but you have got to get rid of all those little rivalries. School is the most fun you'll ever have, enjoy it.**

Group members 8-2,1 and 8-2,3 did not respond in this interaction.

## Follow Up Survey - Semantic Differential

The participants were asked to complete the Focus Group Interview (Appendix E) Team's Perceptions on Motivating Students to Learn. The teachers were requested to fill out the differential individually. They were requested not to discuss their choices with other team members. The results of the teacher's reporting on this survey is shown in Table 15. Each members score was recorded and the team average was

calculated. The scores in Table 15 reflect the mean for each team as reported by each individual teacher. The mean for the three teams is presented in the last column.

The teachers reporting individually indicate a slight shift toward the middle of the differential and toward ability performance motivation in items 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 when compared to how they reported in the team consensus report. The teachers reporting individually on items 3, 4, and 5 indicate a slight shift toward task orientation motivation when compared to how they reported on the consensus survey. (See Table 10). The procedure for establishing scores for each item on the individual survey remained the same as used in establishing the scores for the consensus survey.

The participants were given the results of the two surveys and asked to explain the shifts. These confidential probes gave further insight in explaining the slight shifts. Each member reported that in the consensus survey reporting, team dynamics played an important role in establishing the team perspective on how to report for each item. In the individual survey, the teachers reported they felt they had less team pressure to answer "the correct way." The teachers also reported they viewed the differences very slight in comparing the individual survey to the team consensus survey.

Table 17:

Follow up Group Interview
Survey Response of Individual Team Members

| Item | Team | | | All teams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-2 | m |
| 1. Team motivates by encouraging students to take risks. | 8.2 | 8.0 | 8.3 | 8.16 |
| 2. Team motivates by using evaluation as evidence of student progress. | 7.5 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 7.5 |
| 3. Team motivates by encouraging students to try. | 7.7 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 8.3 |
| 4. Team motivates by using student work and performance as indicators of student potential for learning. | 5.1 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.4 |
| 5. Team motivates by instilling satisfaction in students for improvement. | 7.7 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 7.76 |
| 6. Team motivates by viewing student error as a part of the growth process. | 7.7 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 8 |
| 7. Team motivates by viewing student competence as developing through effort. | 7.0 | 8.0 | 5.6 | 6.86 |
| 8. Team motivates by viewing student success through student effort. | 6.5 | 5.0 | 6.1 | 5.86 |

## Post Study Findings

After concluding the study and before preparing the conclusions of the study, a post findings study model was developed reflecting all the data collected in the process. Two additional patterns emerged in the findings clarification which had not been discussed or observed previously during the study. The first pattern was identified as effective administrative leadership. Effective administrative leadership was defined by the teachers as the role the principal plays in administering the school process on a daily basis with the effective teams.

The teachers reported the following items as playing a vital role in motivating students to learn and are reported in Table 18 as patterns of process within the whole school context for effective administrative leadership.

The second pattern reported by the teachers was effective team practices. This pattern was defined by the reporting teachers as the practices used by teachers in the relationships with their students. These items are identified and shown as patterns of process in Table 19:

Table 18:

Teacher reported patterns of process

within the whole school context

for effective administrative leadership

| Theme: | Process: | Team: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Innovation | - accepting new ideas | yes | yes | yes |
| | - showing interest in teacher innovations | yes | yes | yes |
| | - accepting teacher input for new ways of doing things | yes | yes | yes |
| Atmosphere | - use of positive means of communication | yes | yes | yes |
| | - providing direction | yes | yes | yes |
| Teaming | - making teachers a part the whole school team through working with the team | yes | yes | yes |

Table 19:

Teacher reported patterns of process within the individual student context as effective teacher practices for motivating students to learn

| Theme: | Process: | Team: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8-2 | 7-3 | 6-3 |
| Involvement | - getting to know students | yes | yes | yes |
| | - approaching with confidence | yes | yes | yes |
| | - letting students know teachers things | yes | yes | yes |
| Interpersonal | - being friendly | yes | yes | yes |
| | - showing excitement | yes | yes | yes |
| | - using humor | yes | yes | yes |
| | - being human | yes | yes | yes |

The patterns of process were shared with the participants for Table 18 and Table 19. They were asked to confirm these patterns for accuracy. The columns in each table under the team designation are the team's report on each of these patterns. A "yes" indicates all team members confirmed the pattern as accurately identified.

The patterns were included in Figure 4 as additional findings and added as a design for further research model.

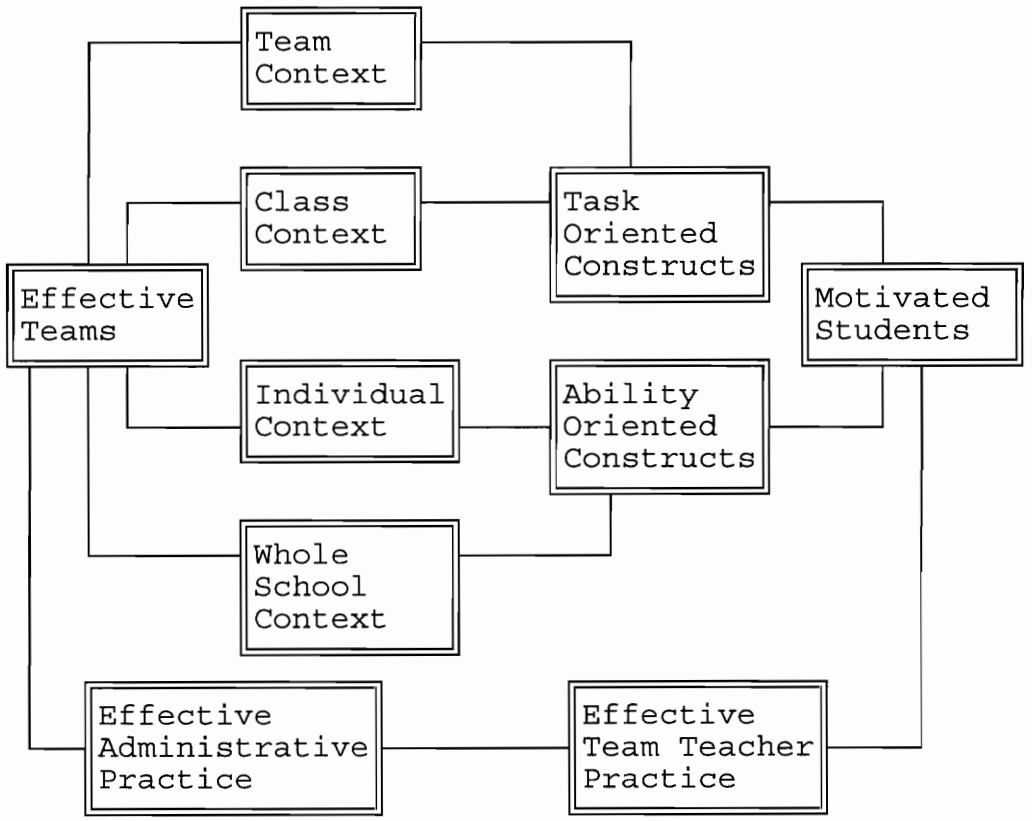


Figure 4:
Further Research Model

# CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how effective teams motivate students to learn. The premise of the examination was based on "How?" and "What?" questions. "Why?" questions were not incorporated into the study because "Why?" questions presume cause and effect relationships.

The difficulty of making causal inferences in small samples and limited study sites has been thoroughly explored at great length by "philosophers of science" (Bunge, 1959; Nagel 1961). This study limited by sample size and selection could not, nor should not, address the infinite regression quality of "Why?" questioning techniques. Results cannot or should not be generalized to other samples or study sites.

What is important about this project? How does it add to existing knowledge? This discussion addresses the question "so what?" by identifying rich areas of descriptive data that tell how effective teams motivate students in this sample and at this site. The findings established a method for discovery and identified data that this sample and study site could use as educative research in order to improve team performance and whole school program delivery. There were five conclusions for this sample and site that addressed how effective teams motivate students to learn and are listed as follows:

- One: effective teams enhance benefits to students
- Two: effective teams motivate students using task oriented motivation in the team context.
- Three: effective teams motivate students using task oriented motivation in the class context.
- Four: effective teams motivate students using ability performance motivation in the individual and whole school context.
- Five: leadership of the school plays an important role in effective teams approach to motivating students.

## Conclusions

### Effective Teams Enhance Benefits To Student

One underlying assumption of the major question of this study was that effective teams enhance benefits to students. This assumption was present in the Erb and Doda (1989) study and the Gibson (1994) study. Findings in this study support that assumption.

The three teams were selected for study because they met three selection components. First, the teams met the demographic criteria definitions established in the theory of Erb and Doda (1989) and the study of Gibson (1994). Second,

the three teams were selected because they reported on the Survey of Teaming Activities (Appendix B) that they met the definitions established by Gibson. Last, the three teams were selected because they met the performance indicators established by the researcher in this study.

These findings also support the assumptions in current literature that effective teaming has positive trends for student attendance (Johnson & Johnson, 1985), discipline (George & Oldaker, 1985), and parental contacts (Cawelti, 1988). Important to the premise in this study was the notion that these teams affected students in a positive manner. Students on these teams came to school more often, were sent to the office for disciplinary problems less, received fewer failing grades, and had a higher contact rate with parents by the teams than the students had on other teams at the corresponding grade levels. The effective teams at this study site enhanced benefits to students.

## Effective Teams Motivate Students Using Task Oriented Constructs Within the Team Context

After the effective teams were identified and it was determined that students were benefited by the teams performance, the teams were asked to report their perceptions on "how" they motivated students to learn. In order to

systematically search for patterns and themes, the teams were asked to report their perceptions in relationship to theoretical constructs developed by Anderman and Maehr (1994). This survey and reporting method gave the participants and the researcher opportunity to examine team perceptions and to establish a benchmark for further observation and review.

The teams reported that they motivate students within the task oriented constructs within the team context in the focus group interview. Results from the team consensus survey on motivating students to learn showed that as teams, the teachers perceived that students should be motivated within the task oriented constructs proposed by Anderman and Maehr (1994). Team consensus reporting indicated that the mean scores reported by the three teams showed a determination on the left side of the semantic differential and toward task oriented motivation for all the constructs.

By comparing team consensus reporting on the survey at the beginning of the study with the individual teacher reporting on the same survey at the conclusion of the study, a slight shift was noted toward ability performance motivation in some construct areas. This comparison revealed that the teachers, reporting individually, shifted away from the task oriented side of the semantic differential in five of the eight construct areas. In other words, the teachers softened their commitment to task oriented motivation when asked to

consider the constructs as individual teachers.

These two reporting patterns support the theories of Erickson (1968), Newman (1981), and Weiner (1991), that teachers grouped in teams develop the thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions held by the team as a whole.

All three teams reported frequent or very frequent activity in domain 3, sharing growth and responsibility of the Gibson (1994) effective team practices model. During meeting observations, much time was spent by all three teams in sharing growth and responsibility. The dialog in meetings focused on how the team could support individual teachers in day to day operations of the classroom. In this domain teachers are sharing information and ideas, team beliefs and team perceptions were formed. The teachers reported in follow-up probes that this interaction does influence and support the formulation of teacher perceptions.

When asked point blank "How do you motivate students to learn?" in the follow up clarification group interview, the teachers responded that they used positive interpersonal skills, incorporated a variety of instructional techniques, and developed a sense of community among the students for motivation. Many of these beliefs and perceptions are shared across the team by way of sharing information and ideas. The team environment helps mold these positive teacher attributes.

## Effective Teams Motivate Students Using Task Oriented Motivation in the Classroom Context

The observation of team meetings, classrooms, and review of team artifacts served to describe "what" these teams did to motivate students to learn. In the classroom setting, and while working with groups of students, the teams tended to continue to operate in task oriented motivation. This pattern was defined as how the team motivates within the classroom setting.

The pattern was established through an analysis of the dialog of the teachers during the focus group interview during the consensus reporting survey. Five themes were generated around the constructs measured in this survey session. The teams reported using task oriented motivation in the following construct areas:

- encouraging risk taking;
- encouraging students to try;
- evaluation used as evidence of progress;
- using student work as potential for learning;
- instilling in students satisfaction for improvement.

The observations of team meetings, classrooms, and artifacts used supported the teams' report that they did use task oriented motivation in these five construct areas in the class context.

Verification of these observations were posted as convergent theme identification. Further analysis and follow up interviews formalized these convergent themes into patterns of process for motivating groups of students to learn within task oriented motivation. These patterns incorporate a myriad of team strategies used to motivate within the group or class setting. The patterns were formalized collaboratively by the researcher and the participants.

It is important to note that the patterns of process identified in this study accentuate effort as the cognitive element leading to proactive and intentional action. This is not unlike the elements of task motivation discussed by Anderman and Maehr (1994) through the works of previous motivation researchers such as Ames (1978), Covington (1984) and Nichols (1986).

The three teams in this study used task motivation in the class context to motivate students to learn. This finding supports the teams' claim that teams "ought" to motivate students with task motivation strategies and that the teams did use group or classroom strategies to motivate within this theoretical framework.

## Effective Teams Motivate Students Using Ability Performance Motivation in the Individual and Whole School Context.

During the course of this study, two patterns of divergence were discovered. In motivating individual students and in relationship to school policy, practice or administrative emphasis, the teams reported that they use ability performance motivation. These two patterns were generated around the following construct areas:

- viewing error as not learning the objective;
- viewing student competence as ability based;
- viewing student success as being determined by ability.

These two patterns and the three themes were identified in the dialog of the focus group interview and supported by observation of meetings, classrooms and the artifacts used.

Verification of these observations were posted as divergent theme identification within individual and whole school context. Further analysis and follow up interviews formalized these divergent themes into patterns of process for motivating individual students to learn within ability performance motivation. These patterns of process were formalized collaboratively by the researcher and the participants. Theses patterns of process describe how these three teams motivate students within the individual and whole school context.

These divergent patterns of process should be minimized by effective teaming practices according to Johnson and Johnson (1985). At this study site, ability motivation was evident in three of the eight constructs proposed by Anderman and Maehr (1994) and were not minimized by effective teaming practices. The CREMS (1990) study concluded that performance grades and assessment practice were rare in middle level settings. The results from this study support that conclusion.

Eccles (1993) noted that team perceptions and actions can be overshadowed by the whole school context. A school wide reward system based on grade standards can influence the motivational scheme of teams. The teams at this study site reported that grades were important motivational factors because of the emphasis of the whole school context on the grading policy, the honor roll, and the use of grades for recognition.

Competitive environments, where grades are used for rewards, are saturated with ability motivation. These environments were found in the Ames (1981) study and the Ames and Archer (1988) study. At this study site, ability performance was evident in the individual context pattern. The teams reported a task oriented motivational approach on the consensus survey but further examination revealed that the teams actually practiced ability motivation in this pattern.

This reporting pattern was explained in the negative case examination during the findings clarification. The teams reported that ability performance practices such as grades and the honor roll are important to students, parents, and teachers. The teams also reported that the Literacy Passport Tests drive teachers emphasis on motivating students to do well on the tests. This focus by the teachers may serve as a non-motivational practice because of the redundancy of the exercises used in class to ensure skill acquisition on the part of the students.

Administrative influence was also reported by the teams as an important factor in motivating students individually and within the whole school context. This influence can be positive or negative depending upon the vision of the leadership, the working relationship the leadership has with the teams, and the environment initiated by the leadership.

## Leadership of the School Plays an Important Role in Effective Teams' Approach to Motivating Students.

Two additional patterns emerged in the findings clarification segment of the study. The first pattern reported by the teachers was effective administrative leadership. The teachers reported three themes in this pattern:

- administrative innovation,
- administrative atmosphere,
- administrative work with teams.

These three themes were reported by the teachers as important determinants of administrative patterns of process that stimulated effective teacher practices. The teams reported a second pattern of effective teacher practices. This was reported in two themes within such pattern:

- teacher involvement with students,
- teacher interpersonal relationships with students.

These two themes were reported as important determinants of teacher patterns of process in motivating students. These patterns emerged outside the theoretical constructs examined in the major part of the study. Nevertheless, the teachers' description of these two patterns become important components of how effective teams motivate students to learn.

The teachers reported that in becoming involved with students by getting to know students and letting the students know the teachers; and interpersonally relating to students by being friendly, excited, humorous, and human is enhanced by effective administrative practices. Administrative practices of approving new ideas, showing interest, and accepting teacher input show a tolerance for innovation. Positive administrative communication with positive administrative direction creates a nurturing teaching atmosphere. By making

the teachers feel a part of the whole school team by working with the team on a day to day basis emphasizes administrative acceptance of the importance of teaming. Hand in hand, these two patterns create a direction for positively motivating students to learn.

What the teams have described in these two patterns is not unlike what was described by Katzenbach and Smith (1993) in their description of the role leaders play on high performance teams. Katzenbach and Smith emphasize that leaders should do six things in good team leadership:

1. Keep the purpose, goals, and approach relevant.
2. Build commitment and confidence.
3. Strengthen the level of skills.
4. Manage relationships.
5. Create opportunities for others.
6. Do real work.

(p. 139 - 144)

Leadership of the school at this study site does play an important role in effective teams' approach to motivating students.

## Implications

The implications of this study pertain directly to the teams, administrators, and the school at this study site. There were three major implications that emerged as a result of the study:

- effective teaming needs further examination to establish data resources on the benefits or non - benefits to students;
- individual context and whole school context need to be addressed in relationship to student motivation;
- the role of the leadership at the study site needs to be examined in relationship to student motivation.

It was found that effective teaming enhances benefits to students. Generalizing the practices of these three effective teams into the practices of those teams not identified as effective could help broaden the enhancement of student performance across grade levels and throughout the school population. Performance of the general population could be enhanced if effective team members train the other school teams on team contextual and class contextual patterns of processes determined in this study.

The whole school context of grading policies, the honor roll, and student recognition programs is in need of further review. The reporting teams indicated that the whole school context influences motivational practices to a great extent.

Alignment of whole school contextual practices with task oriented motivational characteristics needs to be considered at this study site.

Consideration of evaluating how teachers perform on teams needs to take place. Currently, teachers are evaluated on an individual basis for instructional effectiveness. If we know that teams are an effective instructional strategy, then we need to assess how well teachers perform as members of teams. This study can begin to identify some key practices and behaviors that need to be exhibited by all teachers within the team setting. Evaluating teachers on their performance in teams will continue to stimulate professional growth. Since effective teaming was shown to benefit students at this study site, sharing expertise and process will enhance the whole school program.

Administrative practices of grade level administrators (assistant principals) and the school principal need to be reviewed and adjusted according to the working relationships that each of these individuals have with the existing teams at the study site. The influence of leadership has important implications for how teams motivate students to learn. The role of leadership is in further need of definition at this study site.

This study is important because of the educative research merits of the study. Attention to these implications will

improve the effectiveness of all the teams operating at this study site.

## Recommendations for Further Study

There are several recommendations which could enhance and add to the knowledge on effective teaming and motivating students to learn. The most obvious recommendation for further research is to recommend a study that includes student perspectives on task oriented versus ability performance motivation. This study was limited to a teacher perspective. A student perspective would provide another way for establishing validity in these findings at this study site.

Replicating this qualitative study in other study sites would continue to broaden perspectives on how effective teams motivate students to learn in other team and school settings. Each new case study would generate sources of data to describe and verify the different ways effective teaming affects students. Included in these data would be additional convergent and divergent patterns of processes that teachers working with early adolescents would have identified in motivating students to learn. This alone would create a resource bank for middle level educators to draw from as they continue to search for effective practices in meeting student needs.

How teachers are evaluated as members of teams needs to be addressed and reviewed further. Examining team development and team professional growth through case studies could provide the literature with a rich data base of how teachers feel they ought to evaluated and assessed within the framework of the team.

The roles administrative leaders play in team practice is essential for determining expected effective teaming levels. Studies that examine the principal in the interaction that affects the performance of effective teams are in need of closer review. These types of case studies provide descriptive data that outlines the role of the principal in relationship to team effectiveness.

Perhaps the most poignant point of further research using this method for examining the "how" and "what" teams are doing in middle schools is the question of student assessment within the team instructional setting. Assessment practices of early adolescents needs additional examination and disclosure. If the way middle level educators are assessing individual students is not appropriately matched with instructional delivery, what merit is there in teaming?

This implication is important in light of the current trend in educational reform for providing accountability of instructional programs at all levels. The debate stemming from the recent push for accountability should include

perspectives on the benefits that teaming has for students. Assessment measures based on effort of students and not the ability of students can help define the issues.

The current system tends to accentuate ability and avoid the consideration of effort in student performance. Theorists explain that performance increases as effort on the part of early adolescents is emphasized. Adjusting assessment to reflect the emphasis of team context and class context patterns of process within the individual context would align assessment practice with existing team instructional strategies.

There are an abundance of stories to be told by effective teams of teachers who share beliefs systems targeted to meet the needs of early adolescents and to help these early adolescents find an identity. The stories of accurate assessment measures would enhance the student's and the team's search for that identity.

Anyone fortunate enough to spend time and share space in a middle school with early adolescents and the effective teacher teams that serve these students will quickly notice two things. Young adolescents are driven by a need to belong and a need to discover their identity. Effective teams address these needs through shared belief systems that nurture individual student self-esteem and motivate students to learn.

The purpose of this study was to examine and then describe that relationship. This examination and description has provided only a small piece of information about teams and students. The end of this study gives rise to new questions and a new search for meaning. Such is the life of the qualitative researcher; or in the words of Halcolm, "analysis finally makes clear to researchers what would have been most important to study, if only they had known before hand" (Patton, 1990, p. 371). This work becomes a beginning for more study.

## Epilogue

Qualitative inquiry never really ends. Reflection at the conclusion of this study left the researcher with two additional questions. These questions are important and are included as a contributing piece for this document. The first question was "What did your role as both a principal and a researcher teach you during this study? I have found that the strongest motivating influence on groups of teachers and groups of students is positive human interaction. The participants taught me this. I had no idea the extent of influence the behaviors of leadership has on the motivational climate of a school. The study gave me the opportunity to learn.

My investment in their world of instruction gave them an avenue to provide input to me. By working with them as a team member to clarify the "how" and the "what" of what they did day in and day out increased my awareness of how important it is for principals to engage in real work with the teams of teachers. It also made me realize how much effort they put into teaching and motivating the students they interact with daily.

The relationship between principal and teacher is usually tenuous at best, especially if one works in a large school. The joy and frustrations of this relationship should be continually examined. It is best examined working together toward a common and shared goal. This research taught me how powerful that relationship can be and how the relationship should never be taken for granted.

The second question is "where do we go from here ?" I find it best to answer this question in two parts.

First, our school has to develop authentic assessment measures that facilitate task motivation within the individual and whole school context. A better approach for our school would be to emphasize "teaching and learning" assessment practices rather than "selecting and sorting" practices.

The use of student portfolios that follow students through each grade level may be the most logical starting point. The portfolios should include samples of the student's

best work in each subject area at each grade level. Each year the team of teachers and the student should collaboratively develop learning objectives within the framework of the accepted state, division, or school learning standards. Student learning styles inventories given annually should drive the instruction and assessment process as the student works through the portfolio learning objectives.

Criterion referenced assessment should phase out norm referenced assessment throughout the school. A grading paradigm should be developed that emphasizes effort rather than ability. The new grading paradigm should be void of grading scales, honor rolls, and student recognition based on grade attainment. This would serve to minimize the effects of ability motivation within the individual and whole school context.

The second part of my answer to the question "where do we go from here ?" requires a general tone. I suspect teams of teachers working with students at the middle school level are experiencing the same type of philosophical rift experienced by the teams at this study site. The teams that have made changes in instructional strategies are finding that the assessment measures and practices used at their sites are not matching their instructional strategies. Sharing the information from this study may initiate the kind of dialog that is essential for starting the assessment transformation

at the middle school level. In even more global terms, this dialog may give impetus to transforming assessment practices throughout all levels of education.

The climate for such dialog on general and global levels will not be calm. Accountability advocates still view the measure of student success through grades that select and sort, through tests that are normed, and through measures that compare individual and group ability. It is not an approach that will be changed easily. To evoke dialog for authentic or alternative assessment measures will take courage and compassion on the part of teachers and administrators. This is especially true if judgmental and accusatory discussions begin to emerge.

Students and parents have a high level of invested interest in this matter. Inclusion of these groups in the development and implementation of assessment paradigm shifts will decrease the amount of suspicion that accompanies such a shift. Students and parents care deeply about how educational performance is measured. Their input should and must be included. This will take time and patience.

I believe that educative research that includes all the vested partners of any given research topic will find the truest measure of what exists, what needs to be changed, and what does not need changed. And so it goes ...

Appendix A

Research Protocol

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
of Investigative Projects

Title of Project -- **Effective team beliefs on motivating students to learn**

Principal Investigator -- **James B. Phares**

**I. Purpose of the Research --**

You are invited to participate in a study about teaming and motivating students to learn. This study involves experimentation for the purpose of dissertation fieldwork. This study involves nine teachers in addition to yourself.

**II. Procedures** --

The procedures to be used in this research are quantitative and qualitative surveys, interviews, and observations of team meetings and classes. The time and conditions required for you to participate in this project are equivalent to 45 hours.

The possible risks or discomfort to you as a participant may be time spent in filling out questionnaires, discussion time in interview sessions and meetings/classroom observation. These survey/interview/observation sessions will usually last 45 minutes three times weekly over a six week period.

**III. Benefits of the Project** --

Your participation in the project will provide the following information that may be helpful in the following ways: a better way of understanding motivation for early adolescents, effective teaming practices, and the relationship between teaming and motivating for student learning.

No guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in this study. You may receive a synopsis or summary of this research when completed. Please inform the principal investigator, if you want a copy.

**IV. Extent of Anonymity** --

The results of this study will be kept strictly confidential. At no time will the researchers release the results of the study to anyone other that individuals working on the project without your written consent. The information you provide will be submitted anonymously, nothing will identify you during the analyses and any written report of the research. Taping will occur, but all tapes will be erased immediately after they are transcribed.

**V. Compensation** --

You will receive 45 recertification points for your participation in the project. Alternative methods of receiving compensation will be credit of unassigned days as outlined by contract requirements.

**VI. Freedom to withdraw** --

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. If you chose to withdraw, you will be compensated for the portion of time of the study. If you choose to withdraw, you will not be penalized.

There may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that you should not continue as a subject of this project. You will be compensated for the portion of the project completed.

**VII. Approval of research** --

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for projects involving human subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Human Resources, by the Superintendent of Bedford County Schools, and by the Principal of Staunton River Middle School as participant researcher.

**SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

I know of no reason I cannot participate in this study. I understand I have the following responsibilities:

- to complete surveys short answer and narrative as needed by the researcher.
- to participate in group and individual focus interviews with an interviewer other than the principal investigator.

- to be observed in team meetings and classroom by the principal investigator.
- to participate in a review of the findings for verifying accuracy of the data collection and analysis.

_____
Signature

**SUBJECT'S PERMISSION**

I have read and understand the informed consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I will contact:

James B. Phares — phone- 703 297 - 4426
Principal investigator

Steve R. Parson — phone- 703 231 - 9722
Faculty advisor

Ernest R. Stout — phone- 703 231 - 9359
Chair, IRB
Research Division

Appendix B

Survey of Team Activities

As a part of my graduate work at Virginia Tech, I am studying the activities of an effective team in a middle school. Your input can be valuable in helping me to obtain an accurate picture of the activities and experiences associated with teaming. I am asking for your assistance in this project.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate please take about 10 minutes within the next week and complete the attached survey. Your team may also be participating in a focus interview in the near future. I will be meeting with you to determine a convenient time for the interview. Your contribution will be confidential; names, team name, and school will not be published in the research report.

Thank you very much

Sincerely,

James B. Phares

==========

Section 1: This section is designed to determine the nature of your team. Please circle the best response on questions 1 - 6, and fill in the blanks on 7 & 8.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. How many teachers are on your team? | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 2. Is your team responsible for teaching core subjects: science, mathematics, social studies, and language? | YES | NO |
| 3. Does your team share a common group of students during a block of four or five periods? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you have two planning periods -- one for team planning and one for individual planning? | YES | NO |
| 5. Have at least 50% of the members of your team been on the team for the past two full academic years? | YES | NO |
| 6. Have you received training specific to teaming arrangements? | YES | NO |

7. How many years have you taught? ____

8. How many years has your team operated? ____

Section II: This section is designed to indicate the activities of your team. Please circle the answer which best describes how often your team is involved in each activity. Please use the following key:

**0=Never 1=Infrequently 2=Frequently 3=Very Frequently**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Our team keeps copies of team meetings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. | Our team prepares as a team for parent/ student conferences. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. | We plan for new instructional techniques as a team. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. | Members of our team ask other members to observe their classes and provide feedback. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. | Our team has a member who keeps minutes of our meetings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. | We take students on team outings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. | Our team has regular, scheduled meetings | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. | Members of our team neglect to follow through on team decisions. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. | Our team decides as a group on how to spend team funds. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. | We plan interdisciplinary units. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. | Members of our team are aware of what is being taught in all core subjects. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. | Students on our team each have at least one team member who knows the "total picture" of their grades, accomplishments, and problems. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. | We teach interdisciplinary units. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | Our team teaches some basic skills (such as punctuation) in all core areas. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. | We coordinate tests,projects, and homework due dates. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. | Each team member uses their own discipline structure and methods. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. | We resolve our disputes in our regular meetings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. | Our team has a member represent all members when making calls to parents. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. | We share ideas about classroom problems and solutions. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. | Our team discusses how we can improve our communication with each other. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. | We discuss curriculum at regular meetings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. | One member dominates team meetings | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 23. | We share information on staff development. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. | We use specific student scheduling guidelines. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. | We develop solutions to students' problems in our regular meetings. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. | Team members share information. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. | We hold student recognition events. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. | We regroup students as the need arises. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. | One member of our team is responsible for coordination with non-core teachers who share our students. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## Appendix C

### Division of Questions on Teaming Survey by Domain

| Domain 1: Organization | Domain 2: Attention to students |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 16* |
| 8* | 24 |
| 17 | 25 |
| 20 | 27 |
| 22* | 28 |
| | 29 |

| Domain 3: Sharing | Domain 4: Coordination |
|---|---|
| 4 | 3 |
| 9 | 10 |
| 12 | 11 |
| 18 | 13 |
| 19 | 14 |
| 23 | 15 |
| 26 | 21 |

* indicates question in which "0" response indicates high team activity and "3" response indicates low team activity.

Note: from Factors present during the development of exemplary interdisciplinary teams in middle level schools. P. K. Gibson, 1994 (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, replicated with permission.

Appendix D
Self - reported Activity by Domain within Scaled Category
Team 8-2

**Domain 1 - Organization**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 1 | 3.0 | #20 | 2.5 | | | | |
| # 5 | 3.0 | #22 * | .7 | | | | |
| # 7 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| # 8 * | .1 | | | | | | |
| #17 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 2** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 0** | |

**Domain 2 - Attention to Students**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 2 | 3.0 | #27 | 2.0 | #16 * | 2.0 | | |
| # 6 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #24 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #25 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #28 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #29 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 6** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | |

**Domain 3 - Sharing**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 9 | 2.7 | #18 | 2.0 | #23 | 1.0 | #4 | .3 |
| #12 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #19 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #26 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 4** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 1** | |

**Domain 4 - Coordination of Instruction**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| #10 | 3.0 | #3 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #11 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #13 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #14 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #15 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #21 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 6** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 0** | |

Self-Reported Activity by Domain within Scaled Category

Team 7-3

**Domain 1 - Organization**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 7 | 3.0 | | | | | #1 | .0 |
| # 8 * | .1 | | | | | #2 | .0 |
| #17 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #20 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #22 * | .0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 2** | |

**Domain 2 - Attention to Students**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 2 | 3.0 | #16 | 1.0 | | | #6 | .0 |
| #24 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #25 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #27 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #28 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #29 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 6** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 1** | |

**Domain 3 - Sharing**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | tem # | mean |
| # 9 | 2.7 | #23 | 2.0 | | | #4 | .3 |
| #12 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #18 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #19 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #26 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 1** | |

**Domain 4 - Coordination of Instruction**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| #10 | 3.0 | # 3 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #11 | 3.0 | #23 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #13 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #14 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #15 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 2** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 0** | |

Self-Reported Activity by Domain within Scaled Category

Team 6-3

**Domain 1 - Organization**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 7 | 3.0 | # 1 | 2.0 | | | | |
| # 8 * | .0 | # 2 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #17 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #20 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #22 * | .0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 2** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 0** | |

**Domain 2 - Attention to Students**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 2 | 3.0 | #27 | 2.0 | #24 | 1.0 | | |
| # 6 | 3.0 | #29 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #25 | 2.7 | | | | | | |
| #28 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 4** | | **f = 2** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | |

**Domain 3 - Sharing**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| # 9 | 3.0 | | | # 4 | 1.0 | #23 | .0 |
| #12 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #18 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #19 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #26 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 5** | | **f = 0** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 1** | |

**Domain 4 - Coordination of Instruction**

| Very Frequently | | Frequently | | Infrequently | | Never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean | Item # | mean |
| #10 | 3.0 | #14 | 2.0 | # 3 | 1.0 | | |
| #11 | 3.0 | #21 | 2.0 | | | | |
| #13 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| #15 | 3.0 | | | | | | |
| **f = 4** | | **f = 2** | | **f = 1** | | **f = 0** | |

## Appendix E

### Team Belief on Motivating Students to Learn Group Survey

As a part of my graduate work at Virginia Tech, I am studying the activities of an effective team in a middle school. Your input can be valuable in helping me to obtain an accurate picture of how effective teams motivate students to learn. I am asking for your assistance in this project.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate this project will take about 45 minutes to complete. Your team should collaborate in this exercise, team consensus on each survey response is needed. This session will be taped and transcribed. Team and teacher comments will be kept anonymous. The team or individuals on the team will not be identified in the report. After results are analyzed, the team will be requested to review the findings for clarity and accuracy of meaning.

Thank you very much for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,

James B. Phares

---

Your team is requested to discuss and then check the best response to each of the following questions. Please mark the blank closest to the indicator that best relates to your team's position posed by the question. Your discussion may be used to further explain or clarify your team's position on any particular item.

1. What does your team value in student learning?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Value based on student risk taking | __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ | Value based on student avoiding error |

2. How does your team use evaluation in student learning?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| used as norms for comparison | __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ | used as evidence of progress |

3. How does your team encourage student effort?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| through encouraging students to try | or | through encouraging students to prove their worth |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

4. How does your team use student work and performance products?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| to use as evidence for establishing grade distribution | or | to use as indicators for potential learning |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

5. What is the basis for satisfaction your team instills into students about performance in school?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| based on student being best in class | or | based on student improvement |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

6. How does your team view error in student performance?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| error viewed as a part of growth process | or | error viewed as failure and lack of ability |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

7. How does your team view student competence?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| competence viewed as developing through effort | or | competence viewed as inherited and fixed |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

8. How does your team view student success?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| through student effort | or | through student achievement |

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

## Appendix F

### Focus Group Interview Sample from 8-2

Q.4. Team Leader read the question and examined options.

Team Choice:

4. How does your team use student work and performance products?

| to use as evidence for establishing grade distribution | | | ** | | | | | or | to use as indicators for potential learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Dialog:

Member 1: I would say that the work that they do is , huh, evidence of potential learning whether it be a journal, notebook, predictions, homework, classwork ...

Member 4: That is the ideal but then again do we actually take notes ... that is a toughy.

Member 1: It is an indicator. That is why we use them, that is why we have assignments, that is why we have homework.

Member 3: I feel like I am right in the middle on that one. When you take a _____. She gets the good grade but we are also already commenting on what this girl can accomplish with her life.

Member 1: Yeah. Number four goes into that realm of the evaluation that we had on number two and we are saying the evaluation is evidence we use of progress. So if that is the case we would learn more to using this as potential for learning.

Member 2: I know but sometimes some of the things they do in math are not just concrete things there are abstract things. So You know I am always looking for what type of potential is there.

Member 4: The way we view art for instance.

Member 2: Yeah.

Member 1: I don't think anyone of us are consciously aware of grade distribution.

Member 2: Uh huh, did it bother _____ when she gave 28 KW's.

Member 4: No, they wasn't, they were earned ...

Member 2: So, I don't care what my grade distribution looks like, I mean I do care.

Member 4: Yeah it bothered me that there were that many KW's. I thought, wait a minute, what am I not doing. Where did I drop the ball, so ....

Member 3: I would say were just left of middle.

Member 4: Cause we still do the grade thing and if we give grades a lot of our time is taken up with that.

Member 2: So if you are saying, we don't have to grade kids we would be able to use potential for learning.

Member 4: I think so...

Member 2: So over here I think that is higher order thinking skills and over here is more mundane.

Member 1: So what do we say?

Member 3: Does it have to be one or the other?

Member 4: I go with _____ here, let's go to the middle. All right let us take projects for instance. I know some of the students took ... did ... maybe ... a half hour on their project. Did a play do something. I know she can do better. She can. but that does not show me that is all she is ever going to hand in. That kind of a project, she probably threw it together in an afternoon. She could have done better.

Member 2: This is kind of gridlocked.

Member 1: Well -- one or the other.

Member 4: Middle.

Member 3: Yeah, middle.

Member 1: Well, ultimately, the end result is you are using their work and performance for grade distribution though ultimately for the individual.

Member 2: It says establishing grade distribution.

Member 1: Right.

Member 2: So what is a grade?

Member 4: Does that mean you are automatically ... oh it is holistic, so I will have a certain number of A's, a certain number of B's grade distribution.

Member 1: No, I would say for the individual.

Member 4: That is not what that says.

Member 3: I thought it was more like ...

Member 2: repeats question

Member 4: repeats question. How do we use student work?

Member 2: Student work means grade distribution. Performance products is something different.

Member 4: I don't know because I don't think we understand the question. I don't think any of us do the holistic grading where you know there will be 5 A's, 4 KW's and everybody else is in the center and throw it out the window.

Member 1: That is not the way I interpreted the question.

Member 3: Establishing distribution.

Member 1: I see is as the individual student. What do you get? You are getting grade distribution too. But it is based on your student work and performance.

Member 4: Do we give a student a B. Would I give _____ a B because her project is not what it should have been when she is normally an A student. That is what I am talking about.

Member 1: Based on what her work was, yeah, I would say it is.

Member 4: But that project was subjective on my part.

Member 3: Yeah I know see like science fair projects. I can justify a grade by saying you did the hypothesis was stated correctly.... I have more clear cut things to go by.

Member 4: Suggestions, you know, suggestions, I just don't know.

Member 1: I would say with that question the way I am understanding we use grades to establish a grade distribution not for a class but for a student.

Member 4: OK. sigh.

Member 3: He wants to mark it to the left on that one.

Member 1: Do you go along with that.

Member 4: If you understand that ... ? Yeah you do.

Member 2: Maybe we should use it for potential for learning is what you are saying?

Member 1: I am saying it is used for that but in this instance the work and performance is also used for what their grade is going to be.

Member 4: Yeah that is it. that is what we do the way you put it there. Absolutely.

Member 1: So we are in agreement on number 4.

Member 4: Ideally that is not what we should be doing, probably, it should be over here but what we do is this.

Member 1: Used as evidence for grade distribution.

**Convergence Themes:**

**-- Journals, notebooks, predictions, homework, classwork are used as evidence for potential for learning. How?**
**-- individual student examples: student conferences.**
**-- absence of grade curves.**
**-- teacher self assessment**

**Divergence Themes:**

**-- individual student examples: student sample work.**
**-- Student work means grade distribution, performance products is something else.**

**Negative Case Examination:**

**-- There is a question on this group's mind about the importance grades play on how they view students, there is little evidence to support that potential for learning is used for motivating students. Examine the importance of grade usage in classroom, team meetings, and artifacts.**

Focus Group Interview Sample 7-3

Q.4. Team Leader read the question and examined options.

Team Choice:

4. How does your team use student work and performance products?

| to use as evidence for establishing grade distribution | | | | | | or | | | | to use as indicators for potential learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | ** | | | | | |

Dialog:

Member 3: I think we're both. You know we are required to give grades. We have to have some way of establishing a grade. Sometimes the grade does not indicate what they have learned. Kids who test poorly usually do not have very good grades. But sometimes I'll just go up and say "Tell me the answer, don't write it down, tell me the answer." Even like___ he can tell you the answer sometimes.

Member 1: Right. I agree with you - if we are going to go to the right or left we are going to be in this case we are going to move towards looking at potential for learning.

Member 2: Maybe just one past the middle. i agree with you

guys. We have to do it both. We have to have grades. It seems we try to move away from that, but we need the information as much as the children. We need to know they are performing in some way.

Member 3: We use report cards, looking forward to it. Kids are always saying what's my grade, what's my grade? We say we'll give them at the end of the six weeks. Wait until then.

Member 1: There are so many things that go into it.

Member 3: Effort, class participation...

Member 1: Willingness to cooperate.

Member 2: ____just kills herself to do the work. You know she has a real hard time in math. But you know that child works very, very hard.

Member 3: She does.

**Convergence Themes:**

**-- individual assessment: oral response by students, individual examples, class participation, willingness to cooperate**

**Divergence Themes:**

**-- required to give grades**

**Negative Case Examination:**

**-- Policy of giving grades effects construct perceptions**

Focus Group Interview Sample 6-3

Q.4. Team Leader read the question and examined options.

Team Choice:

4. How does your team use student work and performance products?

| to use as evidence for establishing grade distribution | | | | or | | | | | to use as indicators for potential learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ** | | | | | | |

Dialog:

Member 1: For me that would almost be in the middle.

Member 3: We do give them a grade.

Member 1: If we want to determine that grade but we also want to use it as indicators to see how they are doing.

Member 3: I see it halfway because it is not all 1 way or the other.

All: Middle.

Member 3: When they get up and give presentations and so forth. When they get up and tell about things I don't think they are thinking about grades. They think about what they are learning. I tell them you are the teacher, I am the student. So, hmm, I thought this can't all be one way. We give grades, tests.

Member 1: When we give them something to do we grade it.

Member 2: Right.

Member 1: When they do it they do it for the grade or they wouldn't do it. We use it for a grade but we also use it for potential for learning. It is a growth process.

Member 1: We say don't worry about the grade - not everybody makes A's, look at your paper and see where you made your mistakes. Lets correct that mistake so

you can learn from it. That is why we do this. I pretty much say if you knew everything we wouldn't be here.

Member 2: If you can do the math homework all week you should get A's on the test. If everyone got A's we would not be doing this. We need to learn from our mistakes. In Science, I do lab work I do individual work I do some group work. Do some different, investigation answer questions some hands on and that's where students show their improvement and their strong points. How their skills are going to improve. As far as letting their performance improve - if they get below a C on a science test they can retake it and improve their grade.

Member 1: I've been (inaudible) that helps them to improve and it takes away that pressure of everything I do has to be perfect - has to be best.

**Convergence Themes:**

- **-- test retaking for improved performance**
- **-- rewrites**
- **-- individualizing assessment**

**Divergence Themes:**

- **-- the use of grades for performance**

**Negative Case Examination:**

- **-- Grades are used differently for tests than for performance products**

Appendix G
Classroom Contact Summary Form Sample

Class **Algebra/Pre Algebra** Room **108** Date **11/21/94**
Teacher **Member 2, Team 8-2** Coding Date **11/21/94**

| **Salient Points (Theme clarification)** | **PATTERNS:** |
|---|---|
| 1. Individual Assessment: performance test<br>- wrong answers marked<br>- no apparent credit for effort<br>- used grading scale for final grade | Divergent: Using work & performance as indicator of ability |
| 2. Objective on board: task identification<br>- Class objective, team objective<br>- use of each child's name in directing class activity | Convergent: Requiring student effort |
| 3. Lesson presented through Round Table cooperative learning exercise<br>- varied instructional techniques | Convergent: Risk taking |
| 4. Classroom set up invited student comment response and engagement<br>- use problem solving exercise to stimulate conversation | Convergent: Risk Taking |

**Overview of class: (also enter in journal)**

The class began with the teacher returning tests and going over tests (see Artifact Review: 8-2 Math Test Example) The lesson activity for the day was balancing equations for algebra students and word problems for pre algebra students, the students sat facing each other while the teacher worked with individual students at the board. Students shared informally with each other and the teacher at the board as the class progressed. About half way through the period, teacher switched from working with the algebra students and began to work with the pre algebra students. During each segment of instruction students would interact across subject lines in support of the activities at the board. Lesson was organized and purposeful. The classroom while informal was structured to maximize learning opportunities of all students. The students remained on task throughout the lesson. A round table discussion ensued following the group and individual work. Each group was given a problem to solve. The only interruption was a student coming late to class.

**Follow up questions for clarification:**

1. Discuss test as indicator of learning? How? Why?
2. Discuss rationale for set up of learning activities?

Appendix H
Meeting Content Form Sample

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Meeting Date | **11/22/94** | Meeting Place | **Room 106** |
| Observer | **Phares** | Coding Date | **11/22/94** |

| Time | Notes | Pattern |
|---|---|---|
| 9:30 am | Field trip discussion | Team Context |
| 9:35 am | House Party discussion | Team Context |
| 9:40 am | Fund Raising strategies | Team Context |

**Salient Point Review:** This fifteen minutes of discussion defined as organization (see effective team domains) and clarifies collaboration and confirmation of how the team ought to and will carry out long range plans. The team determined and used these events as motivation for good behavior and academic effort within the daily classroom context.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:45 am | Discussion of how to monitor student improvement plans (KW prescription sheets | Team Context<br>Class context |

**Salient Point Review:** This discussion centered on who should monitor the return of student improvement plans (when a student receives a KW for the six weeks, the teacher giving the KW develops an improvement plan it is signed by student and parent and is returned). The team discussed if the teacher giving the KW, receives the signed plan to increase efficiency, or, having the home base teacher receive the signed plan and increase advocacy. The team unable to reach consensus tabled the discussion until further thought could be given the issue. Effective teaming domain - attention to students

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10:00 am | Teacher mini - inservice, a paper on grading student performance was shared by one teacher with the team. The article was on how to enhance student performance. | Team Context<br>Class Context<br>Individual Context<br>Whole School Context |

**Salient Point Review:** The article discussed group projects, student mentor relationships, student choice, focus on student strengths, and developing mutual respect. Team dialog indicated that some of these ideas were already in practice by the team, team views of individual student abilities to perform in such practices, and the school grading policy influence on such practices. Accountability was mentioned by the team often in the dialog. Students who put forth little effort was also discussed. These appeared to be matters of frustration for team members and should be further explored in follow up interviews.

10:20 am Adjournment — Whole School Context

**Salient Point Review:** It was time for students to return from Related Arts and Physical Education Blocks:

**Meeting Overview: (also enter in journal)**

The team met for 40 minutes and discussed openly long range plans for developing a field trip and a house party, strategies for raising funds for these events,the mechanics of monitoring KW improvement plans, and enhancing student performance strategies in the classroom.

The premise for the field trip and the house party was students who did their work and behaved would be given the opportunity to participate in these out of school or after school events. This was used because it had been a successful strategy in the past in motivating students as reported by the team. The field trip was to Williamsburg in the late spring and the house party would be held after school in late January.

Fund raising strategies are needed to ensure that all students who earn the trip are ensured of participation. Students are not charged for these events but do participate in the fund raising efforts. This activity is a shared venture by students and teachers.

The KW issue is between the work load of teachers and the advocacy of children. If the KW sheets are returned to the teacher who gave the KW, the paper work decreases. If the Home Base teacher receives the KW the paperwork increases. The point of child advocacy is measured by the teams willingness to increase the layer of paperwork. * Note: the team later resolved to have students return the improvement plans to the Home Base teacher to bring in another level of advocacy as well as paper work. Home Base teachers would serve to help the child develop strategies to correct the areas that caused the KW.

The student performance mini in-service gives evidence of the teams' identification of patterns of variable clarification. This discussion pointed out team, class, individual, and whole school contextual settings for this grade level. Follow up questions will be needed for further clarification.

**Follow Up Questions:**

1. How does ability influence a students performance?
2. How much pressure do you feel from administrative emphasis on assessment? What are other areas of influence?

Appendix I
Artifact Summary Form Sample

---

Artifact type **Algebra Test** Teacher **8-2 Member 2**
Date received **12/1/94**
Date coded **12/1/94**

Name or description of artifact: **Chapter 8, Test (Teacher made)**

Event with which the artifact is associated: **Evaluation of class work 11/21/94 through 11/30/94**

Importance of artifact: **Evidence of assessment techniques of individual students**

| **Summary of contents:** | **PATTERNS** |
|---|---|
| 1. 25 question test, wrong answers marked, no evidence of teacher input on evaluating how problems were solved, no comments on progress | Individual context |
| 2. Grades determined by grading scale, scale 100 - 0, four points off for each incorrect answer, miss one grade A, miss two or three grade B, miss four, five, or six grade C, miss more than six student receives a KW- student re does work and retakes test | Whole School Context |
| 3. Lack of teacher input on the test limits understanding of where test taker needs to improve, progress not stimulated, performance is based on grading scale. | Individual Context |

**If document is central or crucial to particular theme or contact:**

**Divergent Pattern development** -- teacher uses ability performance construct in assessing individual students, uses grading scale in assigning grade, and use grade to motivate student to not repeat tasks.

**Negative Case Examination** -- teacher used task oriented motivation to stimulate performance in class and in small group settings but used ability performance construct in assessing progress. Why? Follow up interview needed.

Appendix J

Summary of Researcher and Participant Contacts in focus group, class and meeting observations, artifacts review, and follow up interviews.

**Team 8-2**

| Contact: | | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus Interview Team | | 11/14/94 | 9:00 am | 11/19/94 |
| **Classroom Observation:** | | | | |
| | Member 1 | 11/21/94 | 10:20 am | 11/21/94 |
| | 1 | 11/30/94 | 1:00 pm | 11/30/94 |
| | 1 | 12/5/94 | 10:00 am | 12/5/94 |
| | Member 2 | 11/21/94 | 10:50 am | 11/21/94 |
| | 2 | 11/30/94 | 1:30 pm | 11/30/94 |
| | 2 | 12/5/94 | 10:30 am | 12/5/94 |
| | Member 3 | 11/21/94 | 11:20 am | 11/21/94 |
| | 3 | 11/30/94 | 2:30 pm | 11/30/94 |
| | 3 | 12/5/94 | 1:30 pm | 12/5/94 |
| | Member 4 | 11/21/94 | 11:50 am | 11/21/94 |
| | 4 | 11/30/94 | 2:00 pm | 11/30/94 |
| | 4 | 12/5/94 | 11:00 am | 12/5/94 |
| **Meeting Observation:** | | | | |
| | Team | 11/15/94 | 9:50 am | 11/15/94 |
| Student Conference | | 11/21/94 | 9:30 am | 11/21/94 |
| | Team | 11/22/94 | 9:30 am | 11/22/94 |
| | Team | 11/29/94 | 9:30 am | 11/29/94 |
| | Team | 12/5/94 | 9:30 am | 12/5/94 |
| **Artifact Review:** | | | | |
| Lesson Plans | | | | |
| | member 1 | 12/1/94 | 5:00 pm. | 12/1/94 |
| | member 2 | 12/1/94 | 7:00 pm. | 12/1/94 |
| | member 3 | 12/2/94 | 5:00 pm. | 12/2/94 |
| | member 4 | 12/2/94 | 7:00 pm. | 12/2/94 |
| Tests | | | | |
| | member 1 | 12/1/94 | 8:00 pm. | 12/1/94 |
| | member 2 | 12/1/94 | 9:00 pm. | 12/1/94 |
| | member 3 | 12/2/94 | 8:00 pm. | 12/2/94 |
| | member 4 | 12/2/94 | 9:00 pm. | 12/2/94 |

**Summary 8-2 (continued)**

| Contact: | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Artifact Review (cont)** | | | |
| Assignments | | | |
| member 1 | 12/3/94 | 5:00 pm. | 12/3/94 |
| member 2 | 12/3/94 | 6:00 pm. | 12/3/94 |
| member 3 | 12/3/94 | 7:00 pm. | 12/3/94 |
| member 4 | 12/3/94 | 8:00 pm. | 12/3/94 |
| Miscellaneous | | | |
| member 1 | 12/4/94 | 5:00 pm. | 12/4/94 |
| member 2 | 12/4/94 | 6:00 pm. | 12/4/94 |
| member 3 | 12/4/94 | 7:00 pm. | 12/4/94 |
| member 4 | 12/4/94 | 8:00 pm. | 12/4/94 |
| **Follow up Interviews:** | | | |
| Team | 12/12/94 | 8:50 am. | 12/12/94 |
| member 1 | 12/14/94 | 8:50 am. | 12/14/94 |
| member 2 | 12/14/94 | 9:15 am. | 12/14/94 |
| member 3 | 12/14/94 | 9:30 am. | 12/14/94 |
| member 4 | 12/14/94 | 3:30 pm. | 12/14/94 |
| **Findings Clarification:** | | | |
| Team | 1/27/95 | 9:00 am. | 1/27/95 |

**Team 7-3**

| Contact: | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focus Interview Team | 11/14/94 | 9:00 am | 11/19/94 |
| **Classroom Observation:** | | | |
| Member 1 | 11/29/94 | 9:00 am. | 11/29/94 |
| 1 | 12/13/94 | 10:00 am. | 12/13/94 |
| 1 | 12/16/94 | 9:30 am. | 12/16/94 |
| Member 2 | 11/29/94 | 11:00 am. | 11/29/94 |
| 2 | 12/13/94 | 9:00 am. | 12/13/94 |
| 2 | 12/16/94 | 10:00 am. | 12/16/94 |
| Member 3 | 11/29/94 | 11:30 am. | 11/29/94 |
| 3 | 12/13/94 | 10:00 am. | 12/13/94 |
| 3 | 12/16/94 | 9:00 am. | 12/13/94 |
| **Meeting Observation:** | | | |
| Team | 12/6/94 | 1:45 pm. | 12/6/94 |
| Team | 12/12/94 | 1:45 pm. | 12/12/94 |
| Team | 12/16/94 | 1:00 pm. | 12/16/94 |
| Student Conference | 12/19/94 | 1:30 pm. | 12/19/94 |
| Team | 12/20/94 | 1:45 pm. | 12/20/94 |
| **Artifact Review:** | | | |
| Lesson Plans | | | |
| member 1 | 12/22/94 | 8:00 am | 12/22/94 |
| member 2 | 12/22/94 | 9:00 am. | 12/22/94 |
| member 3 | 12/22/94 | 10:00 am. | 12/22/94 |
| Tests | | | |
| member 1 | 12/22/94 | 7:00 pm. | 12/22/94 |
| member 2 | 12/22/94 | 8:00 pm. | 12/22/94 |
| member 3 | 12/22/94 | 9:00 pm. | 12/22/94 |
| Assignments | | | |
| member 1 | 12/23/94 | 7:00 am. | 12/23/94 |
| member 2 | 12/23/94 | 8:00 am. | 12/23/94 |
| member 3 | 12/23/94 | 9:00 am. | 12/23/94 |
| Letters | | | |
| Team | 12/23/94 | 10:00 am. | 12/23/94 |

**Summary 7-3 (continued)**

| Contact: | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Follow up Interviews:** | | | |
| Team | 1/5/94 | 1:00 pm. | 1/5/94 |
| member 1 | 1/6/94 | 1:00 pm. | 1/6/94 |
| member 2 | 1/6/94 | 1:30 pm. | 1/6/94 |
| member 3 | 1/6/94 | 2:00 pm. | 1/6/94 |
| **Findings Clarification:** | | | |
| Team | 1/27/95 | 11:00 am. | 1/27/95 |

**Team 6-3**

| Contact: | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focus Interview Team | 11/14/94 | 9:00 am | 11/19/94 |
| **Classroom Observation:** | | | |
| Member 1 | 12/1/94 | 1:00 pm | 12/1/94 |
| 1 | 12/12/94 | 2:00 pm | 12/12/94 |
| 1 | 12/16/94 | 8:50 pm | 12/16/94 |
| Member 2 | 12/1/94 | 1:30 pm | 12/1/94 |
| 2 | 12/12/94 | 9:30 am | 12/12/94 |
| 2 | 12/16/94 | 8:50 am | 12/16/94 |
| Member 3 | 12/1/94 | 2:30 pm | 12/1/94 |
| 3 | 12/12/94 | 2:30 pm | 12/12/94 |
| 3 | 12/16/94 | 9:50 am | 12/16/94 |
| **Meeting Observation:** | | | |
| Team | 12/2/94 | 10:20 am | 12/2/94 |
| Student Conference | 12/3/94 | 10:20 am | 12/3/94 |
| Student Conference | 12/5/94 | 10:20 am | 12/5/94 |
| Team | 12/9/94 | 10:20 am | 12/16/94 |
| Team | 12/16/94 | 10:20 am | 12/16/94 |
| **Artifact Review:** | | | |
| Lesson Plans | | | |
| member 1 | 12/17/94 | 8:00 am | 12/17/94 |
| member 2 | 12/17/94 | 9:00 am | 12/17/94 |
| member 3 | 12/17/94 | 10:00 am | 12/17/94 |
| Tests | | | |
| member 1 | 12/17/94 | 11:00 am | 12/17/94 |
| member 2 | 12/17/94 | 12:00 pm | 12/17/94 |
| member 3 | 12/17/94 | 1:00 pm | 12/17/94 |
| Assignments | | | |
| member 1 | 12/18/94 | 7:00 am | 12/18/94 |
| member 2 | 12/18/94 | 8:00 am | 12/18/94 |
| member 3 | 12/18/94 | 9:00 am | 12/18/94 |

**Summary 6-3 (continued)**

| Contact: | Date | Time | Coding Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Artifact Review: (continued)** | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | |
| member 1 | 12/18/94 | 10:00 am | 12/18/94 |
| member 2 | 12/18/94 | 4:00 pm | 12/18/94 |
| member 3 | 12/18/94 | 5:00 pm | 12/18/94 |
| **Follow up Interviews:** | | | |
| Team | 12/20/94 | 10:20 am | 12/20/94 |
| member 1 | 12/21/94 | 8:00 am | 12/21/94 |
| member 2 | 12/21/94 | 10:20 am | 12/21/94 |
| member 3 | 12/21/94 | 12:05 pm | 12/21/94 |
| **Findings Clarification:** | | | |
| Team | 1/27/95 | 1:00 pm | 1/27/95 |
| Probes | 2/1/95 | | 2/1/95 |

## Appendix K

### Participant Follow up Interview
January 27, 1995
9:00 am. - 11:00 am.

I. Overview of study and findings

II. Participant input for accuracy and clarity

III. Negative case examination and disclosure

A. Item 8 - Focus Group Interview

1. Participants are asked to describe difference in reporting levels on item 8 of semantic differential.

2. Participants are asked to describe whole school contextual influence on motivating students to learn.

3. Participants are asked to describe the principal as researcher influence on the teams behaviors and practices during the study.

IV. Participant discussion "How do you motivate students ?"

V. Participant are to answer semantic differential

Adjournment

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VITA

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