CAPTURING THE MULTIPLE LANDSCAPES OF EXCELLENCE:
PERCEPTIONS, ENACTMENT, AND EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING PRACTICES
IN FOUR UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

by
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(ABSTRACT)

This study was directed at capturing the multiple landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence as viewed by the major stakeholders in college classrooms, the students and their teachers. These landscapes were described and examined with an eye towards gleaning conceptualizations of teaching excellence that could inform the construction of an integrated landscape. Such an integrated landscape could serve as an ideal starting point for the construction of a comprehensive framework for the evaluation and improvement of undergraduate teaching. Participants included four exemplar teachers, acknowledged for undergraduate teaching excellence and volunteer students from each of their classes: introductory sociology, physics, agricultural economics, and composition methods.

A model of teaching excellence was constructed from aggregated student conceptualizations of excellent teachers. The model consists of five major dimensions: (1) content, pedagogical, and general knowledge; (2) concern and approachability; (3) enthusiasm; (4) focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity; and (5) course organization and classroom management. Two recurring themes underlaying students’
perspectives of preferred teacher roles are described: (1) a desire for a personal or professional connection with the teacher, and (2) a desire for a teacher who is sensitive to student progress.

A comparison is made between teacher and student valuations of 10 dimensions of teaching effectiveness. Teacher rankings of the items varied somewhat from those of students in their classes. Of particular interest, is the higher ranking of a focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity by two of the teachers. Generally speaking, students placed high value on teachers’ content knowledge and enthusiasm.

To capture teachers’ conceptualizations of excellent teaching in practice, researcher observations of the enacted teaching practices of these exemplars were conducted during three time periods throughout the semester. Each teaching practice is described in case format. Cases also include a presentation of student reactions to and evaluation of each teacher’s enacted practice, with particular attention to the teaching dimensions students focused on as they evaluated their teachers.

In an effort to connect the results of this study with the existing literature on college teaching, frameworks of teaching excellence were constructed from student-generated and teacher-generated indicators of 10 dimensions of teaching effectiveness gleaned from the research literature. The enacted teaching practice of each of the exemplar teachers was examined using the class-specific framework.

The conclusions of this study suggest that a dialogue between the stakeholders in the college classroom must take place in an effort to develop shared conceptions of teaching excellence. Additionally, a closer examination of students’ entering perceptions is in order to ascertain their notions of the purpose of higher education. A comparison of teacher and student perceptions of the intended purposes of higher education could further inform the development of evaluation systems designed to meet the needs of the major stakeholders of the higher education enterprise.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a young woman, preparing to graduate from high-school, I could not even begin to conceive of the many wonderful opportunities that I would be faced with as I traveled the yet unforeseen twists and turns my path through life would take. Many possibilities stretched before me as I commenced on an uncharted undergraduate education at the ripe old age of 17 1/2. Following newly sparked interests rather than inspiration set my path as I chose to major in biology. At the time, while I acknowledged that this was an important decision in my life, I was not fully aware of its magnitude. Because, not as I thought - I would become a woman in science - but because I would meet my future husband, a major influence on my being exactly where I am today, completing my doctoral dissertation, an astonishing achievement that I would not have realized without his love and support. Over the past 11 years, Duane has been my most adamant supporter and advocate. Never doubting my abilities, he unremittingly encouraged any endeavor I undertook. Regardless of his own career ventures, my own education was of major importance. Through my personal observations of Duane as he interacted with undergraduate and graduate students, post docs and employees, my perceptions have evolved to become worlds apart from those of the young girl he first met in the microbiology prep laboratory. So far it has been a very enlightening and interesting journey, I look forward to our next adventure. Thank you Duane, for seeing in me things I could not or would not see on my own, you are truly an inspiration.

Of course, once a program of study has been undertaken for an advanced graduate degree, a good mentor can facilitate a student’s transition from the classroom to research. Dr. Susan Magliaro has fulfilled this role for me. As an advisor, collaborator, and sounding board, Sue knew when to let me venture out on my own and when to call me back to refocus my thoughts. Thank you, Sue, for your support and confidence.
I also extend my appreciation and gratitude to each of my committee members: Dr. James Knight, Dr. Jerry Niles, Dr. Thomas Sherman, and Dr. Terry Wildman for your interest in my research topic and efforts on my behalf. Your thoughts and questions influenced my perceptions and helped shape my research study.

I am especially grateful to the participants in my study. The cooperative spirit I was welcomed with, both on the part of teaching faculty and students, was overwhelming. To the four faculty members who opened their teaching practices to me for observation and examination, thank you. To the undergraduate students who met with me outside of class throughout an entire semester, thank you.

To the various faculty members at Virginia Tech and friends and colleagues at other universities who have expressed interest in my study and concern over the evaluation of undergraduate teaching excellence, thank you.

For the encouragement and support I received from loving family members closer to home, Iva and Vaughn, Lana and David. Thank you for your son, your brother, and your love. And finally, to my precious angel puppy, Delphi. Though you often had to forgo long, languorous walks in exchange for hurried sprints, you were ever the appreciative companion, grateful and affectionate for whatever attention you received. I look forward to spending some more relaxing time with you and enjoying your inquisitive outlook on life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... iv
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................... xi
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................. xii
PREFACE .............................................................................................................. xiv

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH .............. 1
  Institutional Context ....................................................................................... 2
  Purpose and Research Approach .................................................................. 3
  Research Questions ....................................................................................... 4
  Assumptions ................................................................................................. 5
  Considerations ............................................................................................. 6
  Researcher Status Position .......................................................................... 7
    Personal history ......................................................................................... 7
    Student role ............................................................................................. 8
    Researcher role ........................................................................................ 10
    Teacher role .............................................................................................. 10

CHAPTER TWO - METHODOLOGY .................................................................... 12
  Setting .......................................................................................................... 12
  Participants ................................................................................................... 13
    Teaching faculty ....................................................................................... 13
    Students .................................................................................................... 14
    Case descriptions ...................................................................................... 17
      1000-level introductory sociology .......................................................... 17
        Teacher ............................................................................................... 17
        Course ............................................................................................... 17
        Physical context .................................................................................. 18
        Participating students ......................................................................... 18
      2000-level physics for engineers ............................................................ 19
        Teacher ............................................................................................... 19
        Course ............................................................................................... 19
        Physical context .................................................................................. 19

vi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating students</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000-level agricultural economics</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical context</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating students</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000-level composition methods</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical context</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating students</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sources and Collection Procedures</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Instruments</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student participant selection survey</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching practice questionnaire</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization of teaching practice</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily instruction</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions to enacted teaching practice</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Organization</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Surveys and Interviews</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Surveys and Interviews</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis and Reporting</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Data Analysis</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student surveys</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty surveys and interviews</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student interviews</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductive Data Analysis</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of enacted practice using student and teacher frameworks</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to Ensure Research Credibility</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Reliability</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Reliability</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal Validity</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Validity</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher's teaching practice ........................................... 95
Initial expectations ....................................................... 97
Perceptions at week 3 .................................................... 99
Perceptions at mid-semester ........................................... 104
End of semester perceptions ......................................... 109
Summary of student perceptions .................................... 113
Postscript ........................................................................ 114
Examination of enacted practice
  using student and teacher frameworks ........................... 115
Agricultural Economics .................................................... 117
  Teacher's teaching practice ........................................... 117
  Initial expectations ....................................................... 119
  Early perceptions ......................................................... 120
  Perceptions at mid-semester ........................................ 126
  End of semester perceptions ....................................... 132
  Summary of student perceptions .................................. 136
  Examination of enacted practice
  using student and teacher frameworks ........................... 137
Composition Methods ..................................................... 139
  Teacher's teaching practice ........................................... 139
  Initial expectations ....................................................... 140
  Early perceptions ......................................................... 141
  Perceptions at mid-semester ........................................ 147
  End of semester perceptions ....................................... 151
  Summary of student perceptions .................................. 154
  Examination of enacted practice
  using student and teacher frameworks ........................... 155

CHAPTER 5 - THE MULTIPLE LANDSCAPES OF COLLEGE TEACHING
EXCELLENCE AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS. 158

Summary of Findings ....................................................... 159
  Student Landscapes of Teaching Excellence .................. 159
  Teacher Landscapes of Teaching Excellence .................. 171
  Evaluation Process ...................................................... 173
Summary and Implications ................................................. 174
Directions for Future Research ......................................... 180

POSTSCRIPT ................................................................. 182

REFERENCES ................................................................ 185

ix
APPENDICES

A. Literature Review ................................................................. 189
B. Student Perceptions of Instruction form ................................. 212
C. Faculty Release Form ............................................................. 213
D. Student Participant Selection Survey ...................................... 214
E. Student Reactions to Enacted Teaching Interview Questions .... 217
F. Teaching Practice Questionnaire ............................................. 218
G. Student Release Form ............................................................ 222
H. Human Subjects Application .................................................. 223
I. Figures .................................................................................. 225
J. Tables .................................................................................. 228

VITA ......................................................................................... 250
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Model of ideality of college teaching as envisioned by undergraduate students</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Model of ideality of college teaching as envisioned by undergraduate students illustrating underlying themes</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teaching faculty participants</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Data collection instruments and collection timeframe</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Frequency reports of student-generated teacher characteristics falling under five dimensions of excellent undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Number of student comments framing a conceptualization of preferred roles for undergraduate teachers</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Frequency counts of student statements, by class, reflecting themes underlying their conceptualizations of excellent undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Student rankings, by class, of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Faculty rankings, by class, of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Comparison, by class, of faculty and student rankings of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci, on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Students’ entering expectations and later perceptions of the introductory sociology course and teacher</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Student-generated characteristics of ideal teachers compared to their mid-semester perceptions of introductory sociology course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Students’ final perceptions of introductory sociology course and teacher, teacher ratings over the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
semester, and their anticipated grade ........................................ 240

12. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the physics course and teacher ............................................ 241

13. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teachers compared to their mid-semester perceptions of physics course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade ............................................. 242

14. Students' final perceptions of physics course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade ............................................. 243

15. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the agricultural economics course and teacher ......................... 244

16. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teachers compared to their mid-semester perceptions of the agricultural economics course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade ............................................. 245

17. Students' final perceptions of agricultural economics course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade ............................................. 246

18. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the composition methods course and teacher ......................... 247

19. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teachers compared to their mid-semester perceptions of composition methods course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade ............................................. 248

20. Students' final perceptions of composition methods course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade ............................................. 249
Starting with a sketch, a rough outline of shapes, generally distinguishable, but still difficult to make out, the new college teacher enters the classroom, armed with personal experience from his/her own college classes. This one-dimensional landscape is often the primary tool many college teachers enter their profession with - subject matter expertise and an exhaustive topic outline.

As they proceed through their teaching careers, college teachers have many opportunities to develop depth and perspective, enabling them to fill in the shading on their sketch of college teaching. Issues move into perspective, but often times, teachers still struggle, as the landscape is not static. New features appear on the horizon while others, once considered constant, fall by the wayside in the natural progression of life in higher education.

Once they have "lived" long enough and through enough, college teachers may feel confident to fill in the colors and textures to bring their pictures of college teaching to full life. Or, as demonstrated by the thoughts and actions of the teachers participating in this study, perhaps the landscape is never a finished product, but remains a work in progress.

Many undergraduate students enter higher education eager to reach their final destination, graduation. They often embark on their expeditions with little more than a few tools such as pencils and a sketch pad. While most students have at least a nascent program of study, few enter the environment with a detailed travel guide, describing the features of the landscapes of college teaching.

As they proceed through their first few classes, they can begin to sketch their landscapes of college teaching excellence. The features in these novice landscapes are understandably undetailed and fragmented. New features are added to students' landscapes as
they experience the enacted teaching practices of teachers they "liked". Like a selfish master artist, students engage in an egocentric process as they select which features of college teaching will be added to their individual landscapes.

Though many undergraduate students have some conception of what excellent college teaching is, like a home-bound person, they have likely not "traveled" widely and viewed a wide variety of the possible vistas that higher education can involve. The potential impact of a narrow, egocentric landscape on the evaluation of teaching is great, particularly if the teaching is not of a similar terrain to those the student has previously and successfully traversed.

The primary stakeholders of the college teaching enterprise come together on their journeys as they meet in the classroom. Each arrives at the meeting with a special agenda or travel plan, which is often ill-defined and rarely shared with the other. Yet they will travel together for a time.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH

The concept of excellence in higher education has been bandied about with increasing fervor over recent years by state legislatures and boards of education, faculty and administrators, undergraduate and graduate students, and parents. These stakeholders seek assurance that the increasingly scarce resources allocated to higher education are effective in producing excellent educational results. An underlying problem with the number of varied stakeholders is that each group carries with it potentially diverse needs to the consideration and evaluation of college teaching. It is conceivable that these varying needs could result in multiple definitions of teaching excellence, which in turn could produce varying sets of performance indicators and a varying sense of satisfaction with the product. Illustrating this problem, Astin (1985) noted that though the term is widely used, very few definitions of educational excellence have actually been developed for higher education.

Concern over the "value" of the product of higher education is currently a focus of debate both nationally (see for example, Guskin, 1994; Miller, 1995; Winston, 1994; Worley & Cassavant, 1995) and internationally (Doherty, 1994). The focus on excellence in the United States has escalated to the point where many state colleges and universities have begun to seek ways to survive in an atmosphere of high stakes and accountability in spite of the lack of a widely agreed-upon definition of what excellent college teaching is. A recent presentation by the Virginia Secretary of Education to Virginia Tech administrators illustrates the increased outside pressure of accountability. Dr. Beverly Sgro was quoted in the Roanoke Times & World News on March 23, 1995 on this topic "...just throwing more money at (higher) education without ensuring accountability is a guarantee of failure." Compounding the problem is the realization that while
research into college teaching has resulted in the identification of several global indices of teaching effectiveness such as enthusiasm and concern for students (see, for example, Feldman 1976, 1977; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975), it has not produced viable definitions of teaching excellence to meet the increasing pressures to demonstrate the quality of college teaching.

**Institutional Context**

The lack of widely agreed upon criteria or descriptions of teaching excellence has not deterred many colleges and universities from devising programs to assess and acknowledge excellence in college teaching. For example, in 1972, the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate in its response to a request from the university president, developed the following position in its report of the Committee on Long Range Goals of the University:

> Emphasis on teaching is an excellent way for the University to enhance its image and support; most citizens perceive teaching as being the overriding objective of the University. To accomplish this and meet the University's educational goals, it is necessary to clearly establish that effective teaching is adequately rewarded by promotions and salary increases.... More effective efforts at evaluating teaching must be made and research in this area should be encouraged.

Over the ensuing years, Virginia Tech, like many American colleges and universities came to rely on student ratings of instruction to demonstrate the quality of undergraduate teaching. According to a former member of the Vice President's Office for Academic Affairs, the intended purpose of student evaluations of instruction at Virginia Tech when he originally introduced them to the provost in 1969 was "to help faculty improve their teaching." Their uses however, have exceeded this original intention. The results of student evaluations have come to
be used in promotion and tenure decisions, awarding of salary increases, and recognition of teaching excellence through awards.

While many efforts have been directed at the assessment and recognition of teaching excellence at Virginia Tech, only recently have formal institutional efforts been directed at actually improving instruction at the university. For example, the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching was established in 1993 to "advocate the importance of teaching excellence as a fundamental responsibility of a land-grant university," (Minutes of the Steering Committee for the CEUT, 1993). Since its establishment, the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching has funded teaching-learning grants and release time for faculty development of new courses. The Center has also been instrumental in the coordination of several forums for faculty to engage in information exchange about college teaching.

**Purpose and Research Approach**

As a background to my study, I conducted a review of the literature to examine common conceptualizations of undergraduate teaching excellence (see Appendix A). Incumbent with the lack of consensus on what constitutes excellent undergraduate teaching was the question of who should really determine what quality is. As Pollitt (1992) proposed, professionals who provide the service (i.e., college teachers) could be the determiners of excellence in the classroom. On the other end of the spectrum, students, consumers of the product "college teaching" can also assess whether teaching is of high quality by determining if it met their needs and wants. Earlier, Kuh (1981) observed that quality is a by-product of human experience, and as such is subject to multiple realities. Acknowledging the multiple realities of the major stakeholders in the college classroom, the major purpose of this study was to capture the landscapes of teaching excellence as viewed by the students and their teachers. To accomplish
this, I chose to use survey and case study methods to collect data for this descriptive and interpretative study.

In the following chapters, I present and examine several landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence. First, landscapes of teaching excellence from the perspective of undergraduate students are interpreted to develop a model of undergraduate teaching excellence comprised of the features deemed as most important. Next, the enacted teaching practices of four exemplar teachers are characterized and described in mini-cases. Each mini-case also includes descriptive interpretations of students' reactions to and evaluations of each exemplar's enacted teaching practice. Finally, a connection is made to the existing research on college teaching as the enacted practice of each exemplar is examined by overlaying student and teacher-generated indicators of dimensions of teaching effectiveness gleaned from the research literature.

Ultimately, a key element of my examination of college teaching is the guiding question, "What do we need to know about the landscapes of teaching excellence to construct a useful system for its evaluation?"

**Research Questions**

Specifically, I set out to address the following research questions as I focused on capturing the multiple landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence.

1. How do college teachers, recognized for undergraduate teaching excellence, characterize their teaching practices?

2. How do undergraduate students characterize excellent college teaching?
3. How do college teachers, recognized for undergraduate teaching excellence, enact their teaching practices?

4. How do undergraduate students react to and evaluate the enacted teaching practices of teachers who have been recognized for undergraduate teaching excellence?

Assumptions

I made the following assumptions as I designed and implemented this study.

1. That each participating teacher's description of his/her own teaching practice would be comparable to his/her conceptualization of excellent undergraduate teaching. This assumption was predicated on Erickson’s (1986) proposal that human action is defined as behavior plus the meaning interpretations of the actor, i.e., the reason behind that behavior. Each participating teacher was informed that his/her invitation to participate in this study was based on the receipt of an award for teaching excellence.

2. That undergraduate students are a viable source of information about the enacted teaching practices they experience in college classrooms. This is particularly salient given that they are asked to evaluate teaching throughout their undergraduate careers.

3. That each participating student's assessment of his/her teacher's enacted teaching practice could fluctuate throughout the semester. This assumption was based on Erickson's (1986, p. 127) position that because human actions are "...grounded in choices of meaning interpretation" and as such are dynamic in that they are "...always open to the possibility of reinterpretation and change." It seems reasonable to assume that students who are asked to consider a teacher's teaching throughout the semester may reinterpret their positions as the semester progresses.
Considerations

Readers should consider the following issues that frame the data collection and analysis presented in the following chapters.

1. That all participants were non-remunerated volunteers. Participation in the interview phase of this study required a substantial time commitment on the part of students. Three interviews were scheduled at student convenience to coincide with data collection at the beginning, middle, and end of the Spring 1994 Semester. These were important times for students as at the beginning of the semester, they were developing individual routines for each of their classes, trying to organize study time, and complete assigned tasks. At the middle of the semester, students were preparing for and taking mid-term examinations, completing assigned projects in their classes, and preparing for a week-long Spring break. At the end of the semester, students were completing tasks for their classes and preparing for final examinations.

While the time commitment was less for participating faculty members (a one-hour formal interview and occasional informal discussions), they still had a lot at stake as they opened their classes to outside observation, a practice that each of the teachers reported they very rarely engaged in.

2. That the sampling units were intact groups, undergraduate classes taught by award-winning college teachers. Over the course of a semester, classes of students do develop a level of identity as a group. The reconstitution of group members into other groups in other classes may result in a qualitatively different group operating under different group dynamics. This phenomena may effect the generalizability of findings from one class to another.

3. That while teachers' perceptions were tapped during data collection, an in-depth treatment of teachers' actions from their perspectives could not be undertaken as data was not collected from teachers concerning their reasons for their behaviors on a day-by-day basis.
4. That the fact that I asked students to tell me about their perceptions of a teacher's instruction had the potential to influence their "attention" to the teacher's enactment of his/her teaching practice. Eight of the participating students volunteered that they came to realize they were paying more attention to what the teacher did in class or their reactions to teachers' actions. Three of these students volunteered that they also paid more attention to their reactions to other teachers as well during the course of my data collection.

**Researcher Status Position**

As described by LeCompte and Preissle (1993), the flow of information between a qualitative researcher and participants in a cultural setting is largely dependent on the social role the researcher holds within the group. While acknowledging that participants' level of acceptance of a researcher into their "world" can influence their level of "sharing" of information, the researcher's own knowledge influences research on other levels starting with the identification of research problems and questions. Researcher knowledge also guides the collection of ethnographic data, the interpretation of that data, the formulation of the findings and finally the design and presentation of the research report (Merriam, 1988). Drawing on Blumer's 1969 presentation of three major premises of symbolic interactionism, Spradley (1980) described the importance of meaning, stipulating that participants in a culture use their cultural knowledge to interpret situations. It was as a student, teacher, and researcher that I entered the classrooms of the four teachers participating in this study. It is because the meanings I ascribe to participants' reports of their perceptions are influenced by my own knowledge and experience, that I attempt to describe my position here.

**Personal history.** As a young woman preparing to enter college I wanted to "become a teacher," having been greatly influenced by a high school biology teacher who really seemed to enjoy both biology and teaching. I was, however, discouraged by my family from pursuing
teaching certification, directed instead to focus on becoming a "scientist." After graduating with honors in biology, having majored in microbiology, I decided that laboratory work really was not for me. Over the next eight years, I held various jobs, none in science or teaching. I did however take two graduate education classes during a one-year stay near The Pennsylvania State University. Being my first exposure to education, these educational psychology and philosophy of education classes really had me intrigued. It was later, at the prodding of my husband, that I returned to graduate school to earn my master's of education degree and become certified to teach high-school biology and chemistry. After 15 months of intense effort, I graduated from Bowling Green State University with a perfect grade point average and my license to teach. An immediate relocation to Blacksburg, Virginia, however stopped my teaching career from really getting off the ground. While waiting for my dream teaching position to open up, I kept my hopes high by serving as a substitute teacher throughout the county. After two years, I accepted a full time position developing and evaluating training programs on contract with government agencies, feeling that at least my still-new master's degree would come in handy. After being accused repeatedly of trying to make people "better" or encourage them "to think" rather than to simply provide them with information, I began to seek other outlets for my desire to deal with "learning" in one form or another. In 1990 I returned to school part time and started work towards my Ph.D. in education, feeling that I could at least focus on my own learning.

Student role. As I reflected back over my own "higher education" I realized that somewhere along the line I had learned how to be a "good" student and do well. A "B" student in high school, during college, I earned much higher grades overall. During the past few years, I have come to realize that I often did not put much "thought" into my learning, but rather focused on drill and practice in my undergraduate courses. The majority of my effort was directed at providing teachers the responses I thought they wished to receive.
I did what I thought was required of me as a student. My approach to my undergraduate degree was not much different than my approach to high school. I simply found that it required substantially more time to read texts and complete assignments, but I went about my work as a student in much the same way as I had in high school.

Doing well on tests and earning good grades is what it was all about for me, though I was not sure why, other than good grades were better than bad. It soon became such a focus that a B was not good enough, nothing less than an A would do. In fact, an A- was even bad, unless it was in a class outside of my major. This understanding of “making the grade” allowed me to relate well with students participating in my study who expressed similar tendencies, though they often did not provide explicit descriptions of their motives and actions, a tacit understanding seemed to underlie the comments of the majority of these students that “good grades” were the major goal of attending class.

To me, my college teachers were there to provide me with information to be memorized, not questioned or challenged. The teacher was the source of all pertinent information, through lecture or assigned readings. He or she would explain concepts, provide information to be memorized, and perhaps, lead students to “realizing” some pre-determined “truth.” I was never concerned overtly about relevance, accepting all information presented by a teacher as worthy because the teacher knew better than I.

As a student, I was occasionally aware of displeasure with a teacher, generally related to his/her “wasting” my time if I did not feel the class period was filled with enough lecture on new material not previously covered in class. During this time period, I was not aware that I made actual comparisons between my teachers or that I had a conception of was excellent teaching was. I usually found myself in awe of the “knowledge base” that my college teachers had and that I did not.
**Researcher role.** Of the roles I assumed during this study, this was the most difficult for me. I often felt that I was not yet fully qualified to carry out all of the responsibilities incumbent with this role. Though I had professionally worked on program evaluations and conducted interviews to gather qualitative data, I had always worked as part of a team of evaluators. The assumption of total responsibility was at once liberating and constraining. Having only myself to rely on during data collection and interpretation, I often worried that “I” was playing too much of a role in my study.

**Teacher role.** As a doctoral candidate in the College of Education, I feel that I was accepted by the participating faculty members as at least an entry-level member of the community of college teachers. In fact, two of the teachers on numerous occasions during my data collection sought my opinion regarding their presentation methods or instructional strategy. One even inquired about how I would assign grades to students. Such questions placed me in an awkward position as I did not wish to impact the teachers and influence their in-class enactment of their individual teaching practices in any greater way than I already had by observing them, so I respectfully declined to engage in conversations about their teaching.

During the data collection phase of my study, I had not actually had experience in a teacher role within the college classroom. However, during the following Fall semester, I served as instructor for a junior-level educational psychology course. I feel that this experience added an additional layer of personal knowledge to my perspective. While preparing to teach during the Summer session following my data collection, I transcribed student interview tapes. Students’ reports of their reactions and interpretations of teacher actions in the classroom influenced how I prepared for my own teaching experience. For example, while I had previously felt that teacher knowledge was very important, I became increasingly aware that students often make note of
discrepancies in explanations or what they perceive as hesitations before teacher explanations.

So I spent a substantial amount of time reviewing material as I prepared for class.

I feel that my perspective was enriched because of my multiple roles during this study. Students were very accepting of my position as a student and quickly became very candid in their reports. Teachers were also accepting, allowing me free access to the students in their classes and unencumbered access to observe their instruction whenever I wished.
CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of the setting in which I conducted this study, paying particular attention to the context surrounding the student evaluation of teaching at the university. Next, I focus on the various participants in this study and how they came to be involved. A general introduction to each of the four college classes examined during this study is presented next. This section is followed by a presentation of the various data sources, data collection and organization procedures, and data analysis procedures used in this study. Finally, I present a description of the procedures employed to ensure the validity and reliability of this multi-method study.

Setting

This study was conducted at Virginia Tech, a land-grant university with approximately 20,000 undergraduate students and 3,500 graduate students. A doctoral campus, Virginia Tech is the largest university in Virginia. The university has nationally-recognized programs in engineering and business as well as a regional veterinary school.

The university administration established “uniform guidelines” for the evaluation of course instructors in 1973. At this time, forms for the student evaluation of teaching, originally introduced by the Provost’s Office in 1969, were selected for use throughout the university at the completion of each course. Prior to this time, many faculty throughout the campus used either personally-developed or departmental forms for the student evaluation of their instruction, though such evaluations were not required institutionally (The University Self-Study, 1977).
At the time data was collected for this study, the Student Perceptions of Instruction form (see Appendix B) was used in different ways throughout campus in spite of the uniform guidelines. In some colleges, faculty are required to conduct student evaluations of every course they teach until they receive tenure. In these colleges, tenured faculty are only required to conduct student evaluations of their teaching practice periodically. Some department administrations consider the results of student evaluations of instruction as the sole property of the teacher while others review results before passing them on to the teacher. Throughout the university, the results of student evaluations of teaching must be included in faculty activity reports submitted for consideration for promotion and tenure and salary increases. Because the 14-question evaluation forms are widely used at Virginia Tech, graduating students have likely completed the forms many times to rate teachers, and as a result may be familiar with several of the common dimensions of teaching measured with this form such as subject matter knowledge.

Participants

All participants in this study were non-remunerated volunteers. Descriptions of participant identification and selection procedures follow.

Teaching Faculty

Potential faculty participants were identified through contact with the director of the university’s Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. The primary identification criterion was receipt of at least one teaching award. A purposive sample (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of faculty meeting this criterion was selected based on gender, teaching discipline, and level of course to be taught during the Spring 1994 semester. This sampling was selected to make a broad cut
through the faculty population in an effort to capture as many potentially different landscapes of teaching excellence as possible.

Once identified, invitation letters describing the scope of the proposed data collection were mailed to each potential participant. I followed each letter by a personal phone call and invitation to participate in the study. Each of the initially invited faculty members agreed to participate in the study during the phone call. Each participating faculty member subsequently signed a faculty release form (see Appendix C) which stipulated the nature of the proposed involvement throughout the semester. Additionally, to inform the teachers of the nature of the questions that students would be asked to respond to, copies of the Student Participant Selection Survey instrument (see Appendix D) and Student Reactions to Enacted Teaching Practice interview questions (see Appendix E) were provided for each teacher’s examination.

**Students**

Students from each of the teaching participant’s classes were invited to participate in this study during the first week of class. To solicit student participation, I explained the nature of my study and the two levels on which students could participate. On the first level, students were told that they could complete an anonymous survey instrument (see Appendix D), which was distributed after my invitation. On the second level, students who wished to participate in three individual interviews throughout the semester were asked to volunteer by signing a consent statement on the last page of the survey instrument and to provide their phone number.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed as the following points were explained to each class of students before survey instruments were distributed.

- That all survey responses would be coded anonymously and remain confidential with each student’s identity known only to me.
- That all survey responses and audio tapes of interviews would be stored at my home, and examined only by me.

- That interview tapes would be destroyed at the completion of the study.

- That any level of participation in the study (either through survey responses or individual interviews) would in no way effect a student’s standing or grade in the course.

- That any student participating in the study could withdraw from the study at any point in time without penalty or prejudice.

- That participating teachers would not be informed at any time, even after the completion of the study, of the identify of students participating in the study.

In three of the classes (2000-level physics, 3000-level agricultural economics, and 4000-level teaching composition), students were invited to participate and completed survey instruments at the end of the first class session. In the fourth class (1000-level introductory sociology), time constraints prohibited the administration of the survey during class. On the second day of class, students were invited to participate and then permitted to take the surveys home over the weekend.

Of the 33 sociology students completing the survey instrument, 10 volunteered to participate in individual interviews. Of the 104 physics students who completed survey instruments, 32 volunteered for further participation in this study. Thirty-nine students in the agricultural economics class completed survey instruments, 17 of which volunteered to participate in individual interviews. Of the 27 students in the composition methods class who completed survey instruments on the first day of class, 16 volunteered to participate in individual interviews.
Purposive samples (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of students who volunteered to participate in individual interviews were selected in an attempt to assure maximum variation in each sample. Samples for each class were targeted to equal 10% of the average number of undergraduate students present the first week of class. Selection was based on responses to the survey instrument described previously. First, the volunteering students were sorted based on their year in school. This was done in an effort to have each group of participating students match the level of the focus course (e.g., 1000-level, 2000-level, etc.) and the average composition of past classes. An effort was also made to distribute students based on their responses to Question 7 on the survey instrument, "My achievement in my courses is directly related to my effort." Because 39 of the 193 students completing survey instruments indicated that they did not believe their achievement was directly related to their effort, I attempted to have 20% of the interviewed students to be those who held this opinion.

Students selected for the interviews were called by phone and asked if they were still interested in participating in the study. Interviews were scheduled at student convenience. I met with students in a common area of the student union building. Interviews were conducted on a small couch near a large floor-to-ceiling window which looked out over the front entry of the building. The area was comfortable though sometimes noisy, as many students passed by throughout the day. Often, students sat with their legs folded up under themselves facing me on the couch drinking refreshments from a nearby fast food vendor.

An occasional problem arose when students did not show up for their scheduled interview sessions. When this occurred, I called the student that evening and scheduled another interview. If a student missed three scheduled interviews I did not call him/her again, assuming that the repeated failure to show up for an appointment indicated a desire to be removed from the study. No students actually told me that they no longer wished to participate, however nine of
the original 24 students participating in interviews were withdrawn from the study through non-
attendance at individual appointments.

**Case Descriptions**

This section presents an overview of each case developed during this study. Each
depiction that follows is comprised of sketches of the participating faculty member (using
pseudonyms), the course observed, the physical context, and the focal students participating in
interviews throughout the semester. Because university faculty charged with undergraduate
teaching are often required to fulfill other responsibilities related to the university’s tripartite
mission, each teacher also reported on his/her assigned duties and actual time spent across the
three areas: teaching, research, and service (see Table 1).

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*Insert Table 1 about here*

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**1000-Level Introductory Sociology**

**Teacher.** Dr. Stevens, a full professor in the Sociology Department had a 100% teaching
appointment and had been at Virginia Tech for 25 years. He acknowledged that while he spent a
majority of his time teaching, he also spent a significant amount of time engaged in research
activities. Dr. Stevens had received two university teaching awards.

**Course.** The introductory sociology course, according to Dr. Stevens, had an average
composition of 70% first-year students, 15% second-year students, 10% third-year students, and
5% fourth-year students. Historically, students from all academic disciplines take this course,
often using it to fulfill a basic studies requirement. At the beginning of the Spring 1994 semester,
90 students were registered for this three-credit-hour course. This class met twice a week for 75 minutes per session.

**Physical context.** Class sessions were conducted in a small lecture hall with no windows, located in a building across the street from Dr. Stevens' office building. Persons could enter the room through one of two doors located at the front. The room had 90 fixed seats with slide-up writing platforms. The lightly padded, upholstered seats were arranged in rows of nine on increasingly higher levels, so students in the back of the room looked down on those in the front. Seven traditional student desks were lined along the left wall and five along the right wall, going up the steps. The floor was carpeted with a speckled mauve industrial-type carpet which also ran half-way up the side and back walls. An office-sized oak desk was located at the front of the room. The room was equipped with an overhead projector, ceiling-mounted projection equipment to play videos or view television, and a double chalkboard.

This classroom was in use when students arrived for class. On the days that I observed Dr. Stevens' class, about 20 sociology students stood or sat on the floor waiting to get into the room. The teacher in the room was quite loud and often students waiting in the hall giggled or commented on his enthusiasm, wondering aloud what the course was.

**Participating students.** Five students from this class participated in individual interviews throughout the semester: two 1st-year students, a male general engineering major and a female biology major; two 2nd-year students, a male math major and a female general studies major; and one third-year student, a female family and child development major. Two of the students completing interviews, the first-year general engineering major and the third-year family and child development major, had indicated on their survey instruments that they did not agree that their achievement in courses was directly related to their effort.
Originally, eight students were scheduled for interviews. However, only six actually participated in initial interviews. The sixth participating student, a female second-year university studies major, was withdrawn from the study as a result of her non-participation in a final interview. On her survey instrument, she had indicated that she felt the grades she received in her courses were not directly related to her effort, but that her learning was.

**2000-level Physics for Engineers Course**

**Teacher.** Dr. Samson, a full professor in the Physics Department, had been at Virginia Tech for over 25 years. During that time, he received one major university teaching award. His faculty appointment during the Spring semester was 40% teaching and 60% research, though he estimated that he spent about 70% of his time on teaching and 30% on research (see Table 1).

**Course.** This physics course was offered in two three credit-hour portions during the Fall and Spring semesters. Seven different sections of this course, two of which were taught by Dr. Samson, were available. Dr. Samson estimated that about 60% of the students from his Fall semester course returned to his class in the Spring semester, with the remaining students registering for other sections of the course. At the beginning of the semester, 130 students were enrolled in this course. This class met three times a week for 50 minutes per session.

**Physical context.** Class sessions were held in a lecture hall, located three doors from the teacher's office. Persons could enter the room from the left side through doors located at the front and back of the room. The slate grey paint was peeling off of the cement-slab floor in this classroom. The cement block walls were painted a cream color. Three large double windows were located on the right wall of the room which seated 160 students in fixed wooden chairs with slide-up writing platforms. The seats were arranged in two sections of gradually rising rows, separated by a walkway. A laboratory bench at the front of the room served as the teacher's lectern. The room was equipped with an overhead projector, ceiling-mounted projection...
equipment to play videos or view television, a motorized screen, and a triple chalkboard with vertically sliding panels. A third door, near the teacher’s bench at the front of the room, led into a storage room where class demonstrations could be set-up and stored until needed.

Another physics class was in this room when students arrived for Dr. Samson’s class. On the days that I observed the class sessions, students from the previous class remained in the room asking their teacher questions as Dr. Samson’s students entered the room.

**Participating students.** Five students from this class participated in individual interviews throughout the semester. All students were second-year general engineering majors. Two were females and three were males. Two of these students, a male and a female, had indicated on their surveys that they did not feel their achievement in courses was directly related to their effort.

Initial interviews were conducted with nine of the 10 original students with whom I scheduled appointments. All four of the students not completing the interview process were male second-year general engineering majors. One student failed to report for his mid-semester interview and was withdrawn after three appointments were scheduled with him. The remaining three students were withdrawn at the end of the semester as they failed to complete final interviews. Each of the students that was withdrawn from the study had indicated on his survey that he believed his achievement in his courses was directly related to his effort.

**3000-level Agricultural Economics Course**

**Teacher.** Dr. Sorenson, an assistant professor with a split appointment between the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics and the Statistics Department, had been at Virginia Tech for about five years. Her faculty appointment was 25% teaching and 75% research, though she estimated that her actual time was allocated about 40% to teaching and 60% to
research (see Table 1). In spite of her short tenure at the university, she had already received a teaching award.

**Course.** In the past, students taking this course had been almost exclusively agricultural economics majors. Dr. Sorenson related that about 25% of the class is usually comprised of second-year students, 50% third-year students, and 25% fourth-year students. At the beginning of the semester, 47 students were registered for this course. This class met twice a week for 75 minutes per session.

**Physical context.** Class sessions were held in a large classroom located three doors down from the teacher's office. The cement block walls in the room were painted a cream color. One wall of the long classroom was covered with windows. Traditional student desks were arranged in five rows of ten. Six additional desks were located along the back wall of the classroom which was equipped with an overhead projector, screen, and a large double chalkboard across the front of the room. A large laboratory bench at the front of the room served as the teacher's podium. Students could enter the side of the room through one of two doors located in the front and back of the classroom.

This classroom was in use when Dr. Sorenson's students arrived for class. On the days that I observed class sessions, on average, 10 of Dr. Sorenson's students stood or sat on the floor waiting to get into the room. While waiting, students often talked among themselves about homework problems or upcoming tests.

**Participating students.** Three students majoring in agricultural economics participated in individual interviews about this course. Two were males, one a second-year student and one a third-year student. One was a female student completing her third year at Virginia Tech who had disagreed that her achievement in courses was directly related to her effort.
One student, a male fourth-year agricultural economics major was withdrawn from the study after missing three appointments for the mid-semester interview. He had indicated on his survey that he did not feel his achievement (grades) in his courses were directly related to his effort.

4000-level Composition Methods Course

**Teacher.** Dr. Sushman, a full professor of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education, had taught at Virginia Tech for over 15 years. She had a 100% teaching appointment, though she estimated that her time was allocated about 50% to teaching, 40% to research, and 10% to administrative duties (see Table 1). She had received one major university teaching award.

**Course.** The composition methods course was generally taken by English or secondary education majors seeking teaching certification. Dr. Sushman estimated that on average, about 25% of the students in this course were graduate level, a small percentage were third-year students and the majority were in their fourth year of study. This class met one evening per week for 2 hours and 45 minutes.

**Physical context.** Class sessions were held in a small room in the same building as the teacher’s office. The room was lined with bookcases filled with curriculum materials for K-12 students. Seating in this room consisted of 30 traditional student desks lined up in five close rows. Three chairs were also arranged around a small reading table located near the only window in the room at the front left hand corner. Persons could enter the classroom through a doorway located at the right rear corner of the room. The room was equipped with an overhead projector, screen, and whiteboard.
On the days that I observed class sessions, Dr. Sushman arrived about 20 minutes before each class and unlocked the door. Students often gathered in their collaborative learning groups before class and discussed their homework or writing.

**Participating students.** Two female students in their fourth year of study at Virginia Tech completed individual interviews for this course. Both students were English majors seeking certification to teach at the high school level.

One student, a female fourth-year English major was withdrawn from the study for non-participation in a final interview. She had indicated on her survey that she disagreed that her achievement in courses was directly related to her effort.

**Data Sources and Collection Procedures**

Data sources included exemplary teachers, students from their classes, class observations, and documents related to each course or teacher. As reported in Table 2, though preliminary data collection from teacher participants began at the end of the Fall 1993 semester, the major corpus of data was collected during the Spring 1994 semester. Following, specific data collection instruments and procedures are explained.

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**Insert Table 2 about here**

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**Survey Instruments**

Survey questions were both closed and open-ended, developed following the guidelines presented by Worthen and Sanders (1987). Open-ended questions were located on the instruments before closed questions in an effort to avoid prompting responses. Specific descriptions of the two survey instruments used in this study follow.
**Student participant selection survey.** This survey was three pages in length and included a section for students wishing to volunteer for individual interviews throughout the semester to sign their names and provide phone numbers (see Appendix D). In addition to providing information to base the selection of student participants on, survey questions were designed to collect information on students' ideality of college teaching and what they felt helped them learn. Questions also focused on capturing students' personal expectations for the course and teacher. Surveys were completed by students during the first week of class in the Spring 1994 semester.

**Teaching practice questionnaire.** Prior to the start of the Spring semester, each faculty participant was asked to complete a Teaching Practice Questionnaire (see Appendix F) in preparation for a subsequent informal interview. The questionnaire consisted of four sections designed to collect information on the teacher's teaching load, teaching practice, interactions with students, and the process by which he/she developed a knowledge of college teaching.

**Interviews**

Individual interviews were conducted with each participant as described below. Interview questions were developed following guidelines developed by Guba and Lincoln (1981). Notes were taken during interviews and all interviews were audio taped. At the close of each interview, students were presented with a summary of what they had said for clarification and correction. Through this procedure, interview outcomes were negotiated as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

**Teacher characterization of teaching practice.** This formal interview was semi-structured, consisting of open-ended questions asking for elaborations on responses on the Teaching
Practice Questionnaire described previously (see Appendix F). Interviews were conducted in each teacher’s office and lasted approximately one hour.

**Daily instruction.** I had planned to conduct brief formal interviews with each teacher before and after observed class sessions. Interview questions were to focus on the teacher’s preparation and plans for the class period as well as perceptions regarding the implementation of those plans. However, due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts with several of the teachers, such interviews were not conducted. I did, however, engage in informal conversations with each of the teachers on several occasions prior to or following class, in the hall or walking to or from their offices. Notes were written into the field notebook for that class after discussions were completed.

**Student reactions to the enacted teaching practice.** Individual formal interviews were conducted with volunteer students from each of the faculty participant’s classes, coinciding with observation periods. At our first meeting, each student was asked to read a Student Release Form (see Appendix G). Each student was then asked if he/she had any questions or concerns about participating in the study before he/she signed the release form. Each of the 24 students completing initial interviews signed the release form without question.

Each of the three semi-structured interviews focused on students’ reactions to and evaluation of the focal teacher’s enacted teaching practice (see Appendix E). The length of interviews varied from student to student, lasting from 25 to 50 minutes depending on a student’s elaborations on his/her responses.

On occasion, during the data collection phase, informal conversations were held with students encountered on campus or in town at a grocery store or restaurant. These brief interactions were of a social nature, focusing on topics not concerned with class.
Classroom Observations

Observations of each teacher's class were conducted throughout the Spring 1994 semester. Classes were observed for an entire week during the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. While in each participating teacher's class, I did not interact with students or the teacher. Other than the initial observations, teachers were not notified of the particular dates that I would observe their classes. They were, however, informed that observations would be conducted in three blocks corresponding roughly to the beginning, middle, and end of the semester.

For the first week of observations, I sat in the front right corner of the classroom to observe the introductory sociology and physics teachers. In the agricultural economics and composition methods classes I sat along the back wall of the classroom. For the mid-semester and end of the semester observations, I located myself in the back in all of the classrooms but physics. In the physics class, I positioned myself along the outside row on the far left of the classroom. In each of my positions throughout the semester, I could easily view the teacher as he/she enacted his/her teaching practice. I could also observe students during class as they took notes, participated, or entered and left the classroom.

In addition to running notes (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), audio tapes of each class session were made and saved for future reference during data analysis. Observations focused on the teacher's enactment of his/her teaching practice and obvious student reactions. In addition to serving as data reflecting each teacher's enactment of his/her practice, observational data were also used on occasion to amend questions for the student reaction interviews described previously.
Documentation

Documents from each course (i.e., syllabus, tests, problem sets, and texts) were gathered for analysis. Data from these documents were incorporated into the descriptions of each participating teacher’s practice. Additional data were also collected, related to each participant’s role as a teaching faculty member, (i.e., annual faculty activity reports, or statements of research interest). These data sources were used to confirm and support each faculty participant’s characterization of his/her teaching practice.

Data Organization

Faculty surveys and interviews. Data including completed surveys, interview notes, faculty activity reports, resumes, and other personal documents provided to me by participating faculty members were coded anonymously and organized and maintained in separate files in my home. Guidelines to ensure confidentiality were followed as outlined in the Human Subjects Application (see Appendix H).

Student surveys and interviews. Student Participant Selection Surveys completed by students in each of the four participating classes were coded anonymously and organized and maintained in folders for each class. Guidelines to ensure confidentiality were followed as outlined in the Human Subjects Application (see Appendix H).

Class observations. Each participating teacher’s class was observed during three time periods throughout the Spring 1994 semester. Impromptu discussions were occasionally held with teachers before, during, or after class. Running notes for each class session observed were maintained in separate notebooks coded anonymously for the class. At the completion of each observation, my reactions were added to the notebook. Audio tapes taken during each class session were coded anonymously for the class and stored until data analysis.
Data Analysis and Reporting

Formal data analysis did not begin until the data collection phase was completed. Both quantitative (e.g., frequency counts of teacher behaviors during instruction), and qualitative (e.g., categorical analysis of students' indicators of teaching excellence) procedures were used to analyze data. Descriptions of the specific treatments used in the inductive and deductive analysis of data from each source follow.

Inductive Data Analysis

Inductive analysis was used to form grounded theory as generalizations of the dimensions comprising a student model of teaching excellence were formulated based on student reports. To develop a grounded theory of undergraduate teaching excellence, the constant comparative method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was employed as modified by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The basic steps of this method are: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory.

Student surveys. All student responses to Question 1 from the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D). "What qualities, knowledge, or behaviors do you think make a college teacher excellent?" were compiled prior to a categorical analysis. Responses were read and compared four times before initial categories were assigned. After three additional examinations in which I compared and contrasted each item, looking for "fit" under a category, five major categories were identified. The data was then set aside for a period of about four weeks before being re-examined to assess the appropriateness of the categorizations. The final categories and frequency counts of students' comments that fell under each category, are reported in Chapter 3. Additionally, an aggregate model of teaching excellence was developed.
All student responses to Question 2 from the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D), "How do you view the teacher's role in teaching?" were compiled prior to a categorical analysis. Responses were read and compared three times before initial categories were identified. After two additional examinations in which I compared and contrasted each item, looking for "fit" under a category, five major categories were identified. The data was then set aside for a period of about four weeks before being re-examined to assess the appropriateness of the categorizations. The final categories and frequency counts of students' comments falling under each are reported in Chapter 3 with the class as a unit of analysis.

All student responses to Question 10 from the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D) were organized prior to analysis. Frequency counts of students' rankings of the 10 dimensions of teaching were tabulated and reported in Chapter 3 on an individual class basis. The overall rankings of students from each class were also compared with rankings of the same dimensions done by the teacher. These results are also reported in Chapter 3.

Faculty surveys and interviews. Data from each participating teacher's responses to questions on the Teaching Practice Questionnaire (see Appendix F) and individual follow-up interviews were used to develop a characterization of each participant's teaching practice. These descriptions are presented in Chapter 3.

Frequency counts of each teacher's ranking of the 10 dimensions of teaching excellence were tabulated and reported in Chapter 3 on an individual basis. Also, each teacher's rankings were compared with the overall rankings of the students from his/her class. These results are presented in Chapter 3.

Student interviews. Data from each participating student's interviews throughout the semester were analyzed separately, then compared to other students in the same class.
Particular attention was given to the various dimensions of teaching that students focused on as they discussed the teacher and their interpretations of his/her behaviors during class.

**Deductive Data Analysis**

In addition to using inductive data analysis methods directed at building a grounded theory of teaching excellence, an effort was made to connect this study with existing research literature on college teaching. Following, the development and use of a conceptual tool for the examination of the enacted teaching practices of the participating teachers is described.

**Examination of enacted teaching practice using student and teacher frameworks.** The 10 dimensions (described previously) recovered from the literature on student evaluation of college teaching were used to construct a tool for the examination of the enacted teaching practice of each exemplar as it unfolded in the classroom. Rather than focus on my interpretation of each teacher’s enacted teaching practice, I chose to focus on the meanings participants in the classroom ascribed to these common indicators (Erickson, 1986). To capture these meanings, I solicited indicators of each of these teaching dimensions from the major stakeholders in the college classroom, the students and their teachers. For example, focusing on the dimension of “concern for students,” each student and teacher was asked how he/she would know when a teacher is concerned about students. These indicators were organized under the five major dimensions of teaching excellence resulting from the categorical analysis of students’ descriptions of the qualities, knowledge areas, and behaviors of excellent teachers. Separate frameworks were developed containing the student and teacher-generated indicators for each class. Audio tapes and running notes from each class session observed were then examined using the class-specific framework in an effort to ascertain if the stakeholders in each classroom were provided with opportunities to have their meanings confirmed.
Efforts to Ensure Research Credibility

Addressing the issues of validity and reliability are requisite to ensuring the trustworthiness of all forms of research. Descriptive and interpretative research are no exception. This section outlines the measures taken in the design and conduct of this research study to enhance its credibility.

External Reliability

Reliability refers to the replicability of a study. In effort to enhance the external reliability of this study, i.e., the likelihood that another researcher could conduct a similar study based on my report, I followed guidelines presented by LeCompte and Preissle (1993). Specifically, I addressed the major problems requisite with the individualistic and personalistic nature of ethnographic methods: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection and analysis. Following are descriptions of the means by which I addressed each of these issues.

Researcher status position. In an attempt to address the extent to which I as researcher, was a member of the groups being studied, which had the potential to influence both the data I collected and the conclusions I reached, I developed a description of the various roles I held during the design and implementation of this study (see Chapter 1).

Informant choices. With an eye towards protecting participant anonymity, I provided as detailed a description of participants in this study as possible. In addition to participant descriptions (presented earlier in this chapter and in Chapters 3 and 4 with specific findings) I also provided a discussion of the participant selection process.

Social situations and conditions. In an effort to provide the reader with sufficient information to replicate this study, I have included descriptions of the context and social
situations framing this study. The physical, social, and interpersonal contexts surrounding my data collection are delineated earlier in this chapter and in Chapters 3 and 4 with case descriptions.

**Analytic constructs and premises.** In Chapter 1, I presented the constructs that informed and shaped this research study. The various dimensions of teaching are defined when first introduced so readers will not be required to make assumptions about their meanings.

**Methods of data collection and analysis.** Because as LeCompte and Preissle (1993) stipulated, only those ethnographic accounts that specify data collection and analysis procedures can be replicated, earlier in this chapter, I presented detailed descriptions of the procedures I used throughout this study.

**Triangulation.** Multiple sources of data were used throughout this study including student and faculty surveys, student and faculty interviews, and researcher observations of the enacted teaching practices of participating teachers. Data from each of these sources was used to confirm data from the other sources.

**Internal Reliability**

The construct of internal reliability is concerned with the agreement between multiple observers within a single study (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). In an effort to maximize the internal reliability of this study, I employed three of the strategies presented by LeCompte and Preissle (1993): the use of low-inference descriptors, peer examination, and mechanically recorded data. Descriptions of the implementation of each of these strategies in my collection and analysis of data follow.

**Low-inference descriptors.** Throughout the data analysis and presentation in Chapters 3 and 4, I present direct quotes from participants to support my conclusions as well as to provide the reader with a means of accepting or rejecting those conclusions. Data from documents and
examples from field notes are also included in the case descriptions to support my interpretations.

**Peer examination.** Throughout the data analysis and reporting in this study, my conclusions were examined and confirmed or disconfirmed by another researcher, my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan G. Magliaro.

**Mechanically recorded data.** All interviews were audio taped to preserve original data in an unabstracted way.

**Validity**

Validity involves demonstration that the findings of research match what actually occurs in human life. Demonstrating the validity of research is of paramount importance. Two primary tests of validity focus on internal and external validation. Explanations of the specific procedures I used to ensure validity follow.

**Internal Validity**

The primary focus of internal validity is truth value. As Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed, qualitative researchers should be concerned with making sure the findings of their research make sense and are credible to both the participants in the study and to the readers. To ensure that my study was internally valid, I addressed two questions presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) as guiding queries into internal validity. Following, each question is presented with a description of the means by which I addressed it.

**Are the presented data well-linked to the categories of prior or emerging theory?** In Chapters 3 and 4, efforts were made to relate emergent categories to samples of data used in their construction. Additionally, an effort was made to connect this study with the existing
literature on college teaching when dimensions gleaned from the literature on teaching
effectiveness were used in an examination of each teacher's enacted teaching practice.

Have findings been replicated in parts of the study other than the one they arose from?
The dimensions of teaching excellence offered by students (see Chapter 3) at the beginning of
the semester were used by participating students as they evaluated and discussed the enacted
practice of the exemplar teachers (see Chapter 4.) That students' assessments of teachers
relied upon their perceptions of teachers meeting the perceived requirements of these
categories supports their validity.

I also followed guidelines presented by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) to address three
threats to internal validity: history and maturation, researcher effects, and spurious conclusions.
The following are descriptions of my specific efforts to eliminate or minimize these threats.

History and maturation. When undertaking this study, I made the assumption that each
participating student's assessment of his/her teacher's enacted teaching practice could fluctuate
as the semester progressed. This assumption was based on Erickson's (1986, p. 127) position
that because human actions are "...grounded in choices of meaning interpretation" and as such
are dynamic in that they are "...always open to the possibility of reinterpretation and change." In
fact, the observation that students do change their foci when evaluating college teaching could
be beneficial in the construction and implementation of evaluation forms. In an effort to identify
and account for such shifts in student reports, I used the constant comparative method (Glaser
& Strauss, 1967) described earlier in this chapter.

Researcher effects. In an effort to control for the effect of my knowledge and experience
during my observations of instruction, I used data from student reports to corroborate my field
notes. When conducting interviews, I summarized each student's or participating teacher's
narrative and presented the summary verbally to the participant for confirmation. This was done
to assure that I had captured the participant’s meaning and that my interpretation of his/her comments was meaningful to the participant.

I also spent a substantial amount of time “living” in the classrooms of the participating teachers, collecting observation data in their settings. The data for this study were collected over a seven month period, with the classroom observations conducted over the last five months of collection phase. This allowed me to observe the culture within each classroom which in turn informed my interactions with students during interviews as well as my conclusions during data analysis.

**Spurious conclusions.** To ensure that I did not jump to spurious unfounded conclusions, I continually reflected on my own ideas, judgments, and conclusions, keeping a log of my temporal “findings” throughout my data collection. To check for my understanding of students’ meanings shared with me during individual interviews, at the close of each interview, I presented each student with a summary of what he/she had said for clarification and correction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Preliminary findings concerning the student and teacher-generated indicators of the dimensions of effective teaching (discussed earlier in this chapter) were presented to each faculty participant for confirmation or modification. No modifications were made by any of the participating teachers. Additionally, throughout my data analysis and reporting, each of my findings was reviewed and confirmed with my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan G. Magliaro.

Finally, throughout my data analysis and reporting, I relied on participant explanations of events as I attempted to determine what was important in each classroom context.
External Validity

As Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate, researchers should be concerned about the larger import of their studies. Descriptive and interpretative studies may be judged internally valid and meaningful to the participants, but they gain additional support if they are judged transferable beyond the immediate study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rather than reporting conclusions of research, that findings of qualitative studies be considered as hypotheses for future research in similar research contexts. To ensure that my study was externally valid, I addressed several questions presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) as guiding queries into external validity. Following, each question is presented with a description of the means by which I addressed it.

Are the characteristics of the original participants, settings, processes, etc., described sufficiently to permit comparison with other samples? Other than specific details which would compromise my efforts to protect participant anonymity, I have presented descriptions of all participants; institutional, class, and interview settings; and the participant selection and the data collection and analysis procedures employed in this study.

Does the report examine possible threats to transferability? I acknowledged the limiting effects of my sample selection procedure in Chapter 1 when I presented the issues readers should consider when reviewing this study.

Does a range of readers report the findings to be consistent with their own experience? A poster session I presented in March of 1995 on the material in Chapter 3 regarding undergraduate students' model of teaching excellence and the themes underlying this model, was well-received by Virginia Tech teaching faculty members from various disciplines who attended the session. During the session, 12 faculty members read the poster and commented on the applicability of the findings or the similarity between the themes presented and what they
had observed or experienced with students in their classes. Additionally, four doctoral candidates who had served in the role of college teacher confirmed that my presentation of findings made sense to them, based on their personal experiences.
CHAPTER 3
LANDSCAPES OF EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING:
STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Buxton and Pritchard (1975, p. 2), in their introduction to a collection of reflective essays written by award winning college teachers, repined the state of research on college teaching excellence, asserting:

One thing will not change: the excellent teacher will always be the most important element in an educational structure. And the excellent teacher is the least studied and least talked about subject in higher education.

The editors went on to state that the continued inability of universities to appropriately assess the value of individual faculty members' teaching performance, resulted in the near exclusive use of other indicators of excellence such as research and publications, when making promotion and tenure decisions. While this statement was made over 20 years ago, little has changed in academia. The assessment of teaching remains a difficult issue, with little agreement on what is valued and what isn't.

Admittedly, a scan of the literature on college teaching reinforces their position; a great deal of research has been conducted on student evaluations or ratings of college teaching and its effectiveness (see, for example, Abrami, et al., 1982; Feldman, 1976; 1977; Koon & Murray, 1995; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Marsh, 1984; Miller, A.H., 1988). But, rather than move completely to the other side of the issue and focus only on teachers, I chose to consider the perspectives on teaching excellence of both the undergraduate student and the college teacher. This decision was based on my belief that when addressing the evaluation of college teaching and the assessment of its excellence, we should focus on aspects that are deemed important to
teaching by all of the major stakeholders as Scriven (1973) and Stake (1975) propose in their models of evaluation methodology.

In an effort to address the need of a more comprehensive conceptualization of college teaching excellence, this chapter begins with an idealization of college teaching as envisioned by undergraduate students who were asked to delineate various aspects of their preferred college teaching experiences. This view is followed by a framework for college teaching as constructed by university faculty recognized as exemplar undergraduate teachers. Finally, in an effort to further enhance the picture, a comparison is made between the perspectives of the participants in the college classroom, the students and their teachers.

**Undergraduate Students’ Conception of Excellent College Teaching**

Student responses to several items on the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D), described in Chapter 2, were used to construct the following idealization of a college teacher/teaching experience. A broader composite picture of excellent college teaching constructed from the responses of students from all four classes participating in this study starts this section. Following this broad perspective, a finer focus is made as data from each of the classes is examined more closely to identify any disciplinary or course level differences.

**Composite Conceptualization From Four Undergraduate Classes**

A combined total of 193 students in the four participating classes completed survey instruments. In three of the classes (2000-level physics, 3000-level agricultural economics, and 4000-level composition methods) surveys were administered during the first day of class and student participation was 100% (n=160). In the fourth class, 1000-level introductory sociology, time constraints due to inclement weather prohibited the administration of the survey during
class. Students were permitted to take the instruments home and return them during the following class, thus affecting the participation rate (33 out of 80 surveys were returned, for a 41% response rate).

**Dimensions of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence**

Of the 133 students completing the survey instrument, 191 responded to the first question: "What qualities, knowledge, or behaviors do you think make a college teacher excellent?" These students offered 485 teacher qualities, behaviors, knowledge areas, or assumptions about the thoughts or behaviors of college teachers as indicators of teaching excellence. Of the students responding, 44 provided only one indicator, 53 offered two indicators, 57 listed three indicators, 25 provided four items, eight offered five indicators, and four supplied six indicators of undergraduate teaching excellence. A categorical analysis of the 485 items revealed that they fell under five major dimensions (see Table 3), listed below in order of frequency reported:

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Insert Table 3 about here

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(1) content, pedagogical, and general knowledge, which includes professional and research experience as well as knowledge about appropriate means of "teaching" content; (2) concern and approachability, which relates to student accessibility to the teacher and teacher concern for student learning and performance; (3) enthusiasm, which includes enthusiasm for teaching and interacting with students, enthusiasm for or love of the subject being taught, and a sense of humor; (4) focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity, which emphasizes asking students challenging questions and encouraging student involvement in the
exchange of ideas in the classroom; and, (5) course organization and classroom management, which focuses on the teacher's structuring of the course, the organization and delivery of individual lessons, and the efficient use of class time. Frequency counts indicate that students from each of the classes offered teacher qualities, behaviors, or knowledge areas that fell under each of the five dimensions. However, as evidenced in Table 3, their emphasis varied across the courses. Specific differences will be discussed in the section dealing with class-specific conceptualizations of undergraduate teaching excellence presented later in this chapter.

The ideality of college teaching excellence as envisioned by undergraduates can be depicted by the model in Figure 1 which illustrates the various dimensions as overlapping rather than mutually exclusive. The four dimensions: content, pedagogical and general knowledge, concern and approachability, enthusiasm, and focus on the development of student thought processes and creativity are illustrated in an overall environment consisting of the fifth dimension, course organization and classroom management.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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Though relatively few students, 29 of 191, (see Table 3) specifically cited course organization and classroom management as indicators of teaching excellence, several indirect comments made by students do support this depiction. Specifically, 12 statements from students in the introductory sociology, agricultural economics, and composition methods classes indicating that teachers should let students participate in class through discussions and other student-centered activities, as well as a physics student's suggestion that teachers should ask students for feedback, elude to instructional strategies and classroom management issues that could impact the other dimensions of the model.
The dimension of concern and approachability serves as a centerpiece of the model, overlapping with each of the remaining dimensions. This placement was selected because, when asked to provide their own descriptors of excellent teaching, the dimension of concern and approachability often suffused students' conceptualizations of excellent teaching. For example, a student from the agricultural economics class stated, "The teacher should know the subject well and be able to convey it to the students in a non-threatening manner. It should feel personal."

Ideal Roles of Undergraduate Teachers

In a further effort to develop a more complete picture of excellent college teaching, students were also asked what they regarded as the teacher's role in the college classroom. A total of 177 of the 193 students completing surveys responded to this question, providing 236 statements concerning teachers' behaviors or motives. Of the students responding, 118 provided only one role, while 48 offered two roles, and 11 students listed three roles for undergraduate teachers. A categorical analysis of these items revealed five major roles (see Table 4) listed below in order of frequency reported: (1) presenter, by presenting and explaining information students feel these teachers can transfer their knowledge to students; (2) facilitator, by serving as a guide, diagnosing needs, assessing knowledge, and being available as a resource students feel these teachers can help students as they take responsibility for learning; (3) motivator, by demonstrating the relevance of material and making the subject matter interesting, students feel these teachers can motivate them to learn; (4) inspiration, by demonstrating a personal love for the subject matter, asking questions, challenging students' positions, and allowing them to draw their own conclusions, students feel these teachers can inspire students to learn; and (5) administrator, by handling administrative details and
administering tests of student knowledge, students feel these teachers fulfill the required role, passing students through who "make the grade" and denying passage to those who don't.

Underlying Themes

Two significant themes evolved as student views on teacher roles were analyzed (see Table 5). First, many of these undergraduate students were hopeful for a personal or professional connection with their college teachers, whether subtle or overt. This desire was evidenced in the large number of student responses that indicated a preference for college teachers who interact on one of three levels, listed below in order of frequency reported: (1) peer parity, (2) professional parity, or (3) sympathetic paternalism. Based on student responses, teachers acting on the level of peer parity can be characterized as friendly, entertaining people who appear comfortable in front of a class, have interesting personalities, are humorous, and tell stories. In contrast, teachers acting on a professional parity level demonstrate respect for students as adults, are open to student opinions, and relinquish some control of the class over to the students. While students indicated they wanted "control" over the class, they stipulated in other areas of the survey instrument that what they sought was the opportunity to engage in discussions and to share their opinions with other students and the teacher. Finally, teachers acting on the level of sympathetic paternalism operate as understanding adult superiors, are flexible with course requirements and deadlines, and treat each student as an individual case should a personal crisis arise, rather than enforcing rules and policies across the board.
The second theme, *a preference for teachers who are sensitive to student ability and progress*, manifests itself in 47 comments supplied by students from the physics and agricultural engineering courses. A statement written by a physics student reflects this desire, "The teacher should not teach over the class' head or talk about areas of the course which are really too involved for the class' knowledge of the subject." Similar statements, indicative of such sensitivity were not made by students in the introductory sociology or composition methods classes. These underlying themes are illustrated in Figure 2, completing undergraduate students' ideality of college teaching.

The themes were placed at the intersections corresponding to the dimensions of teaching excellence that coincided with students' descriptions of their preferred teacher roles.

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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**Student Rankings of Effective Teacher Characteristics**

Differences in student perceptions of effective college teaching have been reported in the college teaching literature (see Literature Review, Appendix A). This is particularly true when student responses to unstructured questions are compared with those to structured questions. To address this issue, students completing survey instruments for this study were asked both unstructured and structured questions about college teaching excellence (see Student Participant Selection Survey, Appendix D).

To tie these data to other published studies, students were first asked several unstructured questions, where they were free to provide their own indicators of excellent undergraduate teaching. They were then asked to respond to a structured question: "Please
number the following teacher characteristics, behaviors, or loci in order of their importance to
excellent teaching with (1) being the most important and (10) being the least important.° The 10
items listed in this question were a composite of indicators gathered from reports and reviews of
college teaching effectiveness literature (see Feldman, 1976; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Murray,
1986). A total of 190 students completed this question. Summary rankings (by class) of the
teaching effectiveness items are presented in Table 6.

| Insert Table 6 about here |

While composite student responses to the earlier question about indicators of excellent
teaching related to many of the items from the effective teaching literature listed in this question,
the frequency of the various items reported is not in total agreement with the ranking of
importance of these items as listed in Table 6. For example, Table 3 indicates a preference for
content, pedagogical, and general knowledge, with 182 of the 485 student-generated indicators
falling under this category. This ascribed level of importance is in contrast to the students’ later
rankings of effective teacher characteristics reported in Table 6. Here, the most important
characteristic according to frequency counts in three of the classes, introductory sociology,
agricultural economics and composition methods, is teacher enthusiasm. In fact, in two of these
classes, teacher characteristics dealing with knowledge do not appear until 3rd place in the list of
importance, making subject matter relevant, and in the third class, composition methods, teacher
knowledge areas are ranked 5th, 6th, and 7th in importance to undergraduate teaching
excellence.
Class-specific Student Conceptualizations of

Excellent Undergraduate Teaching

In this section, variations and unique findings resulting from a closer examination of each of the four participating classes are presented. In each case, the analysis was based on student responses to the three items discussed previously with results presented in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6.

1000-Level Introductory Sociology Class

Thirty three of the 80 students in this class completed student surveys offering 101 items regarding the qualities, knowledge areas, behaviors, or assumptions about thoughts and behaviors of college teachers that they felt were indicators of excellence in teaching (Question 1). A majority of the items offered by these students fall under the dimension of enthusiasm (see Table 3). This finding coincides with the number of student responses from this class, 16, expressing a desire for teachers to interact with students on a peer parity level (see Table 5). Specific statements indicating this preference include, "humor and interesting outside facts, stories are essential," "comfortable with students, approachable," "the ability to relate to kids," "ability to relate to students," "friendly, approachable, interact with students," "funny," "should have a sense of humor to lighten the atmosphere," "a college teacher should have a good personality (and) the ability to maintain a student's interest." As further support for the placement of enthusiasm as primary in importance, students in this class ranked enthusiasm first in importance of the 10 effective teacher characteristics (see Table 6).

The second most commonly reported dimension by this class was content, pedagogical, and general knowledge (see Table 3). This level of importance is supported by the students’ ranking of two teacher knowledge areas as 2nd and 3rd in importance of the 10 dimensions (see Table 6).
2000-Level Physics Class for Engineers

All 103 students present the first day of class completed survey instruments, offering 226 items relating to the qualities, knowledge areas, behaviors, or assumptions about thoughts and behaviors of college teachers that they felt served as indicators of teaching excellence. As indicated in Table 3, 95 of the student responses related to the content, pedagogical, and general knowledge requisite for excellent teaching. This high number of responses is supported by the students’ views on the role college teachers should play in the undergraduate classroom (see Table 4), and these students’ ranking of effective teacher characteristics (see Table 6). Specifically, one of the key roles they want teachers to play is that of a presenter and explainer of information. Students’ comments in this area such as, “It is the teacher’s role to teach the students about the material as well as why it is the way it is,” “…uses examples of material and experiments in almost very class, 9/10 of them,” “…to explain the concepts in a different and more understandable way than the book,” “explain the text and show applications,” and “to give insight, to explain,” demonstrate the need for content, pedagogical, and experiential knowledge. It is also interesting to note that students in this class indicated a preference for teachers who are sympathetic to student progress (see Table 6). This theme supports the presenter role preferred by a majority of students in this class, given that teachers adjust their pacing based on student progress.

3000-Level Agricultural Economics Class

All 39 students present the first day of this class completed surveys identifying 105 items they believed were indicative of undergraduate teaching excellence. As with the introductory sociology class, the dimension of enthusiasm was the one most often suggested by students’
responses about excellent teachers (see Table 3), and their ranking of effective teacher characteristics (see Table 6). Nineteen of the items offered by students indicated a desire for teachers who would interact with students on a peer parity basis, serving as friendly entertainers (see Table 5). Specific comments include: “willingness to teach and make teaching fun,” “lots of energy,” “light-hearted,” “interesting stories,” “ability to hold the students’ attention”; “funny,” “excited and having a good time,” “animated,” and “one that can relate to the students directly - on a personal basis.” Eight students expressed a desire to be treated as an equal by college teachers operating on a professional parity level while the remaining seven students described behaviors falling under the level of sympathetic paternalism as indicators of teaching excellence.

A further similarity to the introductory sociology class is the importance this class afforded to teacher knowledge. As illustrated in Table 3, students in agricultural economics provided 36 indicators of teacher excellence that fell under the dimension of content, pedagogical, and general knowledge, placing it second in importance. This placement is further supported by the students’ ranking of three effective teacher characteristics related to teacher knowledge as 3rd, 4th, and 5th, of the 10 dimensions, placing them just under the enthusiasm dimension (see Table 6).

4000-Level Composition Methods Class

All 18 of the undergraduate students present the first day of this class completed survey instruments. However, only 17 completed the first question, offering 53 items as indicators of college teaching excellence. In contrast to the other three classes, a majority of the students in this education class, 11, offered items indicating a desire to be treated on a level of professional parity by the teacher, though four students expressed a preference for teachers who operated on a sympathetic paternalistic level and two students described peer parity interactions as ideal.
(see Table 5). This finding may reflect the fact that students in this class are nearing the end of their degree programs. Eight of the students were fourth or fifth-year undergraduates while 10 were completing their third year of higher education. Though they had not completed their student teaching, over half of the students had some recent exposure to the public school system, either through observation or student aide practicums, thus providing them a degree of personal knowledge from which to operate.

A major contradiction in this class' perception of excellent undergraduate teaching becomes apparent when considering their valuation of teacher enthusiasm. As reported in Table 3, only three students in this class provided indicators of teacher excellence that fell under the dimension of enthusiasm. This placement is supported by the small number of responses, two, indicating a preference for teachers who interact on a peer parity level, being friendly and entertaining (see Table 5). However, when asked to rank 10 effective teacher characteristics in order of importance to excellent college teaching, the majority of the students placed enthusiasm for teaching at the top of their list. This discrepancy may be explained by the focus of this course, as being one for teachers in preparation. Perhaps, when offering their own descriptions of teaching excellence, many of the students assume college teachers do not enter the profession unless they are enthusiastic about teaching, therefore this characteristic does not come to mind. This assumption was later supported by student comments during individual interviews. However, when faced with a list of characteristics, it is placed at the top of the list.

Exemplar Teachers' Conceptions of College Teaching

In this section, college teaching is characterized from the perspectives of four faculty members recognized for undergraduate teaching excellence by students, colleagues, and administrators. These conceptualizations were constructed with data gathered with the Teaching
Practice Questionnaire (see Appendix f) and follow-up semi-structured interviews. In essence, questions from both the questionnaire and interviews focused on the teaching practices of these exemplars and the reasons underlying their modes of operation. It is important to note that while the presentation of parallel portraits of each teacher’s perception is used to facilitate comparisons, the data and development of the conceptualizations did not evolve in a parallel manner as the interviews were semi-structured, each taking its own individual turn, based on the teacher’s responses.

Introductory Sociology Teacher

Dr. Stevens, a veteran faculty member of 25 years, is often one of the first college teachers that students encounter in their undergraduate careers. Because the course under consideration is introductory, he looks upon his initial role as a teacher as similar to that of a foreign language instructor.

I view my role as first communicating a vocabulary, the vocabulary of sociology. With this vocabulary comes a set of concepts.

Similar to the expert role described by McKeachie (1986), i.e., transmitter of the information, concepts, and perspectives of the field, Dr. Stevens’ undergraduate teaching role can be described as a presenter of information, though he believes it is necessary to strive to do so in a manner that maintains student attention.

It’s like a comedian...If the class is with you and picks up on the subtleties, and laughs in the right spots, laughs at your puns, then it has gone well. They’re with you...it’s all in the timing.

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After the discipline's vocabulary has been communicated, Dr. Stevens moves on to explaining the foreign surroundings to students, just as if they had embarked on a journey through a new country and culture.

Once the vocabulary is understood by the students, I strive to give the students a different perception of reality than they entered the class with...I attempt to color students' view of reality. While communicating the concepts of sociology, I attempt to provide the students with a view of sociology so they can touch, feel, smell, taste reality. This subject can be deadly dull unless you continually apply the concepts.

Right from the start of my teaching career I felt strongly about the importance of making material relevant to students' lives...the primary focus of my teaching is making the subject matter real...I feel if you don't make the material relevant to students then you run the risk of loosing them.

In his undergraduate classes, Dr. Stevens operates under a traditional instructor-centered approach as described by McKeachie (1986). Under this approach, the learning goals are determined by the teacher with an emphasis placed upon intellectual changes within the students. In an instructor-centered class, activities center around the teacher, with the interactions occurring between the teacher and student(s) rather than from student to student. His choice of instructor-centered methods may be influenced by his perception of students and their goals and his stance that he needs to compensate for perceived changes in student motivation.

You have to be continually up and enthusiastic and compensate for the fact that flow is one way; very little reciprocity...I believe that the students have become less and less interested in learning and earning a degree.

He cites class attendance as an indicator of a shift in student motivation.
A lot of the students here copy others' notes (after they fail to come to class). I can't understand this. Then they come to my office and can't figure out why they did so bad in the class. Basically, I'd say most of them just don't know how to take good notes.

To address his observation, Dr. Stevens presents very structured outlines on overheads for the students to take notes from as he lectures. "Everyone should be able to follow along."

When later asked to rank the same 10 items reported as instrumental to effective college teaching that students ranked, Dr. Stevens ordered them as follows (see Table 7): (1) enthusiasm for teaching, (2) enthusiasm for subject matter, (3) mastery of subject matter, (4) clarity of explanations, (5) ability to make subject matter relevant, (6) organization/structure, (7) concern for students, (8) approachability, (9) development of student curiosity, and (10) development of student thought processes. Dr. Stevens' ranking of these items supports his conceptualization of his role as a teacher of undergraduate, particularly introductory classes: presenter of information in an attention-getting and maintaining manner.

Physics for Engineers Teacher

First of all, I feel I've got to convince them that they've got to do the learning and all I can do is facilitate their learning.

Dr. Samson, a veteran college teacher of over 25 years, is confident that he meets this goal, at least with some students. He related that several years ago on an end-of-course evaluation a student made the comment, "This guy expects the student to do all the learning."
And, he does expect them to learn the principles of physics with his assistance, answering questions and providing examples and explanations as needed. As Dr. Samson focuses on answering student questions and explaining material, he is demonstrating skills of the teacher role, expert, as described by McKeachie (1986).

Once basic principles are covered, Dr. Samson shifts his focus to directing the students' thoughts to the application of the principles to the physical world around them.

I like to think that I'm a facilitator (of student learning) by showing them how to think about and analyze physical situations in terms of the principles of physics...I try to take advantage of the experience they've had and build on the things that can relate to. I try to use analogies. I basically try to make use of what I perceive to be fairly common experience and use those things as illustrations of where physics fits into (the world around us).

In spite of the large class size and short class period (50 minutes), Dr. Samson believes that in order to stimulate and effect student thinking, rather than just lecture, he must use demonstrations to spark curiosity as well as ask students questions during class.

I try as much as is feasible to stop and ask questions, to ask people to think about what it really is that I'm saying and to get some feedback.

When later asked to rank order the 10 items identified in the literature on college teaching effectiveness in order of their importance to excellent college teaching, Dr. Samson related that he didn't think a ranking of these items was appropriate, adding, "I'm not sure such a ranking can be justifiably done." But he did provide the following ranking (see Table 5): (1) development of student thought processes, (2) development of student curiosity, (3) clarity of explanations, (4) organization/structure, (5) enthusiasm for subject matter, (6) enthusiasm for
teaching, (7) mastery of subject matter, (8) ability to make subject matter relevant, (9) concern for students, and (10) approachability. Dr. Samson’s ranking of these items supports his approach to students in his 2000-level physics class, i.e., once students have mastered the basic principles, he shifts his focus to the facilitation of student learning, with an emphasis placed on their thought processes and curiosity as they strive to identify and solve problems.

**Agricultural Economics Teacher**

Unlike interviews with the other three professors, this interview was conducted after I had completed several classroom observations. Though I asked questions in the same manner as those asked of the other three faculty participants, occasionally Dr. Sorenson’s responses were framed as a reaction to an incident occurring in a class, regardless if I had present on that date or not.

My responsibility is to teach these guys how to think...Students have to understand the intuition behind the theory being taught. (I have to) try to stop them from memorizing and spitting back answers.

Dr. Sorenson, in her sixth year as a teaching faculty member, acknowledged that she assumed her “mission in life” only after she taught her first college class. “I realized that they (students) don’t think, that they just want to memorize and answer me.” To address her concern over students’ learning strategies, Dr. Sorenson explains her thought processes and reasoning as she goes through problems to model for students the application of economics principles to real world problems. As she employs this methodology, she demonstrates skills characteristic of the teacher’s role as expert as described by McKeachie (1986), transmitting the concepts and perspectives of the field.
I try to explain why we do what we do and how economists think, but students have said "I got by in physics just knowing the formula. I just want to know what formula to use, I don’t care about where they come from." I’m trying to demonstrate to them how to think logically and critically.

During her short tenure in the college classroom, Dr. Sorenson has worked on evaluating her course structure to assess the need for modifications to better meet the needs she sees in the students. For example, while she was pleased that students could apply economics principles when presented with a structured problem, she was dismayed that they were unable to select problem solving strategies on their own when simply presented with situations where specific problems had not been delineated.

I noticed if I told them a problem and set it up (for them) they could figure it out. But if I just sort of described something and they were supposed to identify the problem and figure out how to address it, they couldn’t do it. So I decided to try to teach that, but it hasn’t worked yet.

Still constructing her personal stance on excellence in college teaching, Dr. Sorenson continually assesses her own role in the classroom and how she should interact with undergraduate students. One of her key goals is that students ultimately accept responsibility for their own learning, however she is discovering the difficulties inherent in promoting students’ assumption of ownership of their learning.

They have as much responsibility as I have. But they don’t know it...It’s simple, so simple. They’re just not putting in the effort. That’s what the big problem is. They just don’t do their work. They don’t read, they don’t study, they don’t think....I think most of them blame the professor as soon as something happens. They act like it’s not their responsibility. Their attitude is "You have to teach me."
As a new college teacher, Dr. Sorenson is close in age to many of her students, making it easy for her to interact with students more as a peer. As the Spring 1994 semester progressed, she felt the need to reassess her focus on fulfilling a teacher role comparable to what McKeachie (1986) describes as the person role, i.e., allowing herself to be validated as a human being and to validate students as well. She enacts this role by being friendly, warm, and self-revealing with students both in and out of class. Dr. Sorenson feels it is important to serve as faculty advisor to undergraduate student organizations and remain active in departmental and college functions, thus increasing her exposure to students from her classes.

I'm thinking that some day I might have to abandon my current approach. My idea was that if I was friendly and they could talk to me, we could think things through together. That would be one way to get them away from the structure and memorization. You know, avoid the "Don't talk to me, I'm the teacher. Here just memorize this." But this (being friendly) doesn't work.

They think they can see me any time of the day. The other day I put up a sign on the door saying I was not available until my office hours. But they wait until the last minute and want me to help them out and do the homework set for them. Our country is lazy... I didn't think it was going to be this bad or hard. I mean I thought kids would want to learn at this stage in their career. I think my idea was based on the way I was as a college student.

When later asked to rank the 10 items reported in the teaching effectiveness literature based on their importance to excellent college teaching, Dr. Sorenson responded that the task was "too hard to do!" Her rankings were (see Table 7): (1) development of student thought processes, (2) development of student curiosity, (3) clarity of explanations, (4) mastery of subject matter, (5) enthusiasm for subject matter, (6) approachability, (7) ability to make subject matter relevant, (8) enthusiasm for teaching, (9) organization/structure, and (10) concern for students.
Her rankings of these items is reflective of her conceptualization of college teaching at this point in time. Dr. Sorenson’s ranking of the development of student thought processes and development of student curiosity as the top items is supported by her efforts to demonstrate logical and critical thinking during class. Her ranking of concern for students as least important may be reflective of her reassessment of her means of interacting with students, i.e., considering pulling away somewhat.

**Composition Methods Teacher**

My goal is to change their attitudes. I want students to see that their experience with the type of writing instruction that many of them probably had does not have to be the way they teach writing.

Dr. Sushman, a veteran teaching faculty member with over 15 years of experience, brought with her to the university setting nearly 20 years of practical experience as a high school teacher. Now, as a teacher educator, she often calls upon her experiential knowledge of what goes on in the school system and what challenges teachers, particularly new teachers, will face as they attempt to implement many of the requirements with which they are charged. Paramount in her endeavor to prepare beginning teachers for the classroom, Dr. Sushman strives to increase her students’ awareness of the vast array of potential teaching tools available to composition teachers. As a means of accomplishing this goal, Dr. Sushman focuses on the way she structures her courses and their requirements. She requires that students do a great deal of outside reading, writing, and responding to each other’s work.

Dr. Sushman’s organization of her course and her management of the class demonstrates her approach to teaching, which she calls “eclectic.” The metaphor, orchestrator, suits her approach to the role of college teacher, assembling the necessary components or
material and trying to ensure that they meld together to produce the desired effect, student awareness and learning. Dr. Sushman spends a great deal of time and energy in the selection of learning tools for her class, often reflecting on her past observations and student feedback, making modifications where necessary in an effort to construct a smoother composition.

I am constantly aware of the importance of being a model for the practices I espouse. For me, that means that I always feel the burden of trying to be the teacher I want my students to be.

The implementation and demonstration of the tools and instructional strategies she would like students to consider for their own classrooms when they enter teaching is a major goal of Dr. Sushman. Or, as she puts it "...form and content (should) merge. My goal is to accomplish this in a seamless way." Through her demonstrations, Dr. Sushman promotes students taking control of their own learning and writing processes. In her efforts to effect this demonstration, Dr. Sushman requires a large amount of group work and interactions among the students, both in and out of class. She responds to students' requests for assistance, but shies away from directing student interactions and activities, other than to initiate them. In this regard, she demonstrates some of the characteristic skills of a facilitator as described by McKeachie (1986), i.e., a focus on sharpening students' awareness of their own interests and skills.

I try to be a role model, rightly or wrongly, I do not seek to be their "friend." I want them to see me working hard because teaching is hard; I get papers back in a timely manner because that's what I want them to do as teachers...Teaching is a hard job and takes commitment; those attitudes should be integral to a program (to educate teachers).

Dr. Sushman is very professional in her approach to teaching undergraduate students. She feels that she can best meet the educational needs of her students if she responds to their
requests for clarification or assistance rather than trying to act as a pal. She does so by spending time with students who phone, come by her office, or stop her after class. Dr. Sushman's choice in how she interacts and relates to students is influenced by her personal belief that she should serve as a role model for aspiring school teachers and by advice she received early on in her academic career.

I was told I spent too much time with my students, that I would never be tenured unless I quit giving as freely of my time and attention. It was good advice given the tenor of the times. However, as I (and professors like me) became involved in national and international ventures and writing in order to be tenured and promoted, the demands on our time became inordinate. (Now) to switch back to spending more time with students is difficult because it means that some things, which I have grown to love also must be given up or we try to do it all, which results in things not being done well.

When asked later in the semester to rank the 10 items from the literature relating to teaching effectiveness, Dr. Sushman ranked them in the following order (see Table 7): (1) mastery of subject matter, (2) enthusiasm for teaching, (3) ability to make subject matter relevant, (4) development of student thought processes, (5) organization/structure, (6) clarity of explanations, (7) concern for students, (8) enthusiasm for subject matter, (9) development of student curiosity, and (10) approachability. Her rankings reflect her conceptualization of undergraduate teaching in that in order to best achieve one of her primary goals, the implementation and demonstration of the tools and instructional strategies she feels students should learn and consider for use in their own classrooms, she must have a strong knowledge base concerning what is appropriate for the composition classroom and how to "teach" that material.
Comparison of Student and Faculty Conceptions of
Excellent Undergraduate Teaching

This section first presents general findings resulting from a comparison of overall student and teacher conceptualizations of undergraduate teaching excellence. This general comparison is followed by comparisons using the class as the unit of analysis.

General Findings

*Undergraduate students’ ideality of college teachers.* Based on student responses to open-ended survey questions (see data reported in Tables 3, 4, and 5,) undergraduate students’ ideality of a college teacher is as follows: A subject matter expert with adequate practical experience in a “real” job (like the students may hold some day), so he/she can communicate how this subject matter will be useful/relevant to the students. A teacher’s subject matter knowledge should be backed up with pedagogical knowledge, ensuring the teacher knows how to best “teach” the material. The ideal college teacher demonstrates to students through his/her demeanor, comments, and responses to student questions and concerns that they can be easily approached by students and are concerned about them both as persons and learners. Ideal teachers also demonstrate an enthusiasm for teaching and interacting with undergraduate students as well as an enthusiasm for their subject matter, at times even inspiring their students. In addition to presenting information to students and explaining difficult areas, ideal teachers sometimes focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity. Ideal teachers organize courses such that students are afforded some opportunity to participate in class through discussions or other projects. Finally, ideal teachers make efficient use of class time and
organize the presentation of course material in a logical manner at a not too rapid, but not too slow pace.

Many undergraduate students are uncertain about their role in their own learning.

Though students sometimes expressed a preference for teachers who encourage student interactions during class, suggesting student assumption of some responsibility for their own learning, the role they generally ascribed to teachers was one of presenter and explainer of information (see Table 4). This role, by default, relegates students to a passive, receptive role in the classroom. A large number of students also, perhaps unintentionally, placed themselves in passive roles when they described the preferred teacher roles of motivator, inspiration, and administrator (see Table 4). That undergraduate students consciously relinquish responsibility for their own learning is not supported by overall responses to an additional question on the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D): "My achievement in my courses is directly related to my effort." Only 34 of the 193 students responding to this question indicated that their achievement was not directly related to their effort.

An individual student's perception of his/her preferred role(s) for college teachers is likely influenced to some degree by his/her personal experience in the college classroom. Perhaps, a majority of these students, especially given the fact that most are in their second, third, or fourth years of higher education, have been exposed to traditional instruction in the form of "expert" lectures with the students serving a passive, receptive role and taking notes. Such experience may predispose some students to offering roles such as presenter of information or motivator of students as this is what they have seen "work well" in the classroom. It is also possible that many of the students have been in college classrooms where discussions were used. But the perceived outcome of the discussion may or may not have been the acknowledgement of
student opinions or the encouragement of student thought processes or curiosity. Such experiences could influence students’ perceptions of the ideality of discussions in the classroom.

Three of the participating teachers expressed concern over their observations that students often fail to accept responsibility for their own learning. Their perceptions of students’ lack of self motivation in undergraduate classrooms is supported by a second-year sociology student’s comment, "The teacher is 75% responsible for your performance. He/she controls how comfortable you feel about the subject, asks questions and keeps you from falling asleep." This student later indicated that his achievement was directly related to his effort. However, he still relinquished some responsibility for his own learning when he revealed a desire for teachers who will motivate him to a sufficient level so that he will put in the effort to learn the material.

Inferring from this obvious ambivalence, perhaps what students seek is a guide to ease them into the academic culture. If a teacher is nurturing, inspiring, or impressive enough, then students can at least momentarily become distracted from their major concerns of looking "dumb", unprepared, out of place, or like a "nerd." Then possibly, they can become interested in a subject on a sufficient level to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and proceed marching on their way, internally motivated to learn, as one physics student put it "this neat stuff."

Class-specific Findings

Introductory Sociology

It is interesting to note with this class, based on a comparison of student and teacher rankings of effective teacher characteristics on their relative importance to excellent teaching (see Table 8), that the 1st and 2nd place rankings of the 10 dimensions, enthusiasm for teaching and focus on the development of student thought processes, respectively, were the same.
Additionally, rankings for items between the two perspectives remained relatively grouped, with the largest difference being the relative rankings of organization and structure, ranked three places higher by the teacher than the students. The higher value placed on this item by Dr. Stevens was supported by his statements explaining his preparation and presentation of organized outlines and notes on overheads so, "Everyone should be able to follow along."

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Insert Table 8 about here

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The teacher role of presenter and explainer of information assumed by Dr. Stevens in this class also appears to concur with the overall student conceptualization of the preferred teacher role of presenter (see Table 4). Further evidence of similarity between student and teacher conceptualizations is afforded by the preference of the majority of students who completed the survey instrument, for teachers who operate on a peer parity level in the classroom (see Table 5) and Dr. Stevens' self-described approach to his introductory classes as entertaining and focused on gaining and maintaining student attention.

Physics for Engineers

In this class, a major difference between the student and teacher perspective appears when the two conceptualizations are compared in Table 8. The relative importance ascribed by each of the stakeholders to a teacher's focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity is at opposite ends of the spectrum. Dr. Samson ranked these items as the most important, while the majority of students in this class ranked them as the least important. If the two viewpoints are compared further by considering the top five and bottom five items as ranked by each stakeholder, they approach being opposite. Students highly valued teacher knowledge
areas (clarity of explanations, mastery of subject matter, making subject matter relevant) and enthusiasm. On the other hand, Dr. Samson valued a focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity. His interview statements indicated he feels he can implement his focus by providing clear explanations, presenting material in an organized manner, and demonstrating an enthusiasm for the subject matter.

It is interesting that both Dr. Samson and the students ranked concern for students and approachability in the bottom five items. However, students overall did place a higher value on these teacher characteristics. This placement is supported by the large number of student-generated metaphors for teacher roles indicating a preference for teachers that are sympathetic to student progress (see Table 5). Student rankings of enthusiasm for teaching and enthusiasm for subject matter (see Table 8) also support the number of student-generated statements expressing a desire for a connection with teachers on the peer-parity level (see Table 5). In contrast, Dr. Samson ranked the teacher enthusiasm items in Table 8 in the middle of the list.

**Agricultural Economics**

An examination of Table 8 reveals nearly the same situation for this class as discussed for the physics class when it comes to the relative valuation of a teacher’s focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity. The majority of the students in agricultural economics placed these items at the bottom of the list while, as in the physics class, the teacher ranked these foci as of the highest importance to excellent undergraduate teaching. In contrast to Dr. Sorenson’s most valued teacher characteristics, the majority of the students in this class ranked enthusiasm for teaching and enthusiasm for subject matter as 1st and 2nd in relative importance of the 10 dimensions.
The perspectives of the students and Dr. Sorenson were similar when it came to the ranking of teacher knowledge areas, making subject matter relevant, clarity of explanations and mastery of subject. Students ranked these items as third, fourth, and fifth in importance, respectively. Dr. Sorenson also ranked two of these items in the top five and one in seventh place.

**Composition Methods**

As in each of the other three participating classes, students in composition methods ranked enthusiasm for teaching and enthusiasm for subject matter in the top five items (see Table 8). Dr. Sushman also placed enthusiasm for teaching in the top, ranking it 2nd in importance of the 10 items.

Of interest with the students' perspective is the valuation of a teacher's concern for students and a teacher's focus on the development of student curiosity, ranked by the class as 2nd and 3rd in importance, respectively of the 10 dimensions. Of the four participating classes, this is the only one where students placed these teacher characteristics in the top five. In this regard, the students' conceptualization stands in contrast to the teacher's. Dr. Sushman ranked concern for students and a focus on the development of student curiosity in 7th and 9th place, respectively in importance of the 10 items presented in Table 8.
CHAPTER 4
THE ENACTED TEACHING PRACTICE OF EXEMPLARY TEACHERS

Because student ratings of instruction are generally a primary source of information used in the assessment of undergraduate teaching excellence, an examination of their perceptions of a teacher's enacted practice is requisite to forming a more complete picture of teaching excellence. Centra (1973) reported on comparisons of teacher's self-ratings with those of their students. For teachers who had previously not used student ratings of instruction, or who had not seen the results of their ratings, an interesting finding surfaced. Generally speaking, these teachers were not aware of their students' perceptions of them or their teaching practices. With this in mind, though the teachers participating in this study had their teaching rated by students on many occasions, in this phase of the study particular attention was paid to student reactions to their teaching.

This chapter is organized into four mini-cases, each with the same format. First, the teacher's teaching practice is characterized based on classroom observations conducted during three time periods throughout the Spring 1994 semester and an examination of course materials. Next, pre-class expectations for the course and teacher are presented from student participants' responses to the Student Participant Selection Survey (see Appendix D) and initial interviews. This portion of each case is followed by students' perceptions of the teaching of these exemplar teachers at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. In particular, attention is paid to the dimensions of teaching excellence that students focused on when discussing their perceptions. This means of presentation was selected to facilitate comparison of student perceptions throughout the semester and to allow for an examination of changes that may have occurred as the semester progressed. To aid the reader in these comparisons, specific student comments
are preceded with a number for the student, so a particular student's perceptions may be
followed within that class. Finally, both participating students' and their teacher's indicators of the
major dimensions of teaching excellence presented in Chapter 3 are used as a framework for the
examination of the enacted teaching practice of each exemplar teacher as it unfolded in the
classroom following the procedure discussed in Chapter 2.

The reader should keep the considerations presented in Chapter 1 in mind while reading
the following cases. Student participants, who shared their reactions to each exemplar teacher's
enacted teaching practice, were volunteers. Additionally, numbers of the participating students
from each class total less than 10% of the eligible number of students (undergraduates). Small
samples of volunteers should not necessarily be considered as representative of the larger
group. The reader is advised to interpret the perceptions of each participating student reported
in the following cases in light of these considerations.

*Introductory Sociology*

**Teacher's Teaching Practice.** Students spent their first day in introductory sociology
laughing and giggling as Dr. Stevens skillfully interspersed 17 funny comments throughout the
class period. In his entertaining way, he set the stage for students by sharing with them his
perception of his role in the class, "To convey a new set of vocabulary words that will effect your
perception of reality.... To impart a sociological imagination." And he did not wait until the second
class period to start developing that new vocabulary. After going over the course syllabus,
establishing rules, and pointing out the scheduled dates of tests, he proceeded to challenge
students' ideas about why things were the way they were. He distributed a sociology IQ test that
he had developed and students quietly filled out computer-scoring sheets with true or false
responses to 20 statements about sociology. After checking to see if students needed more
time, Dr. Stevens proceeded to solicit oral responses from the students as he went through the
questions. As he informed students of each correct response, he often added additional details
and indicated that the topic would be covered during the semester, thus outlining a plan for the
course.

Quickly establishing a routine over the next two class sessions, Dr. Stevens proceeded
to move through the scheduled topics in an orderly fashion as the weeks progressed, with
occasional adjustments made to account for class periods missed due to inclement weather.

During the remaining seven class sessions that I observed, Dr. Stevens utilized the
didactic or lecture approach to teaching as described by Centra (1983). Lecturing from a
detailed scroll of overheads, Dr. Stevens set out to provide students with a “new vocabulary of
sociology,” often making comparisons between the sciences of sociology and psychology. In line
with the course level (first-year, introductory), the primary focus of the observed lessons was the
development of students’ knowledge and comprehension of the facts, principles, and theories of
sociology. In addition to examples from his own personal research in the field, Dr. Stevens often
cited data from the university community or studies of young adults, so students may find the
material more “relevant.” In addition to addressing students’ knowledge and comprehension
cognitive levels, Dr. Stevens also addressed the application level as described by Bloom (1956),
during the last week of observed classes. He did so by thinking out loud as he demonstrated the
application of the subject matter to “real world” phenomena stipulating a sociologist’s reasoning
as he talked students through examples.

For the most part, Dr. Stevens used questions to maintain student attention and cue
students in to important concepts or elaborations. He generally answered his own questions
after a slight pause and scan of the classroom. Though students’ questions were responded to
during class, student questioning was primarily encouraged through the use of a "mailbox." With this system, developed by Dr. Stevens, students could place questions that came to mind while reading at home or listening to his lectures into a box placed on the desk at the front of the room. Prior to the next class, Dr. Stevens reviewed the submitted questions and comments. At the beginning of the next class, he answered those questions that seemed to arise most frequently. Before answering the questions, he usually told students how many questions were submitted and how much he enjoyed reading them. As an added incentive to students, a small amount of extra credit was awarded when questions were submitted through the mailbox.

Students were evaluated based on their performance on four non-cumulative exams administered throughout the semester. Tests were computer-scored and consisted of multiple choice questions. As stipulated on the course syllabus, grades were to be assigned based on an individual student's accumulation of points for the four exams. Early in the semester, Dr. Stevens revealed to students that approximately 70% to 80% of the test questions would come from lecture material, with the remaining 20 to 30% coming from assigned readings in the textbook. He reminded them periodically of this fact.

In addition to access to Dr. Stevens during his office hours, students could also contact a graduate teaching assistant during his office hours should they have questions. On the first day of class, Dr. Stevens announced both his and his teaching assistant's office hours.

**Initial Expectations.** As reported on their Student Participant Selection Surveys (see Appendix D), the five students participating in this phase of the study held generally positive expectations for the course and the teacher when the class started (see Table 9). Following are students' specific comments reflecting their entering expectations for the teacher.
Student 1  Excellent.

Student 2  I've heard the professor is good and that as long as you show up for class and contribute, you'll do well.

Student 3  Good instructor.

Student 4  Good prof.

Student 5  I've heard the course is pretty dry but I have heard great things about the teacher - that's why I took the class.

________________________
Insert Table 9 about here
________________________

When later asked in an initial interview to clarify or expand on their responses to these comments students reported that they had heard about this course and Dr. Stevens from friends and acquaintances who had taken courses from him. They also offered the following clarifications of their survey comments:

Student 1  I heard he makes the material relevant to you.

Student 2  I heard (from my boyfriend) that he was pretty relaxed...he makes it a relaxed atmosphere.... One piece of advice that I had is that you just go to class, take good notes and that's most of what you're gonna need in this class.
Student 3  I don't have anyone to compare it to, I just heard he was good.

Student 4  I was told that the material was very easy to learn and interesting and that the professor was pretty cool sometimes.

Student 5  I heard he was kind of funny and that he was a good lecturer.

Perceptions at Week 3. Given that students held sometimes vague, though generally positive expectations when entering the class, it is understandable that some of them modified their opinions as they began experiencing the teacher and course for themselves. Individual student interviews were conducted during Week 3 of the course. The dimensions students focused on when discussing their perceptions are identified in Table 9. Two different pictures began to emerge as students shared their thoughts with me. On one side, students' personal perceptions of the teacher and the course were reflective of their positive expectations. On the other side, the perceptions of some students conflicted with what they had expected, based on the information they had received prior to the start of the semester. Of the two students whose perceptions were similar to their entering expectations, Student 1 indicated that her interest in the class was still high, "The subject matter is so interesting!" adding that she was really pleased with how Dr. Stevens made the subject matter relevant to students' lives. She also touched on several dimensions of teaching excellence presented in Chapter 3 with students' composite conceptualization when she commented on the teacher's style and approach to students in the class.
He's very fashionable, direct, and straightforward. He's very organized and very explanatory. He gives good examples and tells jokes. I think it's a compliment that he puts in so much effort.

Student 2, focused on similar dimensions when she commented that she found the class interesting so far.

You can tell he's very enthusiastic about what he studies. And I just think it's really neat how he tries to show us how the different things that we're talking about apply to us.

She went on to cite an instance from class to illustrate the teacher's interaction style.

I think he takes you seriously.... It seems that the instructor would be very open to things that other people had to say, but if you're just going to state an opinion and can't back it up, then he doesn't want you to waste his class time.

On the other side of the issue, comments made by the remaining three student participants indicated that they did not feel that their initial expectations were being confirmed as the course got underway. In spite of this, Student 3 expressed optimism at his perception that he could do well in the course, i.e., get a good grade.

Right now, I just kind of go to class to prepare for the tests. I think I entered the class with a little bit higher expectations or something, because I haven't really been happy. I kind of expected a feeling of a revelation. I mean (based on the course description) I thought I would be walking out of here going wow! But I haven't yet... In all reality, I don't think that class is going to be too hard. Which maybe that's the way he wants it to be. Maybe he wants us all to do well.
This student also related his interpretation of the situation as he noted a change in Dr. Stevens' demonstration of the dimension of teacher enthusiasm by way of entertainment value, indicating a desire for a higher, more consistent level.

The first day of class he made us laugh a lot, but that has gone down noticeably. I like it when he makes a joke, sometimes I don't quite get it, but like I said, it just changes the mood.

Student 4 centered on the teaching dimension of a focus on the development of student thought processes.

The other day in class we almost got into a little debate, but he didn't let it (happen). A guy disagreed with the teacher on the social influence of fashion and I don't know why, but he said to the guy, "Office hours." I knew he was going to say that...we all lose out on that because we don't hear the discussion.... I'm hoping we're going to get a lot of discussion in. If we don't, I'll be kind of disappointed.

By Week 3 Student 5 had begun to question the value of the material being covered during class, in spite of the fact that she had heard the course was "dry."

The first day of class he said, "Sit back and this will be the best class you've ever taken at Tech." Well, now I'm starting to change my mind.... It's just not very interesting.... I don't think there's any value to going over this stuff. (Here the student was referring to a historical overview of the science of sociology.)

Her comments suggest that while her entering expectations were that the subject matter would be un-stimulating, she modified those expectations as she experienced the first day of class. Her modified expectations then became the lens through which she viewed the enacted practice of Dr. Stevens.
Drawing on her personal experience in more student-centered classes in her first two years of higher education, she also began to question the teacher's course organization, course structure, and his approachability.

I guess he just expects to throw all the stuff at you and for you to just kind of absorb it right away.... It just seems like too much trouble for him.

That her modified expectations were not confirmed likely influenced her reactions to Dr. Stevens' teaching approach. Commenting more on her perception of the teacher's approach to the development of student thought processes she added.

He says a lot, "So I guess you want an example. Well, here's an example." But he doesn't ask for examples. And now I don't even try to think of any anymore. I just wait for him to tell me what to write down.... The way he lectures doesn't challenge the students at all.

This comment illustrates that Student 3 had a framework of teaching excellence that included a concept of "how" a teacher should teach and that this concept was informed by her experience in other teachers' classes.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Dr. Stevens addressed his perception of a general lack of ability among the students to take good notes by providing very detailed overheads for students to copy as he lectures from them. It is interesting to note, that during individual interviews, the students whose initial expectations were not being confirmed based on their later personal perceptions of the teacher's enacted practice, also commented on the overheads.

Student 3 You better be sure to copy all the notes before he moves the overhead. He's kind of quick about it.
Student 4  You (as a teacher) have to expect the class to want to write down everything that's on there.... And his whole lecture is from that overhead.... You sit there and write and write. Then he'll flip it and someone has to ask him to turn it back but he says "It's just an outline." Sure! Then don't be putting all that junk on there.... You just need the main stuff.

Student 5  Don't use the overheads so much. He writes down all his notes on the overheads. Maybe just put down a topic and talk about the topic a little more.

These comments illustrate the students' focus on being "good students" which to their view required that they "write down everything."

During interviews, students were asked if they were to evaluate the teacher today, based on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest, what their overall rating would be. Their ratings and supporting comments, keyed to each student follow.

Student 1  3.95 because there are so many good things. I can't say that I've had any bad impressions yet. He deserved a teaching award. He's the best teacher I've had so far (here).

Student 2  3 or 3.5. I'd like to see him draw people in a little bit more. You know, he asks for questions, but he needs to encourage a little more discussion with different people and different ideas.... Because you know, there are always two or more sides to everything.
Student 3 2.8 because I think he likes what he’s doing and I think he wants to be able to teach us well.... I guess maybe he’s kind of stuck in his ways a little bit and they’ve probably worked fine in the past, but I would like to see it a little bit more interesting, a little bit more fun.

Student 4 I’d say about 2.8. Not too low, he’s doing OK, but not too high because he’s got some room to improve. He needs to get the class more involved.... The class needs to be involved in the discussions. I’d say slow down on the overheads.

Student 4’s continued elaboration illustrates his conception of how a teacher should organize lessons and structure class.

I would hope that he only plans his lectures for 45 or 50 minutes and leaves about 25 minutes in there where he could ask a couple of questions, let the students ask questions.

Student 5 Well, just the way he teaches us, 2.4. I think he’s really organized. I’ll give him that.... He’s too intimidating and maybe too organized, there’s no flexibility....be flexible if people want to ask questions.

Perceptions at Mid-semester: Because of continued weather problems and students’ exam schedules, second interviews were conducted with students during weeks 9 through 11. By this time in the semester the students had covered approximately 11 chapters in the textbook and taken two exams in this class, thus affording the students more personal experience to draw upon as they formed opinions about the course and the teacher.
Before focusing specifically on the introductory sociology course, an effort was made to check where students’ conceptualizations of teaching stood at that point in time. Students were asked to think about excellent college teaching and describe what the teacher does, then what the students do. The dimensions they focused on in their responses are listed in Table 10. For Student 1, a psychology teacher came to mind.

She is excellent. She is so funny. She’s extremely entertaining. She uses real life examples of her life that pertain to the situation.... I mean there isn’t a time in that class that I don’t want to laugh just because she’s a great teacher.

_____________________
Insert Table 10 about here
_____________________

When relating what the students are doing she offered:

I sit there and I listen to the whole class.... She tries to encourage feedback from the students which is something I don’t really see from my other teachers, and the students give her feedback. I mean you don’t want to feel like an idiot in front of 600 people...but she’s pretty good at getting...feedback from the students.

Student 2 related that in an excellent college teaching situation the students were active participants in what was going on in class. She offered specific examples from her two-semester biology class.

There’s a lot of discussion and applying the material, you know one day in class we designed a plant that could live on Jupiter.... One day a week we ask him any questions that we have and he’ll ask us questions. Another day of the week he will have given a list of questions that we’re really supposed to use what we know and kind of stretch our knowledge and come up with answers to these questions that could have real lile
applications... He's just very big on connecting with his students and trying to be very open to their questions, and just trying to draw students in. So much of it is just class participation. I think that is what really makes the class so wonderful.

Student 3 took a different approach to the question. Rather than call upon a personal experience with a college teacher, he focused on an imagined ideal, a teacher's flexibility with student grades.

Ideally, I guess that would be where I had really screwed up on a test and then I went to the teacher and I expressed my concern and the teacher was very open and listened. They didn't just treat me as another student, but treated me as a person and didn't necessarily go by the fact that I had messed up on that one test...try to understand my situation a little bit.

When asked what students are doing in an excellent teaching situation, he related that he would "have a desire to participate in the class" and "prepare for the class ahead of time." He also indicated that his "desire" would come because he was interested in the material.

Student 5 identified a focus on the development of student thought processes as indicative of teaching excellence, "I think a good teacher really gets involved with the kids and challenges you. From here, however, she quickly moved to a focus on student grades.

If the kids are having problems...try to figure something out to make them get better grades. I know one of my teachers, the last test wasn't very good, so he's offering extra credit to people who did not do very good to kind of help them with their grades, and that was really nice. I guess an excellent teacher is flexible with grades.

Of particular interest with Student 5 is her response when asked what students are doing in an excellent college teaching situation.
I guess they talk to him, they talk in class...participate in discussions and ask questions when they come up. (Pause) It's weird to look at it from the kids' point of view.

Table 10 also includes the dimensions of teaching excellence that students focused on as they discussed their current perceptions of the introductory sociology course and assessed their own performance. It is worthwhile to note, that as students received more feedback from the teacher in the way of grades or scores on tests and extra credit points received for written questions submitted via the "mailbox", their overall ratings of the teacher changed somewhat. It is also interesting, that while students may have identified certain dimensions at the beginning of their interviews when asked about the ideality of college teaching, they focused on more or different dimensions as they discussed the class in this study.

For example, Student 1 focused on enthusiasm and a teacher's use of personal examples that helped make the subject matter relevant as indicators of teaching excellence. However, when discussing the strong points of the introductory sociology teacher, whom she now rated at 4.0, (excellent), she identified general and research knowledge and course organization and classroom management as indicators of the excellence of his enacted teaching practice.

He gives me many viewpoints. He's also giving me knowledge about something that pertains to my everyday life. I like the way he runs the class. He's got structured, orderly notes, which I admire greatly. He talks about them very, very well.

Acknowledging that some students may have a problem with Dr. Stevens' demeanor, she later said:

He's very approachable, at least for me. He might sometimes appear like he doesn't want to listen ... but I think it's just a part of his character... He's teaching young adults
that are going through a critical time in their lives trying to learn important information and I think he sees us as that...he gives us a certain amount of respect most of the time.

It is also interesting to note, that despite the fact that Student 1 had not earned the high grades she would have liked on the first two tests, she still rated the teacher highly.

In spite of how I do on the tests, I think I'm learning. I mean I'd have to go over the materials after the course is over to re-learn it, obviously I'm not going to retain all the information because there is just too much. But you know, at least I'd be able to get a general understanding of it and I believe I'll at least remember some of the major concepts.

While Student 2 had indicated previously that she preferred a more student-centered approach in the classroom, when discussing how she thought introductory sociology was going, among the dimensions she focused on was the value of a teacher's knowledge of research in a discipline.

When (Dr. Stevens) uses actual research to explain points that really helps my learning. He's very good about giving concrete examples from research he has done or from some of his graduate students or from some other research he has read about. So you really have a better handle on what he's talking about... I really think that he uses the fact that he's done all this research in his lectures. Which I think more professors should do if it's applicable to what's going on.

Though she rated the teacher quite high, 3.5 to 4, she also mentioned a negative perception concerning the dimension of concern and approachability.

I think in the classroom he's very good... when he's teaching it seems that he's very enthusiastic about what he's doing, but if you have a problem, it doesn't seem like he's very helpful at all.
In contrast to Students 1 and 2, Student 3 generally did not have many positive remarks to make about the course or the teacher during his mid-semester interview. He did, however, identify several dimensions when he commented on how the course was going. In particular, he remained concerned about the teacher’s extensive use of overheads and the pacing in his lectures.

Well, I’d kind of like to just sit there and listen to him sometimes, instead of having to take down all those notes. I find myself pressured to get down everything he’s saying because he’s always emphasizing his lectures instead of the book (on his tests), I think some of his lectures are interesting.... I kind of have to split my attention and maybe I’m not getting everything.

This student also shared his perception of changes in Dr. Stevens’ demeanor by commenting on his attire.

I sit in there and I watch him for an hour and a half and it’s just like, I look at him and a lot of times he’s dressed up nice and sharp and I know sometimes he’ll wear a sweater or a wild T-shirt or something and that seems to make a difference on the way he’s acting that day. Like he’ll make a few more jokes or almost smile.

Student 3, whose entering expectation for this teacher was that he would be "good," had given the teacher an overall rating of 2.8 during his first interview. As reported in Table 10, his rating of Dr. Stevens had dropped to 2.0 by the second interview. This major shift in opinion may have been influenced by the student’s perceptions of the teacher’s attitude toward undergraduates and the College of Engineering.

He really cracks on Virginia Tech a lot and I think that kind of gives me a negative outlook on him. I really don’t like the way that he seems to be putting down the school that he’s been working at so long. I mean, it doesn’t seem like he likes it here...he uses
any chance he can to cut down the engineering school at Tech and I don't think that's right. I mean every department has their own business and their own students and I happen to be an engineering student. It doesn't do me any good to hear him speak that way about my major.

That his reactions to Dr. Stevens are influencing his perceptions, becomes even more obvious as comments from his first interview are compared to those from the second. Recall that this student had postulated that perhaps, Dr. Stevens intended for all of his students to do well. This idea stands in sharp contrast to his current interpretations.

This class isn't much fun. It's just like a routine to him, he's set himself above us and there's just no way we can approach his level. I'd just like to see him smile, that would make me feel a lot better about the course and his intentions. I mean, the way he acts, it's like we just aren't going to be able to do too well. It's like he's in his own little perfect world and we are not members of his universe.... It's almost like we're in dog obedience class. We're a bunch of mutts he's trying to get to do things a certain way. He shows us info and we're accountable for it in the end. He puts his hands up - "This is the way things are." Last semester in psych I learned about bias, I want to know where his info comes from. He presents a very one-dimensional perspective of things and then penalizes us if we don't take the mind meld.... I just thought the class would go smoother. I've only missed one class and it hasn't gone how I thought it would. I mean, I really think he almost sets it up like a race to get all of his notes down - like he takes pleasure in showing us how we just don't have it all together yet. I find the book pretty damn interesting and some of the lectures interesting too. It just seems to me, I feel I learned more than my test grades reflect. I never expected to be carrying a C in this class, never. His attitude is really discouraging to youth. He really stifles me at this point.

Student 5, though she raised her rating for the teacher since her first interview, had not changed her opinion much. She particularly was concerned that her (and other students')
questions were not being answered, neither the written questions submitted to the teacher, nor questions arising during class.

I remember I had my hand up for a long time and he never called on me. I guess it’s because he’s right in the middle of the lecture or something, but that detracts from my learning when I don’t get a question answered, I don’t understand the rest of his lecture on the topic and become frustrated.

She later shared her perception of the teacher’s approach to the development of student thought processes.

Usually, he answers his own questions. The other day (when he was talking about the Titanic) was the first time I remember that he actually asked us a question and let us answer it. And he gave extra credit to whoever answered it, so it wasn’t a normal situation. I guess you had some kind of incentive to try to think up the answer but he made it like a contest. So people just started guessing things and I don’t know that they were really thinking. It took a couple of minutes for someone to come up with that one specific answer that he was waiting for.

Continuing to use her interpretation of the expectations set by Dr. Stevens as a lens to view his enacted teaching practice through, she expressed confusion over what he was trying to accomplish with the students.

He’s not testing us on our understanding of concepts, he’s looking for our memories of little details in the text. He asks the more specific things like things from little stories in the chapter. He won’t ask about the vocabulary words even though we’re supposed to be learning a new vocabulary.

Despite her marked displeasure with her current grade and the teacher’s approach to students in the class, Student 5 increased her rating of the teacher from 2.4 to 3.0. This may be related to
her perception that Dr. Stevens was "flexible with student grades," her self-described indicator of teaching excellence. She indicated that Dr. Stevens had demonstrated a degree of flexibility when he offered students extra credit points if they participated in a sociology student's research project by completing a questionnaire on tattoos.

He's definitely been more flexible with grading because I've done a couple of things where I've gotten extra credit.

End of Semester Perceptions. Final interviews were conducted with students during exam week. Student 3 had taken his exam in introductory sociology prior to his interview, the remaining four students were interviewed prior to the exam date.

During final interviews, students were asked to describe the teacher, a typical class period, discuss what they valued most about the course and teacher, indicate whether they met their personal objectives for the class, and share the overall rating they gave the teacher on their end of course evaluations.

Table 11 lists the dimensions students focused on in their discussions of the class and teacher, their teacher ratings throughout the semester, and their anticipated grades.

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When discussing her overall perceptions of the course and the teacher, Student 1 related that she really appreciated the subject matter and valued Dr. Stevens' enthusiasm for the subject. She also revealed that she had already registered for another of the teacher's courses.

I think the fact that he values what he teaches so much, you know, he's done so much research and publishing that it makes me realize that it's an important topic to pursue.

84
She also shared her perceptions of the teacher's approach to the students and her interpretation of a potential rationale for his classroom personality.

He doesn't go out of his way to know you individually. I don't think it really matters to him. I think he just makes himself available if, in fact, you want to speak with him. There's one thing, he's sarcastic at times.... But I mean, if everybody in the class was a straight "A" student, you know, extremely happy to be there, you know, you would climb a mountain to get to sociology, he wouldn't teach the same way he did. I imagine it's more than a little discouraging when students don't show up for class and that kind of thing, so I think he just learns... he automatically adjusts to the aura of the personality of the class as a whole.

Student 1's comments about the teacher's interaction style illustrate her interpretation of the teacher role as a professional presenter of information.

He pretty much dominates the conversation once you ask a question or present a problem or something. He doesn't really give you much room to talk, but that's what you went to him for was to get an answer, so he's gonna give it to you. He was professional, I mean if it's not obvious with the way he dresses and the way he stands and carries himself and the way that he presents the class.... He puts in the time and effort to make sure we have a highly organized class. That made me happy. I felt like I deserved that kind of professional approach to college teaching.

She also shared her feelings about what might be perceived as a negative attitude on the part of Dr. Stevens.

We're obviously not as learned or educated as he is. I kind of feel that from him, his attitude. You know, he went and got a master's and a Ph.D. and all that, so I guess that he feels the right to do that, which is fine, I guess. It might make students feel a little bit
insignificant at times, but I mean you've just got to learn not to take it personally. He's not
doing it just to make you individually bow down.

Finally, the student indicated that her initial expectations for the teacher were confirmed. "I got
good information about the class and the teacher from a whole bunch of people. It was right on."
She rated Dr. Stevens as excellent adding, "I think I'll have an A- and I definitely learned a lot
about society and myself as well."

Also rating Dr. Stevens at 4.0, (excellent), was Student 4 who had rated him at 2.8 early
in the semester. This student, though he had earlier "complained" about the overheads and
pacing of the teacher, came to consider the "speed" of presentation as one of the most valuable
aspects of the course.

The fact that he did go fast, it didn't give me enough time to write down everything and I
always need practice in taking notes.... One of the best skills a college student can have
is note-taking ability.

Also making a large impact on this student's rating of the teacher may have been the "personal"
connection he felt he had made with Dr. Stevens.

I always talked to him. I talked to him outside of class a lot and not about stuff in
sociology either.... He treated me like someone real and not like someone under him
who didn't have any idea what was going on.

Student 4 also shared an additional thought on the teacher's demeanor as compared with his
ideal teacher.
I would say he was professional. I could see where some people would think he was a little stiff, but he seemed OK to me.... In class he means business, and I like that.... I don't really care for teachers who mess around and constantly get off track. I like the fact that he was organized and kept on task.

Though he did not wish to share his anticipated grade, so as not to "jinx" himself, Student 4 felt that he had done "pretty good" and was considering taking another sociology course because he had developed a new interest in the discipline.

Student 5's final perceptions reflect a change in attitude from her initial interview. She revealed that in the end, what she came to value most about the course was the subject matter.

At the beginning, I didn't think the stuff was interesting, just because it was dry. The stuff we're doing now is more interesting and he gives us good examples, a lot of them from his research.

She called upon her experience in another class to address Dr. Stevens' course organization and structure. In that class, the female teacher shared a lot of information about her family when providing examples and used student-centered activities such as small group discussions and projects.

I kind of felt like I learned more and I was kind of involved more than just sitting there taking notes. I got into it more because she was just warmer and more interested in getting to know the students and getting the students involved. She cared.

Despite her concerns with the teacher's enacted practice, Student 5 gave Dr. Stevens a 3.0 for his final overall rating commenting, "Because he knows his stuff.... You can't say he doesn't."

Student 3, the only one who had taken his final exam prior to his interview, was very particular in his recollections of class sessions, pointing out numerous things that bothered him.
Commenting on his perception that time was not used appropriately during class, Student 3 recalled that Dr. Stevens often finished early and just let the class go.

He was extremely routine. You could almost set your watch to his class. I suppose it might have been nice if he would have used that extra time to answer questions or review or something. I mean we lost 10 minutes (at the end) and 15 minutes at the beginning of the class. Not that I loved being in there or anything, be we did pay tuition for this class.

When relating what he valued most about the course or the teacher, Student 3 indicated that he felt the workload was appropriate.

It didn't require much work outside of class, I like that. It gave me time to focus on my other classes. This was just a course to fill up three credit-hours. I mean it was an intro level course, but I'm not interested in taking any more (sociology) courses. Not after this course.

Recalling his expectations that Dr. Stevens would be a good teacher, Student 3 raised issue with a perceived unapproachability on the part of Dr. Stevens and he wondered aloud about the teachers that his informants used as comparisons. It is interesting to note that in addition to his reports of his initial expectations being disconfirmed, he added commentary related to his anticipated grade for the course.

It seemed like he put the responsibility on the student to make the student-teacher relationship. I don't want to know what they (the comparison teachers) were like...this is an intro level class, so I should have been able to do real well.
Student 3 kept his overall rating of the teacher at 2.0, the same rating he had given him during his second interview, commenting on his perception of how the teacher's attire influenced his demeanor.

I felt more comfortable in the class when he was dressed more casually.... He was much more relaxed when he was dressed more casually.

Of particular interest in the final ratings students gave to Dr. Stevens, is that given by Student 2. She had rated the teacher from 3.0 to 4.0 over the first 2/3 of the semester. These high ratings stand in contrast to her final rating, a 2.0. She focused on several dimensions from her conceptualization of excellent college teaching as she discussed what she perceived to be problems with Dr. Stevens' enacted teaching practice.

He really doesn't seem interested in dealing with students on an individual level...He didn't encourage any interaction between himself and the students or between students themselves.

As evidence to support her perceptions, Student 2 related a story she was told by two friends who went to Dr. Stevens' office and her recollection of a telephone call she had made to his office.

Perceived contradictions between the teacher's words and actions, influenced Student 2's reaction to Dr. Stevens. These contradictions resulted when Student 2 interpreted how the teacher's words should be enacted after comparison with her ideality of college teaching.

You know, in class he kept saying, "Being around you young people and all these fresh ideas are what keeps me going and that's why I'm here." So if you were just listening to him, you'd think he really likes college students and he's really here because he loves his
job. But if you see the little things he does and the way he treats students if they have questions, the way he completely discourages any contact between himself and students, then I'd say you'd really get the impression that we're getting in his way somehow...telling us how brilliant our questions are but not letting us ask them in class or after class, talking about how the new ideas of the youth keep him going. How in the world does he even know what our ideas are? He never let us think for ourselves. He told us what to think and what to memorize the entire semester and he ignored us if we raised our hands during lecture.

Yet, when she discussed her initial expectations, she agreed that the course was interesting.

Well, I thought the class was interesting. I thought I was really gonna like the professor, you know, he's won all these teaching awards, but it turns out that was a big disappointment.... I think offering students the opportunity to ask questions is very important to excellent college teaching.... I got a good grade and I learned some things.... I could have learned a lot more if I would have been allowed to participate in class and contribute. It would have helped me to work out my ideas a little better. But I guess as far as most students would be concerned, I did all right.

As justification for her overall rating of Dr. Stevens at 2.0, she added she gave him an excellent, (4.0), for his knowledge.

So I didn't just completely say he was terrible. Because I don't feel that way and I figured also that it would maybe show him that if we think he's OK in class but terrible on a personal level that we don't just have a totally bad opinion of him the whole way down. Because that's something you're gonna kind of blow off - well this person just didn't like the class.

**Summary of Student Perceptions.** Throughout the semester, students pointed out several problems often associated with large introductory college classes, though often times these problems are perceived as benefits. Among the concerns voiced by these students were:
(1) lack of student-student and student-teacher interaction; (2) inadequate level of response from the teacher to student questions; and (3) a perceived lack of effort on the part of the teacher to encourage students to share their thoughts and opinions.

During their individual interviews, students identified each of the dimensions of teaching excellence presented in Chapter 3 (see Table 3 and Figure 1) forming the composite student conceptualization of undergraduate teaching excellence. Additionally, students’ comments throughout the semester illustrated several of the teacher roles discussed in Chapter 3 (see Table 4) including, presenter, motivator, and inspiration.

The underlying themes discussed in Chapter 3, also came into play as students shared their perceptions of class. Students either noted that they were unable to make a connection with the teacher, whether they overtly tried to or not, or that they had been successful in making some sort of connection. Students 3 and 5 also made comments indicating a desire for teachers who are sensitive to student progress, one suggesting that Dr. Stevens had demonstrated such sensitivity and the other suggesting that he had not.

**Examination of Enacted Teaching Practice Using Student and Teacher Frameworks.** To form a final picture of the assessment of undergraduate teaching excellence, a framework consisting of participating introductory sociology students’ indicators of the major dimensions of teaching excellence (presented in Chapter 3) and another comprised of Dr. Stevens’ indicators, was used to examine his teaching following the procedure described in Chapter 2. Following is a discussion of the various dimensions and the observed demonstration or non-demonstration of the student- and teacher-generated indicators.

**Enthusiasm for teaching and subject matter.** For the most part, the 15 behaviors identified by the students and four identified by the teacher were demonstrated under this
dimension, indicating that both the teacher and the students should have had an opportunity to have their indicators demonstrated. Student-generated indicators that Dr. Stevens demonstrated during the observed class sessions included, "Right when it’s time to start, they’ll start," "Talk about things going on in their field," "Relates the subject to everyday things in life," "Talk about the research they’re doing," "Show that they’ve prepared themselves for class," "Explain things, give examples," "Funny," and "Don’t speak in monotone." Teacher-generated indicators that were demonstrated included, "By being animated," "By modulating one’s voice," and "By talking to students in class."

There were however, negative instances where the teacher demonstrated the opposite of a student indicator. In particular, the indicators, "Don’t say things like they’re facts," which the teacher did during six of the observed classes, and "Don’t say ‘and so on and so forth’," which the teacher did on four different occasions. Students participating in interviews commented on the occurrence or occasional negative instance of the indicators for this dimension.

Students also offered 12 assumptions about teacher demeanor or personal effect as indicators of the dimension of teacher enthusiasm. Examples of these student-generated indicators include, "If they really seem interested," "If they really get into what they’re saying," "They make me want to learn," "They make class discussions interesting," and "If you’re not gonna fall asleep." Given that each of these indicators required a personal interpretation, thus making them high-inference in nature, I could not directly observe their demonstration. However, four of the students did report the occurrence of six of the items during their interviews including the indicators, "If you’re not gonna fall asleep," "They make me want to learn," and "They make class interesting."

**Pedagogical and content knowledge.** Students provided 11 teacher behaviors as indicators of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge while the teacher provided four. All
but one of the indicators were demonstrated at some point in time during at least three of the eight observed classes. Among the student-generated indicators demonstrated were, "Break it down and translate it for a lay person," "Talk to you like a normal person would and explain their subject," "Use real life examples," and "Lecture without notes in front of them." Nine negative instances were reported by students during their individual interviews, three of which related to the student-generated indicator, "Allow you to ask questions in class."

Several assumptions were also made by the students regarding indicators of teacher knowledge. Included in these assumptions were, "If you understand what they’re saying," "When nobody has a question," and "They help me to prevent me from making a mistake in the first place."

**Concern and approachability.** The dimension of teacher concern and approachability is one of the more subjective ones, given that students rely on their reactions to a teacher’s personality as they assess their level of concern and approachability. Numerous adjectives were supplied by students as indicators of a teacher’s concern, "I guess it’s got more to do with friendliness," "Whether or not they’re friendly, outgoing, sociable, or quiet and straightforward" and "Are they nice and considerate?" Students also provided several assumptions about teacher thoughts and actions that could serve as clues about a teacher’s concern and approachability. Among these were, "They care about more than grades" and "The way they present themselves at the very beginning of class."

Students provided 13 teacher behaviors as indicators of concern, while the teacher provided two. Ten of these indicators were demonstrated at least once during the observed class periods. Among those demonstrated were, "They’ll talk to you," "Sometimes, they have to outright say it," "Talk to kids as an equal," and "Figure out ways to help students get better grades." During interviews, students reported 26 instances of what they perceived to be negative
demonstrations of teacher concern or approachability. These disconfirmations dealt primarily with students' personal reactions to the teacher failing to respond to a raised hand, not looking at them when they asked a question before or after class, or their reactions to his demeanor.

**Focus on the development of student thought processes and/or curiosity.** A total of 14 indicators were provided by students and two provided by the teacher for this dimension. All but three of the indicators were demonstrated by the teacher during at least one of the class periods observed. Among those demonstrated were, "They add provocative, thought-enhancing questions to the subject matter," "They try to get you to think," and "Use real life examples." The indicators not demonstrated were, "Pose a question to you instead of having a straight out lecture," "A lot of class discussions," and "Challenge you." In particular, Student 5 commented on this indicator when she said, "The way he lectures doesn't challenge the student at all. We're just supposed to absorb what he says."

**Course organization and classroom management.** Students offered only four observable behaviors or outcomes as indicators of a teacher's course organization and classroom management skill. Each of these behaviors were demonstrated on at least one occasion over the class observation period. Behaviors included, "Don't come in fumbling around for papers," and "Don't jump back and forth unless the subjects are related." During each of her interviews, Student 1 commented positively on the teacher's organization and "effort to prepare" for class. During his final interview, Student 4 commented positively on Dr. Stevens' course organization and classroom management.

A major assumption made by Student 3 about his personal achievement and its relationship to his perception of a teacher's organization is of particular interest. When asked for indicators of teacher organization and classroom management he stated, "If I get out of a class what I feel I should get out of the class, then they've had a good organization." During his final
interview, Student 3 commented negatively on the teacher's organization and classroom management. Throughout the semester, negative instances of this dimension were also reported by Students 4 and 5.

Physics for Engineers

Teacher's Teaching Practice. During the first day in class, Dr. Samson shared with students his interpretation of his role as a college teacher, "A facilitator of your learning." His syllabus for the class also stipulated each student's responsibility:

'It is imperative that you read the textbook material on each topic prior to the discussion of that topic in class. I encourage as much informal discussion during the lecture as is feasible in a class of this size.

He also set out to establish routine procedures for the class' operation. First as Dr. Samson reviewed the syllabus with students, he explained a change he had made from the last semester's class organization. During the fall semester, every third or fourth class period was dedicated to addressing students' questions on problem sets. However, he had observed that attendance on those days had dropped dramatically. To address the situation, this semester, every third or fourth class period was to be dedicated to the application of the physics principles covered during the previous three class meetings. Additionally, as he did not what to remove the added opportunity for students to have their questions addressed, he indicated that an extra help session could be scheduled one afternoon per week. After he addressed the proper procedure for completing, turning in, and picking up graded problem sets, he proceeded to solicit questions from the students. As he addressed each question, he made eye contact with the student who had asked it, sometimes stepping towards the student. After all questions had
been answered, he indicated the topic that would be covered during the next class by referring students to their syllabi. As he closed the first class session, he reminded students to, "Please come see me if you have problems."

During the first few class sessions, Dr. Samson demonstrated a specific class routine that was carried out through the rest of the semester: (1) he wrote the topics for the day on the chalkboard; (2) a demonstration or video clip was usually used, (3) he worked through sample mathematical problems on the chalkboard, (4) he encouraged and answered student questions, and (5) he reminded students to see him if they had questions. Throughout the remaining eight class sessions that I observed, Dr. Samson's lessons demonstrated a focus on several goals: piquing student interest, demonstrating relevance of the physics principles under study, and assessing students' understanding of principles discussed in the text. Generally, each class session would include either a demonstration or a clip of a video to demonstrate a principle or raise questions for the students to think about. As Dr. Samson asked questions, he assessed the general understanding of principles by individual student responses, called out responses from several students, or a look at the faces of the students. If students' answers were off-target, or if they looked "puzzled," he would either ask additional questions to guide them to the correct explanation, or provide clues until the appropriate answer was reached. During each class session, in addition to the knowledge and comprehension questions asked of the class, he also asked application or process questions to help guide students into the application of physics principles to everyday phenomena.

In addition to access to Dr. Samson during his office hours, students could contact departmental graduate teaching assistants, however, Dr. Samson told the class that he would rather they contact him, so he would know where the questions were.
In addition to homework (graded by graduate teaching assistants), students were evaluated on their performance on three tests and a comprehensive final exam. The tests and exam were multiple choice and computer-scored. As stipulated on the syllabus, student grades were assigned based on a curve, "Your grade on each test and the final exam will be based on your ranking relative to other class members. Your percentage right is of no significance."

Initial Expectations. At the onset, nine student volunteers participated in this phase of the study. However, by the end of the semester, only five students completed final interviews. Data from the four students who did not complete final interviews are not included in this section. It is also important to point out that this was the second semester of a two-semester course. While many of the students in this class had been in the same class during Fall semester, Dr. Samson estimated that about 40% of the students had switched teachers for Spring semester. Two potential reasons for such changes are students' scheduling conflicts and students' wishes to try other teachers. Of the five students completing interviews for this phase of the study, only Student 2 had been in Dr. Samson's class during the previous semester.

As reported in their Student Participant Selection Surveys (see Appendix D), these students held positive expectations for the teacher, though three of them had heard that the course was difficult (see Table 12). The following students' specific comments reflected their entering expectations for the teacher and the course.

Student 1   Good class and instructor.

Student 2   Important course, good instructor.
Student 3  Recommended teacher.

Student 4  Difficult course, one of the best instructors.

Student 5  He's supposed to be good. The course is hard.

________________________
Insert Table 12 about here

When later asked in an initial interview to clarify or expand on their responses to these comments, students offered the following:

Student 1  My friends liked the way he taught so I changed from the teacher I had last semester.

Student 2  I heard his demonstrations make you think about (the subject matter).

Student 3  What you get out of a course has a lot to do with the teacher.... I contacted this girl and she said that she was recommended by somebody else that he was a very good professor, that he went through the material thoroughly. So I said, why not?

Student 4  I heard he was the best of the physics professors, that he grounds (the subject matter) in the real world.
Focusing on the subject matter to be covered during this semester, Student 5 related that he received a warning from a friend, "I can do all the work and (still) know nothing."

**Perceptions at Week 3.** During Week 3 of the course, individual interviews were conducted with students. Throughout their discussions, students reported that they were generally satisfied with the course and the instructor to date, and that their expectations for both were being realized. This agreement between expectations and perceptions may have been influenced by the nature of the undergraduate engineering program at this school. Students begin their program of study as general engineering majors. They must declare a specialty area by the end of their second year. So, all of the students participating in this phase of the study, and most of the students in the class, were on the same schedule. This fact contributes to a "general engineering" culture for students. Of some import to this culture are the legends and stories surrounding the physics for engineers course, with the topic of the "right" teacher being widely discussed. Based on student comments such as one shared by Student 4, "Everyone pretty much goes in there (physics class) with a bad attitude about it. Everyone knows that it's pretty hard," it is apparent that many students come to believe that their performance in this "difficult" course could have a lasting impact on their admittance into their desired program, with students who do not do "well-enough," not getting into their first choice.

The dimensions of excellent teaching that students focused on when discussing their perceptions of the class are identified in Table 12. During Week 3 interviews, each of the dimensions discussed in Chapter 3 in the presentation of the student conceptualization of excellent undergraduate teaching was touched on by at least one student. In line with the class' conceptualization of teaching excellence and student perceptions of a teacher's primary role in the classroom presented in Chapter 3, four of the student participants focused on Dr. Samson's
content and pedagogical knowledge as they shared their perceptions of how the class was progressing. Additionally, students commented positively on his handling of student questions and the pacing of the course, both on a daily and weekly basis, which also illustrated the students' underlying preference for teachers who are sensitive to student progress as presented in Chapter 3.

Student 1 had taken the first semester of physics from a different teacher and was in this class now with high hopes. He looked forward to what he had heard about Dr. Samson and the way he organized his course.

I hope to learn better than I did last semester. Physics and science is hard for me to learn. I think homework is very important. I don't know about everybody else, but that's probably my main way of learning, doing the homework problems and that's hopefully what the tests are going to be like.... Last semester, the teacher tried a different way to teach without homework, and I didn't do well.

Student 1 went on to use his personal perceptions to make assumptions about Dr. Samson and his role in the class.

He's there to give us basic knowledge of physics. He's trying not to get discouraged with us, which is hard I know because a lot of the class just doesn't care about physics so much because it's so abstract.

Student 2 had been in Dr. Samson's class during the Fall semester and said, "I like the way he teaches." Though he had heard the second semester was harder than the first (a notion that Dr. Samson also shared with me during an interview), he was looking forward to Dr. Samson's instructional strategy and commented on his content knowledge.
I had Dr. Samson last semester and he was able to explain anything and it really helped me out.... I feel like I'm here to learn everything there is about a subject and when a professor knows everything, then I feel like I'm going to be able to learn everything that he can teach me.... Dr. Samson can teach it in several different ways and I can learn from one of the ways.... His demonstrations make you think and he explores different ways to do problems, explaining things as he goes along and asking for questions throughout.

Later, Student 2 focused on Dr. Samson's clear explanations.

He says how his role is to be there to facilitate our learning and I think he does that. He really does help out and puts an emphasis on helping us in our understanding.

Student 3 had signed up for Dr. Samson's class looking for a teacher who would explain physics so that she could understand it. Commenting on the teaching dimension of enthusiasm, she indicated that she was pleased with his teaching and the way he structured the course.

He is very enthusiastic about the subject and about teaching in general. I can tell. He wants (the students) to learn. He thinks they can learn the material. He doesn't think it's too difficult.... I think he goes a little beyond what he said his role was (facilitator).... He has help sessions. He offers a lot, which my other physics teacher did not.

Commenting on Dr. Samson's teaching style, she also assumed a reason behind it.

He asks questions to joggle your mind a little bit - then he answers them.... That's a way of teaching, to get you to think about it a second - to make you aware that this is something that people do question.
Based on her performance last semester, Student 4 expected to do “fair” this semester when she entered the class. However, she shared that over the first three weeks of class, she raised her hopes a little higher.

I'm optimistic. That professor last semester left me with a bad taste in my mouth for physics, so it can only get better... I think I understand what he's talking about so far. I love his analogies to last semester's stuff... It really helps clear things up.... He really expects us to prepare for class and to think while we're in there.

Alluding to a need for external motivation, she also stated that what she valued most about Dr. Samson was the fact that he required that the students turn in homework to be graded.

I need a reason to have to sit down and read the chapters and do the problems and make sure I know what is going on.

Student 5 had also taken the first semester of physics from another teacher. On his survey instrument, he wrote, "I just hope to pass, because my last physics class was so confusing, all I remember are algorithms for particular problems. I don't really see where this would be different." During his interview, Student 5 expanded on his reasons for changing teachers.

(My other teacher), it seemed like he was more trying to prove what he knew than to actually teach us something.... All it was was memorizing problems, I don't remember the theory or anything.

He also shared his reason for selecting Dr. Samson's class over the remaining options.

I know the kid that liked (Dr. Samson) was pretty lazy.... he said he was good and clear.
His perceptions of Dr. Samson and the course at Week 3 were positive. He focused on the teacher's instructional strategy, relating it to his memory.

I think I've learned a lot in this class so far. He'll go through a lot of stuff and I'll understand it basically, then he'll say, "All right, let me help you visualize this." Then he'll show us a graph or an experiment or something and then I'll always remember that graph or that experiment, so I can figure out how things work.... He answers every question and he never hurries it up.... He'll always break it down.... It helps a lot when he answers questions.

Based on his observations in class to date, Student 5 had formed an opinion on Dr. Samson's perception of his role as teacher and the corresponding requisite role for the student.

He realizes his job is to teach us. I mean, it's not like some teachers that think it's our job to learn everything and it's their job to pass us in like they're the gatekeepers or something.... But he also says "don't expect to get anything unless you do this, this, and this." So actually, he's not forgiving if you don't do your part.

During interviews, each student was also asked to rate the teacher's instruction to date on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest. Their ratings, keyed to each student, and supporting comments follow:

Student 1  I'd say he's doing better than average, a 2.6. He's trying really hard not to get discouraged with us. He's trying to keep us interested. It really seems like he likes what he's doing and he's having a good time doing it.

Student 2  If you would have asked me last semester I would have said 3.6, but right now I'd say about a 2.3.... It hasn't really interested me too much yet, things are really slow.
Student 2's rating is of particular interest, given that he was in Dr. Samson's class last semester and obviously used his landscape of teaching excellence, including the feature concerning what the teacher was capable of as he made his assessment. It is also interesting to note that while he was deciding on a rating, he indicated that he had scored 100% on the first quiz of the semester. So rather than focus on his "grade" as an indicator of teaching excellence, he focused on his interest in the subject matter, which while it can be influenced by a teacher's enthusiasm and interest in the subject matter, is not directly under the teacher's control.

Student 3  He's right up there - probably about a 3.6.

Student 4  Compared to my last teacher, he's way up there, a 3.6 or so.

Student 5  I'd say about a 3.2. He's a really good teacher.

**Perceptions at Mid-semester.** A second interview was conducted with each student after the mid-term exam had been administered. Before focusing specifically on students' perceptions about how the physics course was progressing, an effort was made to check where their conceptualizations of teaching stood at this point in the semester. Students were asked to think about excellent college teaching and describe what the teacher does, then what the students do. The dimensions they focused on in their responses are reported in Table 13.

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*Insert Table 13 about here*

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Student 2 recalled a math teacher, commenting on her perceptions of his approachability and enthusiasm for teaching.
He was very easy going, very easy to talk to.... He kept everybody interested.... He would talk directly to different people, even though there were about 70 people in class, to make sure that people kept up with stuff and didn’t fall asleep during class.

Student 3 used her ideal construction of college teaching to relate what an excellent teacher would do.

The teacher would lay out what was planned for the semester. The teacher would, every class session, give you an outline of the notes that he or she was going to cover so that you can pay attention and write down little comments, but you are listening and not spending your time copying.... There is more interaction. We all tend to be hesitant, because we are learning. People don’t ask the kind of questions that you want to ask because you don’t want to sound dumb. In an environment where the teacher wants to give to the student and the student wants to learn from the teacher you have that interaction.... You’d have to have a smaller class and the teacher would have to know your names.

Student 4 focused on the dimension of approachability when she recalled an excellent teacher from her past.

He was really open. He wanted us to learn the material and he told us over and over that he wanted us to understand. He was very approachable. Of course there was a lot of responsibility for us too. If we had questions we had to go see him, he wouldn’t come after us. His door was always open.

Though her later comments indicated that she had assumed some responsibility for her own learning, she also acknowledged that along with the good, often comes the bad.

I mean you could talk to him besides class, but it kind of gives you high expectations for the future. You always want professors that will talk to you and who genuinely want you to learn the material and not just pass you through the class.... I was always asking
questions, but I think a lot of times I didn't think very much before I asked a question because I knew he would help me with the answer.

Rather than discuss another teacher, Student 5 asked if he could use Dr. Samson as an example of excellent teaching. He focused on the dimension of content and pedagogical knowledge and also identified the underlying theme of sensitivity to student progress as he discussed Dr. Samson’s enacted teaching practice.

I’ve been telling all my buddies to sign up for him. He doesn’t let us miss anything and he doesn’t side track.... All the important stuff, he'll make sure it’s clear. He’ll look around the class and say “You guys look like you don’t understand.” ...I like the way he’s organized the course. He knows exactly what he wants to do, so he can come in and talk slow and reemphasize stuff.... He does experiments that other teachers don’t do. They help you see what’s going on.... And the homework he assigns, it’s not overbearing and it’s not really simple. I think it’s just right.

Table 13 also includes the dimensions of teaching excellence that students focused on as they discussed how they thought the physics for engineers course was going and assessed their own progress. It is worthwhile to note that as students progressed in the course and received more feedback in the way of grades or scores on tests, that their overall ratings of the teacher changed somewhat, with the majority of the students increasing their ratings of the teacher. It is also interesting to note, the dimension of approachability became more prevalent in both students’ landscapes of teaching excellence and their perceptions of what they liked about Dr. Samson.

For example, Student 2, who had not identified the dimension of concern/approachability during his first interview, now suggested this dimension was important when he discussed his excellent math teacher, “He was very easy going, very easy to talk to...” He later related that he
felt very comfortable going to see Dr. Samson before the test because he had questions about the right hand rule discussed in class.

He was real helpful.... He just went ahead and explained it to me.... He showed me on paper how to do it and then he showed me how to do it in my head and it made it a lot easier.... He's there for you if you need him.

The dimension of course organization and classroom management was highlighted in Student 3's discussion of excellent teaching. She had not focused on this dimension during her previous interview, however it did come up once again when she reported her perceptions of Dr. Samson's enacted teaching practice.

He keeps track of where we are on the syllabus, and even if we're behind, we're behind.... When he slows down, that helps me.... When he reviews a little bit at the beginning of the next period, that helps me remember.

She also reported that she had been to his office hours on many occasions and characterized Dr. Samson as very helpful when she had asked questions.

He asks you (questions), he doesn't want to just answer you. I think that that helps you, because sometimes when you ask a question you learn it better if you come up with the answer and he says yes.... Sometimes I've felt like maybe I should have known more before I asked a question.

Student 4 related that she really liked the structure of Dr. Samson's course, "We have to do homework and that forces you to keep up." She also identified the dimension of a focus on the development of student thought processes, but added that she felt students may not fully appreciate it.
He tries to ask us questions, but we don’t always answer.... He tries to make us think, but I don’t think we really want to, sometimes we’re just, “Give us the answer.”

Later, Student 4, like a couple of the other students had, began to discuss Dr. Samson’s tests and her perception of a lack of similarity to the homework problems. She was puzzled over the purpose of the homework, if it was not to just practice for problems on the test.

Is the test to know how much physics we know or to know how much physics we know compared to other people in the class? I still haven’t figured out what we’re supposed to be getting out of the class.

Student 5 stated, “I’m really impressed with him compared to last semester’s teacher,” indicating that he really liked how Dr. Samson paused after he asked questions "to give us time to think.” In contrast to the other students who complained about the tests, he felt that the test questions were very similar to the homework problems. His only criticism was of Dr. Samson’s habit of turning around students’ questions and posing them back to them during office hours, earlier described by Student 3 as beneficial to her.

When I go to him for help he makes it really hard. If you ask him questions, he’ll ask you questions and you’ll be sitting there thinking about it and thinking about it... You just start saying stuff even though you have no clue what it means because it’s dead silence.

Though the teacher’s focus on the development of student thought processes caught the student off guard, he did acknowledge the benefits of the teacher’s practice.

Sometimes it’s good because it gets you to start thinking about it but sometimes if it doesn’t just come to me then I get really nervous, I mean I’m sitting there in front of the teacher.... If he would just lead me along more.
It is interesting that Students 2, 3, and 4 indicated that they thought they would really benefit if Dr. Samson would work out more sample problems during class. However, none of these students had attended the extra help sessions that Dr. Samson held for his physics classes on Monday afternoon.

**End of Semester Perceptions.** Final interviews were conducted with students during exam week. None of the participating students had taken their physics exam prior to their interview.

During final interviews, students were asked to describe the teacher, a typical class period, discuss what they valued most about the course and teacher, indicate whether they met their personal objectives for the class, and share the overall rating they gave the teacher on their end of course evaluations. Table 14 lists the dimensions students focused on in their discussions of the class and teacher, their teacher ratings throughout the semester, and their anticipated grades.

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Insert Table 14 about here
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Student 1 suggested that his negative attitude about the discipline of physics had gotten the better of him when he confessed that he usually reads the newspaper during class. It is likely that his attitude also influenced his motivation to read the text and keep up with homework outside of class.

I’ve done about 80% of the homework...he never tells us our homework is due the next time which bothers me.... it’s on the syllabus, but sometimes you forget.... This is my only class where we are actually going by the syllabus so I can’t get used to following it.
It seems reasonable to assume that Student 1's feelings about physics impacted his assessment of Dr. Samson's enacted teaching practice. Earlier in the semester, Student 1 had commented positively on Dr. Samson's organization and classroom management, however by the end of the semester, he had become disillusioned with both.

...the burning desire to stay on schedule, that bothers me.... He does it because he wants us to learn all this stuff that we're supposed to learn. I understand that. But I don't really want to learn it.

As evidence that Dr. Samson was focused on covering a certain amount of material each class period he commented:

People ask questions and it's almost like he just wants to answer real fast and get back to what he's doing because this question is taking up a lot of time.... I can tell that he's a nice guy but he's very task-oriented in class.

Acknowledging that Dr. Samson was concerned that the students learn, Student 1 agreed that his expectations were met for the most part.

I think he really wants us to learn the material and he'd be willing to do whatever it takes for us to learn it, like an extra review session or that type of thing. I heard he was a good instructor, and he was. But his tests were harder than I expected.... Well I do understand physics better and I have some appreciation for it.

Allowing his interest (or lack thereof) in the subject matter to influence his assessment, Student 1 rated Dr. Samson at 3.0, (good), overall adding, "I feel really bad. He's a good guy, I just don't like physics."
Student 2 rated Dr. Samson at 4.0, (excellent), sharing that he intended to tell others who asked about the course and teacher that he was, “the most consistent teacher” he’d had, adding, “He knows what he’s doing, and you’ll get a good idea of what’s going on.”

Commenting on Dr. Samson’s pedagogical knowledge, he reiterated his appreciation for the teacher’s use of multiple examples and teaching strategies, expressed earlier in the semester.

He knows what he wants to do, he knows how he wants to go about it.... He gets people involved, gives a lot of examples, and uses multimedia to help our understanding.

Indicating that his expectations for the course were met, Student 2 explained that the course was important because the “Subject matter ties in with a lot of other classes.” He also commented on the dimension of concern and approachability, one of his indicators of excellent undergraduate teaching.

He’s nice about stuff, he’s friendly. He seems like a nice guy. He’s more on the professional side.... I think he has a pretty good level of respect for us.

Student 3 rated Dr. Samson at 4.0, (excellent), relating that he was responsible for her changed attitude.

He was able to give you a positive feeling about physics. I didn’t have that before. It’s a hard subject and I think he knows it’s a hard subject. But he tries to make you think that it’s not gonna be so difficult, that you can learn this stuff.

Focusing on the dimension of organization and management, one of her indicators of excellent teaching, Student 1 described Dr. Samson’s routine, indicating that she found it very beneficial. She also commented on the teacher’s approachability.
He's friendly. He's willing to help and when he interacts, it's in a pleasant manner. He made me have a better attitude and when you have a positive feeling, you don't get all down on a class and you're still open to trying to do better. He knows that students can learn, he can relate. He tends to be in tune with the students.

Indicating that her expectations had been more than met, she closed by saying, "I'm glad it's almost over. It's been a good course and I think the course has gone well. I feel that I know a lot more, but it is so hard."

Rating Dr. Samson at 3.0 was Student 4 who had rated him at 3.6 earlier in the semester. Throughout the semester she had indicated that the dimension of organization was very important to her and that Dr. Samson did quite well in this dimension.

His structure was really good, I like getting the homework, it really helped. Each day he says, "Here's our objectives for the day," and then he'll start going through them, maybe do a couple of problems and write things down on the board. He gets down to business, there's not a lot of joking.

She also commented on her perception that he was approachable.

He doesn't joke a lot, but somehow you still know that you can ask him questions and he's really helpful. I think he respects students, that's why he's here. He's encouraging.

Acknowledging that she felt a little guilty after she evaluated the physics course and instructor, Student 4 reflected on her evaluation, identifying a possible reason for her rating of 3.0, (good).

I was really excited about Dr. Samson at the beginning because I had a horrible professor last semester. But now, I take him for granted. And sometimes I think it's
kind of dull.... Now I have the structure and now I can feel free to go see him and ask him questions and I'm not as excited anymore.

Student 5 stated that he learned a lot more physics than he thought he would when he started the semester. His final overall rating of Dr. Samson was 4.0, (excellent). He focused on the teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge and organization and management as he discussed his final perceptions.

Usually he outlines what we're going to do for the day then he goes on to each thing, going through the physics of stuff, derivations, why it's used, and the application. He always gives us all sides.... He explained things more in layman's terms.... I can definitely see now where physics fits into the world.

He did, however, make note of what he perceived to be a problem with the organization of the course, particularly as it impacted the pacing of lectures.

There was a lot of material covered in the class, I mean that's not the teacher's problem, they're just covering what they have to cover. But there's not time for anything more than an overview...it just comes too fast.

He was quick, however, to add that in spite of time constraints, Dr. Samson addressed student questions, "He always stopped for questions. He's really good about that." And finally, Student 5 shared his perception of the teacher's approach to students in the class.

I think he looks at student like equals...like it's just a matter of time before we can work at his level. He's there to help us.

**Summary of Student Perceptions.** Based on the information students share about this physics class and their comparisons with other available teachers, these students perceived that
it was to their advantage to end up in this particular teacher’s class. They entered the class expecting it to be difficult, and were not surprised when it was. But they also reported positive perceptions of the teacher and his concern for the students, who were themselves nervous and worried about this “difficult course.” While Dr. Samson was perceived as very business-like and professional by the participating students, they also felt he was friendly and approachable, a dimension of teaching excellence that was addressed by students throughout the semester during their individual interviews.

At the beginning of the semester (as he had at the beginning of Fall Semester), Dr. Samson shared with students his perceptions of his role and their role in the teaching-learning situation. Several students commented on this throughout the semester, indicating that he had fulfilled his self-described role of facilitator of student learning. The fact that he addressed teacher and student roles was interpreted by several of the participating students as a concern for their learning. But he also communicated that he did not assume total responsibility for student performance. That Dr. Samson addressed these roles likely influenced student expectations and perceptions once they began the class.

Postscript. During the following Fall semester, I encountered Student 3 several times during an aerobics class on campus. She shared with me that she did not earn as high a grade as she had anticipated.

He (Dr. Samson) seems a lot easier than he really is. It is deceiving. He looks, talks, really low-key. He really seems laid-back - but he’s hard.... I didn’t do as well in there as I thought I would - I thought I would get a better grade. He’s harder than I thought.... I guess I learned from him, so he’s still a good teacher, I mean he really knows his stuff. I just thought I was doing better, but I wasn’t. I thought that semester would be better. Well, I did feel more comfortable in class, but I just didn’t do as well as I thought.
Examination of Enacted Teaching Practice Using Student and Teacher Frameworks. To form a final picture of the assessment of undergraduate teaching excellence, a framework consisting of participating physics students’ indicators of the major dimensions of teaching excellence and another comprised of Dr. Samson’s indicators, was used to examine his teaching following the procedure described in Chapter 2. Following is a discussion of the various dimensions and the observed demonstration or non-demonstration of the student- and teacher-generated indicators.

**Enthusiasm for teaching and subject matter.** The four behaviors identified by students and the one identified by the teacher were demonstrated under this dimension, indicating that both the teacher and student participants had the opportunity to have their indicators confirmed. Student-generated indicators that were demonstrated were, “Appears that they’re excited about being there and excited about the stuff that they’re teaching,” ”Excited when they come to class,” ”They take the time if we have problems,” and ”They hold review sessions.” Students also offered teacher qualities that they felt were indicative of teacher enthusiasm. Among those were, ”Attitude,” ”Cheerful attitude,” and ”They’re happy.” During individual interviews, several students offered that Dr. Samson had demonstrated each of these qualities to their satisfaction.

Several student indicators were based on assumptions about teacher motives or the outcomes of teacher behaviors, and as such did not lend themselves to my observations. However, students did indicate positive occurrences of many of these indicators from their perspectives. Among these were, ”You get the feeling they want you to learn this good stuff,” ”They make us excited about it somehow,” and ”Make it so you vaguely care about it.”

**Content, pedagogical knowledge.** Students offered 11 teacher behaviors as indicators of a teacher’s content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, while Dr. Samson identified two. All of these indicators were demonstrated at least once during each of the class sessions observed.
Among the students' indicators were, "Can answer any question," "Talk about things that aren't in the book," and "They show application, where we can find this theory in practice." Eleven assumptions, many concerning personal effect, were also offered by students as indicators, many of which were also confirmed by students during interviews as having been demonstrated by Dr. Samson. Examples of the assumptions made by students are, "If you can make sense of it," "They're sure of what they're saying," and "The point that they've gotten to already shows that they've mastered the subject."

**Concern and approachability.** Under this dimension students offered 22 behaviors as indicators of a teacher's concern for students and approachability while Dr. Samson offered two. All of these indicators were demonstrated by Dr. Samson on at least one occasion during the classes observed. Several adjectives were also offered by students, either to describe a desired personality characteristic such as "nice" or "easy-going," or to point out undesired personality characteristics such as "not mean," "not intimidating," "not unfriendly," and "not condescending." Students indicated that Dr. Samson demonstrated many of the student-generated indicators including, "Interact successfully with students," "Act like they want to help you," "Look to see if students understand," and "Easy-going."

**Focus on the development of student thought processes and/or curiosity.** A total of eight teacher behaviors were offered by students and three were offered by Dr. Samson as indicators of a teacher's focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity. Each of these indicators was demonstrated during at least two of the nine class sessions observed. Among the indicators were, "Said - 'I want to make you think'"; "They ask questions for you to think about rather than just have you take notes," and "Give good demonstrations."

**Course organization and classroom management.** Students offered seven observable behaviors as indicators of a teacher's course organization and classroom management. All of these
indicators were demonstrated during each of the observed classes and several students commented on Dr. Samson's demonstration of several of the indicators. Among the student-generated indicators were, "Get into a routine" and "If he never has to pause and think where he is." The teacher-generated indicators were, "Well-planned and executed classroom activities and a well laid-out course." Students commented on the demonstration of each of these indicators as well.

Of particular interest in this dimension were the following student-generated indicators, "If I learn the stuff I'm supposed to learn by the end of the class" and "If I learn the course objectives." These indicators illustrate an egocentric approach to the assessment of college teaching as well as at least a partial projection of responsibility for student learning onto the teacher. That the teacher was at least partially responsible for student learning was also reflected in student comments revealing a desire for teachers to make the subject matter interesting and to help motivate students so they would learn.

Agricultural Economics

Teacher's Teaching Practice. "I didn't know she would use the cards that way." This statement was made by a male student seated in the back of Dr. Sorenson's agricultural economics class during the first session. The cards he referred to, were common index cards that the teacher had students write their names, academic major, hometown, and previous math and economics classes on. A practice such as this is demonstrated in college classrooms everywhere, however, the result may not always be the same. Throughout the first class, Dr. Sorenson used those cards often, as she called out students' names and made comments on their hometowns, siblings who had been in her previous classes, and professors who taught the
courses students indicated they had taken. She also commented on her observations during the first class. For example, she acknowledged a student’s fraternal affiliation, made known to her by the Greek letters on his hat and another’s club membership, evident to the knowledgeable observer by the insignia on her sweatshirt.

During the observed class sessions, Dr. Sorenson employed an actively modified lecture as described by Centra (1993). In addition to presenting agricultural economics principles and explaining concepts, she often brought students into the lesson. To accomplish this early in the semester, she relied on the students’ information cards. Before asking students for their input on problems being solved on the chalkboard, she often made personal comments as she had during the first class, sometimes sharing personal information about her college days or family. The noise level during class sessions was almost a constant low buzz as she continually called on students and other students chimed in with responses or answered her questions aloud to themselves. During the first week of observed classes, Dr. Sorenson made announcements at the beginning of each class, letting students know about corporations that would be on campus conducting interviews or about special seminars. She also allowed students to make announcements about extracurricular activities such as meetings of the Agricultural Economics Club. This was an active classroom.

Throughout the observed class sessions, for the most part, students paid attention and took notes. This may have been influenced by the fact that they never knew who would be called upon to help with a problem. During these class sessions, the questions asked by Dr. Sorenson generally solicited students’ definitions of concepts, required them to make comparisons among concepts or principles, or required that they indicate what step should be taken next in solving a problem. Throughout her working of problems, she often provided several different explanations or demonstrations of a concept, until students indicated that they understood, usually by not
asking questions. Dr. Sorenson rarely asked for student questions, however, students in the
class did not appear to have a problem asking for clarification. Students either raised their hands
or called out her name (sometimes her first name) if she happened to be writing on the
chalkboard. It is also interesting to note, that several students felt comfortable enough in Dr.
Sorenson's class to call out corrections to her as she worked problems on the board if she
happened to make an error in her calculations.

The teacher repeatedly reminded students of her office hours and that she was available
to help them should they become puzzled while doing homework problems. She also reminded
them of the two graduate teaching assistants that could also be contacted with questions. As an
extra attempt to address student questions and clear up misconceptions, Dr. Sorenson held a
help session for students before the mid-term exam. About 1/2 of the class attended this one
hour session where she answered all questions.

In addition to graded homework problems, students were evaluated on their
performance on quizzes, two written exams, and an individual comprehensive oral final exam.
During the three final exams which I observed, Dr. Sorenson asked each student what one of the
most important things that he/she had learned about agricultural economics. She then
proceeded to have the student explain whatever concept he/she had stated. Occasionally, she
provided clues if they hesitated for any extended period of time. After each student left, she
assigned a grade based on her assessment of the quality of their responses.

Initial Expectations. At the beginning of the semester, four students participated in this
phase of the study. However, by the end of the semester, only three students completed final
interviews. Data from the one student who did not complete the interview process was not
included in the following analysis.
As reported in their Student Participant Selection Surveys (see Appendix D), these students had received information about the course and the teacher from other students. The nature of their initial expectations based on the information they received about the course and the teacher is reported in Table 15. Student 1 had heard that the subject matter of the course was "all calculus", but that it was understandable. He had also heard that the teacher was "fun" and "excellent". Student 2 had simply heard that the course was difficult, while Student 3 had additionally heard that the teacher was "fun". When asked during an initial interview to clarify or expand on their responses, students offered the following comments.

Student 1 She is a happy person.

Student 2 The material is hard and difficult, you need to study. The instructor is fun.

Student 3 I've heard that it has been a really hard class.

________________________________________

Insert Table 15 about here

________________________________________

Early Perceptions. Due to inclement weather and students' schedule conflicts, their interviews were conducted at very different times. Student 2 was interviewed during Week 3 of the semester, Student 3 during Week 5, and Student 2 during Week 6. Since each of the students indicated that they had not missed any of the scheduled class periods, the disparity between their interview dates afforded them differing numbers of opportunities to experience Dr. Sorenson's enacted teaching practice.
The dimensions of teaching excellence that students focused on as they discussed their perceptions of the teacher and the course are reported in Table 15. Of particular interest is the level of agreement between these dimensions and the composite conceptualization of teaching excellence for the entire class presented in Chapter 3. Table 3 illustrates that the majority of students in this class valued a teacher’s enthusiasm; content, pedagogical, and practical knowledge; and concern and approachability. This finding is supported by the dimensions of teaching excellence that these participating students focused on during their individual interviews.

When relating his early reactions to Dr. Sorenson and the course, Student 1 addressed the teacher’s concern for students and his perception that she was approachable and open to offering assistance. He also indicated that he felt she treated students on a peer parity level as described in Chapter 3’s treatment of themes underlying students’ conceptualizations of teacher roles. To support his perceptions, he cited Dr. Sorenson’s outside activities with various student groups.

Just about every day she announces when her office hours are. When she sees you in the hall, she says “Hi” to you.... Participating in things outside of the classroom.... It shows that (she) wants the students to learn, (she) wants the students to notice that (she’s) there for them and that they can go to (her) with the problems they’re having.... I feel I can learn a lot better from someone I can talk to. They don’t feel that they’re above us...they can listen to what a student has to say, even if it’s wrong...I can take it better if they’re talking to me, not above me.

He also commented on Dr. Sorenson’s practice of using student information cards to help her as she got to know the students and to encourage student involvement in the class.
She calls on people and has the cards... That kind of makes it worth coming to class too, because you get a little bit of class credit there and it also makes you pay attention.

Commenting on Dr. Sorenson's focus on providing students with practical, relevant examples to illustrate concepts, Student 1 also shared some of his personal philosophy and his reason for seeking higher education.

I had a conversation with my grandfather about college. We agreed that you can learn just as much (by) farming (and) not going to college - but you don't understand why. When you come to college you understand why.... If you know why something's happening and what causes things to happen you can detect problems.... She tries to apply the (subject matter) to things that most of the people in the class understand. That makes me understand a little more, if you can relate it to farming.

Acknowledging that a majority of the students in the agricultural economics program probably came from farming families, Student 1 described his view on a teacher's role in the classroom.

Professors have to be open-minded to what different people do (in their farming practices). They have to understand that what they (the professors) say isn't gospel, that different things will work.... (They should) give practical viewpoints on different things and what things can go wrong when different things happen.

Finally, he commented on Dr. Sorenson's sensitivity to student progress, indicating that she often modified her lectures, based on student understanding or lack there of.

I think she really wants people to understand it.... It's good that she does do it, but I don't feel it's her responsibility.... (A teacher shouldn't have to say) "maybe you should come in", because that's the student's responsibility to know that they need help. But (teachers need) to be aware (when) students need help, and that they may need to slow down a little bit.
Student 2 focused on Dr. Sorenson’s enthusiasm and content knowledge as he discussed what pleased him most about her teaching.

Well, as far as enthusiasm goes... she is very energetic and tries to keep everybody awake in class. For the few classes that we've been to so far, I think she is knowledgeable about the subject and she knows what she is doing.

He was, however, experiencing some concern over the clarity of her explanations. His concern was grounded in his occasional confusion during class and his interpretation of the reactions of students seated around him.

But it sometimes seems like it's hard for her to convey it to the students... Don’t get me wrong... I mean I love her to death... I think she's a good person.

Stipulating why he did not yet feel comfortable in asking for clarification on concepts he did not understand, Student 2 added:

I get a little intimidated about things sometimes, especially if I heard it's a hard course... so I guess I feel a little shyish [sic] because I have heard it's a difficult course... The final exam is oral, you know, and I heard that that was really a bear, it was close to impossible.

Commenting on his interpretation of Dr. Sorenson's self-assumed role as a teacher, he also shared his perception that she was approachable and helpful.

She’s there (as a) source (of information), but it's the students responsibility to do what they (need) to do... I think she would be the type of person that would help you or give you her right hand, you know, to do anything that she could for you. But you've got to be the one to take the initiative to ask and make sure that she knows what you need.
Later eluding to his desire for practical information, Student 2 stated:

I'm down here for a reason. This is planning the rest of my life pretty much. I hope to take something away from here that I'm going to do in the future.

Finally, Student 2 appeared pleased to share with me that he had scored an "A" on the first quiz in class. His later comments also revealed that he concluded Dr. Sorenson was a fair grader.

Student 3 indicated that she was very pleased with Dr. Sorenson and the course so far. Focusing on the teacher's energy level and enthusiasm, she explained what she felt to be the teacher's rationale for the course.

She tries to get people involved in the class, so they're not sleeping or gazing out the window, they're actually wanting to understand the concepts. I think she looks at it like it's a fun course. It was one of her favorite courses when she was an undergraduate and that's why she loves teaching it. It's a fun class that we all can learn from.... A willingness to teach has to do with how (the teacher) makes people in the class feel welcome... She'll like throw out fun examples or say, "Cover your ears if you already understand this," we can like joke around in the class with her, but we still get a lot done.

Her later statements about Dr. Sorenson's practice of asking for students' input elude to the underlying theme, personal or professional connection with the teacher, presented in Chapter 3, in particular, the professional parity level.

Sometimes she doesn't explain things exactly like you would want them explained. So she says, "Does somebody else have a better idea for this?" She'll ask us, realizing that she doesn't know everything there is about the Universe. That we might know some things more than her, but that she does know more than us sometimes.
Student 3 also related that she valued the teacher's focus on the development of student thought processes and her encouragement of student questions.

Whenever she’s going through a concept she’ll always ask questions about it, she won’t give us the answer first. She’ll make us think about it. She’ll call on us. She’ll spend 10 or 15 minutes until we get it.... When someone asks a question she’ll be like, “That’s a really good question.” Which is great because in other classes when people ask questions the teacher will be like, “Oh my God!”

During interviews, students were also asked to provide an overall rating for the teacher at that point in time. Ratings were to range from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest. Their ratings, keyed to each student, and supporting comments follow.

Student 1
3.2. I said that probably just basing it on professors that I’ve had in the past. I’ve had some better and I’ve had some worse.

Of particular interest with Student 1’s rating is his immediate qualification, revealing his comparison of Dr. Sorenson to other teachers. After his comment, he went on to indicate that if he were to rate Dr. Sorenson based on his self-described indicators of teaching excellence, open-minded, interacts with students, and takes time out to help you, that he would probably rate her at 4.0.

Student 2
2.0. It’s early in the course. We sort of got our feet wet, but we haven’t got into swimming yet.

Student 3
Probably a 3.2 to 3.6. Because she’s really enthusiastic about the class. She’s up there. She’s up. She’s ready. She’s willing to teach us. I haven’t seen her in a bad mood; her instruction ability, her (sharing) her college experiences (with) us.
She wants to get to know us, which is really great. That’s one of the greatest things in the world.

**Perceptions at Mid-semester.** A second interview was conducted with each student after the mid-term exam had been administered. Before focusing on students’ perceptions about how the agricultural economics course was progressing, an effort was made to check where their conceptualizations of teaching stood at this point in the semester. Students were asked to think about excellent college teaching and describe what the teacher does, then what the students do. The dimensions focused on in their discussions are reported in Table 16.

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Insert Table 16 about here

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Student 1 thought for about 1 1/2 minutes before calling upon his personal experience in another agricultural economics class he had taken the previous semester. Specifically, he focused on a group project that involved the application of concepts covered throughout the course to the development of a agribusiness plan.

He had us get together in groups and we developed a business. Then we had to do a formal presentation of the business before him and a couple of teaching assistants and another teacher. It took at least half the semester to develop the whole thing. We had to treat it just like we were starting a business and do an analysis of the market,.... It was a real life situation - very, very practical.

Student 2 called upon an agricultural finance class, which he was currently enrolled in.

It’s probably the best class that I’ve had since I’ve been up here. And, as far as I’ve heard, it might be the best class that I’ll have while I’m here. He’s just incredible as a
teacher. He knows how to keep people's attention. He's jumping up and down, he's so energetic.

It is interesting that though Student 2 had heard this teacher was "great", he addressed a perceived similarity between himself and the teacher when he commented on what he really like about him.

That's the kind of person that I like. When I'm teaching a class, or when I'm doing a seminar, that's the way I like to be...just carefree.... Even though sometimes the stuff isn't exactly the easiest or it might not be the most interesting, but he can make it interesting. He can tell a story about something and then you'll say, "That's a good way to remember." Everybody in there has a good time. There's not a day that goes by that you're not laughing and learning at the same time.

Revealing an additional dimension of excellent teaching, Student 2 went on to describe how the teacher made the subject matter relevant for students.

He travels around the United States and a few foreign countries as well.... What helps me out a lot, is that he can tell stories from people who are actually out in the business world. You know, a real life situation. This is actual stuff that's happened. That helps me to remember things a whole lot better.

Returning to this teacher's personality, Student 2 closed his discussion by indicating a personal effect of the teacher's approach.

Being that he's upbeat, I'm upbeat about things.... When somebody puts in that much time to be energetic about things and to make the class enjoyable, then I'm gonna give the same thing back. It's one of those give - give things.... I enjoy (the class) and it's just something that I like to do.
Student 3 focused on several teaching dimensions when identifying what she felt were the distinctive characteristics or behaviors of exemplar teachers from whom she had taken courses. She first commented on their efforts to make the subject matter useful to students.

Teachers use their real life experiences to relate (subject matter) to the class. They’re not just using theory for their whole basis of teaching. So that when we get out of here, we can use it in real life.

She also touched on the way an excellent teacher organizes and structures a course. Particularly, with regard to the varying of instructional methods and the incorporation of student-centered group projects.

Instead of always doing problem sets they would bring in let’s say, a motivational speaker for the day... or a person from industry, like say Frank Purdue... meeting people in industry always helps... The students work in groups. I think that working in groups gives you the opportunity to get to know the other people better... because my angle might be different from their angle... get a new fresh approach to it.

She also eluded to an excellent teacher’s focus on the development of student thought processes when she described an additional feature of her best teachers’ classes.

... teacher-student interaction where the teacher calls upon you and asks you questions... to get your personal opinion.

Finally, Student 3 focused on the dimension of teacher enthusiasm. Her comments are particularly interesting in that they illustrate, once again, her desire for making a personal connection with a teacher.
They're enthusiastic, whether it's 8:00 in the morning or 5:00 in the afternoon, which helps a lot... The teacher will tell a story about, let's say, something that happened last weekend. Even though it's not necessarily relevant to the class, it is relevant in a personal relationship because you do develop that relationship if he or she seems interested in the (students).

Table 16 also includes students' assessments of their own progress in the course as well as the dimensions of teaching excellence they focused on as they discussed their perceptions of the agricultural economics course and the teacher.

Student 1 reported that he really appreciated Dr. Sorenson's ability to explain concepts clearly as well as her concern for students and approachability. However, over the previous few weeks, he had become concerned with what he perceived as a lack of availability.

I kind of wish she would have a little bit more of an open door policy than she does. She's only available for office hours one day a week and I don't like going to the teaching assistants.... If it came down to a question on the homework it might be different, but when it comes to actual theory, I'd rather talk to the professor.

An additional problem had made itself known to Student 1, a distracting level of "noise" arising from several students in the back of the room. He only brought it up to relate how pleased he was that Dr. Sorenson had done something to correct the problem.

They're always talking and thinking they know more than everybody else does.... I think class went a lot better the other day than it had been in the recent past.

He went on to assume a reason for the teacher's actions to stop the "chatter" while others were talking.
From what she said the other day, some people are probably there just because they have to take a class, but I think she really wants it to be a professional class. I think she wants everybody to do well, she doesn’t want people to fail...She really tries to get you to think about it and try to understand it. She tells you to go home and study it.

Because he had recently taken the mid-term exam, it was fresh in his mind. His remarks reflected a perceived discrepancy between the actual test and his expectations for the test based on the homework problems and his conception of “economics.”

When I got it and first started looking at it, I hated the whole thing. But then I started doing a little bit here and a little bit there... it was critical thinking. If you had just memorized, you wouldn’t have done too well on that test. You really had to understand what was going on and apply it in different ways that hadn't really been presented before.... I mean, it was an economics test with almost no numbers on it. It was just graphs and things.

Student 2 admitted that he was one of the students that Dr. Sorenson was directing comments to when she asked students to be quiet while others were asking questions.

There was a lot of yackering [sic] going on in the back of the room and she got ticked off and she let us know about it the other day. But she was still good about answering questions and explaining things. I guess the best point about her is that if she can't get the point across to start with...she’s willing to meet with you to make sure you understand it.

Among the dimensions of teaching excellence he focused on in his discussion was that of concern and approachability. He described the teacher’s personal qualities and student-directed behaviors.
She has a good personality. I get along with her.... She knows your name and she asks questions. She had a help session before the test the other night... she took the initiative to help.

He later shared his confusion over what this course should entail. His position was that there should be a more practical focus, particularly given the title of the course. He also revealed his frustration and concern over his progress and related it to the focus of the course, mainly theory.

The name of the class is agricultural production and consumption. I don't hear anything about theory in there.... You know, you see a title in the timetable and...you hear stories about the class - you have an idea about what it's going to be about, what's gonna be covered. And then when you get in there, and it's just the reverse of what all your expectations are...I am disappointed about the class so far.

Student 3 revealed that she was very pleased with Dr. Sorenson's teaching and the general content of the course. In particular, she focused on the dimension of concern and approachability when she described what she liked the most.

She has done an excellent job promoting a teacher-student relationship.... As long as you try and as long as you are putting forth the best effort, she's willing to put forth that extra inch or two to help you out in trying to understand something.... if you act like an adult, if you act with respect, then she will give you respect...students must take the responsibility to come to class. I like Dr. Sorenson and I think she's enthusiastic and she really does care about the students.

She also indicated that she was satisfied with her learning and grade in the class to date.
End of Semester Perceptions. Final interviews were conducted with students during exam week. None of the participating students had taken their final exam in agricultural economics prior to their interview.

During final interviews, students were asked to describe the teacher and a typical class period, discuss what they valued most about the course and the teacher, indicate whether they met their personal objectives for the class, and share the overall rating they gave the teacher on their end of course evaluation. Table 17 lists the dimensions students focused on in their discussions of the class and teacher, their teacher ratings throughout the semester, and their anticipated grades.

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Insert Table 17 about here

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Student 1 reported that Dr. Sorenson always started class by reviewing the material she had covered during the prior class. He also shared his perception that she was sensitive to student progress.

...that helped me, because usually when I hear it the second time it makes more sense and I can put down a better explanation in my notes because I can pick up things that I missed before.... She always made sure that most of the people understood something before she went on to the next thing.

When revealing what he liked most about the class, he focused on the teacher's enthusiasm and approachability.

Her enthusiasm. She asked a lot of questions so she encouraged interaction between herself and students all the time.... She's not shy about talking to students. She'll take the initiative. She was friendly. I'd rather have a professor that comes across like she
does. I think it kind of helped this class with the bore of the subject matter that she was friendly and enthusiastic but still professional... It made it more bearable since it was so boring. It made it easier to come to class. If it had been a real dry professor, I don't think I would have wanted to come to class and sit through it.

His interpretations of the teacher’s enthusiasm led him to assume a teacher affect.

She thinks highly of students as people and I think she really likes teaching.

He agreed that the information he had received prior to the start of class was confirmed as he experienced the teacher’s enacted practice. The course was all calculus, but still understandable and the teacher was “a really fun person”. He did, however, indicate that he did not feel that he met his personal objectives for the course, but he still gave Dr. Sorenson an overall rating of 4.0, (excellent).

I think (the subject matter) is probably gonna help me down the road somewhere. Not directly, but more indirectly... It doesn’t really seem to apply to the real-life agriculture situations like I wanted... Most of the things that she went over were agricultural, but (they) weren’t realistic... I don’t think you can apply it to agriculture directly as much as she felt that you could... Probably on her level of knowledge, it would be easy. But as an undergraduate, it’s still pretty far over my head.

During his final interview, Student 2 related that he had developed a new appreciation for the course and teacher over the past six weeks. His change in attitude occurred after he began to make a personal connection with Dr. Sorenson.

The second half of the semester got better as far as my being able to relate to her on a personal basis. I’d see her out at different places like livestock shows and things. And she came over and shook my hand and started talking. I value that, being on more of a personal basis. It means something when a teacher looks at you like you’re more than
just a number, and this (university) is so bad about that...that just doesn't make me feel
good... She probably knows 3/4 of the people (in class) on a fairly (good) basis. I value
that. I think she can call everybody by name.

Concomitant with his perception that he had made a connection with Dr. Sorenson, Student 2
indicated that he began to re-evaluate his position, finally becoming more inspired in his
approach to this course.

After I got the first exam back I said, "Forget it. I'm just going to give up." Then I thought
about it some more, and my QCA ain't that good. After I got back in the swing of things I
took on a different attitude and it took me to where I am today.

He went on to describe his sense of the teacher's approachability communicated to students in
class, adding the personal effect he experienced as a result of realizing that Dr. Sorenson would
help him if he asked.

I think she has made herself available to everybody.... It gives you a little something to sit
back on, a little buffer so to speak.... It's like a sixth sense, you feel more comfortable
about it.... I don't think she wants to fail anybody.

Finally, reflecting back on the start of the semester, he expressed dismay over his 'missing'
something. While he agreed that he may have been at fault due to his previous attitude, he also
acknowledged that he could do the "work" required in class. In spite of this ability, he remained
unsure as to why the agricultural economics principles "worked."

I don't know how to get that production function to take it back to the farm. I think I know
how to do the stuff that we've learned in there. (But) the production function is the
backbone to everything, but we still don't know how we got there.
In spite of his feeling that he had missed something, Student 2 gave Dr. Sorenson a final overall rating of 3.0, (good). This rating was an improvement over his previous two ratings of 2.0, (fair). He also stated his reason for the increased rating.

She’s shown to me that she isn’t afraid to get in (there) and try to help you. She’s not afraid to get personal with the students and that’s a plus...I think she tries to be fair. If you had asked me (to rate her) six weeks ago I would have said a 1.0 to 2.0.

Student 3 described the means by which Dr. Sorenson demonstrated her focus on the development of student thought processes.

(Shes) encouraged interactions every single day by asking questions and posing problem situations to us...she tried to spark something in your brain.... She’d ask you questions and then try to guide you to the answer, without telling you the answer.

Since she was taking this courses after she had taken all of the other required agricultural economics courses, what Student 3 found most valuable about this course, was the way the subject matter all fell into place and made sense to her now. "It really helped me clarify points and I now understand the consumption side of things."

Admitting that she had not done as well in the class as she would have liked, Student 3 indicated that she had performed to the best of her ability.

I’m glad it’s over. I’ve been dreading taking it for two years. It didn’t seem that difficult (but) it was time-consuming.
Almost as if she didn’t want Dr. Sorenson to be disappointed in her, Student 3 added that her grade wasn’t that bad and that she didn’t think the teacher would think less of her for it. She also provided her final overall rating of Dr. Sorenson, 3.0, (good).

I think she has a high regard for students. She respects them. She understands that we work and that we do have other things that we do besides go to school. She’s understanding that we’re not all gonna be 4.0 students and that a well-balanced student is better than a 4.0 (student) who sits at home and does nothing.

Summary of Student Perceptions. Of interest in this case, is the general agreement between the dimensions participating students focused on as they evaluated Dr. Sorenson’s teaching practice throughout the semester and the whole class conceptualization of undergraduate teaching excellence presented in Chapter 3. Particularly, the similarity between the top three dimensions identified by the entire class on their Student Participant Selection Surveys (see Appendix D) as indicators of excellence: enthusiasm; content, pedagogical, and general knowledge; and concern and approachability. Though participating students varied in their level of attention to each of these indicators, each indicator was touched on by at least one student during each of the interview time periods.

An additional similarity can also be noted between the overall class’ conceptualization and participating students’ focus. The two themes underlying students’ conceptualization of teaching excellence, presented in Chapter 3: desire for a personal or professional connection with the teacher and a desire for a teacher who is sensitive to student progress, played an important role in these participating students’ evaluations of Dr. Sorenson’s enacted teaching practice throughout the semester. In particular, Students 2 and 3 interpreted her behaviors and demeanor as facilitative of developing a peer parity relationship with students. Student 1’s
comments, on the other hand, leaned more towards a professional parity level, with some characteristics of peer parity showing through.

**Examination of Enacted Teaching Practice Using Student and Teacher Frameworks.** To form a final picture of the assessment of undergraduate teaching excellence, a framework consisting of participating agricultural economics students’ indicators of the major dimensions of teaching excellence and another comprised of Dr. Sorenson’s indicators, was used to examine her teaching following the procedure described in Chapter 2. Following is a discussion of the various dimensions and the observed demonstration or non-demonstration of the student- and teacher-generated indicators.

**Enthusiasm for teaching and subject matter.** The 12 student-generated indicators and seven teacher-generated indicators for teacher enthusiasm were demonstrated by Dr. Sorenson during at least one of the observed class sessions. Among the students’ indicators were, “Ask you questions rather than do everything themselves”, “Tell us to come see them with questions”, “Develop a personal relationship with students”, “When she shows a concern for the student then that shows that she’s enthusiastic about teaching”, “Tell stories”, and “Make teaching fun.”

**Content, pedagogical knowledge.** Of the 14 student-generated indicators of a teacher’s content and pedagogical knowledge, Dr. Sorensen demonstrated all but two, “Have guest speakers”, and “Have students work in groups.” Among the assumptions of personal effect made by students that they reported she demonstrated were: “If I understand it”, “If it makes sense to me”, and “If she’s getting it across to the students and if that’s reflected in the grades, then it’s obvious that she has to know what she is talking about.” The six teacher-generated indicators were also demonstrated by Dr. Sorenson during at least five of the eight observed class sessions.
Concern and approachability. Students offered 15 indicators of a teacher's concern for students and approachability, while the teacher offered three. Dr. Sorenson demonstrated each of the indicators during at least two of the observed class periods. In fact, students commented on her demonstration of this dimension during each of the interviews. Among the student-generated indicators most frequently demonstrated for this dimension were, "If they're friendly", "If they don't make you feel uncomfortable", "They make you feel like you can carry on a general conversation", "Get to know the students", "Tell us to come see her", "Talk back and forth, joke around", and "They explain things".

Focus on the development of student thought processes and/or curiosity. For this dimension, students offered 10 indicators, while the teacher provided five. Dr. Sorenson demonstrated each of the indicators during at least one of the observed class sessions. The student-generated indicators that she most often demonstrated dealt with calling on students and asking them questions. The indicators demonstrated least often dealt with having the students apply agricultural economics concepts to real life problems.

Course organization and classroom management. Dr. Sorenson demonstrated all seven of the behaviors identified by students as indicators for this dimension of teaching excellence. Student-generated indicators included, "If they follow the syllabus", "Follow through with lectures from the start", and "List their objectives each day." She also demonstrated the five indicators she provided for this dimension.
**Composition Methods**

Teacher’s Teaching Practice. Dr. Sushman began her first composition methods class meeting by welcoming students. She continued by setting expectations for the semester by explaining the various assignments or tasks on the syllabus and sharing past students’ reactions to collaborative learning groups and course texts. As she introduced the various class routines or tasks described on the syllabus, Dr. Sushman also shared her rationale behind the requirements. For example, she explained that she would like students to write quietly in personal journals or on plain paper for the first 10 to 15 minutes of each class period. After relating her perception of the value of allowing students free writing time to write about anything they pleased, she also explained how she felt that “writing teachers should write,” so during that time she would write also. While later explaining the concept of group process, Dr. Sushman also offered her rationale for having these teachers-to-be work in groups in the first place, “To learn how to use groups, you need to be in a group.”

During the remaining class periods observed throughout the semester, Dr. Sushman operated under the procedures she established during the first class meeting. As each class period started, students got out their journals or notebooks and began writing, as did she. After 10 or 15 minutes, she told students to get to a good stopping point, then she began lecturing on the evening’s topic. On average, the lecture periods lasted about 60 minutes during the observed class sessions. Usually, interspersed throughout the lecture, were time periods where students actually engaged in whatever technique she had just described, such as looping (a pre-writing exercise). At the end of each lecture period, students took a short break and then returned to meet in their writing groups.
During her lectures, Dr. Sushman explained concepts and techniques using examples from her own experience in the schools, or from information she had received from other teachers. During explanations, she often paid particular attention to "how things worked" with various age groups of students. As she presented students with options for their future classrooms, she also compared and contrasted the various theories or methods, illustrating their application to classroom situations. In addition to verbal explanations, she often used physical examples so students could actually examine samples such as students' writing, portfolios, or publications. While lecturing, Dr. Sushman responded to student questions that arose and then continued on with her lecture. She paused during class and asked for student questions numerous times during each observed class.

After instructing students on particular things they should accomplish while in their writing groups, Dr. Sushman moved from group to group, observing students quietly as they interacted. She responded to student questions or comments if directed at her, but I did not observe her "telling" students what to do or offering unsolicited comments.

Students were evaluated based on their performance on several tasks and exams including: weekly reading responses, responses to additional outside readings of each student's choice, two writing portfolios, class participation, and a mid-term and a cumulative final exam. Prior to the two exams, Dr. Sushman provided students with "review sheets", identifying important topics likely to be covered on the tests.

Initial Expectations. At the beginning of the semester, three students participated in this phase of the study. However, by the end of the semester, only two students completed final interviews. Data from the one student who did not complete the final interview were not included in this section.
As reported on their Student Participant Selection Surveys (see Appendix D), these students had received information from other students about the teacher, Dr. Sushman. The nature of their initial expectations for the course and the teacher is reported in Table 18. Student 1's specific comments were, "I heard that she (the teacher) and the course are tough, but worth it and that she is a pretty fair grader." Student 2 simply indicated that she had not heard anything about the course, and had received "mixed" information about the teacher. Students' personal expectations, informed by the information they had received about the teacher and the course, were that they would learn in this course. Student 1 indicated that she expected to learn "very well," while Student 2 indicated that she expected to learn "hopefully well."

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Insert Table 18 about here

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When asked during an initial interview to clarify or expand on her survey responses, Student 1 offered that she had received information from many former students, "I've heard that the midterm is a beast...I'm going to start studying for that now." Student 2, who admitted that several of her friends had taken courses from Dr. Sushman, did not wish to elaborate on her incoming expectations other than to indicate that she hoped to learn well and to make strides towards becoming an excellent high school English teacher.

**Early Perceptions.** Interviews were scheduled with participating students during the third week of class. However, due to a personal conflict, Student 1 was not interviewed until after class had met three times and Student 2 was interviewed after the fourth class meeting. The dimensions students focused on when discussing their perceptions are reported in Table 18 as are their ratings of the teacher at this point in time.
Though she expressed displeasure with the teacher's instructional strategy of lecturing, Student 1 had reasoned to her own satisfaction, why Dr. Sushman utilized an instructor-centered method of disseminating information.

I just think the class is way too big and she's almost forced into a lecture mode. I don't think that's how she really envisions the class going.

She went on to add that she appreciated Dr Sushman's efforts to modify the lectures to involve students with the material under study.

I like how she explains concepts or procedures and then she has us actually do it.... It kind of makes me see it, because I haven't been comfortable with all the readings, some things just don't come out at you.... I think the way she has us do things provides me with incentive to keep an open mind. You know, if I have a class with 25 students five times a day, that's 125 kids, so I'm not going to be able to please every single one of them. And I sort of have to try different things. The way she has us do things (for ourselves) made me realize that.

Despite the few classes that had passed, Student 1 was beginning to form a clearer picture of what Dr. Sushman intended to accomplish in the composition methods course. Commenting on her perception of Dr. Sushman's approach to students, Student 1 illustrated her reasoning as she accounted for an apparent shortage of teacher-student interaction.

She doesn't seem like the type of teacher who doesn't really care what her students are doing.... She's trying really to set up I think, a student-centered classroom with the response journals, the peer review, the writing groups. I think that that's more what she is trying to concentrate on, so I don't think there is much teacher-student interaction.
She further explained how the teacher's approach benefited her personally as a learner, reflecting on her early years in college.

The class (composition methods) is so student-centered, I feel I can bring in anything for people (in my collaborative groups) to look at. I feel that it is really important for my learning... That sense of comfort, that's something that a lot of (first and second year students) are lacking. I think they feel alienated. I know I did.... In a first-year class you're like, "Everyone here is a genius and I'm not going to say anything."

When she did point out her concern over a perceived shortness on the part of the teacher in response to student questions during lecture, Student 1 offered a personal example illustrating her empathy and concern over her own tendency to react in a similar manner when "interrupted" by student questions.

Sometimes when people raise their hand, she kind of gets this look like, "Why stop me?"... You can kind of tell...she really doesn't like to be interrupted. I think that's probably because she feels really rushed, you know, because class is only one night a week.... I kind of get that way too. I think it's going to be a definite hindrance to my teaching. Because when I get going and I have a train of thought going, and I'm trying to explain something, I don't want a hand going up in the middle and then all the gears come grinding to a halt. Then after you answer the question you have to get re-started.... But I think that a lot of students really resent that, you know... "She's here for me, so she should just want to answer my questions."

Finally, Student 1 expressed her pleasure at having kept up with the many tasks and readings for the course, acknowledging the practical value of the various assignments.

So far, I've kept up on all the readings and gotten all my responses done on time. I got my second draft on my paper done so everything is going right on schedule.... I think
that I'm gaining a lot of really valuable resources that I can use during my first year of teaching and I don't have to go. "What can I do now?"

Initially, Student 2 indicated that she hoped to learn how to become an excellent high school teacher as a result of this course. After spending 12 hours (four class periods) in Dr. Sushman's class, she thought that she would be able to accomplish at least part of her goal during this class, commenting on Dr. Sushman's pedagogical knowledge and course organization.

For the most part, it's a very open place where I can learn. I want to learn from someone who (has an) open (relationship) with students (but) still maintains an organization, and progresses... because it could go to the other extreme.

That she considered herself a teacher-to-be is evidenced by her additional comment revealing a major focus of her attention in class, the teacher's skill and technique.

We don't want to see it go to the other extreme and I'm trying to learn the art of what I see (Dr. Sushman demonstrate) that I think works.... I think the best way to learn those skills is from someone who practices them.

As with Student 1, Student 2 had "picked up" on Dr. Sushman's underlying strategy to demonstrate the implementation of a student-centered classroom, in spite of the fact that it had not been specifically shared with the class. Acknowledging that she had benefited from the collaborative learning groups, she continued:

I've learned an extreme amount from the people in (the writing and reader response) groups. It's a multiple level thing. First of all, there's the feedback I get on my own work. Secondly, when I sit back and I watch this happening - I watch this group working - and how beautifully it works.... I watch it come together.
Student 2's comments also illustrate her reflective approach to this class. As she was presented with various strategies or models, she tried to walk through them in her mind and examine how they would actually work. She shared her initial reaction to Dr. Sushman's selection of students for the collaborative working groups, her group in particular.

If I was a teacher, I would have separated us. But, I've learned, it's not just about my own work, but about how the system works... (I learned this) by being a part of the group process.

So in-tune to observing everything the teacher did in class and attempting to reason out why she did things the way she did, Student 2 tried to relate Dr. Sushman's behaviors and thoughts to her own.

I know I am human. There have been times, even on my student aide experience, where I did things and then I'd look back and think to myself, "You are against exactly what you just did." But, I think the most important thing is being aware of the fact that you did it.

She revealed that she often wondered if Dr. Sushman did the same thing.

Is she aware (when) she breaks her own rule(s) or was that the only way she could see to deal with the topic?

Noting a perceived discrepancy between Dr. Sushman's demeanor and behavior outside of class and inside of class, Student 2 tried to reason this out as well.

I met with her a long time ago...we talked for like two hours. We talked about all kinds of stuff, it was great. And I was like, "Hey, I can really deal with her." Then when we got into the class, I was really surprised. I expected her to be more like a facilitator. She's not nearly as relaxed as when you go in and talk with her one-on-one. I'm trying to figure it
out...sometimes I see a glint in her eyes (during class) and it's her (the "outside of class" person) shining through.

It was obvious by her comments, that Student 2 preferred the "outside of class" person. This is of particular interest as one considers how she may evaluate the "inside of class person."

Eluding to her personal approach to her education classes, Student 2 stated, "From what I can tell with education classes, if you're going to teach people how to do this in the school, you've got to do it yourself." This comment suggests a possible reason for her tendency to scrutinize the enacted practice of teacher educators.

Finally, while indicating that the workload was heavy, Student 2 also acknowledged the value of the various tasks required by Dr. Sushman.

I'm enjoying it. I'm enjoying it a lot. There's a lot of work in it.... it takes me a lot to have everything done by class.... But I like the type of work it is. I don't mind doing the actual work.... I've learned a lot about the process of the (writing) workshop. But I've also learned about how I learn. It's multidimensional.

During interviews, each student was also asked to rate the teacher's instruction to date on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest. Their ratings, keyed to each student, and supporting comments follow:

Student 1 I'd give her a 3.5. I heard that she was the toughest, meanest teacher that you will ever have (here)... But I don't see that.
Student 2 Probably about 3.5, because there's involvement (in the collaborative learning groups) and (students') opinions are discussed. There is a respect among the students for each other's work, which I'm still trying to figure out the magic of organizing a class so that students have this respect for each other. And, once again, I think you can knock on her office door when you need help.

Perceptions at Mid-semester. A second interview was conducted with each student after the mid-term exam had been administered. Before focusing specifically on students' perceptions of the composition methods course, an effort was made to check where their conceptualizations of excellent teaching stood at this point in the semester. Students were asked to think about excellent college teaching and describe what the teacher does, then what the students do. The dimensions they focused on in their responses are reported in Table 19.

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Insert Table 19 about here
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Student 1 called upon her personal experience in a previous education course, focusing on the teacher's instructional strategy.

Since we were learning how to be teachers, he really placed a big emphasis on inductive teaching and letting the kids figure things out.... I think the good thing about his class (was) that he didn't just tell us (that) inductive teaching was a good thing to do - he didn't teach us directly how to teach inductively. He sort of made us figure out what inductive teaching was all about. He taught us inductively, which I thought was really neat.... He sort of modeled what he was preaching.

She further explained the preferred teacher role in a student-centered classroom.
The teacher’s role is one of a facilitator. You’re supposed to just nudge and sort of make the conversation just flow to where the kids can just draw the same conclusion that you want them to draw.

Adding what the students do in an excellent college teaching situation, she continued with her example discussed previously.

We worked together as a group, actually doing things instead of listening to him talk about things.

When thinking about excellent college teaching, Student 2 indicated that she had "actually had two or three excellent college teachers." She went on to explain the common features of their enacted teaching practices.

The class is very interactive. Students’ opinions are taken and considered and as long as (they) can support them, and in fact barter it back and forth. Very rarely, unless it’s a factual error, would the professor knock you down for the way you were looking at it. They might say, "Look more into this aspect. How would you approach this?"... An excellent teacher plays devil's advocate (rather than stipulate what’s right or wrong.)

She continued to explain what students do in an excellent college teaching situation.

They’re talking freely.... Notes are going down, but they’re not forced. Most of the time it’s conversation notes from the constant talking and challenging (of) each other.... A lot of scenario or case study problems - that’s a big one....This is a classroom setting and this is what is going on and this is what you want to do. How would you do it? Why?.... The students are problem solving.
Table 19 also includes students' assessment of their own progress in the course as well as the dimensions of teaching excellence that they focused on as they shared their thoughts on how the composition methods course was going.

On the positive side, Student 1 indicated she continued to be pleased with the teacher's pedagogical knowledge when she discussed her strategy to have the students actually practice things she presented during lectures. She cited several examples, including Dr. Sushman's presentation of pre-writing exercises.

She doesn't just say something and then drop it. She actually lets us do it. Like with the pre-writing exercises. She says, "This is the theory behind loopign. This is how you do it. Ok, now lets do it." So I can kind of understand what a student is going through and I can see what problems they might have with each exercise.

On the not so positive side, she continued to be discouraged with her perception of the teacher's reaction to student questions during lectures.

I feel like whenever you ask her a question she gets really defensive.... When you just raise your hand for clarification in class...you know, it like really bothers her.

But, just as she had done during her first interview, Student 1 provided an explanation for the teacher's reaction. Her explanation is in agreement with Dr. Sushman's self-described goal discussed in Chapter 3, to "Let students know that teaching is a hard job."

I think it's just like she's really overstressed and she has to get all this stuff done.... I think that she's just so overwhelmed that it comes out in class.

In spite of the fact that she felt good about her progress in the class, indicating that her current grade was an "A", and her sharing that she found the subject matter and instructional tasks
interesting, Student 1 dropped her rating of the teacher from a 3.5 to a 2.5 or 3, citing an
adjustment that Dr. Sushman could make that would bring the class in line with her landscape of
college teaching excellence.

Give more control over to the class. Be a little more flexible and let us get into a
discussion about topics once in a while as a whole class. I feel we're missing a lot of
good discussions just because she feels the need to push on.

Student 2 remained pleased with the level of student interaction in the class, citing it as the most important aspect of the course that impacted her learning.

That's the most important thing to me, because first of all, it's important for my learning. But it's also important for me to see how to execute such a dynamic in my own classes in the future. I believe it can be implemented at all levels of education if you know how to set the stage.

Acknowledging the role that Dr. Sushman played in "setting the stage", she went on to share her perceptions.

She's the one who set us up in our groups. She's the one who tells us when it's group time and what to do in our groups and when to come back together as a larger group. She established the process, and I like it.

The perception that Dr. Sushman had a lot of material to cover in a set amount of time was also communicated by Student 2. She cited this as a reason for her perception that the teacher refused to consider students' points of view when she did not encourage student-teacher interactions ("banter") during her lectures.
When she wants interaction, it's by asking a question. But she doesn't feel comfortable going back and forth (bantering).

Once again, using her experience in an ideal teacher's class as a comparison point, Student 2 cited the scarcity of involved whole-class discussions as she discussed Dr. Sushman's teaching style. Her interpretation of the teacher's behavior when students commented or responded to her questions, e.g., just moving on to the next lecture point, was that Dr. Sushman communicated a resistance to considering student viewpoints.

Well, it's not like she does it every single time, but she does do it frequently enough to the point that there are a group of us that refuse to answer her questions.

As she further explained her interpretation, it became evident that she perceived that teachers who elaborate on student comments and engage in "banter" directly related to their comments, communicate an acceptance of the student point of view. Her position also held that such acceptance could serve as a lure to really engage students with the content under study.

Student 2 acknowledged that she scored in the lower third of the class on the mid-term exam, indicating that her current grade in the course was "fair." She would not offer a rating on the teacher at this point in the semester, reserving her evaluation until the end of the course.

**End of Semester Perceptions.** Final interviews were conducted with students during exam week. Neither of the participating students had taken their composition methods exam prior to the interview.

During final interviews, students were asked to describe the teacher, a typical class period, discuss what they valued most about the course and teacher, indicate whether they met
their personal objectives for the class, and share the overall rating they gave the teacher on their end of course evaluations. Table 20 lists the dimensions students focused on in their discussions of the class and teacher, their teacher ratings throughout the semester, and their anticipated grades for the course.

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Insert Table 20 about here
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Student 1 related that she had indeed benefited from being in Dr. Sushman's class.

I got a lot of good ideas for the classroom...actual activities and ways to do things...ways to go about things.... I think that was good.

Both students continued to use features from the enacted practice of another education teacher that they "liked" as a comparison point when assessing Dr. Sushman and the composition methods course. In particular, they remained dissatisfied with the portion of each class devoted to lecture, indicating that it should have been more of a blend of whole-class discussions. For example, Student 1 stated:

She basically told us things. Sometimes, she would put us in groups, but (there) was never a teacher-led discussion.

She went on to later communicate her confusion over the appropriate means of setting up a student-centered class. She was particularly adamant about her belief in the need of a teacher telling students up front the nature of his/her instructional strategy and course organization. Her comments reveal her perception that teachers can effect students' expectations.
She never initiates interaction, but if you go up and talk to her, she won't avoid you... I mean, there's nothing wrong with teaching inductively... I love it. I encourage it. But you need to let the class know that's what you're doing. You need to tell them the first day, "This is a student-oriented class. I'm here as a facilitator, not as a teacher." It can't be incognito. They're gonna think that you're just aloof. In her class, you just get all these mixed signals, you just never know what she's up to or about.

Student 1's final overall rating for Dr. Sushman was a 3.0, (good).

I'm glad it's over, but I feel like I learned a lot. I really do. Honestly, I do feel it's a worthwhile class to take if you're gonna become an English teacher.... It's tough, but worthwhile.

Using the same teacher as Student 1 did for a reference point, Student 2, focused to the smallest detail on what Dr. Sushman did, how she moved, where she moved, her voice fluctuations. It was to the point where she fixed on perceived discrepancies between the teacher's words and body language. This level of analysis of the teacher had an obvious impact on Student 2's assessment of Dr. Sushman. Based on the comments made during her interviews, it was almost as if Dr. Sushman could never match the features in her landscape of teaching excellence, in spite of her acknowledgement that Dr. Sushman was successful in many things, such as setting up the collaborative working groups and the class process.

Despite the many negative comments she had made during her final interview, Student 2 also gave Dr. Sushman a 3.0 for a final overall rating.

There is so much more I think could have been done... Not that she was a bad teacher... a bad teacher I'd just give up on.
She closed by commenting on the end of course evaluation forms used by the university, offering that she had made many written suggestions on her form because she thought Dr. Sushman really was a good teacher.

I don't like the evaluation questions. "Apparent knowledge of material", well you could know everything there is to know about the subject and not get it across to the students. And your textbook might be great, but who says that you'll assign readings in it, and go over the readings with the students?

**Summary of Student Perceptions.** Talk among students in the English teacher certification program, particularly about the composition methods course, appears to be high, informing their entering expectations for the course. Generally speaking, students' entering perceptions of the course were that it would require a lot of work. Just as the culture surrounding the general engineering major included stories about the physics for engineers course, a culture filled with stories and legends also surrounded the certification for English teachers program. Stories were shared between students about the composition methods course. Many of these stories communicated to students that in order to student teach and become certified to teach, they must do well in this course.

Given that this is a course for teachers in preparation, it is not surprising that students would focus on the teacher's implementation of the various teaching models and strategies that she covers in the class. However, this can be a double-edged sword. For the most part, with the exception of the 10 or so graduate students in the class who were currently or had been employed as school teachers, these students had not been in a school system since they were students themselves, other than for their student aide experiences. While they may feel that this experience afforded them adequate personal knowledge of what it means to be a teacher, it is likely that there is more involved than they could have fully understood in such a short exposure.
Often not fully realizing the conditional nature of much educational knowledge, participating students often expressed frustration that Dr. Sushman, through lectures, demonstrations, or reading assignments, often presented them with several different instructional methods. During these times, they wanted to know which one was the "right one." Then at other times, when Dr. Sushman did share her personal experience, relating what she had seen work personally, they struggled with her "telling" them "what to do" in their future classes.

**Examination of Enacted Teaching Practice Using Student and Teacher Frameworks.** As a final focus on excellence in undergraduate teaching, the teaching practice of Dr. Sushman was examined as it unfolded in the classroom. A framework, consisting of student-generated and teacher-generated indicators of undergraduate teaching excellence was used for this examination as described in Chapter 2. Following, each of the major dimensions is addressed along with the supporting indicators of excellence as they pertain to Dr. Sushman's enacted teaching practice from both student reports and researcher observations.

**Enthusiasm for teaching and subject matter.** Eleven behaviors identified by students as indicators of enthusiasm for teaching and enthusiasm for subject matter were demonstrated by Dr. Sushman at least once and as many as 21 times during each of the five observed class sessions. Among the student-generated behaviors demonstrated by Dr. Sushman, "They move around", "They ask questions," "They share their own experiences with the subject matter" and "They go beyond the notes that they have." Dr. Sushman also demonstrated both of her self-described indicators of enthusiasm, "body language - show an interest in what one is doing" and "well-planned lessons". Students offered as evidence supporting their interpretations, the apparent shortage of "bantering" and whole-class discussions.
There were also three student-generated indicators that participating students reported negative instances of were, "They want to actually explore with you," "They want that "Ohhhhhhh kind of thing," and "They want you to understand."

**Content, pedagogical knowledge.** Students offered six teacher behaviors as indicators of a teacher’s content and pedagogical knowledge while Dr. Sushman offered five. All but one of the indicators was demonstrated by Dr. Sushman at least once during three of the five observed classes. The student-generated indicator, "If they can't answer a question, do they know where to send someone for the answer?" was not demonstrated as the situation did not occur during any of the observed class sessions. Among the indicators observed in class or reported as confirmed by students were, "Give you options that work", "Having students actually go through the motions so we can see first hand what it's like to do those things," and "They show you their personal experiences."

**Concern and approachability.** Students offered five observable behaviors as indicators of a teacher’s concern for students and approachability. Each of the indicators was demonstrated by Dr. Sushman on at least one occasion during the observed class sessions. Among these were, "They encourage questions" and "Don't show disregard or disrespect for students." The teacher offered two indicators, stipulating that student perceptions of this dimension would vary with the personality of the student and the teacher. She did indicate that her approach to undergraduate classes such as the composition methods class was based on her personal assumption of these indicators, "Concerned that students will get what they will need to further their college career and their chosen careers" and "(act as) concerned adults not friends."

**Focus on the development of student thought processes and/or curiosity.** Students offered five observable behaviors as indicators of a teacher’s focus on the development of student thought processes or curiosity, while Dr. Sushman offered three. Each of the indicators
was demonstrated by Dr. Sushman during the observed classes. Both of the participating students also commented on Dr. Sushman's demonstration of this dimension during two of their three interviews. Student indicators included, "They want to know what I think of the reading and how I interpret it." This indicator was demonstrated during the third observed class when Dr. Sushman presented written reactions to students' reading responses. She spent about 20 minutes of class going over her reactions to students' responses, often commenting on students' insight.

**Course organization and classroom management.** Students identified two observable behaviors, "If they stick to the syllabus pretty closely" and "Are things connected?" as indicators of a teacher's course organization and classroom management. The teacher offered one indicator regarding the course syllabus. Dr. Sushman demonstrated each of these indicators.
CHAPTER 5
THE MULTIPLE LANDSCAPES OF COLLEGE TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS

Focusing on only one perspective when designing an evaluation system has the potential to afford a limited view of a complex phenomenon, as well as do disservice to the stakeholders in that enterprise. The enterprise of higher education is no exception. In the current atmosphere of decreased funding and increased accountability, we must be careful to not take an easy route to addressing outside demands. We should, however, also strive to not lose sight of the potentially varied needs of stakeholders outside of the immediate environment. But, while remaining sensitive to these perspectives, I believe our attention should focus primarily on constructing evaluation systems sensitive to what actually happens in the college classroom.

This study was directed at capturing the multiple landscapes of teaching excellence as viewed by the major stakeholders in the college classroom, the students and their teachers. The purpose of this study was predicated on the belief that valuable features from these landscapes could be gathered and transplanted into an integrated landscape forming a viable theory of college teaching excellence and ultimately facilitating the development of a useful system(s) of evaluation. It was further held that progress towards an integrated view of college teaching excellence incorporating student and teacher landscapes of teaching excellence could also positively influence the landscapes of stakeholders outside of the college classroom. As a first step towards this integration, this chapter presents findings about the multiple landscapes captured from the perspectives of the various participants in this study as well as findings about the process of conducting student evaluations of college teaching. This presentation is followed

158
by a discussion of potential implications of these findings to the assessment of college teaching excellence.

**Summary of Findings**

This section is organized into three major sections. First, findings emerging from an examination of student perspectives of college teaching are summarized. Next, findings concerning teacher perspectives, including the formation and maintenance of their teaching landscapes are presented. Finally, this section closes with a discussion of findings related to the evaluation process.

**Student Landscapes of Teaching Excellence**

**Dimensions of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence**

As reported in Chapter 3, a model of teaching excellence was constructed from undergraduate students' descriptions of the behaviors, knowledge areas, or foci requisite for excellence. The model is comprised of five major dimensions: (1) content, pedagogical, and general knowledge; (2) concern and approachability; (3) enthusiasm; (4) focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity; and (5) course organization and classroom management. Following, each of these dimensions is described and related to the existing knowledge base on teaching.

**Content, pedagogical, and general knowledge.** From the perspective of the students participating in this study, excellent college teachers utilize knowledge from two of the teacher knowledge areas derived from narrative research in high-school classrooms and described by
Shulman (1986, 1987) and Wilson, et al., (1987). Specifically, a majority of the student-generated descriptions of excellent college teachers examined in this study focused on what Shulman termed content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. According to Shulman (1986), content knowledge is concerned with a teacher’s grasp of the facts and concepts of a discipline as well as the structure and reasoning of that discipline. Pedagogical content knowledge refers to a teacher’s understanding of the most useful means of organizing, representing, and presenting topics, problems, and issues in the content area, that make the subject accessible to students (Shulman, 1987).

Further corroborating the inclusion of this dimension, several students participating in individual interviews used their perceptions of a teacher’s content knowledge as their reason for upgrading their evaluations, overriding their perceptions that the teaching practice was poorly enacted. Students’ assertions that excellent college teachers have thorough content knowledge are also supported by the literature on college teaching effectiveness. For example, Sheffield (1974) contacted bachelor-degree alumni and asked them to identify excellent teachers they had taken courses from and describe what made these teachers effective. Mastery of subject matter was the most commonly-offered item in this descriptive, unstructured study.

In addition to these knowledge areas described by Shulman, students participating in the present study also described more specific areas of knowledge related to a teacher’s ability to “teach” college-level subjects/students. Specifically, students cited general, practical or experiential, and research knowledge areas as requisite to excellent college teaching. Each of these knowledge areas were judged by students as useful if utilized by teachers to demonstrate the relevance of a subject matter. Based on student comments, subject matter relevance can be demonstrated by relating the topic to students’ general every-day existence or their future "jobs."
Students also indicated that teachers could make subject matter "real" by discussing its relation to their research or personal experience.

**Concern and approachability.** In addition to being offered as a discrete indicator of teacher excellence, when asked to provide their own descriptions of excellent teachers, students' conceptualizations were often suffused with the dimension of concern and approachability. Student comments demonstrating this dimension include, "Care for the students" and "They show concern for my welfare as a student and a person." This finding is supported by an earlier study by Feldman (1976) who reported that when asked to provide indicators of effective college teaching, a majority of students focused on a teacher's concern for students.

**Enthusiasm.** As recounted by Sherman, et al. (1987), teacher enthusiasm has consistently been reported as an indicator of teaching excellence from both the student and teacher perspective. In this study, students who cited teacher enthusiasm as indicative of teaching excellence offered descriptions of enthusiasm that could be categorized on three levels. First, global behavioral indicators identified by students included "energy," "tell(ing) interesting stories," "humor and interesting outside facts," "enthusiasm (for) teach(ing) the subject," and "excitement about the job." Second, some students offered indicators related to a teacher's general demeanor such as "hip-hop attitude, not boring and somber/wise" and "dynamic personality." And finally, some students made assumptions about the consequence of a teacher's enthusiasm, "hold(s) the students' attention," "get(s) me excited," and "makes me interested."

**Focus on the development of student thought processes and curiosity.** In providing descriptions of excellent college teachers, 36 statements provided by students completing surveys cited intellectual challenge and the sparking of interest as desirable foci of teachers. The following statement, provided by a female senior in the agricultural economics class, illustrates
the general nature of students' indicators of this dimension, "They challenge me (to think) - I'll break my neck to prove myself...I understand ideas when I can relate them personally to an idea I already understand." This finding stands in contrast to an earlier report by Feldman (1976) on unprompted student-generated indicators of teaching effectiveness. Feldman reported that students did not suggest intellectual challenge on their own, but did select it as important to effective teaching if presented with a list of criteria. Further illustrating a contrast, when presented with a list of criteria, most of the students in this study ranked the development of student thought processes and curiosity rather low in importance relative to the other dimensions of teaching. The exceptions was the composition methods class, which overall reported a value of a teacher's focus on the development of student curiosity.

**Course organization and classroom management.** Students participating in this study indicated that the structure of the course (including instructional strategies employed), the organization and effective delivery of individual lessons, and the efficient use of class time were important indicators of a teacher's excellence. Researchers of college teaching effectiveness have reported on teacher characteristics that fall under the dimension of course organization and classroom management. For example, Hildebrand, et al (1971) factor-analyzed student-generated lists of characteristics held by their best teachers. Organization, including the identification of objectives and of what is important, was of major importance to these students.

**Underlying themes.** Students' landscapes of teaching excellence often contained features eluding to two major themes focusing on a "human" connection with teachers. First, many undergraduate students' comments revealed a hopefulness for a personal or professional connection with college teachers. As reported in Chapter 3, these comments indicated a preference for college teachers who interact with students on one of three levels: peer parity, professional parity, or sympathetic paternalism. The second theme, a preference for teachers
who are sensitive to student ability and progress, stands in contrast to earlier research reported by Feldman (1977). He reported that students only acknowledged the importance of a teacher's sensitivity to class level and progress when prompted with a list of teacher characteristics. However, many students participating in this study, offered such sensitivity as an indicator of teaching excellence when responding to an open-ended question. A statement provided by a male physics student reflects this desire, "The teacher should not teach over the class' head or talk about areas of the course which are really too involved for the class' knowledge of the subject."

Of course, different students in the same teacher's class can and sometimes do rate the teacher at opposite ends of a scale. The question is, "Why does this happen?" If a teacher is excellent, then the teacher is excellent. "Right?" As Doherty (1994) suggested, "The experience of satisfaction creates the perception of good quality." What leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction for students in the same teacher's class? Particularly when, on the surface, it appears that students' conceptualizations of "what" it means to be an excellent teacher are similar. Following, I present general findings that may clarify this phenomenon.

**Students' landscapes of teaching excellence are informed socially.**

Students' landscapes of teaching excellence are informed through interactions with peers, family members, university faculty, or professionals in their field of choices. Based on the present study, some features comprising students' landscapes of teaching excellence can be traced back to their social origin.

Each of the students participating in this study reported that they did not know who the other student participants were. Additionally, a majority of the students indicated they really did not interact with other students in these classes, (the composition methods class was the exception to this). During individual interviews, the majority of the students volunteered that they
had discussed the focus teacher with friends, acquaintances, significant others, or parents. Often these interactions started with students sharing something that "bothered" them about the teacher or the course. Through their recountings of these discussions, students revealed that the interactions resulted in further confirmation or disconfirmation of their anticipated teacher behaviors. For example, during a mid-semester interview one student told me of a conversation with her boyfriend regarding her perception that the focus teacher was not concerned about students. "He told me not to worry and just take good notes and memorize everything." At the end of the semester, this student reported continued dissatisfaction with the teacher, commenting that students were "ignored" or "not taken seriously." In spite of this, she raised her final evaluation of the teacher because, as she related, she had done well in the course and the teacher had a strong content knowledge. This example illustrates a social impact on this student's landscape of teaching excellence. In addition to the features of teaching excellence selected from her own personal history, this student modified her framework based on her boyfriend's account of how things should proceed in a college classroom.

The culture surrounding a particular program or course can also serve to inform students' expectations. Further developing their expectations for a particular course of teacher, students make assumptions of what a particular teaching dimension or feature of the landscape will "look like" when enacted. These expectations are used as students experience and interpret a teacher's enacted practice, seeking confirmation or disconfirmation of their expectations.

It is particularly interesting to note that in the case of the physics course, while students expected that the course would be difficult, they were generally satisfied with the teacher and his enacted teaching practice. Their expectations were met. The culture surrounding the general engineering major encompasses a belief system that each of the students participating in this study apparently have bought into. They entered the physics class with very similar expectations,
informed by this culture. Entering expectations of students who had heard the general engineering stories varied only in regard to their perceptions of their individual ability to master the "difficult" material. On the first day of the semester the physics teacher communicated his view of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the classroom. This offered the students a valuable opportunity to modify their expectations to accommodate these features. The result was a harmonious case, the students had very similar expectations, which reflected those of the teacher. There was very little dissonance and few contradictions within the perceptions of participating students as they evaluated the enacted practice of the physics teacher.

While an argument can be made for similar cultures surrounding the other courses examined through the course of this study, they likely exist in varying degrees, particularly with regard to the extent of which they are successful in influencing students to buy into a majority belief system. For example, the culture surrounding the agricultural economics course, while it did include stories about the difficult subject matter, primarily focused on the traits of the teacher. These stories influenced students’ entering expectations. However, students maintained their own belief systems, informed by their personal histories, as a dominate system did not appear to suffuse the agricultural economics program.

A culture surrounding the English teacher certification program was also revealed through student comments. Most students entering this teacher's class had heard the stories of the culture, which spoke of the heavy workload as well as the pivotal nature of the course to their chosen careers. These stories also appear to have been extrapolated, with many students ultimately attributing the majority of the responsibility for students' success or failure in achieving certification to the teacher. The majority of the student comments on the Student Participant
Selection Surveys (see Appendix D) revealed that students entered this course with definite expectations informed by the stories surrounding this course.

Because it was a 1000-level course, taken by students from various backgrounds, the culture surrounding the introductory sociology course was, perhaps understandably, the most diffuse. Stories were told about the scope of the content covered in the course and about the personality and testing practices of the teacher. The belief systems of the diverse students entering first-year courses such as this are varied. So it seems reasonable that students' perceptions and valuation of the enacted teaching practices of teachers would vary as well.

**Students form their perceptions of a teacher and the course early in the experience.**

In addition to the social influence, previously discussed, initial expectations for a teacher or course are also likely informed by a student's own past academic experience/success, particularly in the same academic discipline. This supposition is supported by students' comments regarding their entering expectations. In particular, several students in the agricultural economics course anticipated that the course would be difficult because they had heard the subject matter was "all math" and they didn't do well in math. Students' past academic success also influenced entering expectations in a positive manner. Such influence is demonstrated by comments from two students in the sociology course who anticipated that they would earn "good" grades because they had done so in introductory psychology courses and they believed the two disciplines were similar.

Students' perceptions of a given teacher's excellence, in addition to being affected by their incoming expectations, are further developed and modified by their immediate first impressions as a course gets underway. When discussing their early semester perceptions of a course or the teacher, students participating in individual interviews shared their observations of teachers' speech patterns, demeanor, or attire. Additionally, many comments at this point
focused on the physical context within the classroom. Students offered that rooms were too large or too small, too cold, too hot, too quiet, or too noisy. A male physics student even commented, "Well, at least the seats are comfortable." As students were asked to evaluate their teachers during initial interviews, many revealed that their first impressions influenced their assessments, some positively and some negatively.

Students use several tools in assessing the quality of a college teacher/teaching experience.

Prominent among the tools used by students is the egocentric nature of their assessment. Undergraduate students enter the classroom under the belief that a tacit contract exists - binding the teacher to an unspoken commitment to meet the needs of each individual student, whatever they may be and however inobvious or unrelated to the subject matter. Among the needs expressed by students participating in this study was the desire to be acknowledged as human beings by the teacher. This need, characterized as the desire for a personal or professional connection with college teachers, was communicated by students completing survey instruments in each of the classes. Students also expressed a desire to be sheltered from unfair or unwarranted assessment by college teachers. This was particularly true if they perceived the purpose of the assessments to be purely to rank students to decide who moves on to the next level of study and who does not. While this desire was communicated by students from each of the classes examined during this study, it was particularly prevalent among students in the physics class. Each of these needs were further substantiated as focal students mentioned them during interviews throughout the semester.

Students participating in this study used other tools as they assessed teacher excellence. Among these were their perceptions of teacher qualities such as friendliness or compassion, teacher behaviors such as asking questions of students, and assumptions about
the thought behind teacher behaviors. Students used these tools to construct an impression of each college teacher, the structure of which relied heavily on the level to which factors spoke to them personally. Such impressions formed a rubric of teaching excellence for students that was often modified as students "experienced" the instructor and his/her enacted teaching practice.

**Student rubrics of excellent college teaching are dynamic.**

Students participating in this study modified their landscapes of teaching excellence throughout the semester, making adjustments as they experienced and reflected on the enacted teaching practices of their teachers. At the beginning of the semester, participating students demonstrated a broad sense of what was helpful to them as learners, which may be expected from novices. However, over the course of the semester, many students became better able to expand upon the major dimensions of teaching to articulate what was helpful to them as learners. Admittedly, being involved in this study may have functioned as a form of treatment for students, effecting their level of "attention" to a teacher's enacted practice. However, the fluctuations in their rubrics should not be overlooked as they may serve as indicators of potential fluctuations for undergraduate students as a whole.

Of particular import were the fluctuations that resulted when students perceived that implicit contracts were broken. For example, several students reported significant shifts in their perceptions of a teacher's excellence immediately after they had taken quizzes or tests or received them back graded. During individual interviews, teachers' demonstration of various dimensions of teaching excellence came into question as students shared their reactions and their interpretations of the teachers' motives. Particularly, the dimensions of pedagogical knowledge, concern for students, approachability, and enthusiasm for teaching came into question. Additionally, students often began to focus on a teacher's failure to make a connection with students on the levels presented in Chapter 3 and described earlier in this chapter.
Student rubrics of excellent college teaching vary in their focus, level of sophistication, and complexity.

Granted, students' entering expectations are likely modified after they interpret their initial and ensuing experiences in the classroom. However, another factor that may contribute to students' differing perceptions of their expectations being confirmed or disconfirmed may be the somewhat incomplete and differing frameworks they use to assess college teaching excellence. What is "good" to one student, may not be "good" to another. For example, some students in the agricultural economics class related that they preferred teachers who challenge them to think for themselves while others indicated a preference for teachers to tell them specifically what to memorize. Additionally, what is identified as good by a particular student, may not be valued to the same extent in a different context. Illustrative of this point are comments from two students in the introductory sociology class and several students in the physics class. These students acknowledged that teachers who encouraged class discussions were helpful to them, if the subject matter lent itself to personal opinion. However, some students did not feel that courses in subjects such as physics or biology were appropriate theaters for student discussions. On the other hand, a student who was taking an honors biology course reported that one of the best things about the course was the level of student discussion and interaction encouraged by the teacher. Such evidence attests to students' varying and flexible frameworks of college teaching excellence.

Further substantiating the distinctness of students' rubrics of teaching excellence are the differential values assigned to various features. While on the surface, students' observations may appear similar, their perceptions and interpretations of teacher behaviors are influenced by their valuations of the teaching dimension observed. For example, several students in one of the classes shared their perceptions that the teacher was not as approachable as they would have liked. However, the impact these perceptions had on their final overall evaluations of the teacher
varied. This was likely because the relative importance each student assigned to his/her observations was influenced by his/her perceptions of the relative value/weight of this dimension in his/her landscape of excellent teaching.

Further illustrating variations in student valuations of the various teaching dimensions, was a student who admitted to raising her overall rating of the teacher because, as she stated, "He knows his stuff." Several other students also qualified their final evaluations of teachers by indicating that the teacher was a subject matter expert. Some students admitted to assumptions regarding a teacher's subject matter expertise because, they reasoned, the teacher had earned a Ph.D. or held a teaching position at a major research university.

A discrepancy exists between many students' conceptions of themselves as active participants and their continued assumption of passive, receptive roles in the college classroom.

Students participating in this study reported that for the most part, they did not make a practice of responding to teacher questions, asking questions in class, meeting with teachers outside of class to ask questions, or discussing the subject matter or studying with classmates. Several students did, however, stipulate that teachers should treat them as intelligent adult equals. As described by students, such treatment would involve teacher-student interactions focused on seeking and acknowledging students' opinions. These students perhaps, have not yet figured out the responsibilities requisite with an academic relationship. This is not surprising, given that such responsibilities are often communicated in oblique ways.
Teacher Landscapes of Teaching Excellence

College teaching can be a lonely profession.

...teaching is conducted without an audience of peers. It is devoid of a history of practice (Shulman, 1987, p. 12).

Shulman’s description of the profession of school teachers can also be used to describe the profession of college teaching as it is lived by many faculty. This is evidenced by the teacher-reported dearth of peer-reviews of instruction as well as the general lack of discussion or consultation about teaching. Three of the teachers participating in this study reported that peer observations of instruction were almost non-existent in their respective departments, at least to their knowledge. One of the teachers reported that she did attempt to observe the teaching of a different faculty member several times during each semester. She additionally revealed that she though her primary focus during these observations was the subject matter, she did pick up features to add to her landscape of college teaching.

That college teaching is devoid of a history of practice is verified by the means by which these teachers developed their knowledge of teaching. Several of the participating teachers reported they learned how to teach from observing their college teachers. Basically, calling on their of past teachers, these teachers developed their memories classroom practices by; “Trial and error” and “By doing it”.

Based on the reports of these participating teachers, many of the avenues identified by Fink (1984) as helpful to college teacher preparation are not widely utilized at Virginia Tech. The primary tool used by these exemplars was the personal experience of developing plans and materials and actually teaching courses themselves. Through two of the focal teachers expressed a desire to have their teaching observed and formatively evaluated, none of the
participating teachers reported outside observations of their teaching other than for summative purposes.

Though many college teachers desire to make their enacted practices as good as they can, often the only source of data to inform improvements, in addition to their personal observations, is occasional student comments on standardized evaluation forms.

As I listened to the participating teachers describe their teaching practices and later watched each enact his/her practice in the classroom, a common characteristic of these exemplars emerged. It was evident that each had a desire to "teach" the best that he/she could. At some point during my data collection, each teacher explained changes he/she had made in his/her practice as a result of observations of student problems or difficulties. On several occasions, two of the teachers also sought my opinion regarding their teaching practices, further illustrating their desire to do all that they could to help their students and improve their practices. It is also worthwhile to note here, focal students from each of the participating teacher's classes commented on their beliefs that the teachers tried or wanted to teach well.

Though none of the participating teachers reported using formal formative evaluations of their enacted teaching practices they did reveal that student performance on homework and tests was monitored to assess the need for changes in the classroom. Each of the participating teachers also reported that they considered comments on the Student Perceptions of Instruction forms (see Appendix B) as they prepared to teach subsequent classes. These teachers cited specific changes they had made to their enacted teaching practices as a result of such feedback. For example, one teacher described a basic shift made in the focus of course examinations as a result of student comments during the previous semester. Previously, the teacher had used essay questions, requiring students to demonstrate their knowledge in a "synthesized form." However, students indicated that they preferred to demonstrate their
knowledge in a more direct manner rather than being required to apply it. Though the teacher indicated that such an approach did not fit his/her beliefs, changes were made to adjust to student expectations.

*Exemplar college teachers balance the demonstration of their practical and research knowledge with the presentation of subject matter*

As reported earlier, undergraduate students value college teachers' practical, general, and research knowledge if it is effectively used to demonstrate the relevance of the content under study. Through my observations and focal student reports, a common feature of each of the focal teacher's enacted teaching practices was the use of these knowledge areas to demonstrate subject matter relevance. Students did reveal, however, that teachers can go "overboard" in talking about their research or past work experiences, indicating that the level of presentation should be understandable and the amount "moderate".

**Evaluation Process**

*Teacher and student expectations differ.*

For the most part, students participating in this study were trying to get through the "system" by whatever means required of them. If teachers provided information on what paths to take, students reported following that advice. For example, Dr. Samson shared with students what he considered to be helpful ways to set up their homework problems. These strategies, when used appropriately would result in higher grades and more correct answers. One of the participating students reported that he began using the same format for his homework in another class. The result was a dramatically improved homework grade for both classes.
Many of the student comments throughout the course of this study revealed that they were seeking clues to help them navigate the higher education system. These clues could be provided by other students, but ideally, students believed that teachers should be the source of this vital information. Students expressed a desire to be told exactly what they needed to "do" to receive a "good" grade. On the other hand, teachers also reported expectations for the students entering their classes. Teachers expected that students would be motivated to learn, think through things as they learned, and ask legitimate questions should they need clarification.

*Students' negative perceptions may not be readily obvious to the teacher or to classroom observers.*

Hidden fractures within the foundations of students' landscapes of teaching excellence may cause teachers to stumble when they attempt to "take a read" of the classroom horizon. In the four classes that I observed, student displeasure was not readily obvious. On occasion, particularly when I was seated in the back of a classroom, I overhead students' negative comments or signs of frustration, as they expressed confusion or frustration with the pacing of a lecture or the "boring" nature of the subject matter. Such comments, often unshared with or unnoticed by teachers, reveal the unattractive features of students' landscapes of college teaching. They also reflect their assumptions and interpretations of teacher motives and perceptions of whether their needs are being confirmed or disconfirmed.

**Summary and Implications**

The findings of this study help clarify the process by which students develop their landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence and approach the evaluation of teaching. Students' evaluations of teaching are influenced by their varying landscapes of teaching.
excellence, which are often socially informed, but ultimately arise from students' personal histories. Differences resulting from varying features between students' landscapes of teaching excellence often manifest themselves in differential valuations of the various dimensions of teaching.

Based on comments from students and faculty members participating in this study, the level of consensus within this university regarding the purpose of higher education and what comprises good teaching comes into question. Granted, scholars and professionals from varying disciplines will likely value different forms of knowledge or recognize different outcomes as educational achievement but sometimes within disciplines, faculty and students hold differing views. Because these views of the nature of knowledge differ, views of the appropriate means of "transmitting" or developing that knowledge within students will likely also differ. Perhaps such differing views lead to the items on the current Student Perceptions of Teaching forms (see Appendix B) which focus primarily on global traits such as apparent knowledge of subject or concern and respect for students. As pointed out by one of the students participating in this study, though these forms do solicit student ratings of items such as the adequacy of the textbook and course materials, they do not address the teachers' use of curriculum materials, their instructional strategies, etc. Neither do they attempt to assess what students deem as important. As one student indicated to me, she had a teacher who was really poor at communicating, but she did not care because it was a very student-centered class and the students conducted their own investigations, sometimes led by the teacher's helpful suggestions. Hence, when faced with evaluating the teacher on this dimension, she did not know what to do. But, she reasoned, the class was good because she learned a lot. So, she gave the teacher a 4.0, (excellent), on success in communicating the subject matter.
The next steps that should be undertaken to improve the evaluation and recognition of college teaching excellence are:

1) **Further elaboration of the landscapes of teaching excellence.**

To further inform the construction of integrated landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence, additional information is needed. As a foundation for these landscapes, perceptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the purposes of higher education should be identified for the major stakeholders.

2) **Formation of integrated landscapes of teaching excellence, acknowledging the needs of each stakeholder.**

A starting point to developing shared conceptions of what dimensions should be included in landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence is the integration of salient features from the landscapes of each major stakeholder. To best effect this, students and teachers should be brought together to engage in dialogue about "teaching" and its evaluation.

3) **Construction of viable evaluation frameworks incorporating features from the integrated landscapes of teaching excellence of the major stakeholders.**

Using information gathered in the first two steps, evaluations can be constructed that will better meet the needs of the participants in the college classroom. Using conceptualizations regarding the nature of knowledge and the purpose of higher education as starting points, consensus could be reached on acceptable means to address these features. Based on characterization of the various acceptable means or strategies, appropriate evaluation instruments to gather information from multiple sources can be developed with data being supplied to the appropriate stakeholders.
In addition to these implications for the development of useful evaluation systems, the findings from this research also informed the identification of tools that could positively impact the student evaluation of enacted teaching practices as well as student learning. Following are descriptions of these tools.

1. **Establish mutual expectations among the stakeholders in the college classroom.**

   Once in a classroom, teachers have the potential to effect the rubrics which students employ as they evaluate their own learning and the teacher's instruction. Because students' entering expectations and belief systems will likely vary, it may serve teachers well to engage students in "discussion" about the respective roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the classroom. Such discussion could result in modifications to both teacher and student landscapes of undergraduate teaching excellence. As demonstrated in the case study for the physics class, a common belief system and expectations allow all parties to proceed, confident that their efforts will make a difference in their individual goals being realized.

2. **If a purpose of student evaluations of instruction is the improvement of enacted teaching practices of college faculty, then on-going formative assessments of students' perceptions and learning should be implemented.**

   Because student opinions or quality assessments are dynamic, changing as events unfold in the classroom, evaluation of the enacted practice of teachers should be conducted in an on-going manner. Periodic use of minute papers or exit slips could provide teachers with valuable information regarding student learning and perceptions of their enacted teaching practices.

   Additionally, though more time consuming and labor intensive, the inclusion of unstructured/open-ended questions in student evaluations of college teaching may also provide
teachers, teacher evaluators, and faculty development experts more valuable information concerning possible areas of improvement as well as information concerning strategies, methods, etc. that students found particularly helpful in their learning.

Such evaluations can also serve to inform students. The questions that teachers ask students to respond to in minute papers or exit slips inform students' conceptions of what is "important". Continually focusing students' assessments of teaching on their learning can also serve to inform students' landscapes of teaching excellence, moving them from focusing on global perspectives to specific features that effect their learning.

3. The potential that teacher evaluations of students has to impact student perceptions and evaluation of college teachers should be considered in the timing of evaluations.

Perhaps the last day of class or after final exams is not amenable to providing a fair picture of teaching excellence (competence). If students feel they have not done well enough in a particular course, i.e., have not received a grade they deem as acceptable or good, they may project their dissatisfaction over their perceived performance onto the teacher being evaluated.

This potential could also be addressed by establishing mutual expectations and employing more formative evaluations for the assessment of student learning.

Through my communications with teaching faculty throughout this campus a common fear emerged. Many faculty made comments similar to the following I recently received from one of the exemplar teachers participating in this study:

I think teaching evaluations (current ones used) and the emphasis placed on them have exacerbated current problems in the U.S. educational system. Faculty, including myself, are too scared to give the grades students deserve!!

Another faculty member shared the following comment with me.
I am afraid to even question students’ answers or comments to get at their underlying assumptions for fear I will be accused of "attacking" them. I long for a return to the "good old days" when students expected to be challenged and did not evaluate a teacher’s instruction as poor when they were required to defend their positions and think!

Based on these comments and many from students and faculty participating in this study, I present the final, overall implication.

To positively affect the assessment and promotion of undergraduate teaching excellence, institutions of higher education need to develop and support a culture of teaching excellence.

Just as students wish to be sheltered from unfair assessment, particularly if they perceive its purpose to be the ranking of students, so too feel the faculty. Many of the problems, from the perspective of faculty, with student evaluations of instruction can be addressed if a culture of teaching excellence is established throughout the campus. For example, several of the teachers participating in this study communicated a desire for a more comprehensive evaluation system including peer evaluations of instruction to supplement the student evaluations.

An active culture of teaching excellence can accomplish many goals, particularly in the three steps previously outlined regarding the development of a useful evaluation system integrating features from the landscapes of teaching excellence of the major stakeholders. A forum encouraging open exchange of information and perspectives is necessary if informed decisions are to be made regarding the evaluation of such a complex phenomena as college teaching.

In addition to providing a forum, institutional efforts need to be focused on eliminating the "threat" of reprisal felt by many faculty. One of the teachers participating in my study illustrated the extent of this threat when stating that many university faculty are afraid to even admit they
have questions or concerns about teaching. The fear that such information could be used against them in promotion and tenure decisions, decisions regarding pay raises, or course assignments stop many faculty from engaging in conversations about their teaching practices or inviting peers to observe their teaching.

**Directions for Future Research**

In order to develop a useful evaluation system for college teaching, we must first agree upon a purpose. Recently, a former member of the Vice President’s Office for Academic Affairs related to me that in 1969 he presented a student evaluation of teaching form to the Provost that he had borrowed from another university. He indicated that his reason for suggesting that systematic student evaluations of instruction be implemented at Virginia Tech was “to help faculty improve their teaching.” He felt that the information from the student evaluation forms would help teachers as they planned for future teaching efforts. He also related that he felt the questions on the current Student Perceptions of Instruction form (see Appendix B) had really not changed much over the ensuing years since Virginia Tech adopted uniform guidelines for the evaluation of teaching. Given that the original intention of student evaluations of instruction was improvement of college teaching, perhaps an examination of the purpose of the evaluations and the intended recipients of the resulting data is where we should start.

If higher education is considered under a market-driven model where the college or university can be pictured as a provider and students as primary consumers, university administrations walk a tenuous line as they attempt to address the changing “needs” of the external environment comprised of secondary and tertiary consumers of the products of higher education, graduates. Which stakeholder body’s needs are met when overall ratings of college teachers are “high,” serving as an indicator of excellence? The use of student evaluation of
teaching forms that do not assess what teachers feel is important in the college teaching enterprise or what students feel is important to their learning and satisfaction is not productive.

Closer examination of students’ entering perceptions of the purpose of higher education could illustrate additional features in their landscapes of teaching excellence. A number of questions would underlie this examination such as:

- What are the differences between the perceived purposes of higher education from the perspective of the major stakeholders?
- What impact do these perceived purposes have on the enactment of teachers’ practices inside the classroom?
- What impact do these perceived purposes have on the students’ reactions to teachers’ practices?

- Is one of the purposes of higher education to guide students as they develop and expand their initial landscapes of teaching excellence?
- Is this being done in college classrooms now?
  - How is it done?
  - Are students aware of the process?

Frameworks of college teaching excellence should be supple, responding to the influence of stakeholders’ needs and goals as they fluctuate and emerge. These frameworks should remain relative, however they must maintain a level of sensitivity to the larger environment outside of the classroom walls.
POSTSCRIPT

My personal landscape of teaching excellence continues to emerge as I reflect on my various roles of student, teacher, and researcher. Also informing my landscape are my recollections of interactions with the faculty and students who participated in my study, students from my Educational Psychology class last semester, and faculty throughout Virginia Tech.

I was not so naïve when I undertook this study to think that it would be easy to define or characterize teaching excellence. For if it was, then it would have been done already.

I preface my following discussion by stipulating that I feel that perceptions of quality are equal to satisfaction. Just as I will not consider an award-winning chef as excellent if I am not satisfied with the meal, I do not believe that students or observers of college teaching consider excellence from “outside” themselves, i.e., personal belief systems and histories play a major role in influencing one’s perceptions of excellence. Just as my tastes for fine food have evolved over the years, becoming more refined as I branched out and experienced various cuisines, so too have my tastes for teaching. Yet, while I may admire a teacher’s skill or some quality they demonstrate in the classroom, I, like the students who participated in this study, will not consider the teacher excellent unless that particular skill or quality is of value to me. I may however, in a group of people, share that I recognize that characteristic or skill, yet when asked to anonymously evaluate that person, I return to my own framework to assess quality. That said, I’d like to start by stipulating what I believe excellent teaching is not.

Excellent teaching is not entertainment. While I do acknowledge the value of a few light remarks to “break the ice” so to speak and chip away at the wall that appears in many classes as teachers stand before students, I do not feel that entertainment value is requisite to student learning.

Excellent teaching does not spew forth from fonts of knowledge. Granted, subject matter expertise is an EXTREMELY important tool in any college teacher’s repertoire. I do not, however, feel that students always get what they need from continuous teacher-centered lectures, which remain prevalent in college classes.

Excellent teaching is not something that is done to students. I believe that excellent teaching is something that is done for students. College education is something that students must do for themselves. While I acknowledge that most undergraduates learn while they attend college, I hesitate to use the label “learners” when referring to many of them. I say this because,
from a cognitive constructivist perspective, I believe that to really learn, students must construct
their own knowledge. I am bothered by the number of students and faculty I have encountered
over recent years who consider college education as simply achieved by memorization.

For me, the most important outcome from conducting this study, was the opportunity to
really think about teaching. The personal implications I derive from this study follow.

Of primary importance in my landscape of teaching excellence is a reflective and
thoughtful approach to teaching. I believe teachers must consider what outcomes they wish for
the students in their classes. Not until these outcomes are considered can a teacher select
instructional strategies or curricular materials. Simply repeating topic lists from their own college
classes without thought about the value of the topic or how best to accomplish the desired
outcomes has the potential to do disservice to both the teacher and the students.

I feel excellent teachers serve as a guide to students as they become part of a
community of engaged learners with efforts directed toward compatible, if not common goals.
Teachers who are successful in establishing the atmosphere and conditions for students to
become engaged with material in a meaningful way can serve multiple purposes. As in the
physics course examined in this study, if students' expectations are met, then they are satisfied. I
would also hope that meaningful learning can take place as well.

Beyond the basic definitions and terminology of a discipline, I would not encourage
memorization for my students. I would instead, attempt to develop cases and problems which
would encourage students to "think" in order to answer. Simple parroting back on tests does not
equate to academic achievement. Instead, I would like students to venture into the discipline and
work with reasoning through issues much like professionals in the discipline would do.

I would also strive to demonstrate my thought processes when engaged with
students. I believe that this could alleviate some of the problems students experience as they
attempt to write down every word a teacher says, memorizing them for tests.

Finally, I would attempt to provide an environment in which students felt comfortable with
both asking and responding to questions. This can help in many ways. First, student learning can
be assessed by attending to their answers and examining the level of response. Second, I
believe that student learning can be encouraged through questioning. By the types of questions
asked, I feel that teachers influence student expectations for what they will need to do to get
through the system. I feel questions also "inform" students' conceptions of the nature of
knowledge and what it means to be educated. If the majority of the questions asked of students
are low level knowledge and comprehension questions, then how can I expect students to make the leap to the application, synthesis, and evaluation levels.

Of course, I realize that there are many constraints and influences on the college classroom that can impact student learning. For example, budget cuts and increasing class sizes take away opportunities to interact with and question students. Moves towards extensive use of distance learning or computer-assisted instruction take away opportunities to make a personal contact with students. The contact that they are seeking.

Based on discussions I have engaged in with faculty throughout this campus and at other universities, I believe that continuing use of evaluation forms such as the current one used at Virginia Tech for the student evaluation of instruction run in direct opposition to what I feel the best reason to seek student feedback about teaching is: to better effect student learning. Taking a form from an outside institution, with little knowledge of how the indicators of excellence were developed or if they were even valid to the students who would be asked to complete them is not in higher education’s or Virginia Tech’s best interest. Adding insult to injury, composite student ratings resulting from such forms have been used in promotion and tenure decisions and decisions about faculty salary increases.

I agree, recognizing exemplars or people who epitomize an ideal is of great value to institutions, including higher education. Additionally, outside recognition based on the quality of a college or university’s faculty is important in many ways. However, the goal I hold for college teaching is student learning and I believe that evaluations of teaching can best serve to enhance student learning.
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APPENDIX A

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO EXCELLENCE IN COLLEGE TEACHING

The American Heritage Dictionary (1981) defines excellent as "Being of the highest or finest quality; exceptionally good; superb." While there are many characterizations of teaching in higher education (see, for example, Beidler, 1986; Buxton & Prichard, 1975; Ebel, 1972, 1988, 1990; Erickson, 1984; Gullette, 1982; Jussawalla, 1990; McKeachie, 1994; Shea, 1990; and Sheffield, 1974) there is no consensus model of the ideal teacher (Erickson, 1984). And, despite all of the conceptualizations, no clear idea of excellence in higher education has been portrayed. In fact, the terms good, effective, and excellent are often used interchangeably in the college teaching literature (see, for example, Feldman, 1974; Hartung, 1972; Sheffield, 1974). The purpose of this review is to provide a foundation for the construction of a clearer conceptualization of excellence in college teaching. To set the tone for this discussion, I begin with a brief description of some common conceptions of excellence for colleges and universities, follow with a review of research on college teaching effectiveness, and close with a discussion of teaching effectiveness research for grades K-12 and how findings here may be useful in the construction of landscapes of college teaching excellence.

Conceptions of Excellence in Institutions of Higher Education

Approaches to assessing the quality of institutions of higher education have traditionally focused on a school's reputation, resources, student outcomes, or the content of the curriculum.
Excellence as Reputation

Astin (1985) characterized the reputational view of excellence in higher education as highly subjective in that it is based on common folklore associated with institutions such as Cal Tech, MIT, Stanford, or Harvard. Fairweather (1988) described the reputational view of excellence as the institutional halo. Basically, under the reputational view, the relative excellence of an institution lies in a consensus opinion of its quality (Skinner & Tafel, 1986).

Excellence as Resources

The premise underlying the resource view of excellence is ‘more is better’. The four basic types of resources that higher education can be rated on are: the staff, physical facilities, students, and budget. What is interesting about this list, is the first three items can be acquired, provided the institution has enough of the fourth item, money. Winston (1994) proposed that the primary source of an institution of higher education’s national reputation for excellence was its faculty. So, research institutions with sufficient resources are able to attract faculty members who have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences or have won Nobel Prizes. Winston maintained that the "hiring and growing of faculty superstars" established an institution’s reputation for seriousness and academic achievement. The addition of such faculty members improves the institution’s perceived excellence. Based on this notion, institutions can also impact excellence by raising admission standards and enrolling large numbers of National Merit Scholars and other high ability students, or by increasing per-student expenditures (Astin, 1985).

Excellence as Outcomes

Proponents of the outcomes view of institutional excellence support the notion that the true measure of excellence in higher education is the quality of an institution’s products. Early
attempts to measure the quality of institutional outcomes were reported by Knapp and Goodrich (1952). Commonly employed outcome measures include: persistence rates of undergraduates; student performance on achievement tests in major fields; the proportion of baccalaureate recipients from an institution who go on to receive doctorate degrees; job placement of alumni; lifetime earnings of an institution's alumni; awards earned by alumni; and alumni satisfaction ratings (Astin, 1985; Skinner & Tafel, 1986). Webster (1986) reported that the most common method of ranking undergraduate colleges has been by the number of graduates who later achieve eminence, i.e., positions at colleges and universities, positions of power in corporations, etc.

**Excellence as Content**

Under the content view of excellence, the ultimate quality of an institution is determined by the disciplines taught, with higher ratings of excellence typically being afforded to schools that grant more degrees in engineering and the sciences (Astin, 1985).

Astin (1985) concluded that reputational, resources, and output views of excellence in higher education produced very similar rankings of colleges and universities. He also noted that the reputational and resources views reinforce each other because an enhanced reputation can result in increased resources, and additional resources, in turn, can improve an institution's reputation.

While the present conceptualizations of excellence in higher education consider numerous indices including resources and alumni achievement as indicators of quality, they do not consider the enacted teaching practices of faculty, i.e., what actually goes on inside college classrooms.
College Teaching Effectiveness

Generally, the research into college teaching effectiveness has been aimed at one of the following dimensions: perceptions of effective teacher characteristics and teaching effectiveness of outcomes of teaching, i.e., student achievement. Prior to 1970, the research generally focused on the characteristics of good or ideal teachers (Common, 1989). Researchers approached this feature from two primary vantage points, student perceptions and faculty perceptions.

Effectiveness as Perception

Student perceptions of effective teacher characteristics. The primary source of data on college teaching effectiveness has been students, the target of teaching. Over the years researchers have asked students or alumni to specify the characteristics and behaviors they feel contribute to superior teaching and effective college teachers. Research methodologies have varied. Some studies have focused on student descriptions of ideal teachers (Smith, 1944), while others have focused on the characteristics deemed most important to good teaching (Lehmann, 1966). Further distinctions can be made in research approach, with unstructured studies allowing students to respond freely with their own lists of characteristics or descriptions while structured-response studies provided students with lists of characteristics and behaviors for their consideration. Another approach has been to have students identify the best teachers they have had and to describe what characteristics or qualities set them apart from their other instructors (Sheffield, 1974).

In an unstructured descriptive study, Sheffield (1974) addressed the teaching effectiveness of faculty from 19 colleges and universities in Canada. One thousand graduates (Classes of 1958, 1963, and 1968) responded to Sheffield’s request for descriptions of effective teachers. The comments made by all responding alumni were grouped into four major
categories: personal qualities or attributes; subject mastery, scholarship, and devotion to teaching; attitudes towards and relations with students; and methods and procedures (organization and presentation of materials). Each of these categories was further divided, resulting in 53 subcategories of characteristics. The top 10 characteristics identified and the number of alumni reporting each were: mastery of subject matter (717), organized lectures (712), made subject relevant (555), encouraged student questions and opinions (481), enthusiasm for subject (385), approachable (372), concern for student progress (329), sense of humor (321), kind (278), and effective use of teaching aids (278).

Various studies have demonstrated a degree of consistency in the student identification of characteristics of effective teachers. Feldman (1976) reviewed 60 studies reporting student perceptions of the characteristics of ideal college teachers, their best college teachers, or the characteristics they deemed the most important to superior college teaching. The most frequently identified characteristics of effective teachers in order of relative importance from non-structured response studies were: concern or respect for students, knowledge of subject matter, stimulation of interest, availability and helpfulness, openness to other's opinions, clarity, enthusiasm, and preparation/organization.

It is interesting that the most frequently identified characteristics from structured response studies differ somewhat from the non-structured responses: knowledge, stimulation of interest, sensitivity to class progress, clarity, enthusiasm, preparation/organization, challenge and availability.

In a similar review, Kulik and McKeachie (1975) developed a list of four major dimensions following a factor analysis of student trait nomination studies of teacher effectiveness: Skill - ability to communicate in interesting ways; Rapport - empathy, interaction, concern; Structure - organization, presentation; and Load - workload, instructor demands. In 1986, McKeachie
expanded this list of major dimensions by adding a fifth dimension, Group Interaction - encouraging group discussion.

**Student ratings of teaching effectiveness.** Over the past quarter of a century widespread acceptance has been gained for the use of formal student ratings of teaching in North American universities (Murray, 1985). The purpose of these ratings ranges from providing diagnostic feedback to faculty on their teaching effectiveness, providing a measure of teaching effectiveness used in promotion and tenure decisions, providing information for students to use in the selection of courses, and as an outcome on a process description in research on college teaching effectiveness (Marsh, 1984). While there are many critics of the use of student ratings (see, for example, Abrami, 1989; Sheehan, 1975), research does support their usefulness in evaluations of teaching (McKeachie, 1979, 1994; Marsh, 1984).

Student ratings of a given instructor remain reasonably stable across courses, groups of raters and time periods and are only affected to a minor extent by extraneous factors such as class size, time of day, required vs. elective classes and severity of grading; are consistent with similar ratings made by alumni, colleagues, and classroom observers, and are significantly correlated with objective measures of teaching effectiveness, such as student performance on exams (Cohen, 1981; Feldman, 1989; McKeachie 1979, 1990, 1994; Murray, 1985; Sheffield, 1974). Teachers rated as effective by students on end-of-course evaluations are generally those teachers whose students achieve most based on end-of-course examinations (McKeachie, 1990, 1994). One should consider however, lacking standardized tests as measures of achievement, these findings could be related to the test content rather than to student achievement.

Recently a new criticism of student ratings of teacher effectiveness has been raised. Menges (1988) commented on what could be characterized as a paradigm problem with the evaluation forms used in student assessment of college teaching. Generally speaking, the forms
fail to address the student as an active learner. Instead, students are placed in a position as receivers of knowledge and asked to evaluate their teachers as purveyors of knowledge. This approach does, however, coincide with the predominate mode of teaching that exists in higher education today.

Murray (1985) used student perceptions of teaching effectiveness in a study designed to identify the behaviors of effective teachers. In this study, students trained as neutral observers visited classes taught by 48 full-time social science faculty members at the University of Western Ontario. Each of the teachers was observed during three separate one hour lectures by six to eight observers. Standardized rating forms were used to obtain frequencies of 30 low inference teacher behaviors falling under six categories: enthusiasm, clarity, interaction, task orientation, rapport, and organization. Significant correlations were reported between half of the behaviors and student perceptions of teaching effectiveness as measured by end-of-course evaluations. The correlations reported for all six of the behaviors attributed to enthusiasm were significant.

Murray cited this as indicative of the importance of effective methods for eliciting and maintaining student attention. However, significant correlations were also reported for such instructional behaviors as stressing important points, providing multiple examples, signaling transition to new topics, encouraging questions and comments, and showing concern for student progress. It is interesting to note that correlations were reported for behaviors in all but one of the major categories, task orientation. Behaviors attributed to task orientation were: advising students regarding exams, providing sample exam questions, proceeding at a rapid pace, digressing from the theme of lecture, and stating course objectives. This finding appears to be contradictory to researcher and reviewer findings that students identified preparation, organization, or structure as important to effective teaching (Feldman, 1976; Goodwin & Stevens, 1993; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Sheffield, 1974; Sherman, et al., 1987). Murray suggested that the correlations
with student ratings being larger for attention-getting teacher behaviors than for information-giving or rapport building behaviors may be due to mediation by student attention. In other words, these behaviors are not likely to be effective with students, if they are not already paying attention.

As it stands, Murray’s (1985) study does not provide evidence that the low-inference teacher behaviors examined are related to student achievement. However, because Murray was able to show a relationship between neutral-observers’ reports of teacher behaviors and student ratings of teaching effectiveness, this study does provide support for the position that instructors who receive high student ratings do teach differently than instructors who receive low ratings.

**Faculty perception of effective teacher characteristics.** Data on college teaching effectiveness has also been gathered from teachers and colleagues. Sheffield (1974) invited 23 professors, identified as effective in nomination letters from former students, to write essays explaining their beliefs about effective college teaching. The majority of the effective teacher characteristics gleaned from an analysis of the essays were similar to those identified by the alumni nominating the teachers, including competence in and enthusiasm about subject matter and positive attitude towards students. However, the faculty placed a higher significance on attitude towards students than the students did. Donald (1985) reported that students tend to be most concerned with the teacher’s grasp and coverage of course content. This was true in this study, with mastery of subject matter nominated by 71% of the alumni as an indicator of teaching effectiveness.

In a structured-response study, Miron (1985) surveyed 51 teaching faculty from two social science disciplines at a single university in Israel. Respondents were asked to identify the three most important characteristics of a good college teacher from a list of fifteen characteristics. The characteristics were selected from a list generated by the faculty at the university and related to
four aspects of the faculty role: scholarship, delivery, advising, and personal traits. The ability to stimulate intellectual curiosity and develop student thought processes were identified as the most desirable characteristics of good teachers. These global characteristics were followed by preparation and organization of lessons. It is interesting to note that friendliness and willingness to help students ranked 10th and 11th respectively followed by speaking ability, sense of humor, flexibility and appearance.

Recently, Goodwin and Stevens (1993) surveyed 250 faculty at the University of Colorado. Their structured-response survey solicited ratings of various characteristics and behaviors drawn from the literature and deemed to be indicative of good university teaching. The resulting ranked characteristics and behaviors are similar to those reported in other studies (see, for example Sheffield, 1974): mastery of subject matter, enthusiasm for teaching, enthusiasm for subject matter, clearly states objectives, concern for improving students' higher-order thinking, fair tests, friendly, frequent feedback, avoids criticism, concerned with student's self-esteem, varies instructional methodology, encourages student interaction, and uses a variety of visual aids.

**Colleague ratings of teaching effectiveness.** Centra (1975) reported that prior to 1975 the majority of studies on college teaching effectiveness found fairly high agreement between colleague and student ratings of teachers. However, he added that in most studies, the faculty did not observe actual teaching, but rather based their judgments on their knowledge of student ratings. Centra was interested in how colleague ratings based on actual classroom observations would compare with student observations. In order to assure ratings were not based on knowledge of student assessments, Centra conducted his research at a university within its first year of operation. Results indicated that faculty were more generous with colleagues than students when rating teaching effectiveness. The average colleague rating was 4.47 (s.d. = .43) on a five point scale, while the average student rating was 3.98 (s.d. = .54) This may have been
due to the fact that colleague ratings were based on one class observation, while student ratings were based on an entire semester of classes.

In a recent review, Feldman (1989) examined 14 studies (completed from 1953 to 1985) comparing colleague and current student ratings of teaching effectiveness. The colleague ratings were made by each teacher’s peers. Peer status was based on faculty standing, with colleague raters coming from various departments, depending on the design of the study. All colleague ratings did not include observations of actual instruction. Feldman reported overall, there was a high degree of similarity between student and colleague ratings of instructional effectiveness.

Self ratings of teaching effectiveness. Another area of research has focused on faculty self-ratings of teacher effectiveness. Feldman (1989) reviewed 19 studies (completed from 1962 to 1984) that examined the similarities between teacher self ratings and current student perceptions of teaching effectiveness. Overall, the findings were that a moderate degree of similarity existed between students’ and teachers’ perceptions.

A common argument raised against the use of student evaluations of instruction is that students do not know what makes good teaching good. Feldman (1988) reviewed 31 studies in which both students and faculty at the same schools were asked to specify the instructional characteristics they considered important to effective college instruction. The results between the two populations were generally similar (average correlation $r = .71$, $p < .001$). Notable differences were that students valued teachers being interesting, having good elocutionary skills, and being available and helpful more than faculty. Faculty valued intellectual challenge, motivation, high standards, and encouragement of self-initiated learning more than students did.

To summarize, the major dimensions reported in research and reviews of student and faculty perceptions of effective, good, or ideal college teaching are: enthusiasm for subject matter and teaching; preparation, organization, or structure; clarity in explaining subject; mastery
of subject matter, including ability to make subject matter relevant and interesting; and concern for students, helpfulness. Reports of faculty perceptions included additional dimensions focused on the development of student thought processes (Goodwin & Stevens, 1993; Miron, 1975) and curiosity and self-initiated learning (Feldman, 1988; Miron, 1985).

A major criticism of characteristic studies is that they generally result in lists of global characteristics, qualities, or behaviors that may or may not be in fact related to effective teaching (Barnes & Eliner, 1983). Later researchers of teacher effectiveness shifted their focus to establishing relationships between teacher behaviors and student outcomes. These methodologies enabled researchers to correlate observable teaching behavior with student achievement (Common, 1989).

**Effectiveness as Student Outcomes**

Donald (1985) defines good teaching as effective teaching. She goes on to state that teaching is effective if it meets given criteria: “factors or characteristics that can be measured according to a standard.” McKeachie (1994) characterized teaching effectiveness as the degree to which one has facilitated student achievement of educational goals. Most studies relating classroom activities to student outcomes have tried to establish a relationship between teacher behavior and the student outcome of achievement or learning (Hecht, 1978). Studies falling under this paradigm have been characterized as process-product research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). When researchers focus on student learning as the criterion measure of teacher effectiveness, they usually refer to cognitive outcomes (McKeachie, 1994). Donald (1985) suggested that the strongest measure of student learning would be the increase or gain in knowledge between the beginning and end of the course.
Rather than focus on long-term measures of outcomes as commonly used as an indicator of institutional excellence, the most common measure of student outcomes as they relate to teaching effectiveness is the course final examination (Donald, 1985; McKeachie, 1994; Menges, 1988), which generally measures knowledge much more heavily than application, analysis, synthesis or problem solving domains. Another commonly used measure of student achievement is standardized tests (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

Goodwin and Stevens (1993) surveyed university faculty in an attempt to identify appropriate outcomes of effective teaching by asking the open-ended question, "In your view, what are the appropriate outcomes that reflect 'good' teaching?". The 250 responses fell into the following major categories: proficient knowledge of subject matter, problem solving and critical thinking skills, enthusiasm and self-motivation, show desire to pursue subject matter further, and high student course ratings. It is interesting to note that about 58% of the suggested outcomes of good teaching provided by respondents related to cognitive gains in students. This finding, paired with the low priority respondents gave to student interaction and participation, indicates these faculty focused more on subject matter knowledge and higher order thinking skills than on affective outcomes.

An important point here is that studies directed at establishing a relationship between teacher characteristics or behaviors and student outcomes generally approach education from the view that teacher characteristics or behaviors are independent variables that impact the dependent variable, student learning (Hecht, '78; Scott, 1993). Such an approach tends to emphasize a teacher's behaviors rather than professional judgments (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

Baxter-Magolda (1992) reported that students who believed that knowledge is absolute, perceive that the teacher plays a central role in their learning. This suggests that students'
perceptions of their academic experiences, and therefore their ratings of college teaching effectiveness, are predicated on their underlying epistemologies. Baxter-Magolda (1992) proposed that students learn better when the instructional strategy matches their way of knowing. On the other hand, Winne and Marx (1977) postulated that any relationships that may exist between teacher behavior and student achievement occur only because of the student's participation in the learning process. Based on this assumption, teacher-student, student-student, and student-material interactions or involvement may be vital to the learning process.

Effective Teaching in Grades K-12

The research on effective teaching in grades K-12 followed a similar evolution as that for college teaching. Prior to 1960, researchers focused on the identification of teacher traits or characteristics considered exemplary by administrators and supervisors (Cruickshank, 1990). In the sixties the research focus changed to identifying specific teacher behaviors present or operative when pupils were succeeding (Cruickshank, 1986).

Teacher Characteristics and Behaviors

Cruickshank (1990) reviewed research conducted on effective teaching for grades K-12 from 1971 to 1988. The effective teacher behaviors and characteristics reported in these studies can be organized into seven clusters: teacher character traits; teacher knowledge; what the teacher teaches; how the teacher teaches; teacher expectations; how the teacher reacts to students; and how the teacher manages the classroom.

**Teacher character traits.** The studies focusing on teacher character traits suggest that teachers are effective when they are: enthusiastic, stimulating, encouraging, warm, task-oriented and business like, tolerant, trusting, flexible, and democratic (Cruickshank, 1990). Effective
teachers also hold high expectations for students, do not seek personal recognition, care less about being liked, are able to overcome student stereotypes, are less time-conscious, feel responsible for pupil learning, are able to express feelings and demonstrate good listening skills (Cruickshank, 1990).

**Teacher knowledge.** The literature suggests that effective teachers draw upon many areas of knowledge in the planning, preparation and delivery of instruction (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Cruickshank, 1990; Porter & Brophy, 1988; Shulman, 1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1988; Wilson, et al., 1987). Shulman (1987) proposed that the components of a professional knowledge base, prerequisite to effective teaching, are: content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational aims. Shulman (1987) identified four potential sources for such a teaching knowledge base: scholarship in content disciplines, the materials and settings of the institutionalized educational process (curricula, textbooks, school organizations, etc.), research on schooling, human learning, teaching and development and the other social and cultural phenomena that affect what teachers can do, and the wisdom of practice itself.

**Content knowledge.** Shulman (1986b) proposed that in order to think properly about content, the teacher must go beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. The teacher must understand the structure of the discipline, knowing not only that something is so, but why it is so. For K-12 teachers, Shulman proposes that they have at least the same level of understanding of the subject matter knowledge as a subject major in the discipline. This criteria would appear to be met with college teaching faculty.
General pedagogical knowledge. Here Shulman (1987) refers to the need for an understanding of such areas as strategies of classroom management, planning and organization, that appear to transcend the content under study.

Curriculum knowledge. Under this category, Shulman (1986b) emphasizes the importance of a teacher's knowledge of alternative materials for the study of the content area. Shulman also proposes that a teacher have a lateral curricular knowledge, being familiar with the materials that students are using as they study other subjects, and a vertical curricular knowledge, familiarity of the topics and issues that have been and will be taught to the students in the same subject area during the previous and later years.

Pedagogical content knowledge. This type of knowledge can be conceptualized as an amalgam of content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986b). Such knowledge includes understanding of the most useful means of organizing, representing, and presenting topics, problems, issues in the content area, the most powerful analogies, examples, etc., that make the subject accessible to students. A teacher's pedagogical content knowledge grows as he/she transforms his/her content knowledge for the purpose of teaching.

Knowledge of learners. This area of knowledge refers to knowledge of the traits and characteristics of students, i.e., the way they think, learn, feel about learning, etc.

Knowledge of educational contexts. This knowledge encompasses understanding the workings of small groups, the classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, the character of the community and its cultures, etc. (Shulman, 1987).

Knowledge of educational aims. Here the effective teacher has an understanding of the educational purposes and values of the system in which he/she operates.

What the teacher teaches. Here the research suggests that in addition to ensuring that content students will be held responsible for is covered, effective teachers go beyond, and
provide maximal content coverage (Cruickshank, 1990). Porter and Brophy (1988) reported that effective teachers also clarify what is to be learned, relating it to what has been previously learned or will be learned in the future.

**How the teacher teaches.** The literature suggests that effective teachers structure the classroom, demonstrate clarity, provide variety in instructional methodologies, proceed at an appropriate speed, use small groups effectively, encourage student participation, monitor student progress (Cruickshank, 1990). Effective teachers also demonstrate flexibility, taking advantage of teachable moments, use both open-ended and lower-order questions, avoid complexity by providing information in small chunks, demonstrate relevance of material under study, demonstrate metacognitive and problem solving processes, and are reflective about their teaching (Cruickshank, 1990).

**Teacher expectations.** Effective K-12 teachers establish expectations for students and hold them accountable for them (Cruickshank, 1990; Porter & Brophy, 1988).

**How the teacher reacts to students.** Here the research supports that the idea that effective teachers are accepting, supportive and deal with students in a consistent manner, make judicious use of student criticism, adjust to student developmental levels, individualize instruction, ensure equitable student participation, direct questions to non-volunteers, know all of their students' names, use appropriate wait-time when asking questions, use prompting, provide immediate feedback, and are aware of the diversity existing in their classrooms (Cruickshank, 1990).

**Classroom management.** Effective teachers demonstrate planning expertise, provide strong organization, start classes on time, make smooth transitions, maintain a relaxed atmosphere, and hold students to high standards (Cruickshank, 1990).
Models of Teaching Effectiveness

Dunkin and Biddle (1974) conducted an earlier review of the literature on teacher effectiveness for grades K-12. They identified process variables that fell under four different models for "explaining" classroom events: the trait model, the interaction model, the social system model, and the curriculum model.

The trait model. In this model, teaching is depicted as the display of behavioral traits by the teacher. Teachers can be ranked based on the degree to which they display particular traits. Such traits include teacher praise, acceptance of students, questioning, lecturing, providing directions, use of higher-order knowledge, etc. (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974). I believe a large part of the research into college teaching effectiveness based on student and teacher perceptions would fit under this model of teaching (See Feldman, 1976; Miron, 1985; Murray, 1985; Sheffield, 1974; for example).

The interaction model. This model differs from the trait model in that teaching is considered to be an interaction between the teacher and individual students. Variables appearing within this model include simple reciprocation, episode length, appropriateness, etc. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) expressed concern that this model, in addition to the trait model, does not consider the classroom group and proposed that the model would be most effective when combined with other models in an effort to obtain adequate coverage of classroom events. Mehan (1979) also expressed concern over the use of quantification schemes to record classroom interactions because such an approach limits its domain to behavior tabulated into discrete categories. Such schemes often minimize the contributions of students to the organization of classroom events. Mehan further proposed that classrooms are socially organized and that teachers and students are co-participants in the creation and operation of the organization.
The social system model. This model conceptualizes teaching as involving group states as well as individual states of the teacher and students. Actions taken by the classroom participants are a result of the conditions set up in the classroom. The actions in turn, produce effects in the behavior and growth of the participants (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974). The variables studied under this model relate to the teacher’s role, the structure and function of the classroom groups, and the students’ role. A study reported by Common (1989), describing the importance of the college teachers’ responsibility in constructing the "setting" for the class, would likely fit under the social system model of teaching.

The curriculum model. Under this model, the events of teaching are expected to vary as a function of the curriculum imposed on the classroom. As in the social system model, the curriculum model views the classroom setting as a system of interlocking, interrelated parts. The difference is, under the curriculum model, the system is viewed as a whole, rather than as a set of individual components that can be analyzed (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974). Further, the system is considered as resulting from many causes - lesson plans, pressures from outside the classroom, teacher actions, student actions - rather than as an environment over which the teacher has ultimate power and control (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974).

It is interesting to note that while the major dimensions reported in research and reviews of college teaching effectiveness do appear in the literature on teaching effectiveness for grades K-12, there are many dimensions or behaviors in the later that are not at least widely addressed in the college teaching literature. Of particular interest is the absence of data supporting the need for pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge as described by Wilson, et al. (1987). It is also curious that levels of teacher questioning, use of small group instruction, demonstrating metacognitive and problem solving processes, being reflective about their
teaching, ensuring equitable student participation, and being aware of the diversity among students, are not generally not addressed in the college teaching effectiveness literature.

**Summary**

If excellence in college teaching is, as Maslowski (1975) said, more than the mere transmission of knowledge, or student performance on end-of-course examinations (McKeachie, 1994), or more than can be identified as sets of discrete behaviors, reproducible from one teacher to the next (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990), or manifested in, perhaps, as many ways as there are excellent teachers (Sherman, et al., 1987), then how do we define, evaluate, and promote teaching excellence?

Dunkin & Biddle (1974) suggest that dependence on only one model in the study and/or evaluation of teaching does not allow for the accommodation of the various variables and events of the classroom. Teaching is a complex activity. As has been demonstrated in this review, much of the past research into college teaching effectiveness has focused on either the teacher or the student, with little attention paid to interactions or context (Common, 1989). As Kuh (1981) observed, quality is a by-product of human experience, and as such is subject to multiple realities. Because of this, a holistic approach, including faculty and students as data sources, considering the various contexts of college teaching is in order if an informed conceptualization of undergraduate teaching excellence is to be constructed.
References


# VIRGINIA TECH

**Student Perceptions of Instruction**

Mark the column labeled **NA** when a question is not applicable or inappropriate.

*P = POOR, F = FAIR, G = GOOD, E = EXCELLENT*

## HOW I RATE THE INSTRUCTOR COMPARED WITH OTHERS I HAVE HAD AT VIRGINIA TECH:

1. Apparent knowledge of subject matter:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

2. Success in communicating or explaining subject matter:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

3. Degree to which subject matter was made stimulating or relevant:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

4. Concern and respect for students as individuals:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

5. Fairness in assigning grades:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

6. Administration of the class and organization of materials:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

7. Overall rating of this instructor:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

## HOW I RATE OR DESCRIBE THIS COURSE COMPARED WITH OTHERS I HAVE TAKEN AT VIRGINIA TECH:

9. Adequacy of textbook and other study materials:  
   - **POOR**  
   - **FAIR**  
   - **GOOD**  
   - **EXCELLENT**  
   - **NA**

10. Time and effort required:  
    - **LESS THAN AVERAGE**
    - **AVERAGE**
    - **MORE THAN AVERAGE**

## HOW I RATE OR DESCRIBE MY OWN SITUATION AND OUTCOME FOR THIS COURSE:

11. For me this course was:  
    - a. A required course in my major field:  
    - b. A required course outside my major field:  
    - c. An elective to fulfill a requirement:  
    - d. A free elective in my major field:  
    - e. A free elective outside my major field:  

12. My academic level is:  
    - a. Freshman  
    - b. Sophomore  
    - c. Junior  
    - d. Senior  
    - e. Master's  
    - f. Doctoral  

13. The grade I expect in this course is:  
    - 1  
    - 2  
    - 3  
    - 4  

14. I would rate my gains in this course compared with similar courses as follows:  
    - a. Knowledge of principles, theories, techniques, etc.:  
    - b. Logical thinking and problem-solving ability:  
    - c. Appreciation of the subject matter and discipline field:

### SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST 1</th>
<th>LIST 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MAKE WRITTEN COMMENTS HERE.**

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. CP646434 (C1-23)
APPENDIX C

FACULTY RELEASE FORM

BENEFITS

From this project, I hope to better understand what constitutes excellence in undergraduate teaching. Research data will be gathered from faculty recognized as excellent undergraduate teachers, observations of their teaching, and from students in their classes.

HOW INVOLVED

As a faculty participant, your involvement would entail:

1) Completion of a teaching practice survey,
2) A one-hour interview on your teaching practice,
3) Providing researcher access to documentation related to your role as a teaching faculty member,
4) Providing the researcher an opportunity to invite students to participate in the study,
5) Researcher observations of your teaching three chunks, during the beginning, middle and end of the Spring 1994 semester,
6) Discussing your planning for and reflections on the observed instructional events, and
7) Review of and reaction to researcher interpretations of interview and observational data.

PRIVACY

Interviews and instructional events will be audio taped. Audiotapes will be kept in the researcher's home and only she will have access. Tapes will be transcribed by the researcher at a later date and specific identifying information will be removed during transcription. All information provided will remain confidential however, the data gathered will be used to develop a description of undergraduate teaching for my dissertation and professional papers or presentations; information regarding your role as a teaching faculty member, i.e., faculty rank, number and type of classes taught, may be used in the description.

WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or prejudice, by contacting the researcher's advisor, Dr. Susan G. Magliaro, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, War Memorial Hall, (231-5269) or Dr. Ernest Stout, Chair of the Institutional Review Board (231-9359).

CONTACT

This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee and the Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions please contact Sandra E. Berry, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, War Memorial Hall, (552-0528).

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information above and have agreed to voluntarily participate in this research project under the conditions described.

_________________________  ___________________________
Signature                               Date
APPENDIX D

STUDENT PARTICIPANT SELECTION SURVEY

PART 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name ______________________ Major __________________ Levei _____________
(optional)

How many credit hours are you enrolled in this semester? ______

PART 2 - GENERAL BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. What qualities, knowledge, or behaviors do you think make a college teacher excellent?

2. How do you view the teacher's role in teaching?

3. How would you describe your learning (processes, strategies, needs)?

4. How do you know when you've really learned something?

5. What do instructors do that help your learning?

6. What do instructors do that hinder your learning?

Please check the response which most clearly communicates your opinion of each of the following statements.

7. My achievement in my courses is directly related to my effort.

   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____

8. Professors should make an effort to interact with students in their courses.

   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____

9. I learn a lot from interactions with other students.

   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____
10. Please number the following teacher characteristics, behaviors or foci in order of their importance to excellent teaching with (1) being the most important and (10) being the least important.

____ Enthusiasm for teaching  ____ Enthusiasm for subject matter
____ Mastery of subject matter  ____ Ability to make subject matter relevant
____ Clarity of explanations  ____ Organization/structure
____ Concern for students  ____ Approachability
____ Development of student curiosity  ____ Development of student thought processes

Is there anything else you would add to this list? If so, where would you place it?

PART 3 - BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING AT VIRGINIA TECH

1. I have had some excellent teachers here at Virginia Tech.

   YES _____ NO _____

   If Yes, how many? _____ Please describe.

2. I meet with my professors outside of class.

   YES _____ NO _____

   If YES, what do you discuss?

   If NO, why not?

3. Overall, the instructors I have had at Virginia Tech were approachable.

   AGREE _____ DISAGREE _____

4. Overall, the instructors I have had at Virginia Tech made the content under study understandable.

   AGREE _____ DISAGREE _____

5. I have had instructors at Virginia Tech who incorporated relevant material from their research or consulting projects into course materials.

   YES _____ NO _____

   I find this practice valuable to my learning.

   AGREE _____ DISAGREE _____
PART 4 - BELIEFS ABOUT THIS COURSE

1. What do you hope to get out of this course?

2. What do you think the instructor's goals are for this course?

3. What have you heard about this course? The instructor?

4. How well do you expect to learn in this class?

5. Do you expect to interact with the instructor?

   YES ____  NO ____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT

The aim of this study is to develop an informed description of undergraduate teaching excellence.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this study by completing this survey. I understand that any information I provide will remain confidential.

By providing my phone number below, I volunteer to participate in interviews for this study. I understand that my participation in this portion of the study will require that I meet outside of class with the researcher for three separate interviews (approximately 20 to 30 minutes each), scheduled at my convenience, throughout the Spring 1993-94 Semester. I understand the interviews will focus on my perceptions and reactions to the instruction in this particular class and that the interviews will be audio taped and transcribed by the researcher at a later date. I understand that any information that I provide the researcher during these interviews will remain confidential.

I understand that my participation or non-participation in this study will have no impact on my course standing or grade, and that the instructor will not be informed of my participation in this study. I also understand that I may withdraw from this project at any time without penalty or prejudice by notifying the researcher's major professor, Susan Magliaro, Division of Curriculum and Instruction (231-5269).

_________________________________  __________________       ___________________  
SIGNATURE                               DATE                             PHONE NUMBER

216
APPENDIX E

STUDENT REACTIONS TO ENACTED TEACHING PRACTICE

1. How is the class going so far?
2. What has helped your learning?
3. How has it helped?
4. Has anything detracted from your learning?
5. How has it detracted?
6. Please describe any interactions you have had with the instructor.
   Other students?
   How have these interactions impacted your learning?
7. What do you find most valuable as you learn in this course?
8. What could the teacher do to help you as you learn in this course?
9. What could other students do to help you as you learn in this course?
10. Do you attend class regularly? Why/why not?
11. How do you feel about this course now?
    Your progress in this course to date?
13. How would you rate the teacher's instruction to date?
APPENDIX F
TEACHING PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name ____________________ Department ________________________

Current Rank ______________ Date of Current Rank ________________

Teaching Assignment ___% Research Assignment ___% Extension
Assignment ___%

What percentage of your work time do you actually spend on each activity?
Teaching ___% Research ___% Extension ___%

Please list the courses (including level) you teach.

How many courses do you teach each semester? Please include the number of
students in each course.

PART II - TEACHING PRACTICE

A professional practice can be characterized by the routine goals, beliefs, actions
and patterns of the professional engaging in that practice. Please reflect on your
teaching practice and answer the following questions. Feel free to attach
additional sheets if necessary.

1. Please describe your teaching practice.

2. What are your teaching goals?
3. What types of learning activities do you intend to use this semester?

4. Please discuss any changes that you have made in your teaching practice this semester.

   Why did you make these changes?

5. What changes (if any) do you plan to make next semester?

   Why are you planning these changes?

6. How have you formally or informally evaluated your teaching in the past?

   What have you learned from these activities?

   Will you use the same evaluation tools next semester? Why or why not?
PART III - INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

1. How would you characterize the student/faculty relationship?

How do you address potential linkages/barriers?

2. How much out-of-class time do you spend with students from your classes?

What sort of interactions are you involved in during this time?

3. To what extent are you aware of the diversity of student interests that exist in your classes?

How have you come to this awareness?

How does such an awareness affect your teaching?

4. How do you convey your enthusiasm for teaching to your students and colleagues?
PART IV - DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

1. How did you learn how to be a teacher?

2. Would you have liked more support/assistance in developing your teaching knowledge/skills from your colleagues?

   How could they have supported you?

   What kind of support would you appreciate now?

3. How often do you observe the teaching of others?

   What do you typically focus on?

   How has what you have observed impacted your teaching practice?

4. To what degree have your experiences as a teacher produced professional satisfaction for you? Please explain.

5. If you could pass on one piece of knowledge or advice to a beginning college teacher, what would it be?
APPENDIX G

STUDENT RELEASE FORM

BENEFITS

From this project, I hope to better understand what constitutes excellence in undergraduate teaching. Research data will be gathered from faculty recognized as excellent undergraduate teachers, observations of their teaching, and from students in their classes.

HOW INVOLVED

As a student participant, your involvement would require being interviewed three times (about 30 minutes each time) throughout the Spring 1994 semester with interviews scheduled at your convenience to coincide with the researcher's observations of your ______ class. Interview questions will focus on your reactions to the instruction in your ______ class and events that help or hinder your learning.

PRIVACY

Interviews will be audio taped. All tapes will be kept at the researcher's home and only she will have access. During transcription, all identifying information will be removed to ensure anonymity. All information provided during interviews will remain confidential, with your identity known only to the researcher. Your participation in this project will not be made known to your professor. The data gathered during interviews will be used to develop a description of undergraduate teaching for my dissertation and professional papers or presentations.

WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or prejudice, by contacting the researcher's advisor, Dr. Susan G. Magliano, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, War Memorial Hall, (231-5259) or Dr. Ernest Stout, Chair of the Institutional Review Board (231-9359).

CONTACT

This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee and the Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions please contact Sandra E. Berry, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, War Memorial Hall, (552-0528).

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information above and have agreed to voluntarily participate in this research project under the conditions described.

 Signature

 ____________________________

 Date

 ____________________________
APPENDIX H
HUMAN SUBJECTS APPLICATION

EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY TEACHING:
A Description of the Teaching Practice of Four Exemplar Teachers

Project Summary for for certification of exemption of project involving human subjects

January 1994

PROJECT SUMMARY

Purpose
The purpose of this project is to construct an informed description of undergraduate teaching excellence. The project entails an investigation of the teaching practices of four faculty members, recognized as excellent by students, colleagues, and administrators at Virginia Tech and the development of individual case studies for each faculty participant.

Methodology

Data sources
Data sources will include the four faculty participants and students from each of their undergraduate classes.

Data collection
Data will be collected from students through survey instruments (administered the first day of class), classroom observations (which will be audio taped and transcribed), and individual interviews (which will be audio taped and transcribed.) Student interviews will be scheduled at student convenience to coincide with researcher observations of instruction (beginning, middle, and end of the Spring 94 semester). Interview questions will focus on student reactions to the instruction in the observed class, feedback on how the instruction helped or hindered learning, feedback on the presence or lack of interaction, and other issues directly related to university instruction.

Informed faculty involvement
Four faculty members who have received at least one major university teaching award were identified and personally invited by the researcher to participate in this study. Each participant was informed about the nature of the proposed project, the intended outcomes (individual case study to be included in my dissertation) and the time commitment required for participation. Faculty participants were asked to: participate in an individual interview about their teaching practice, allow the researcher to observe their instruction (three one-week chunks, during the beginning, middle, and end of the Spring 94 semester), discuss their planning for and reactions to or reflections on the observed instructional events, review researcher interpretations of interview and observational data, and participate in an exit interview at the completion of the
project. Informed consent of each faculty member was assured by his/her signature on a faculty release form (see attached).

Informed student involvement
Volunteer students from each class will complete a survey during the first week of classes of the Spring 94 semester. The survey (see attached) focuses on students' characterization of excellent undergraduate teachers and their perceptions of how they learn best. Prior to the student completion of the survey instrument, the researcher will explain to the entire class the nature of the research project and the nature of student involvement (that completion of the survey is voluntary, that all responses will remain confidential, with specific respondents known only to the researcher, should the students choose to provide their names).

Students who volunteer to complete the survey instrument will also be invited to participate in the study on another level. The researcher will explain that volunteer students (about 10% of each class) will be scheduled for three individual interviews (each 20-30 minutes) at the student's convenience, to coincide with instructional observations. The students will also be told that they may exercise their option to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty or prejudice by contacting the researcher's major professor. Students who agree to participate in the interviews will be provided a card with the professor's phone number. An initial student consent form is located at the end of the student participant selection survey. This form explains the nature of the student involvement, that all information will remain confidential, and that students may withdraw from the study at any time. Students will sign their names and provide their phone numbers to indicate that they wish to participate in the interview portion of the project. Prior to the first individual interview, the researcher will provide each student with an expanded student release form for their signature (see attached).

Criteria for exemption from review by the IRB

- This research will be conducted in an established educational setting, involving normal education practices,

- This research involves survey and interview procedures, in which subjects will remain anonymous,

- This research does not deal with sensitive aspects of the participants own behavior,

- This research involves the observation of public behavior, (university instructional settings) in which the subjects will remain anonymous, and

- Data gained through interviews with or observations of student participants could not put the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability.
Figure 1. Model of ideality of college teaching as envisioned by undergraduate students illustrating major dimensions of teaching excellence as listed in Table 3.
Figure 2. Model of ideality of college teaching as envisioned by undergraduate students illustrating major dimensions of teaching excellence and underlying themes. (Note: peer parity, professional parity, and sympathetic paternalism are three metaphors for levels of the underlying theme, desire for a connection with teacher, as listed in Table 5.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Tenured</th>
<th>Academic Area</th>
<th>Official Faculty Appointment teaching</th>
<th>research</th>
<th>service</th>
<th>Actual Time Allocated to Activities teaching</th>
<th>research</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stevens</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Samson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sorenson</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Agricultural economics</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sushman</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>English education</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Data collection instruments and collection time frame.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection Instrument</th>
<th>Collection Time Frame For Spring 1994 Semester</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior to semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVEY INSTRUMENTS</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Participant Selection Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Practice Questionnaire</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>X *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Characterization of Teaching Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Discussions With Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Reactions to Enacted Teaching Practice</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher Field Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT ANALYSIS</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents Related to Observed Classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents Related to Teachers' Practices</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: * The interview with the agricultural economics teacher did not take place until early in the Spring semester.
Table 3. Frequency reports of student-generated teacher characteristics falling under five major dimensions of excellent undergraduate teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>content, pedagogical &amp; general knowledge</th>
<th>concern/approachability</th>
<th>enthusiasm</th>
<th>development of student thought processes &amp; curiosity</th>
<th>course organization &amp; classroom management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Sociology (n=33)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics for Engineers (n=103)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Economics (n=39)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition Methods (n=17)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Frequencies reported may not equal n for each class as 147 students offered multiple items.
Table 4. Number of student comments framing a conceptualization of preferred roles for undergraduate teachers.

```
-- Preferred Roles of Undergraduate Teachers --

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Motivator</th>
<th>Inspiration</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Sociology (n=33)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics for Engineers (n=93)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Economics (n=34)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition Methods (n=17)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Note: Frequencies reported may not equal n for each class as 59 students offered multiple items.
Table 5. Frequency counts of student statements, by class, reflecting themes underlying their conceptualizations of excellent undergraduate teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Peer Parity</th>
<th>Professional Parity</th>
<th>Sympathetic Paternalism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Sociology (n=33)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics for Engineers (n=93)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Economics (n=34)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition Methods (n=17)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Frequencies reported may not equal n for each class as some students offered multiple items.
Table 6. Student rankings, by class, of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class and Level</th>
<th>Introductory Sociology 1000 level (n=33)</th>
<th>Physics for Engineers 2000 level (n=100)</th>
<th>Agricultural Economics 3000 level (n=39)</th>
<th>Composition Methods 4000 level (n=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>development of student curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>clerk of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>development of student curiosity</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>development of student curiosity</td>
<td>clerk of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>clerk of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>development of student curiosity</td>
<td>development of student curiosity</td>
<td>clerk of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>dev. of student thought processes</td>
<td>dev. of student thought processes</td>
<td>dev. of student thought processes</td>
<td>clerk of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Faculty rankings, by class, of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Introductory Sociology</th>
<th>Physics for Engineers</th>
<th>Agricultural Economics</th>
<th>Composition Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

235
Table 8. Comparison, by class, of faculty and student rankings of teacher characteristics, behaviors, or foci on their relative importance to excellent undergraduate teaching.

**Introductory Sociology (1000 level)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student perspective (n=33)</th>
<th>Teacher perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd clarity of explanations</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th mastery of subject</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th concern for students</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th approachability</td>
<td>approachability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th organization/structure</td>
<td>dev. student curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Physics for Engineers (2000 level)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student perspective (n=100)</th>
<th>Teacher perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st clarity of explanations</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd mastery of subject matter</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th concern for students</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th organization/structure</td>
<td>mastery of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th approachability</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>approachability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 continued

Agricultural Economics (3000 level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student perspective (n=39)</th>
<th>Teacher perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th clarity of explanations</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th mastery of subject</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th concern for students</td>
<td>approachability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th approachability</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th organization/structure</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composition Methods (4000 level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student perspective (n=18)</th>
<th>Teacher perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td>mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd concern for students</td>
<td>enthusiasm for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd dev. of student curiosity</td>
<td>make subject matter relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>dev. of student thought proc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th mastery of subject</td>
<td>organization/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th clarity of explanations</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th make subject matter relevant</td>
<td>concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th approachability</td>
<td>dev. of student curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th organization/structure</td>
<td>approachability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the introductory sociology course and teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex</th>
<th>Initial Expectations</th>
<th>Perceptions After Class Started</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>course organization</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>make subject relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entertaining (funny)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 1st yr.</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject</td>
<td>3 - 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>make subject relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dev. student thought processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), M, 1st yr.</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>easy level</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entertaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>dev. student thought processes</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>respond to/encourage student questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>course organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>dry</td>
<td>course organization</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funny</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good lecturer</td>
<td>dev. student thought processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dev. student curiosity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideal of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 10. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teacher compared to their mid-semester perceptions of introductory sociology course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex</th>
<th>Excellent Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Perceptions of Class to Date</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Current Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>entertaining make subject relevant ask questions</td>
<td>clarity of explanations make subject relevant general/research knowledge organization/management <strong>pacing</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B+ to A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 1st yr.</td>
<td>ask/respond to quest. class discussions problem solving</td>
<td>research knowledge clarity of explanations enthusiasm <strong>pacing pedagogical knowledge concern/approachability</strong></td>
<td>3.5 - 4</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), M, 1st yr.</td>
<td>concern/approachability flexible with grades</td>
<td>pacing <strong>pedagogical knowledge concern/approachability attire entertaining</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>flexible with grades ask/respond to ques.</td>
<td>-- NOT INTERVIEWED DURING MID-SEMESTER --</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>concern/approachability asking/responding to questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C to B-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 11. Students' final perceptions of introductory sociology course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex, class level</th>
<th>Final Perceptions of Class, Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Teacher Ratings</th>
<th>Anticipated grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>enthusiasm for subject organization</td>
<td>3.95 4 4</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interesting subject matter approachability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 1st yr.</td>
<td>interesting subject matter approachability</td>
<td>3 - 3.5 3.5 - 4</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ask/respond to questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), M, 1st yr.</td>
<td>organization approachability attire</td>
<td>2.8 2 2</td>
<td>C- to C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>organization pacing approachability</td>
<td>2.8 --- 4</td>
<td>&quot;pretty good&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>make subject relevant research knowledge</td>
<td>2.4 3 3</td>
<td>A- to A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interesting subject matter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subject matter knowledge approachability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 12. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the principles of physics course and teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex class level</th>
<th>Initial Expectations</th>
<th>Perceptions After Class Started</th>
<th>Teacher Rating at week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>organization/management concern/approachability respond to/encourage student ques. enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* (2), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>content, pedagogical knowledge respond to/encourage student ques. dev. student thought processes clarity of explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>very good</td>
<td>enthusiasm content, pedagogical knowledge approachability organization/management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>one of the best</td>
<td>clarity of explanations organization/management dev. student thought processes content, pedagogical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>organization/management respond to/encourage questions content, pedagogical knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates student who was in this teacher's class the previous semester.
Table 13. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teacher compared to their mid-semester perceptions of the principles of physics course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex class level</th>
<th>Excellent Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Perceptions of Class to Date</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Current Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>-- NOT INTERVIEWED DURING MID-SEMESTER --</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(2)</em>, M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>approachability enthusiasm</td>
<td>content, pedagogical knowledge respond to/encourage student ques. concern/approachability</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>&quot;pretty good&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approachability organization</td>
<td>content, pedagogical knowledge concern/approachability dev. student thought processes respond to/encourage student questions</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>&quot;fair&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>approachability organization respond, encourage student questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>approachability sensitive to student progress</td>
<td>organization/management dev. student thought processes content, pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>&quot;happy&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>content, pedagogical knowledge organization sensitive to student progress</td>
<td>organization/management clarity of explanations concern/approachability dev. student thought processes</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates student who was in this teacher's class the previous semester.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex class level</th>
<th>Final Perceptions of Class, Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Teacher Ratings</th>
<th>Anticipated grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>concern/approachability organization/management</td>
<td>2.8  ---  3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* (2), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>flexible content, pedagogical knowledge concern/approachability</td>
<td>2.8  3.0  4.0</td>
<td>C+ to B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F. 2nd yr.</td>
<td>organization/management motivating/encouraging concern/approachability enthusiasm</td>
<td>3.6  4.0  4.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4), F, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>respond to student questions organization/management content, pedagogical knowledge professional demeanor</td>
<td>3.6  3.0  3.0</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5), M. 2nd yr.</td>
<td>content, pedagogical knowledge organization/management professional demeanor pacing</td>
<td>3.2  4.0  4.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension; * indicates student who was in this teacher's class the previous semester.
Table 15. Students' entering expectations and later perceptions of the agricultural economics course and teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex class level</th>
<th>Initial Expectations</th>
<th>Perceptions After Class Started</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>all calculus fun</td>
<td>concern/approachability</td>
<td>3.2 to 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>content, pedagogical, practical knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>enthusiasm</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>content knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>hard difficult fun</td>
<td>concern/approachability</td>
<td>3.2 to 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>respond to/encourage student questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sensitive to student progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dev. student thought processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 16.  Student-generated characteristics of ideal teacher compared to their mid-semester perceptions of the agricultural economics course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex</th>
<th>Excellent Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Perceptions of Class to Date dimensions</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Current Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>practical projects organization</td>
<td>clarity of explanations</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>availability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>classroom management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>enthusiasm fun content knowledge practical knowledge</td>
<td>concern/approachability course organization pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>disappointed below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>practical projects organization enthusiasm practical knowledge focus on development of student thought processes</td>
<td>concern/approachability enthusiasm respond to/encourage student questions</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 17. Students’ final perceptions of agricultural economics course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex, class level</th>
<th>Final Perceptions of Class, Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Teacher Ratings</th>
<th>Anticipated grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), M, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>concern/approachability enthusiasm respond to/encourage student questions <em>practical knowledge</em></td>
<td>3.2 to 4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), M, 2nd yr.</td>
<td>concern/approachability enthusiasm</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3), F, 3rd yr.</td>
<td>enthusiasm respond to/encourage student questions content, pedagogical, practical knowledge focus on the dev. of student thought proc.</td>
<td>3.2 to 3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher falling to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Initial Expectations</th>
<th>Perceptions After Class Started</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number, sex class level</td>
<td>course teacher</td>
<td>dimensions focused on by student during initial interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>tough tough fair grader</td>
<td>course organization pedagogical, content, experiential knowledge concern for students <em>lecturing</em> <em>respond to/encourage student questions</em></td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>nothing mixed</td>
<td>course organization approachability pedagogical, content, experiential knowledge <em>lecturing</em></td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Text in bold italic signifies students' comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 19. Student-generated characteristics of ideal teacher compared to their mid-semester perceptions of the composition methods course and teacher, current teacher rating, and their current grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex class level</th>
<th>Excellent Teacher</th>
<th>Perceptions of Class to Date</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Current Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>student-centered</td>
<td>consider students’ point of view</td>
<td>2.5 to 3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>focus on development of student thought processes</td>
<td>respond to/encourage student questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>content, pedagogical, experiential knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>student-centered</td>
<td>course organization</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>“fair”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consider students’ point of view</td>
<td>testing criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>consider students’ point of view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students’ comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
Table 20. Students’ final perceptions of the composition methods course and teacher, teacher ratings over the semester, and their anticipated grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number, sex, class level</th>
<th>Final Perceptions of Class, Teacher dimensions focused on by student</th>
<th>Teacher Ratings</th>
<th>Anticipated grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>content, pedagogical, experiential knowledge respond to/encourage student questions approachability pacing teacher-centered lectures</td>
<td>3.5 2.5 to 3 3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2), F, 4th yr.</td>
<td>course organization enthusiasm approachability consider student opinions teacher-centered lectures</td>
<td>3.5 --- 3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text in bold italic signifies students’ comments about teacher failing to meet their ideality of excellent teaching in a particular dimension.
VITA
SANDRA E. BERRY

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Expected completion May 1995.

M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH. 1988.

B.S. Biology/Chemistry, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI. (Magna Cum Laude) 1979.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1994 **Instructor**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Taught 3000-level educational psychology course during Fall 1994 Semester.

1992-1993 **Acting Program Director**, Training Systems Laboratory, Management Systems Laboratories, Blacksburg, VA. Responsible for the development, acquisition, and implementation of training program contracts.

1990-1992 **Program Manager**, Training Systems Laboratory, Management Systems Laboratories, Blacksburg, VA. Researched, designed, developed, implemented, and evaluated training programs and sessions under contract with the U.S. Department of Energy, Defense Programs Training and Staff Development Division.

1990 **Information Officer**, Management Systems Laboratories, Blacksburg, VA. Compiled information and developed marketing capabilities packages for Technology Transfer Group. Wrote, edited, and produced information tools for contract sponsors including briefings, flowcharts, and monthly reports.
1988-1990 Substitute Teacher, Montgomery County Public Schools, Christiansburg, VA. Served as a substitute teacher for all subjects and grade levels at schools throughout Montgomery County. Substituted an average of 100 days per school year.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS


PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association

American Evaluation Association

Phi Kappa Phi
RESEARCH AWARDS

First Place Research Award, Humanities Division 11th Annual Graduate Research Symposium Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (March 1995)

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Instructional Fee Scholarship Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Fall & Spring 1995)

Instructional Fee Scholarship Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Spring 1994)

Board of Regents Scholarship Eastern Michigan University (Fall & Spring 1975)

CIVIC AWARDS

Public Service Award Napoleon, OH (1987)

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

1995 Participant: Training The Future Professorate - Workshop conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.


1992 Participant: Developing Questionnaires and Surveys - Workshop conducted by Robert W. Covert, University of Virginia, annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association. Seattle, WA.

1991 Participant: Creating Strengths Out of Differences - Leadership Workshop, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.