



Montana high school students' perceptions about teaching characteristics
by Sulayman Nasser Alkhayyatt

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

© Copyright by Sulayman Nasser Alkhayyatt (2000)

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions about the characteristics of good teachers and how those characteristics affect students' motivation to learn.

The research method was a qualitative case study about Mrs. Julia. The researcher acted as an interviewer and observer for seven weeks. As an interviewer, he conducted 23 student interviews and one teacher interview. As an observer, he conducted seven class observations. During and after the data collection, he analyzed the data based on emerging themes and their components.

Six themes and 34 components surfaced in the study. It was found that all of the students perceived four major characteristics of Mrs. Julia's teaching: caring, respect, commitment, and knowledge. One student perceived her as an enthusiastic teacher and three students perceived her as a "fun" teacher. In addition, it was found that Mrs. Julia's knowledge influenced the students' motivation to learn. The most frequent characteristic mentioned by the students and Mrs. Julia was respect, and the most frequent components were treating the students equally and using examples in teaching. Regarding their motivation to learn, the most frequent characteristic mentioned by the students was knowledge. The most frequent component mentioned by Mrs. Julia was involving the students in the learning process. The most frequent characteristic mentioned in the researcher's field-notes was "fun" and the most frequent components were telling jokes and telling stories in teaching.

The researcher concluded that respect was the most frequently mentioned characteristic in Mrs. Julia's teaching. In addition, the students agreed that Mrs. Julia's knowledge influenced their motivation to learn. The students had their own definitions of teacher's characteristics because they came from their own perspective. For example, their definition of a "fun" teacher was altering teaching techniques and methods rather than being an easy teacher.

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
ABOUT TEACHING CHARACTERISTICS

by

Sulayman Nasser Alkhayyatt

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN
Bozeman, Montana

February 2000

© COPYRIGHT

by

Sulayman Nasser Alkhayyatt

2000

All Rights Reserved

D378
AL493

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by
Sulayman Nasser Alkhayatt

This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, quotations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Jana Noel
Dr. Jana Noel
Committee Chairperson

2-25-2000
Date

Approved for the Department of Education

Gloria Gregg
Dr. Gloria Gregg
Department Chairperson

2-25-2000
Date

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Bruce R. McLeod
Dr. Bruce McLeod
Graduate Dean

2-25-00
Date

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Montana State University-Bozeman, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. I further agree that copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for extensive copying or reproduction of this thesis should be referred to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, to whom I have granted "the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute my dissertation for sale in and from microform or electronic format, along with the right to reproduce and distribute my abstract in any format in whole or in part."

Signature *Suleyman Altunoglu*

Date 2/25/2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First, I would like to thank my family members for helping and encouraging me by providing the foundation for all of my adventures. Without their support and love, I would not have been able to fulfill my dreams.

A very special thank you and gratitude to my chair, Dr. Jana Noel for her patience, her guidance, and most especially for her willingness to share herself in helping me become who I am. I like to thank my committee, Dr. James Hauwiler, Dr. Jennifer Vadeboncoeur, Dr. Pete Carparelli, Dr. Priscilla Lund, and Dr. Steve Eiger.

Thank you for all of the participants of this study including the teacher, the principal, the assistant superintendent and others for helping me to see that all things are possible. Thank you to all of the non-traditional students who took the time to meet with me many times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Conceptual Framework.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Definition of Concepts.....	6
Definition of Concepts Found in Literature.....	7
Definition of Concepts Found in Student Interviews.....	9
Research Questions.....	11
Summary.....	11
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	13
Teacher's Role.....	14
Setting Learning Environment.....	14
Being a Role Model.....	15
Encouraging Knowledge.....	16
Students' Perceptions.....	16
Relationships between Student and Teacher.....	17
Rating the Teachers.....	18
Characteristics of Good Teachers.....	19
Caring, Respectful, and Committed Teaching.....	19
Knowledgeable, Enthusiastic, and Humorous Teaching.....	23
Students' Motivation.....	26
Case Study.....	27
Characteristics of Case Study.....	28
Analysis of Case Study.....	30
Summary.....	33
3. METHODOLOGY.....	34
Preparation for the Study.....	35
Researcher Positionality.....	36

TABLE OF CONTENTS--CONTINUED

	Page
Setting and Selection.....	37
Montana High School.....	37
Ethical Considerations.....	38
Purposeful Selection.....	39
Methods of Data Collection.....	41
General Procedure.....	41
Multiple Interviews.....	43
Observations.....	48
Time Frame for Data Collection.....	49
Analytic Techniques.....	52
Themes.....	52
Data Coding.....	53
Data Analysis.....	53
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study.....	55
Summary.....	56
4. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' INTERVIEWS.....	57
Original and New Themes and Codes.....	57
Original Themes and Codes.....	59
New Themes and Codes.....	61
Analysis of Responses to Questions 1, 2, and 3.....	63
Analysis of Responses to Questions 4-12.....	67
Integration of Responses to Questions 4-12.....	69
Case Study of Jim.....	70
Case Study of Sue.....	73
Case Study of May.....	76
Case Study of Joy.....	79
Summary.....	82
5. ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS AND MRS. JULIA'S INTERVIEW.....	84
Mrs. Julia's Classroom.....	85
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Caring".....	86
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Respect".....	87
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Commitment".....	88
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Knowledge".....	88
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Enthusiasm".....	89
Observing Mrs. Julia's "Fun".....	90
Analysis of Mrs. Julia's Interview.....	91

TABLE OF CONTENTS--CONTINUED

	Page
Summary.....	94
6. COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF DATA.....	95
Comparing and Contrasting the Students' Responses to Questions 4-12.....	95
Comparing and Contrasting between the Students' Responses to Questions 4-12, Observations, and Mrs. Julia's Responses.....	105
Summary.....	112
7. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	114
Findings.....	115
Findings Responding to Research Questions.....	115
Additional Findings.....	116
Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice.....	118
Recommendations for Further Research.....	121
Summary.....	121
CITED REFERENCES.....	123
APPENDICES.....	130
Appendix A--Data Codes.....	131
Appendix B--Literature Codes of New Themes.....	133
Appendix C--Diagram of Mrs. Julia's Class.....	135
Appendix D--Assistant Superintendent's Consent Form.....	137
Appendix E--Principal's Consent Form.....	139
Appendix F--Mrs. Julia's Consent Form.....	141
Appendix G--Student's Consent Form.....	143

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Time frame for asking interview questions.....	46
2. Time frame for data collection.....	50
3. Theme and code development.....	58
4. Codes for "caring," "respect," and "commitment".....	60
5. Codes for "knowledge," "enthusiasm," and "fun".....	62
6. Coding for "caring" based on responses to questions 1, 2, and 3.....	64
7. Coding for "respect" based on responses to questions 1, 2, and 3.....	65
8. Coding for "commitment" based on responses to questions 1, 2, and 3.....	66
9. New codes in analyzing responses to questions 4-12.....	68
10. Jim's responses to questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11.....	70
11. Jim's responses to questions 6, 9, and 12.....	72
12. Sue's responses to questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11.....	74
13. Sue's responses to questions 6, 9, and 12.....	75
14. May's responses to questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11.....	77
15. May's responses to questions 6, 9, and 12.....	78
16. Joy's responses to questions 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11.....	80
17. Joy's responses to questions 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11.....	81
18. Observing Mrs. Julia's "caring".....	86
19. Observing Mrs. Julia's "respect".....	87
20. Observing Mrs. Julia's "commitment".....	88

21.	Observing Mrs. Julia's "knowledge".....	88
22.	Observing Mrs. Julia's "enthusiasm".....	89
23.	Observing Mrs. Julia's "fun".....	90
24.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "caring".....	91
25.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "respect".....	92
26.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "commitment".....	92
27.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "knowledge".....	93
28.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "enthusiasm".....	93
29.	Mrs. Julia's responses about "fun".....	93
30.	Codes in responses to questions 4, 5, 7, 8,10 and 11.....	96
31.	Codes in responses to questions 6, 9, and 12.....	100
32.	Most frequent themes and codes in students' responses.....	104
33.	Most frequent themes and codes in data.....	105
34.	Definitions' components in data.....	107
35.	Components that surfaced, those that did not, and definitions from the literature.....	110
36.	Data codes.....	131
37.	Literature codes of new themes.....	133

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Diagram of Mrs. Julia's classroom.....	135

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions about the characteristics of good teachers and how those characteristics affect students' motivation to learn.

The research method was a qualitative case study about Mrs. Julia. The researcher acted as an interviewer and observer for seven weeks. As an interviewer, he conducted 23 student interviews and one teacher interview. As an observer, he conducted seven class observations. During and after the data collection, he analyzed the data based on emerging themes and their components.

Six themes and 34 components surfaced in the study. It was found that all of the students perceived four major characteristics of Mrs. Julia's teaching: caring, respect, commitment, and knowledge. One student perceived her as an enthusiastic teacher and three students perceived her as a "fun" teacher. In addition, it was found that Mrs. Julia's knowledge influenced the students' motivation to learn. The most frequent characteristic mentioned by the students and Mrs. Julia was respect, and the most frequent components were treating the students equally and using examples in teaching. Regarding their motivation to learn, the most frequent characteristic mentioned by the students was knowledge. The most frequent component mentioned by Mrs. Julia was involving the students in the learning process. The most frequent characteristic mentioned in the researcher's field-notes was "fun" and the most frequent components were telling jokes and telling stories in teaching.

The researcher concluded that respect was the most frequently mentioned characteristic in Mrs. Julia's teaching. In addition, the students agreed that Mrs. Julia's knowledge influenced their motivation to learn. The students had their own definitions of teacher's characteristics because they came from their own perspective. For example, their definition of a "fun" teacher was altering teaching techniques and methods rather than being an easy teacher.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Framework

Good teachers help students to be active, involved in their learning process, and motivated to learn. McKeachie (1986) defined active learners as students who “test their ideas in a situation in which they can get the results of the test and see examples of better thinking” (p. 231). Through their teaching practice, good teachers play a vital role in engaging students to be active and motivated learners. They give students the opportunity to be active, motivated to learn, and able to express their feelings and perceptions about the educational environment, themselves, and their teachers. In his book, Joyce (1992) argued that “models of teaching are really models of learning. As we help students acquire information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves, we are also teaching them how to learn” (p. 1).

Good teachers who are qualified to influence students need to make daily provisions for every student to learn and encourage students to learn, question, and reflect. Both teachers and students have to interact together in the learning process to provide a good educational environment. Schubert (1986) argued that “the teacher is a facilitator of personal growth, and the curriculum is the process of experiencing the sense of meaning and direction that ensues from teacher and

student dialogue” (p. 30). Schubert (1986) stressed the importance of teacher efficacy by describing three roles that teachers play: providing a good educational environment, assisting students to be active and motivated learners, and exhibiting characteristics of role models.

Sometimes, active students may lose their motivation to learn because of the complexity of the learning process. Therefore, good teachers need to motivate their students to play an active role in the educational environment. By manipulating materials and activities that arouse the students’ interests, engaging them in goal setting procedures, manipulating rewards and competition, and providing knowledge of progress, good teachers sustain motivation in their students to learn. Robenstine (1997) said that “teachers who associate motivation with getting students to desire or value something understand an important point” (p. 303). One of the signs for good teachers is their ability to motivate their students to learn. Ralph (1989) argued that “successful teachers not only reflect upon, plan and implement specific classroom managerial strategies, but they organize and develop clear and motivating lessons” (p. 144).

Although good schools need active and motivated learners, those students must have good teachers who guide them and understand their abilities and needs. Labonty and Danielson (1988) used a list of characteristics to design a questionnaire for testing the students’ rating of good teachers. They listed good teachers’ characteristics such as:

Monitoring, using effective praise, using comments and reinforcements, pacing, assigning appropriate seat work, enlisting active participation, modeling, being able to make smooth transitions, focusing, being flexible, using time effectively, caring, having a sense of humor, and being in control (Labonty and Danielson, 1988, p. 395).

In that study, students mentioned their perceptions about both attitudes and actions of good teachers. The teaching characteristics mentioned reflected three major teaching characteristics: caring, respect, and commitment.

Noddings (1995), a leading writer on caring in education, pointed out that caring teaching must not be put aside and that:

Clearly, teaching is filled with caring occasions or, quite often, with attempts to avoid occasions. Attempts to avoid caring occasions by the overuse of lecture without discussion, of impersonal grading in written, quantitative form, of models of discipline that respond only to the behavior but refuse to encounter the person all risk losing opportunities for moral education and mutual growth (p. 222).

According to Noddings (1988), "teachers have an obligation to support, anticipate, evaluate, and encourage worthwhile activities, and students have a right to pursue projects mutually constructed and approved" (p. 221). Noddings considered that caring teachers are those who have good relations with their students and treat them equally.

Noddings believed that caring implies a continuing search for sufficiency that makes those caring and respectful teachers committed to their students and supportive of their learning. Noddings (1995) argued that "caring is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling that makes people kind and likable. Caring implies a continues search for competence" (p. 676). By accepting responsibilities for students' growth in teaching, caring, respectful, and committed teachers are

good teachers. With caring, teachers have good attitudes towards their students, and with respect, teachers treat their students as equal human beings. With commitment, teachers accept the responsibility to develop the students' learning. In both meaning and practice, caring, respect, and commitment are overlapping.

Novak (1998) argued that "teaching is a complex activity" (p. 112).

Teachers have a variety of roles relative to students, among two of those roles are setting educational environment and assisting students to be active learners. To set the best educational environment, teachers need to act as leaders. They are to carry responsibilities for the roles of organizing, sorting, and evaluating students' knowledge. Teachers must create an educational environment that encourages students to question, comment, and learn. Noddings (1988) believed that "teachers have an obligation to support, anticipate, evaluate, and encourage worthwhile activities, and students have a right to pursue projects mutually constructed and approved" (p. 221).

The second role for teachers is to assist students to be active learners. This role requires teachers to help students to be safe. Banner and Cannon (1997) argued that "the classroom must be a protected place, where students discover themselves and gain knowledge of the world, where they are free of all threats to their well being, where all received opinion is open to evaluation, where the explicit goal is to see the world more openly, fully, and deeply" (p. 37). In order to set the learning environment and find that which generates active learners, teachers must have a thorough understanding of their students. Schubert (1986) stated, "Teachers are effective if they are able to get to know

their students well enough to look deeply behind and broadly beyond their superficially expressed interests to perceive their genuine interests" (p. 352).

Statement of the Problem

As noted in the opening paragraph, teaching is one side of the teaching - learning equation. If the notions of caring, respect, and commitment mean anything, students must perceive those characteristics. Students must in some way recognize those characteristics in their teachers.

While there have been numerous studies on the characteristics of good teaching, there is a shortage of case studies about students' perceptions of the characteristics of good teaching. Students' perceptions are valuable, not just because students are the actual clients in schools, but also because they are capable of seeing and recognizing their teachers' characteristics.

Two questions are to be answered in this study. First, how do students perceive good teaching characteristics? Second, how do the students' perceive characteristics of good teaching influence their motivation to learn?

Purpose of the Study

To find out the perceptions of students about the characteristics of good teachers and how those characteristics relate to students' motivation to learn, the purpose of this study was (a) to investigate the students' perspectives about the teaching characteristics of good teachers; and (b) to investigate through

observations and student interviews the influence of those characteristics on student motivation to learn. By studying a good teacher, and by determining the perceptions of some of her students, this study is intended to provide additional insight about that complex activity we call teaching. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions about the characteristics of Mrs. Julia¹ as a good teacher, and the influence of those characteristics on students' motivation to learn.

Definition of Concepts

Before starting this study, I accepted three critical characteristics of good teachers which surfaced in the literature review: caring, respect, and commitment. After analyzing my data, I found that the students perceived three other characteristics in their responses to the interview questions. The students added teacher knowledge, enthusiasm, and "fun." In reading through the relevant literature, I found that teacher knowledge and teacher enthusiasm appear frequently, but I did not find any literature that describes good teaching as "fun." The word "fun" is not commonly used in describing characteristics of good teaching in the literature. The literature refers to playfulness, enjoyment, or humor. Therefore, when discussing the students' responses, I will be using their term "fun." For the literature review, I decided to include both the original

¹ All of the names of participants and places in this study have been replaced by pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

characteristics: caring, respect, and commitment, in addition to the new characteristics of teacher knowledge, enthusiasm, and humor.

Definition of Concepts Found in Literature

Teacher Caring. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) and Noddings (1995) agreed on three components in defining a caring teacher: being polite, being friendly, and talking with the students about their learning problems. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) described the caring teacher as a teacher who believes that learning is a continuing process where teachers and students share their experiences to learn. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) described the caring teacher as the teacher who believes that the students learn best when they can make their choices to learn in different opportunities and situations.

Noddings (1995) supported the idea of considering caring as a major purpose of schooling. Noddings (1995) argued that caring teachers are those who talk with the students about their learning problems and spend time with them to develop relationships with them. Noddings (1988) noted that teachers and students must know and understand each other, and spend time together in order to have a dialogue to build trust among them. Noddings' (1995) definition of caring emphasized the friendly relationships between teachers and students.

Teacher Respect. Noddings (1988) had her own definition of respectful teachers based on caring. Noddings (1988) wanted teachers to develop their caring into a relation based on establishing a dialogue with students to keep

them engaged and involved in the learning process as respectful human beings. According to Noddings (1988), treating students equally requires the teachers to engage in conversations with them in a similar fashion regardless to their race, gender, language, background, or academic achievement. That means that we owe human people regard universally and apart from acquired excellence. By treating students well and equally, the teachers must have positive attitudes towards students. Once teachers treat their students equally, the students ideally feel respected.

Teacher Commitment. Noddings (1989) and Ruddick (1986) agreed on two components of commitment: being passionate about increasing the students' learning, and planning for that development. Noddings (1989) described committed teachers as those who accept their responsibilities for the growth of their students.

Ruddick (1986) believed that teachers, like mothers, are required to provide two things to their students. First, teachers need to maintain and nurture their students' growth. Second, teachers have to shape acceptable human beings. Therefore, committed teachers are those who are passionate about students' learning and who plan for their development.

Students' Motivation. Seyler (1998) defined motivation as an inner drive that causes a change in behavior or attitude. Seyler (1998) argued that motivation refers to a drive or a reason for doing something that originates with

internal needs. Seyler (1998) argued that in a practical sense, the teacher's task within the environment of the classroom is to ensure as many needs of students so that students are truly free to be curious and explore.

Zahorik (1995) noted that "interest is critically important if students are to extend their understanding through activity, because if they are not interested in the activity, they will not participate to a sufficient extent" (p. 20). Cooperative relationships are respectfully considered in an effective classroom, and student motivation is critically important to good teachers.

Definition of Concepts Found in Student Interviews

Teacher Knowledge. Banner and Cannon (1997) described knowledgeable teachers as those who master their subjects, embody the act of learning, convey the love of learning to their students, remain open to learning from their students, provide the basis for independent thought, and evaluate their students' learning. Teachers' knowledge is organized into managing the class and representing and enacting the curriculum. Pre-service teacher education should be focused on subject matter, child development, communication skills, and other leadership skills. In addition, in-service teachers need to have continuing education in which they learn more about interaction with the staff and students, and learn from the social systems of their schools.

Schubert (1986) listed several components of teachers' knowledge. He emphasized that the teachers need to learn "(1) active learning time, (2)

feedback and corrective procedures, (3) instructional cues, (4) continuous programs of instructional evaluation, (5) direct implications for teaching and learning that support such classroom climate variables" (p. 392). Banner and Cannon (1997) and Schubert's (1986) definition had two major components of knowledge: what to teach and how to teach. In other words, knowledgeable teachers are experts in their disciplines, and they are skillful in using appropriate teaching methods.

Teacher Enthusiasm. Gehrke (1979) described enthusiastic teachers as those who do not point to the inflexible housekeeping and scheduling duties they have, the unchanging nature of the content they teach, and the shallowness of their students. According to Gehrke, teachers are excited when they avoid thinking about their daily routine and the shallowness of their students, and they are exciting when they feel happy and enjoy teaching.

Teacher Humor. Banner and Cannon (1997) described humorous teachers as pleasurable teachers. Those humorous teachers feel pleasure as well as give it in their classes. They (1997) listed six components of humorous teachers. First, humorous teachers create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Second, they encourage humor in the class. Third, they enjoy teaching and learning. Fourth, they encourage students to overcome learning difficulties. Fifth, they are proud of the success of their former students. Sixth, they enjoy their students' success.

Research Questions

In this study, I focused on the following four general research questions:

1. What characteristics of Mrs. Julia's teaching do 12th grade students in Montana High School perceive to help them to be engaged in their learning? How do these students perceive that these characteristics influence them in their learning?

2. Do students perceive that Mrs. Julia cares about learning? How do they perceive this characteristic influences their motivation to learn?

3. Do students perceive that Mrs. Julia respects them as students? How do they perceive this characteristic influences their motivation to learn?

4. Do students perceive that Mrs. Julia is committed to their learning? How do they perceive this characteristic influences their motivation to learn?

Summary

Good teachers who are caring, respectful, and committed provide a good learning environment for active learners. Good teaching characteristics motivate students to learn. The purpose of this study was to find out the perceptions of students about the characteristics of good teachers and how those characteristics relate to the student motivation to learn. By focusing on a case study of Mrs. Julia as a good teacher, this study provides student and teacher interviews and class observations. This study provided the answers to two

questions: How do students perceive good teaching characteristics, and how do those characteristics of good teaching influence their motivation to learn?

The next chapter provides a review of relevant literature that supports the topic of this study. The need for this study and the statement of its problem evolved from reading through that relevant literature. Through teacher's role, students' perceptions, characteristics of good teachers, and case study methodology, chapter two provides a rich review of relevant literature that sets a base for this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Being an engaged learner may be motivated by several sources. Motivation may come from textbooks, curriculum, school activities, school policies, or other sources. Also, the people who participate in schooling might influence that motivation. Besides principals, staff, and students, teachers might affect students' motivation to learn. This study was designed to explore students' perceptions of their teachers' characteristics, actions and attitudes as a method for understanding how the actions and attitudes of the teachers' influence the motivation to learn.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section provides a literature review of the role of teachers. The second section organizes research on students' perceptions of teachers and teaching. The third section describes the research on six good teaching characteristics that are linked to motivating students: caring, respect, commitment, knowledge, enthusiasm, and humor. The fourth section reviews literature about the student motivation. Finally, the fifth section describes the literature on case study as a method of research.

Teacher's Role

Teachers are influential figures in schools. They can play a strong role if they know their students' needs and abilities. In sharing the learning process with their students, the teachers can excite students and support their active learning. Tukman (1995) defined good teachers as "those teachers whose students learn and grow most" (p. 127). Teaching requires preparation and specific skills to provide guidance for the students' learning. The teacher's roles are to create the learning environment, to be a good role model, and to encourage the students' learning.

Setting Learning Environment

In evaluating their teaching performance, teachers may reflect on their responsibilities towards their students. Boy and Pine (1987) argued that "the evaluation of a teacher's role demands that the teacher examines daily responsibilities and separates the important from the trivial, that is, those that serve students from those that are unrelated to students' needs" (p. 107). Banner and Cannon (1997) called sustaining the students' learning, "pleasure" (p. 124). They believed that creating an atmosphere that provides for the enjoyment of learning could encourage students to learn themselves and have a positive experience.

Wubbels (1990) used a questionnaire to investigate students' perceptions about their teachers in affective and cognitive domains. In that study, the teachers' communication was emphasized. In another study, Amos (1987) found that students emphasized two major points in describing their teachers. All of the students in the study thought that the teachers' attitudes toward the students and the manner of presenting class work seemed very important because positive attitudes make them eager to learn and the good organization of the class suits their active participation. The students thought that these two characteristics were more important than actual book learning. As parts of the learning environment, the communication between the teachers and their students, their attitudes toward the students, and the presentation of the class work are important.

Being a Role Model

Bergem (1992) stated that "the teacher should be a role model for the students" (p. 358). The teacher is considered a role model given his or her exemplary behaviors. Although high school students are about to be adults, they still look at their teachers as role models.

McCabe (1995) discussed the results of interviewing twelve junior high school students to find out who they thought were the best teachers. One of her conclusions was that the best teachers were those who care about the subject matter, as well as the students themselves. That led her to recommend further

studies about the teacher as a role model for students. Darling-Hammond (1998) supported McCabe's study by repeating similar findings, noting that "teachers need to be able to inquire sensitively, listen carefully, and look thoroughly at student work, as well as structure situations in which students write and talk about their experiences" (p. 7). The teacher who is a good role model should be caring about both the students and the subject matter.

Encouraging Knowledge

Teachers should be experts in their subject matter. The expertise of the teacher should drive students to learn and acquire valuable knowledge in classrooms. The students might provide uncertain answers or incorrect responses in their classes, but the teachers should have the willingness and ability to let the students learn from their mistakes. McKeachie (1986) noted several points about the role of teaching. He said that the teachers need to specify their goals and the tasks to achieve in their classes. In addition, they need to notice any mistake or uncertainty in the students' responses or comments. Finally, the teachers need to provide some activities that sustain the students' learning.

Students' Perceptions

Students' perceptions are important to teachers because they help teachers to understand students' motivation to learn. Through the students' point

of view and expressing their perceptions, their voices are recognized. The relationships between students and teachers and the rating of the teachers can reflect the students' perceptions about their teachers.

Relationships between Student and Teacher

There are reasons to listen to students' perceptions about their teachers. Whether students are satisfied with their teachers or not, the relationships between students and their teachers can be used to improve teaching. Turley (1994) argued that:

There are several compelling reasons for listening to what students have to say about teaching and learning. First, we can increase our awareness of how students perceive the social reality of the classroom and come to know the world of school through the eyes of students. Second, there are important implications to be made between student perceptions of what works in classrooms. A third reason to be concerned with students' perceptions of effective methods of teaching is that it is an important piece in the puzzle researchers and practicians are jointly and continually constructing in the effort to create effective classroom environment. It provides information from the point of view of the major dependent variable in the classroom, that is, from the student who is the beneficiary of the process-taking place in the black box of the experiment called schooling. Finally, listening to the voices of students validates them as partners in the educational process. It gives students a share in the management of the learning environment by including the student voice in the analysis of data that leads to decision-making (p. 3).

As partners, students share with teachers the learning process. Therefore, the relationships between students and teachers are important and should be strong.

In his study, Beelick (1973) interviewed 194 high school students. Beelick (1973) analyzed his data and developed a general statement. He noted that:

The results reveal that the major sources of student satisfaction with school are achievement, recognition, the school work itself, and school activities, and the major sources of student dissatisfaction are the teachers' behavior, school policy and administration, and interpersonal relations with peers (Beelick, 1973, p. 22).

So, good relationships between students and teachers are essential.

Rating the Teachers

In order to find out students' perceptions, researchers had to use several methods and tools. One of the ways to know about students' perceptions was interviewing the students. Those perceptions might be about the teachers' personalities, actions, appearance, or other characteristics.

Tuckman (1995) argued that in the K-12 education, the students' rating of their teachers is not common but it is common in adult education. Because the students see their teachers and observe them every day, the students' rating may indicate their teachers' characteristics. Belton (1996) suggested that volunteer students could observe their teachers and rate their teaching characteristics. Volunteer students can speak with other students to detect some of the aspects of their teachers' characteristics such as enthusiasm and respect towards the subject matter, as well as the students.

Students describe the teachers as mean, boring, uncertain, rigid, quiet, unfair, unfriendly, unenthusiastic, humorless, or other negative characteristics. On the other hand, students may describe their teacher as nice, not boring, certain, kind, fair, friendly, enthusiastic, warm, or other positive characteristics. Whether or not, the students' perceptions are accurate, those perceptions should be recognized and analyzed as an indicator for rating the teachers.

Characteristics of Good Teachers

In an ideal schooling, teachers participate and enjoy their privileges in a very balanced way. They do not humiliate students because of their position and power. In schooling too, caring, respectful, committed, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and humorous teachers are good teachers.

Caring, Respectful, and Committed Teaching

The three characteristics of caring, respect and commitment to teaching are very overlapping. Each of them has two sides: emotional and behavioral. Therefore, caring, as well as respect and commitment, are attitudes as well as exemplified by behaviors.

Caring Teaching. Beck (1994) described caring as an attitude and an action. In describing the activities of caring people, she argued that "they are (1) receiving the other's perspectives; (2) responding appropriately to the awareness

that comes from this reception; and (3) remaining committed to others and to the relationship” (Beck, 1994, p. 12). To receive the other’s perspectives, teachers need to listen to their students, understand them, and respond to their needs. To continue that caring action, teachers have to feel committed to their students to continue reacting to them in a proper way. In addition, Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) noted that:

Caring professors believe that knowing is a continual process to which people contribute. They believe that all of us are partial, limited, social beings who need each other to become aware of our own contextuality. They believe that people learn best in situations where they have the opportunity to make choices, and have control over their learning, when the curriculum is student centered and the methods of instruction encourage students to be engaged learners (p. 267).

Beck (1994) commented on Noddings’ discussion of caring teachers, noting that caring enhances the consideration of the students’ needs whether they are subjective or objective. That positive reaction to the students’ needs is crucial to building caring communities in schools. To react to the students needs, teachers and educators first have to perceive those needs. As a result of caring teaching, students’ ethics grow and their minds become more ready to learn as Buber (1965) argued. Buber (1965) noted that students who are cared for by teachers feel at ease in recognizing their identities as active learners in school.

Good teachers are caring teachers who listen to their students and involve them in the learning process. Gould (1996) argued that “teachers who talk with children about a piece of literature or writing need to give children a chance to explore half-formed ideas and to expand their understanding of their own writing

or literature through hearing other's interpretations" (p. 95). For Gould, the caring attitude of the good teachers makes their students more involved and engaged in the learning process.

Respectful Teaching. Respectful teachers care about their students and treat them as their partners. After knowing their students' needs, respectful teachers treat their students well and equally and encourage them to be active thinkers and learners in their classrooms. Thayer-Bacon (1993a) noted that:

Teachers need to act as partners and coaches, not judges; they should get to know their students better, in smaller classroom settings, where the opportunities to express concern and nurturance toward students, as well as the possibilities of teaching them reasoning skills, are greater. Teachers need the courage to think out loud with their students, and to provide models of thinking as a human, imperfect, and attainable activity (p. 339).

By creating learning opportunities for students, good teachers act as respectful leaders. To create learning opportunities, the good teacher's role is to plan, guide, and facilitate students' learning. Berman (1987) argued that:

The task of the caring teacher, therefore, is to create settings that possess stimuli for the building upon and negotiating of personal knowledge, to create concern for the common good as individuals pursue personal meanings, and to create bondings with schools or classrooms so that mutual as well as individual pursuit of truth occurs (p. 206).

As Berman (1987) argued, teachers need to respect their students' ability to accomplish a high level of knowledge as well as personal meaning.

Committed Teaching. To feel responsible toward their students, teachers should commit to their students and to their jobs as leaders. Noddings (1989)

argued that "there is considerable evidence that women teachers are deeply committed to their work with students" (p. 22). Whether or not there is a difference between men and women in commitment, all teachers need to be very committed in their teaching.

By providing the best learning environment, teachers are committed and careful to watch for the growth of their students' development. Drucker (1993) believed in commitment as part of a modern society. Drucker (1993) argued that:

Loyalty from now on cannot be obtained by the paycheck; it will have to be earned by proving to knowledgeable employees that the organization, which presently employs them, offers them exceptional opportunities to be effective. Not so long ago, we talked about "labor," increasingly; now, we are talking of "human resources." This implies that it is the individual knowledgeable employee who decides in large measure what he or she will contribute, and how great from his or her knowledge can or should be (p. 66).

Drucker (1993) meant to stress the importance of encouraging committed employees who are considered a valuable human resource in their organizations, schools, and workplaces.

The other component of commitment is the notion of continuity of caring and respect. Noddings (1992) looked at the teachers' responsibilities as broader, deeper, and more ambiguous than accountability, and this perspective describes commitment in interpersonal relations more accurately. One of her suggestions is that teachers should continue their educational duties at the lunchtime. She (1992) noted that:

Families that take personal responsibilities for educating their children often make mealtime an important educational event. It is a time when the day's experiences are recounted with enthusiasm or

sympathy or apology; when moods are assessed; when world, community, and family affairs are discussed; when family work and vacation plans are debated; and, even, when specific information is proffered and skills demonstrated (Noddings, 1992, p. 65).

Noddings (1992) stressed that the students' families respect the mealtime as an opportunity to educate their children during that time. To continue this practice at school, committed teachers should join their students at lunchtime to continue supporting interpersonal relationships.

Knowledgeable, Enthusiastic and Humorous Teaching

Teachers are considered experts in their subject matter, but they might be unenthusiastic and boring. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and humorous teachers provide a good educational environment that makes students attracted to their schools and involved in the learning process.

Knowledgeable Teaching. Noddings (1992) noted that:

Although I agree that teachers need to know much more than most currently do, I have argued that the superbly well-trained capacity for inquiry and a Socratic willingness to pursue wisdom. This means that teachers have to know their subjects so well that they can spot and encourage promising approaches in their students and not be overcome, out of ignorance, by the need to control. It means also that teachers should be willing to discuss matters on which they have had no specific training -- all the matters pertaining to human existence -- and help students to create and learn powerful methods of investigation (p. 178).

Therefore, in preparing teachers for their jobs, skills and information are central to their preparation. In teacher education, teachers receive knowledge of the subject matter as well as teaching skills.

Berman (1987) noted the necessity of teachers who are concerned about more than just getting across the facts of the text. In other words, teachers prepare themselves for modeling, dialogue, practice, continuity, reflection and confirmation of their subject matter.

Knowledgeable teachers know how to teach and what to teach. Therefore, they need to know about their students as well as about their surrounding world. Knowledge in action is the best way to recognize teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Gideonse (1984) listed many kinds of decisions that teachers need to make to be successful teachers. First, they need to know curriculum content. Second, they have to know how to motivate their students to learn. Third, they have to know the instructional and evaluation process. Fourth, they need to know how to manage their classes. Thus, the knowledge that teachers need to know is not only about their disciplines, but also about the technical methods of teaching, testing, and other related rules and regulations. To acquire the best teacher knowledge, teachers have to learn by studying, reflecting, doing, sharing their learning, and looking at their students all of the time. In other words, "teacher education" really continues as long as the teacher stays at his or her job.

Enthusiastic Teaching. If teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy their classes, students might be motivated to learn and have "fun" in their learning.

Good teachers like their jobs and are able to teach their subjects in interesting ways.

Good (1984) believed that enthusiasm is related more to affective outcomes than to cognitive outcomes. Like any job, teaching needs enthusiasm and motivation. If teachers have enthusiasm toward their subject matter, teaching approaches, and methods, their students and their classrooms will be different from the bored teachers' classes. Simultaneously, teachers are responsible to do many things including organizing their instructional process, leading their classes, pacing their presentations, sequencing their lessons, planning their activities, and dealing with a variety of students' understandings and needs. If teachers lose their passion to teach, their students' learning might decline.

Humorous Teaching. Good teachers will be effective once they have a strong background in their subject matter and a love of teaching. Those teachers can transmit their love of their subject matter to their students. Laughter, a sense of humor and doing interesting activities in class can also attract the students to participate in the learning process.

Lieberman (1997) found many traits that are related to playfulness in teaching, including a sense of humor, kindness, sensitivity, cheerfulness, enthusiasm, laughter, active participation, flexibility, imagination, being at ease, relaxation, and entertainment. A sense of humor and the ability to perceive relationships between people or ideas, as well as the ability to communicate this perception to others, is important. Humorous teachers soothe the class

atmosphere through laughter or smiles. They have a sense of humor required to understand and enjoy messages containing humor. In schools, humor can be used in motivating the students and providing interesting classes.

Sluder (1986) believed that humor can be integrated into a disciplinary strategy. He argued that "humor, as disciplinary strategy, helps in establishing rapport while maintaining interest and can be useful in defusing anger and tension" (Sluder, 1986, p. 123). He thought that laughter is a privilege that teachers and students should enjoy. In classrooms, teachers can use laughter by telling jokes, telling stories, or providing entertaining learning activities.

Students' Motivation

A teenager may differ from an adult in behavior, attitudes, and expectations about schooling. Wiggins (1958) believed that the biological growth of teenagers makes a difference in the way they look at their teachers. In a study about the motivational procedures for instruction, Rubadeau (1984) divided the motivation styles into two. He noted that:

Motivation is from within the person and in general there are two basic types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic does not appear to be affected by environmental factors. With intrinsic motivation the individuals maintain their drive toward some goal without any apparent reward from the environment. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand, depends on reinforcements or rewards from the environment to keep the individual working toward some goal (Rubadeau, 1984, p. 5).

Sullivan and Wircenski (1986) provided some general suggestions and tips to create a positive learning climate. They stressed the importance of the guidance

and commenting of the teachers and being sincere and dedicated teachers. They suggested providing praise and reinforcement because that could be a good substitute for correcting negative behavior. Fisher (1982) ended her study with an explanation about the role of the teachers by providing many suggestions to motivate the students. One was for the teachers to be passionate. Through loving their jobs, teachers provide interesting communities of schools. Thayer-Bacon (1993b) argued for strong relations in the community by way of schooling. She noted that:

The classroom is dependent on the individual's well being to function best. Again, there is a relationship here, there is interaction, there is interconnection, there is inter-dependency. Realizing this is the first step toward working to help build healthy democratic communities in classrooms, full of loving, caring, reasonable people who help each other and learn from each other (Thayer-Bacon, 1993b, p. 18).

In looking at these studies and others that deal with the concept of motivation in learning, human relations are important. Ralph (1989) argued that "successful teachers not only reflect upon, plan and implement specific classroom managerial strategies, but they organize and deliver clear and motivating lessons" (p. 144).

Case Study

As part of the literature review, I am providing this section about case study. In Chapter 3, I will explain the type of case study I used in my research.

To understand special people or events, case studies are significant. Patton (1990) argued that:

Case studies are manageable, and it is more desirable to have a few carefully done case studies with results one can trust than to aim for large, probabilistic, and generalizable samples with results that are dubious (p. 100).

As a qualitative research method, the case study is a thick description of a specific situation. The thickness of the description comes from the intensive emphasis on the specific situation. Patton (1990) defined thickness as describing a situation "in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations" (p. 375). Thick description means an intensive and detailed explanation about a specific situation.

Characteristics of Case Study

Because a case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a group, a process, an individual, or a phenomenon, it produces a thick description about a specific situation. Merriam (1988) noted that "case study seeks holistic description and explanation" (p. 16).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described the characteristics of qualitative research. They explained the importance of the natural setting where, for instance, the study takes place in schools because the qualitative researcher is concerned with context. Patton (1990) described naturalistic inquiry as "studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally; non-manipulative, unobtrusive, and non-controlling; openness to whatever emerges lack of predetermined

constraints on outcomes" (p. 40). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stressed the importance of the researcher as the key instrument in qualitative research.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) argued that:

Although some people use videotape equipment and recording devices, many go completely unarmed save for a pad and a pencil. Even when equipment is used, however, the data are collected on the premises and supplemented by the understanding that is gained by being on location. In addition, mechanically recorded materials are reviewed in their entirety by the researcher with the researcher's insight being the key instrument for analysis (p.29).

They described qualitative research as thick description. The thickness comes from the corroboration of data collection and intensity of the analysis and description of a specific situation. In addition, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) emphasized the importance of inductive analysis in this kind of research. By inductive analysis, the results of qualitative study are derived by reasoning from particulars to generals. Finally, they described the meaning of the data as of essential concern to the qualitative approach. The qualitative researcher is concerned with the participants' perspectives.

Because the research questions in this study were "why" and "how" more than "what," the qualitative case study is more appropriate than rationalistic inquiry. In providing detailed data, the qualitative researcher clarifies the study's situation and its surrounding conditions. To gain detailed information about the studied situation, the open ended interview questions have to be "why" and "how," not just simple facts that can be provided by "what" questions. Yin (1994) argued that "how and why questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies" (p. 6). Because qualitative case studies deal with

explanation and thick description, they are intensive. Merriam (1988) argued that "the qualitative case study can be defined as intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single focused phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 16).

Merriam (1988) described four features of the case study. The first feature is that the case study is particularistic. That means that it focuses on a specific event or situation to understand it as a whole, with an awareness of the meaning of its surrounding conditions. The second feature is being descriptive, and that means that it provides a rich description that is a very detailed representation of the study. The third feature is being heuristic. That means that the reader of the case study has more illumination and understanding about the case study because of the corroboration of data collection and the thickness of the description. The fourth characteristic of the case study is that it is inductive. That means that reasoning moves from the particulars to the generals in order to understand the situation.

Analysis of Case Study

To conduct a case study, the researcher needs to utilize five components. Yin (1994) described those five components. First, Yin (1994) noted that "the case study strategy is most likely to appreciate "how" and "why" questions, so your initial task is to clarify precisely the nature of your study questions in this regard" (p. 20). Yin also pointed to the importance of the study of propositions as the second component. He said that the reason to provide those propositions is

to direct the attention to focus on specific points within the scope of the study. By initiating the case study based on propositions, the researcher bases the case study on a specific standpoint to start the research. Specifying a direction does not restrict the emphasis of the research, but it provides a starting point for the researcher to look into the situation very deeply.

Unit of analysis is the third component of the design of the case study. The selection of the unit of analysis arises out from the specification of the research questions and the primary focus of the study. By designing the research questions, the researcher addresses the analysis of the questions based on the components of those questions. The fourth and fifth components are linking data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings. These two components deal with the idea of laying out the foundation for the analysis. The data analysis is based on the propositions, research questions, and data collection themes. In applying all of the five features of the case study, the researcher provides an integrated methodology of a thick description and explanation of an event or situation.

Yin (1994) noted that "currently, there is no precise way of setting the criteria for interpreting these types of findings" (p. 26). He described the way to link theories or conceptual frameworks to the case studies. By linking theories to the case studies, the researcher produces new knowledge about that case.

One of the challenges of conducting a case study is coding the data and finding patterns. In order to organize the qualitative data, the researcher needs to put the data in categories. Those categories are codes and themes. The codes

are the tools to form and classify the data into small phrases or words. The themes are the focused topics in the research.

To find codes in the qualitative data, the researcher searches through the data for regular patterns. The codes can be parts of the patterns and themes of the research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described many types of codes. One of the types of coding is the definition of the "situation codes." With this type of codes, the researcher uses the subjects' definitions of the particular topics in the research. Another kind of codes is "process codes" that refer to coding words that facilitate sequences of events over time. The selection of specific kind of coding system depends on the researcher's understanding of the data and the subjects. To use any kind of coding, the researcher needs to label the data based on the codes to classify them into categories. By labeling the entire data, the researcher has an understanding about the entire data and the themes as well as the subjects. The themes of the study can be a good source of that coding system.

As a focus of a qualitative study, themes are essential at the beginning of the data collection and data analysis. Patton (1990) suggested that qualitative researchers need to rely on their understanding in creating the study themes. He argued that "because qualitative analysts do not have statistical tests to tell them when an observation or pattern is significant, they must rely on their intelligence, experience, and judgement" (Patton, 1990, p. 406). Patton (1990) recommended that qualitative researchers use different classification systems and choose one of them in finding the research patterns.

Summary

One of the characteristics of a good teacher is the emphasis of the teacher's role in facilitating students' learning. In perceiving a good teacher, the students' opinions are valuable because the students' voices must be recognized and appreciated. By providing a case study, the voice of the students about their teachers' characteristics can be recognized, understood, and analyzed.

The next chapter provides the methodology that was used in this study. I decided to use a case study methodology because of its capability to describe and explain Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics. I used multiple interviews of the students to gather their perceptions about teaching characteristics. By using twelve study questions in interviewing six students, multiple observations and field-notes, and an interview with Mrs. Julia, I provide a thick description of Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on the four research questions laid out in Chapter 1 (see pages 10-11). I investigated students' perceptions of Mrs. Julia's caring, respect, commitment, and other teaching characteristics. In addition, I asked students about the influence of Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics on their motivation to learn. To investigate the students' perceptions and ask them about their motivation to learn, I chose to follow a specific educational research paradigm. Educational research tends to fall within two paradigms of research: quantitative or qualitative. To decide which paradigm to use, I needed to understand the nature and the purpose of my study. Mostly, a quantitative study seeks generalization over its population. In the case of a qualitative study, the research focuses on one event or situation, but in an emphasis on thickness of description. In this study, I used qualitative research because I wanted to find out the perceptions of small number of students within a specific context, because I wanted to gather and provide a detailed description of a specific setting and group of people.

This chapter is organized into six sections. The first section explains the preparation for the study. The second section provides the setting of the study and the participants of the study. The third section describes the methods of data

collection. The fourth section states the analytic techniques. The fifth section describes the analysis of data. Finally, the sixth section specifies the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Preparing for the Study

In the Fall of 1997, and the Spring of 1998, I spent my internship at Montana High School observing and interviewing 12th grade students. An internship is gaining practical experience in an educational institute or school. In the Fall of 1997, I spent four hours a week in the school observing several classes and interviewing two 12th grade students for six weeks. In the Spring of 1998, I spent two hours a week observing two of Mrs. Julia's classes and interviewing several 12th grade students from her classes every week.

Although the principal, Mrs. Julia, and other teachers knew me, I needed an official permission to conduct my case study. To acquire access to the setting of my research, I needed to get permission from the Public School Superintendent's office. At the beginning of July 1998, I arranged an appointment with the assistant superintendent to meet him and talk about my study. At that meeting, I received an oral permission to conduct my study at Montana High School. Just before starting my interviews and observations, I designed consent forms for the assistant superintendent, the principal, Mrs. Julia, and the six students. Each one signed the consent form (see Appendices D, E, F, and G).

Rapport with the assistant superintendent, the principal, the staff, the teachers and the students was very important to gather my data and make my interviews and observations easier.

Researcher Positionality

One major reason to choose a case study method in this study was my own interest and desire to conduct a study about high school students' perceptions and connect it with an actual application of teaching. I spent ten years in my country, Saudi Arabia, teaching biology in high schools. The educational system I was involved in was different from the educational system in the United States. Because I got exposed to a new educational system, a new life style, and a new philosophy of education, I became interested to test my educational beliefs in studying a case of a "good" high school teacher. In this case study, I used my outside views, as an international student, to investigate an actual model of a caring teacher who represented a "good" teacher in a public high school.

Once I arrived in the United States, I started thinking about my own experience in teaching in high schools in Saudi Arabia. After more than six years, I found myself in a position where I knew about myself, my country, my culture, and my own experience in teaching in high schools. My own experience and cultural background were appropriate to conduct this case study and analyze its findings from a grounded perspective. As I expected, I gained very rich

knowledge in studying Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics by using her students' perceptions.

To gain that rich knowledge, I decided to investigate the perceptions of high school students about one teacher, Mrs. Julia. Because the study needs an actual application to understand it, I chose to do my case study about a teacher that I knew personally and who is believed to be a good teacher in Montana High School by the principal, other teachers, and students. In the United States, I wanted to investigate the basis of the premises and assumptions of a good teacher.

Because of my unique background in teaching high school students in Saudi Arabia, and because my interest was to test my beliefs about the concept of a good teacher, I conducted my study that was about Mrs. Julia. She was a good match for my case study because of her good teaching characteristics.

Setting and Selection

Montana High School

The case study I conducted was located in Montana High School, which is located in a small city of about 30,000 people in the state of Montana. The city includes a campus of a main university that has about 11,000 students. This university is the major employer in this city. Montana High School is a four-year, comprehensive public school with an enrollment of about 1,700 students for the

year 1998-1999. The Northwest Accrediting Association and Montana Office of Public Instruction accredited Montana High School. In 1993, the United States Department of Education honored Montana High School as a School of Excellence. It also received this award in 1989. In 1994 and 1996, Redbook magazine named Montana High School as one of American's best schools in its "Best of the States" program. The professional staff is composed of about 130 certified personnel, including four administrators.

The academic calendar of Montana High School has 36 weeks with seven class periods per day. The length of class period is 50 minutes. Every class meets five times per week. A unit of credit is earned when a student successfully completes one course over the period of one year. One-half unit of credit is granted upon the successful completion of one semester of any course. Students in my study have a GPA that is provided cumulatively from 9th through 12th grades.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, I addressed many ethical considerations in conducting interviews with the students. One of the ethical concerns was selecting the place and time to interview the students. That location needed to accommodate the students, their parents, the principal, and myself. Because I did not want to interrupt the students' classes, I met them during their study hall periods. The principal and I decided on the meeting room. Another ethical concern was the

confidentiality of the students' answers, the teacher's name, and other names such as the school name, so, I used pseudonyms. I created consent forms to use with the students, Mrs. Julia, the principal, and the assistant superintendent. Although most of the participants are adults, they needed to sign the consent form to be clear about our responsibilities and duties.

Purposeful Selection

In this study, I decided to use what is called a purposeful sample. Patton (1980) argued that "the purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under the study" (p. 169). My participant selection was carefully designed.

Teacher's Selection. Because 12th grade students have had a long experience in schools, I wanted to select them rather than other high school students. In addition, I had ten years of experience in teaching biology to 12th grade students. In Montana High School, there were three classes that most of their students were 12th grade students. These classes were Advanced Placement (AP) psychology, AP US history, and AP English. Because the principal, teachers, and students told me that Mrs. Julia was an exceptional teacher, I wanted to do my case study about her teaching characteristics.

The first time I heard about Mrs. Julia was in the Summer of 1996 when a professor at a local university described Mrs. Julia as one of the greatest

teachers in town. Because of that, I spent ten weeks observing two of her AP psychology classes in Spring of 1998. The principal of Montana High School and two of the teachers also recommended Mrs. Julia to be observed as an excellent teacher. Besides, I knew that she received many awards such as the Graduate Achievement Award, from the Montana State Foundation, in 1993; Outstanding Graduate Student, from the Department of Education, Montana State University, in 1993; AA Coach of the Year, from the Montana Forensic Educators, in 1987; Who's Who in Education, in 1986; and Who's Who Among Young Professional Woman, in 1981. Because of her great accomplishments and because she is an excellent teacher and has a very good reputation, she usually had observers in her classes. Mrs. Julia had four sections of AP psychology in the calendar year, 1998-1999.

Because of her good reputation, my personal relationships with her, and because she was teaching AP psychology that was designated only for 12th grade students, I decided to elect her to participate. She consented to be in the study and welcomed me.

Students' Selection. Montana High School is a four-year school; there are four grade levels, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. In the third week of October 1998, I attended the four AP psychology classes that Mrs. Julia taught. Because I had to get to know the students, Mrs. Julia introduced me to them. The reason for getting familiar with her students was to build some rapport and trust from the beginning of my case study. In the fourth week of October, 1998, I advertised for

student volunteers to be interviewed for my case study. I did not tell them my personal thoughts about Mrs. Julia or other educational thoughts that might influence their responses. I chose the first six volunteer students who met the criteria. All of the six students were from one AP psychology class that was taught by Mrs. Julia.

In this study, I considered age, ethnicity, gender and length of time in Montana High School as criteria for students' selection. Regarding age, all six students were at the same age, 17-18 years. Regarding ethnicity, I selected white students because most of the Montana High School students were Caucasians. To have a balanced number of genders, I selected three boys and three girls. To avoid students who transferred from other high schools, I selected students who spent the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade in Montana High School. The first six students who met the criteria were my selected students. They were Jim, Sue, May, Joy, Max, and Day.

Methods of Data Collection

General Procedure

Before starting my case study, I developed the research questions and the interview questions.

Developing Research Questions. In this study, I started developing the research questions based on my readings in the relevant literature. I started the

research questions by focusing on the idea of human relations between high school teachers and their students. I came up with many questions that dealt with human relations between the teachers and the students.

Because I asked the original questions in my pilot study during my internship at Montana High School, I decided to reduce them to four research questions. The first research question deals with general characteristics of Mrs. Julia that motivate the students to learn. The second question was about the influence of her caring on the student motivation to learn. The third question was about her respect and its influence on the students' motivation to learn. The final research question deals with the commitment of Mrs. Julia that influences the student motivation to learn.

The commonly used methods in qualitative studies are interviews and observations, and therefore, I decided to use those two methods. In qualitative studies, providing rich data is very important to make any qualitative study thick in description and explanation. Therefore, I used participant personal information, Mrs. Julia's interview in addition to the student interviews and my observations. In this study, I used two methods to collect my data; I interviewed the students and Mrs. Julia, and observed them in class to corroborate their experiences.

A number of qualitative research tools were utilized to develop a case study. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described five major types of case studies. Because I had to choose one type case of study, I had to understand each type. The first type of case study is called historical organizational case study, where the researcher concentrates on a particular organization over time to study

change and development over time. The second type of case study is called observational case study, where the researcher uses observation as the major data collection tool. The third type of case study is called life history case study where the researcher interviews an individual asking him or her about his or her life history. The fourth type of case study is called modified analytic induction case study, where the researcher gathers and analyzes data to develop a theory and use it. The fifth type of case study is called constant comparative case study, where the researcher collects data to develop codes and themes through the time of data collection in order to develop new codes and themes by the end of data collection. Glaser and Strauss (1976) described characteristics of this kind of case study. They argued that looking for key issues in the data begins after starting the data collection. In addition, searching for new incidents and issues that come from the data opens the opportunity to discover new themes and codes based on the data themselves. Moreover, engaging in coding does not mean not to focus only on the core categories and themes that the researcher selects before his or her study. Because my study fits the last type of case study, constant comparative analysis case study, I chose to use it in my study.

Multiple Interviews

Bodgan and Biklen (1992) described open-ended interviewing as a way to collect data and analyze them in an efficient inductive way. They describe this method as modified analytical induction. This descriptive study matches what

Gay (1981) believed. Gay (1981) noted that "a descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. One common type of descriptive research involves assessing attitudes or opinions towards individuals, organizations, events, or procedures" (p. 12). Therefore, I used interviews to collect my data about the students' perceptions of Mrs. Julia's characteristics.

Because the research questions were not to be used in the interviews directly, I generated 12 questions from those four research questions. Each of the four research questions was covered by three interview questions. Because this study was about one teacher, I modified the questions to be asked about one teacher.

Interview Questions. In this study, I used the following interview questions:

1. How do you describe Mrs. Julia as a teacher?
2. In your opinion, what characteristics of Mrs. Julia's teaching motivate you to learn?
3. How do Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics influence your motivation to learn?
4. How do you know whether or not Mrs. Julia cares about your learning?
5. What specific things does she do in her teaching that show that she cares about your learning?
6. How do these characteristics of caring influence your motivation to learn?

7. How do you know whether or not Mrs. Julia respects you as a learner?

8. What specific things does she do in her teaching that show that she respects you as a learner?

9. How do these characteristics of respect influence your motivation to learn?

10. How do you know whether or not Mrs. Julia is committed to you as a learner?

11. What specific things does she do in her teaching that show that she is committed to you as a learner?

12. How do these characteristics of commitment influence your motivation learn?

The nature of this study inquires about human perceptions that are often associated with the affective domain. Therefore, I preferred to interview the students to gain more direct and immediate information. I started my questions by asking the students about their opinions about Mrs. Julia's teaching, and then I narrowed down my questions to focus on three characteristics that surfaced in the literature: caring, respect and commitment of Mrs. Julia's teaching.

Table 1. Time Frame for Asking Interview Questions.

Weeks	Research questions	Interview questions
1 st week of October, 1998	1	1
2 nd week of October, 1998	1	2, and 3
3 rd week of October, 1998	2	4, 5, and 6
1 st week of October, 1998	3	7, 8, and 9
2 nd week of October, 1998	4	10, 11, and 12

The order of the 12 questions is noted in Table 1. Questions 1, 2 and 3 cover the first research question, which is about the students' opinions about Mrs. Julia's teaching in general. Questions 4, 5 and 6 cover the second research question which is about Mrs. Julia's caring in teaching. Questions 7, 8 and 9 cover the third research question, which is about Mrs. Julia's respect in teaching. Questions 10, 11, and 12 cover the fourth research question which is about Mrs. Julia's commitment in teaching. All of the 12 questions were asked in five weeks. In following that plan, I had spare time to go through follow-up questions and comments during and between the interviews.

During the students' study hall periods, I interviewed each student individually in a room that the students, the principal and I agreed on. I spent 30-45 minutes with each interviewee every week. I continued interviewing the students for seven weeks. I used a tape recorder to tape the interviews, and then I transcribed them.

In my study, I planned to interview six students, three boys and three girls to look at the patterns of their perceptions toward the teacher of their AP psychology class. Because of my intent to get a selection that has rich information about the topic of the study, I preferred to interview no more than six students in seven weeks. I expected to have all the six students complete their interviews. However, I ended up completing the interviews with only four students, three girls and one boy, Sue, May, Joy, and Jim who completed all five of the interviews. Max completed two interviews and Day had only one interview.

In this study, I completed interviewing four students who answered 12 questions in seven weeks. The 12 questions represent the four research questions of this study. In the first week, I asked the students the first question. In the second week, I asked them the second and the third questions. During the following weeks, I asked them three questions each time. I started my first interviews by asking all of the six students the first question. Then, I decided to ask the second and the third questions at once to increase the students' ability to connect more than answer together. During the last three interviews, I decided to ask three questions at once to gain more integrated responses dealing with one theme at once: caring, respect or commitment.

Since the hall study period is 50 minutes, I decided to reserve at least 30 minutes for interviewing the students in their hall study periods. Thus, I decided to have a maximum of three questions at each meeting, and 15 minutes for each question. Because the questions were open-ended, the students spent a long

time answering each question. Therefore, 15 minutes was enough to cover each answer of each question.

I could not force Max and Day to complete all of the interviews. Max had problems with his attendance at school, so he decided to cancel his interviews with me to catch up on his missed classes and assignments. Day had an injury while he was practicing sports at school and missed some classes and assignments. Therefore, Max and Day refused to continue their interviews.

Observations

The idea of adding the observations to the multiple interviews was to enrich the data and to provide more insight and understanding about the students' perceptions. During the interviews, I conducted seven observations of the class. In doing that, I corroborated my experience with the experiences of the students and Mrs. Julia.

I observed Mrs. Julia's AP psychology class once a week for seven weeks. Patton (1980) noted that "the purpose of the observational data is to describe the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed" (p. 202). Because the class is 50 minutes long, I followed a specific order to write my field-notes. I wrote my field-notes every 10 minutes by dividing the class time into five sections (8: 35-8: 45, 8:45-8:55, 8: 55-9: 05, 9: 05-9:15, and 9:15-9:25). I wrote different

field-notes in my observations to describe the activities that Mrs. Julia was doing and the interactions between Mrs. Julia and her students. In addition, I quoted some of the words used by Mrs. Julia and the students. During the observations, I avoided talking with Mrs. Julia or the students to free myself to observe and write down my field-notes. Most of the time, I sat at the back of the class and tried to observe the entire class atmosphere, without interacting with it.

In this study, I focused on the students' behavior and their reactions, keeping in mind the three original characteristics and their influence on students' motivation to learn.

Time Frame for Data Collection

In this case study, time was a big concern because of my busy schedule, the students' schedules, and Mrs. Julia's schedule. In addition to time, organizing a place to meet was very difficult because there were many administrative meetings and activities that needed meeting places and there was a shortage of them in the school. In spite of the time constraints, I conducted 7 observations and 23 interviews starting in October, 1998, and finishing in December, 1998.

Table 2. Time Frame for Data Collection.

Weeks	Collected data
1. 4 th week of October, 1998	1 st observation
2. 1 st week of November, 1998	2 nd observation, and 1 st student interviews
3. 2 nd week of November, 1998	3 rd observation, and 2 nd student interviews
4. 3 rd week of November, 1998	4 th observation, and 3 rd student interviews
5. 4 th week of November, 1998	5 th observation
6. 1 st week of December, 1998	6 th observation, and 4 th student interviews
7. 2 nd week of December, 1998	7 th observation, and 5 th student interviews
8. 4 th week of April, 1999	Students' personal information
9. 1 st week of May, 1999	Mrs. Julia's interview
10. 2 nd week of May, 1999	Mrs. Julia's personal information

As noted in Table 2, I started collecting data for my study in October, 1998, and finished the data collection in May, 1999. I started the class observations in October 1998, and finished them in December, 1998. I started the student interviews in November, 1998, and finished them in December, 1998. I wrote the students' personal information in April, 1999. The last piece of my data was Mrs. Julia's interview, which I conducted in May, 1999.

Because Mrs. Julia had other observers in her classroom at the same time period, she did not want to have me in her classes except on Fridays. As Table 2 shows, I conducted the first observation in the fourth week of October 1998. The other observations were in November, and December, 1998. On the last day of each week, I observed the AP psychology class once. Because I needed to

conduct one observation each week, I conducted five observations in addition to one observation before the first interview and one after the last interview.

Because all of the six students were in the same class that taught by Mrs. Julia, I observed that class seven times in seven weeks.

I spent five weeks in interviewing the students. The reason for spending five weeks in interviewing the students was because I needed five meetings to go through the interview questions. In every week, I had an interview with every student for at least 30 minutes. During the first week, I interviewed six students. At the second week, I interviewed five students. During the last three weeks, I interviewed four students each week. In addition to the student interviews, I interviewed Mrs. Julia once for about an hour. In that interview, I asked Mrs. Julia about her opinion of caring, respect, and commitment for her teaching and their influence on the students' motivation to learn. The total of the interviews was 24 interviews (23 student interviews and one of Mrs. Julia's). The average length of each interview was 40 minutes and an hour for Mrs. Julia's interview.

There were five reasons for interviewing the students and observing their class for seven weeks in November and December, 1998. First, I needed five interviews to ask my interview questions, so I interviewed each student once a week. Second, I started interviewing the students in the beginning of November, 1998 because they needed at least a month to know Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics and to know me. Third, I started my observations a week before the first interview to have a general understanding about the class before I interviewed the students. Fourth, I avoided interviewing the students during the

week of Thanksgiving because most of them missed that week. Fifth, I interviewed the students and observed the class in the first semester of 1998-1999 calendar year, and saved the second semester for any follow-up data collection. Indeed, I needed more time to give the students copies of their transcribed interviews to review them. Furthermore, I sent them a form to clarify personal information such as their pseudonym names, age, and other pieces of personal information. With Mrs. Julia, I needed to interview her and ask her to complete another personal information form. All of that follow-up data collection took place in the second semester of 1998-1999 calendar year.

Analytic Techniques

Themes

My data themes came from the literature review and my raw data. I started with four themes of caring, respect, commitment and motivation, and then I was open to add more themes. In theme developing, I was adding new themes over the time of collecting and analyzing data. Patton (1980) argued that "the point is that one must have some initial framework for managing the voluminous data collected during fieldwork" (p. 377). Themes were developed from the beginning of my analysis, so I kept reviewing them frequently. In constant comparative analysis case study, theme development starts from the beginning of data

collection and continues throughout out the data collection and analysis, and that was what happened in my study.

Data Coding

In this study, I started thinking about my data's codes very early and I did not wait to the end of the data collection. While I was interviewing the students, making the observations, and organizing the data into files, I started thinking about the codes. At that time, I was able to think about the primary codes of the data in order to reveal patterns, themes, and concepts embedded in the students' responses and my field-notes. As Patton (1980) suggested, I utilized common phrases and notions to analyze my data. Patton (1980) noted that "a good place to begin inductive analysis is elucidation of key phrases or terms used in a program" (p. 390). He explained the common words and phrases that are used in the study in order to organize the data based on those common names and phrases. In utilizing those common words and phrases, I labeled my data. In my study, I labeled the data and classified them based on the themes, the numbers of the interviews, observations, and the names of the students.

Data Analysis

As I planned, at the end of the first week of November, 1998, I finished reading through the data, writing the observations, and transcribing the interviews. In January, 1999, I started reading all of the data at once. In two

months, I read through all of data and organized them in computer files as well as in paper files. The data analysis started while I was collecting the first components of the data. Therefore, I was transcribing the data word by word to be ready for the analysis. From that verbatim data, I developed patterns of analysis. Because I started very early in the data collection process by thinking about the codes, themes, patterns, and concepts, I was able to discover each person's uniqueness and draw a clear picture of Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics.

To develop patterns that fit the students' behavior and perceptions about Mrs. Julia's behavior, I relied on my own understanding of the data. The notion of fitting things together and providing convergence of the data was very problematic, but I solved that problem by reading the data from the beginning. Patton (1980) argued that "the qualitative analyst's effort at uncovering patterns, themes, and categories is a creative process that requires making carefully considered judgments about what is really significant and meaningful in the data" (p. 406). Creativity in analyzing the data provides more understanding and integration among the components of the data. To be creative in my data analysis, I compared and contrasted the themes of data.

Through my data analysis, I was interpreting the data and using tables and summaries to organize my thoughts and interpretations. In addition, I created many tables to demonstrate more connections and relationships among my data components. In displaying those tables, the reader understands more about my

study. After the data analysis, I provided my findings, conclusions, implications and suggestions.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

1. The participants in this study were limited to Mrs. Julia and six of 12th grade students in an AP psychology class at Montana High School during the Fall, 1998.

2. The resources available at the library of Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, from the library loan or accessible to me were a limiting factor. Financial resources and a limited time restricted the scope and the variety of resources.

3. Students' interviews, Mrs. Julia's interview, and my observations were the tools I used to collect data in this study.

4. The conceptual framework of good teaching characteristics, students' perceptions, and teacher's role was a limiting factor in my study. The data collection and analysis were directed toward this conceptual framework.

5. The time frame for data collection was a limiting factor in this study. I used students' interviews and class observations as my major data collection tools during the Fall, 1998, and reserved the Spring, 1999 for any extra data collection (see Table 2).

Summary

This study investigates the students' perceptions of Mrs. Julia's teaching characteristics by using multiple interviews and observations. The preparation for this study took more than a year, the selection of the teacher took about a year but the final selection of the students took two weeks, and the data collection took eight months. Starting in the fourth week of October, 1998, I interviewed the students during their study hall periods at Montana High School. The coding of the data produced themes that I used to label the data in order to analyze them. Findings and recommendations are provided at the end of this study.

The next chapter provides the coding of the responses to the interview questions. In addition, the next chapter describes four cases of the students (Jim, Sue, May, and Joy) who completed all of the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' INTERVIEWS

In qualitative studies, surprises and changes in research agendas often occur. What I found in the students' responses was very exciting. The students provided new themes and added new components. I started analyzing the responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 by using the original themes of caring, respect and commitment. Because these three themes had their definitions based on the literature review, I used their components as my original codes, but this changed given the students' responses.

This chapter is organized into seven sections. The first section exhibits the original and the new themes and codes. The second section describes the analysis of the responses to questions 1, 2, and 3. The third section states the analysis of the responses to questions 4-12. Each of the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sections provides a case study of each student.

Original and New Themes and Codes

Themes of caring, respect, and commitment were found in the literature and mentioned in the students' responses. Based on their definitions, I started my data analysis. Table 3 shows the stages of theme and code development.

Table 3. Theme and Code Development.

Stages	Time	Themes	Codes
1	Before data analysis	Three themes	Seven codes
2	After analyzing responses to questions 1-3	Six themes	23 codes
3	After analyzing responses to question 4-6	Six themes	30 codes
4	After analyzing responses to question 7-9	Six themes	37 codes
5	After analyzing responses to questions 10-12	Six themes	40 codes

As shown in Table 3, throughout reading and analyzing my data, the number of codes escalated in five stages. At the first stage, I used seven codes of the three original themes based on the definitions that I had from my review of literature about caring, respect and commitment. At the second stage, I added three new themes that had sixteen codes based on the students' responses to questions 1, 2, and 3. At the third stage, I added seven new codes based on the students' responses to questions 4, 5, and 6. At the fourth stage, I added seven new codes based on the students' responses to questions 7, 8, and 9. At the final stage, I added three codes based on the students' responses to questions 10, 11, and 12. Therefore, I started using seven codes that represented three themes, and I ended using 40 codes that represent six themes (see Appendix A).

