COMPASSION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND COLLABORATION:
EFFECTIVE TEACHERS IN HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

AS
35
2011
EDD
.G35
v. 1

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
San Francisco State University
In partial fulfillment of
The Requirements for
The Degree

Doctor of Education
In
Educational Leadership

by

Michael Arthur Gallagher

San Francisco, California

May 2011

Copyright by
Michael Arthur Gallagher
2011

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *Compassion, Accountability and Collaboration: Effective Teachers in High Poverty Schools* by Michael Arthur Gallagher, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree: Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University.

Ali Borjian, Ph.D.
Chair and Associate Professor
Department of Elementary Education
San Francisco State University

Wanda Lee, Ph.D.
Dean of Faculty Affairs and
Professional Development
San Francisco State University

Andrea Whittaker, Ph.D.
Director of Teacher Performance and
Assessment
Stanford University

COMPASSION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND COLLABORATION:
EFFECTIVE TEACHERS IN HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

Michael Gallagher
San Francisco State University
2011

This study generated theories about characteristics and practices that contribute to and support teacher effectiveness in two high performing, high poverty elementary schools in San Vicente (pseudonym) County, California while identifying outcomes teachers in these schools seek for their students. The study included surveys of teachers in the two schools, interviews with principals, and interviews and observations of two subject teachers at each school as representative case studies. Effective teachers in these high poverty schools sought both academic and social-emotional outcomes for their students and displayed characteristics of compassion: demonstrating authentic caring, building social capital, and employing aspects of critical pedagogy. These qualities were bound by high expectations. Effectiveness was supported by collaboration between teachers and comprehensive data/accountability systems.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this dissertation.

Ali Borjian

Chair, Dissertation Committee

April 22, 2011

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION

My sincerest thanks go to my chair, Dr. Ali Borjian, for his selfless and patient guidance. Thank you for the many hours of your time. I am also grateful to Dean Wanda Lee and Dr. Andrea Whittaker for their insightful suggestions and support. Thanks to my partner Jason Chan for his support and patience through these three years, to my roommate and friend Eric Claravall for always being good natured and positive, and to my superintendent, Dr. Benjamin Picard, for believing in the value of this work.

This dissertation is dedicated to the teachers in my family:

- My grandmother Monica Agnes Gallagher, San Francisco State class of 1932, for inspiring a family of teachers committed to social justice.
- My father John Vincent “Jack” Gallagher for teaching me to value hard work and character above all other qualities.
- My mother Joan Hauck Gallagher for supporting me as a beginning teacher and for encouraging me and believing in me throughout my career.
- My aunt Joanne Teresa Gallagher for always demonstrating a love of learning and an appreciation and valuing of diversity.
- My cousin Alison Uyehara Hess for modeling the characteristics of an effective, compassionate teacher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Research Questions.....	4
Lens of the Researcher.....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Scope and Delimitations	9
Significance of the Study.....	11
Chapter Two: Literature Review	13
Introduction and Statement of the Problem	13
Conceptual Framework.....	15
Methodology	16
Overview of the Review	16
Characteristics of High Achieving, High Poverty Schools.....	18
The Teacher Makes the Most Significant Impact on Student Achievement	21
Searching for Observable Characteristics of Effective Teachers	24
Principals Use Subjective Analysis to Accurately Predict Effectiveness	26
More Comprehensive Descriptors of Teacher Effectiveness	28
Compassionate Student-Teacher Relationships	32
Effective Teachers Recognize and Build Upon Strengths	34
Effective Teachers and Social Capital	37
Matching Pedagogy to Student Needs	40
Supporting Effectiveness	44
Conclusion and Implications	46
Chapter Three: Methodology	49
Introduction.....	49
Design	49
Role of the Researcher	53
Research Questions.....	54
Context.....	55
Participant Selection	59

Teacher Selection Process.....	59
Subject Teachers	60
Susan—Amber Elementary School	60
Melissa – Amber Elementary School	62
Gloria—Ryan Elementary	64
Teresa—Ryan School	65
Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects.....	68
Data Collection	68
Internal Validity	70
External Validity	72
Data Reduction and Analysis.....	73
Chapter Four: Report of Findings.....	75
Overview.....	75
Introduction of the Two Schools.....	77
Introduction to Amber School	77
Introduction to Ryan School	83
Presentation of Survey Results	89
Describing Effectiveness: Overview.....	90
Describing Effectiveness: Amber School Teachers.....	92
Describing Effectiveness: Ryan School Teachers	96
Reflection: Amber and Ryan School Teachers	100
Supporting Effectiveness: Overview	102
Supporting Effectiveness: Amber School Teachers:	103
Supporting Effectiveness: Ryan School Teachers	106
Summary and Discussion of Survey Findings.....	108
Discussion of Subject Teachers	110
Overview.....	110
Teacher Gloria	112
Building Authentic, Caring Relationships with Students and Parents.....	115
Social Capital: Bridging Students’ Families and School to Empower	118
Critical Pedagogy to Empower	123
Data and Accountability: Supporting Academic Outcomes	127
Teacher Teresa	128
Building Authentic, Caring Relationships with Students and Parents.....	130
Social Capital: Empowering and Building on Strength.....	135
Critical Pedagogy: Focus on Social-emotional and Academic Outcomes..	137
Data and Accountability: Drawing on Competitiveness.....	140
Teacher Melissa	144
Caring and High Expectations	147

Social Capital: “It’s hard”	149
Parents: Well Meaning but Unable to be Supportive	152
Skillful, Effective and “Uncritical” Pedagogy	155
Data and Accountability: Recognition for Effectiveness	160
Teacher Susan	163
Caring like a Mom	166
Shielding the Classroom from the Challenges of the Community	170
Critical Pedagogy: Culturally Blind Focus on High Expectations	174
Data and Accountability: Guiding and Documenting Achievement	178
Gloria, Teresa, Melissa and Susan: Collaboration.....	181
Summary of Discussion of Subject Teachers	188
Summary and Synthesis of Findings	194
Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations	197
Overview and Brief Summary of the Findings	197
Interpretation and Implications	198
Reflection.....	198
Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development	199
Outcomes: Academic and Social Emotional	201
Compassion.....	206
Collaboration	211
Data and Accountability	213
Recommendations for Further Research.....	215
Conclusion	218
References.....	221
Appendices.....	231

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. <i>San Vicente County Enrollment by Ethnic Group</i>	3
2. <i>Demographic Data for Amber and Ryan Schools and the County from 2008-09 School Accountability Report Cards and the County Office Website</i>	56
3. <i>Academic Performance Index Comparison Between Amber and Ryan Schools</i>	57
4. <i>Demographics of the Teacher Staffs at Each School</i>	58
5. <i>Amber School Assessment Timeline 2010-11</i>	81
6. <i>Scale to Measure Teacher Description of Effectiveness</i>	91
7. <i>Teacher Distribution on the Description of Effectiveness Scale</i>	92

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A. Staff Survey	232
B. Principal Nominating Interview Protocol	238
C. Subject Teacher Interview Protocol	240
D. Classroom Observation Protocol	243

Chapter One: Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Considerable research and even current popular media attention has focused on defining teacher effectiveness (Gladwell, 2008; Green, 2010). Much of this attention has ignored the unique challenge of describing effectiveness for teachers in high poverty schools, and there is an urgent need to improve the quality and effectiveness of the teachers serving students in high poverty schools. The ineffectiveness of the teachers serving in these schools contributes to the achievement gap and confounds efforts to narrow the gap (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Researchers, seeking to identify indicators that predict effectiveness have found that teachers with lower objectively defined qualifications serve students in low SES schools (Bacolod, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Plattner, 2008). Others (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Achinstein, Ogawa, & Spielman, 2004; Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001) have explored the proposition that teacher characteristics are overemphasized as a strong predictor of student achievement because the mismatch of teacher qualities and practices and the needs of students leads to lower student achievement for students in high poverty schools

The current standards and accountability regime narrowly defines effective teaching as the ability of a teacher to increase student achievement on standardized tests despite arguments from others (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Wechsler & Shields, 2008) that outcomes in addition to student achievement on standardized tests must be considered in

the description of effective teaching. In order to narrow the achievement gap, it is critical to identify student outcomes that indicate effectiveness, to describe the characteristics of effective teachers for these school environments, and to know how to support teacher effectiveness in these schools.

This study's design amplifies the voices of effective teachers serving in high poverty schools to understand teacher effectiveness specifically for their environments. By understanding the outcomes they seek, the characteristics indicative of their effectiveness, and how their effectiveness is supported, others can replicate their success and close the achievement gap. I am also eager to create a description of effective teachers for high poverty schools since so often teacher recognition and accolades go to those serving the most privileged students. Schools in privileged, affluent communities are typically seen as good schools with good teachers while schools serving communities of poverty are often viewed as low-performing schools with inferior teachers. This construct contributes to the devaluing of teachers serving in often the most challenging conditions where the most effective teachers are needed.

I am influenced by my role as a public school administrator. As Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources I am charged not only with identifying and hiring effective teachers, but also distributing teachers throughout my school district to serve in the schools where they will be most effective. I seek information to guide my decision-making and to assist the decision-making of others. This research also has implications

for supporting teacher effectiveness, particularly in high poverty schools, through the design and application of teacher training, induction, and other professional development.

This study focused on teachers in two schools in San Vicente (pseudonym) County California. The broad ethnic, cultural, language, of economic diversity of this county contributes to the challenge educators face in their efforts to meet the needs of all of their students. Table one presents to ethnic diversity of the county. While the county is considered prosperous and is home to major universities and a broad array of industry fueled by venture capital and technological innovation, large segments of the population live in poverty. More than 35% of county students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program, and approximately 26% are considered English Language Learners. Nearly 13,000 teachers working in approximately 400 public schools organized into more than 20 separate school districts plus the County Office of Education teach more than 250,000 students in San Vicente County.

Table 1

San Vicente County Enrollment by Ethnic Group

Enrollment by Ethnic Group	
African American	3.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	25.9%
Filipino	4.9%
Hispanic/Latino	36.8%
Pacific Islander	0.7%
White (not Hispanic)	24.2%
Multiple or No Response	4.1%

Research Questions

My central research question is, “What are the characteristics that are especially important for teachers to be effective in high poverty schools?” Many researchers searching for the characteristics that predict effectiveness have focused on objective measures including teacher standardized test results, teacher education and preparation levels, and teacher experience as potential proxies for teacher effectiveness. More recently, the national urgency to improve student achievement has led to narrow reliance on value-added measures including efforts to describe teacher effectiveness solely based on comparisons between student performance on a California Standards Test (CST) given at the end of one school year and performance on a different CST given at the end of the next school year (Horton, 2010; Song, 2010). My research will use qualitative methods to understand more subjective teacher characteristics that contribute to effectiveness. To this end, the study is also designed to answer the question, “What are the outcomes that teachers in high poverty schools seek for their students?” Another important research question is, “What conditions support effective teachers in high poverty schools?”

A goal of my research will be to develop more nuanced understanding of the concepts “compassion,” “collaboration,” “social capital,” “data/accountability,” “caring,” and “critical pedagogy” as they relate to teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools while exploring how these themes also support effectiveness. These are the themes that

emerged following staff surveys, principal interviews, and subject teacher interviews and observations.

Lens of the Researcher

The three districts in which I have worked vary greatly in terms of the demographics of the students they serve. During the first seven years of my career I worked in a high-poverty, Title One school in a working class region of the county. For ten years, I worked in an affluent community with very high achieving schools. In fact, the middle school where I served as principal for six years routinely ranks among the highest achieving schools in the state. Currently I work in a ten school elementary district that might be seen as a microcosm of the county. The communities surrounding individual schools range from wealthy and privileged to high poverty and disadvantaged. Experiencing this dichotomy of privilege and commensurate achievement has piqued my curiosity about what truly constitutes teacher effectiveness. I have long suspected that teachers who are successful in affluent schools, like the one where I was principal, may not be successful in the school where I began my teaching career. I also believe that reverse is likely true. My commitment to social justice, to closing the achievement gap, and to providing opportunity to students from disadvantaged backgrounds leads me to be curious about what characteristics are necessary to be an effective teacher in high poverty schools.

Just as the personal backgrounds of the subject teachers in this study influences their understanding of their students and the communities they serve, my personal background shapes my views of the phenomena described in this study. The ethnic diversity of my community and of my family plays a role in my understanding of equity and access in public schools. My Catholic background largely influences my understanding of and commitment to issues of social justice. The mission of the Jesuit university where I earned bachelor's and graduate degrees is summarized in three words: competence, conscience, and compassion. Groody (2007) described the underpinnings of Catholic theology and, in particular liberation theology, that connect my faith and my work. He wrote,

Solidarity with the poor then inspires and provokes transformative action. While there are many ways of working for a more just society, liberation theologians believe no one can choose to ignore a commitment to the poor and still claim to be Christian. (p. 193)

My background more resembles the life and experiences of the teachers in this study than the life and experiences of the students in the high poverty San Vicente County schools examined in the study. Like most of the teachers working in the two schools and all four of the subject teachers, I entered education with a sense of mission: to make a difference in the lives of children who have not had the advantages that I have. Like all four of the teachers, I am a white and middle class. Like me, all four subject

teachers are committed to serving disadvantaged communities though we could choose to work elsewhere. My similarities with the subject teachers helped me to build trust during the course of the study and to understand their perspectives. As the study progressed, I grew to understand that effective teachers desire to understand and to respect differences and begin by drawing on their own life experiences.

Participation in the study was transformative for both the researcher and the participants. The subject teachers were found to be reflective, and toward the end of the study they each explained that answering questions and reading transcripts about compassion, social justice, and their teaching was an uncommon but beneficial experience. For example, each of the four subject teachers explored her own background to understand how she could better connect to the lives of her students, and each of the teachers made these connections in different ways. Similarly, during the course of the study I sought to understand the source of my own commitment to social justice. This exploration examined the values I learned from my parents and my Catholic faith including respecting hard work, character, and morality over status and wealth.

Conceptual Framework

I was initially drawn to Cammarota and Romero's (2006) critically compassionate intellectualism because I found the authors' description of the construct's three component concepts to be similar to the qualities I have observed in effective teachers in a wide range of school environments during my twenty-two years of public school

service. The authors' three component concepts are compassionate teacher-student relationships, social justice consciousness, and critical pedagogy. The authors drew on Valenzuela's (1999) research to understand concepts of caring and Freire's (1970) work to understand concepts of critical pedagogy. Prior to this study, I often explained while hiring or describing effective teachers that I believed that effective teachers care deeply about their students' academic success and futures, work hard for their students as a result of connecting with students' lives and cultures, and employ effective teaching strategies that lead their students to high levels of achievement.

As a result of this study with its focus on high poverty environments and my review of the literature, including the influence of Cammarota and Romero's work, I have refined and revised my original framework. I have found that effective teachers in the high poverty environments demonstrate compassion, and the essential elements of compassion in the target environments are authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999), development of social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010). Additionally, "high expectations for all students" is a theme that is present in all three elements of compassion, and high expectations bind the three themes. Importantly, teachers in high poverty schools describe "effective" in terms of student achievement of two sets of outcomes: academic achievement outcomes and social emotional outcomes.

Finally, the study identifies how effectiveness is supported in the two target environments. The themes “collaboration” and “data/accountability” emerged as significant supports to effectiveness. The emergence of these two themes suggests that the ability to collaborate and the ability to use data are also important skills of effective teachers. Finally, results of the study strongly suggest that principal leadership is critical to the establishment of environments that foster these significant supports to teacher effectiveness.

Scope and Delimitations

A comparative, purposive case study design (Achinstein et al., 2004) was selected in order to spotlight the characteristics that are of particular importance in the description and support of teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools achieving high levels of student achievement. Two high-performing, high poverty schools were selected primarily because they were anticipated to be good sources of effective teachers to populate the study. The two school sites were chosen purposively based on shared characteristics necessary to explore the research question. The study focused on two teachers from each of the two schools. The subject teachers were also selected purposively by being identified as cases representative of effective teachers at their high poverty schools. The design emphasized the voices of the four identified effective teachers to understand their backgrounds and worldviews and to gain their perspectives of their students, of their work, and of their professional development.

Achinstein, et al wrote, “Although case study findings are not generalizable, they provide opportunities to generate hypotheses and build theories about relationships that may otherwise remain hidden” (2004, p. 563). The study generated theories about the characteristics and practices that contribute to and support teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools. Since the study was conducted in San Vicente County, school demographics and conditions are similar to those in many other California schools, particularly those in San Vicente County. School leaders will be able consider the applicability of my findings to their own situations in an effort to increase teacher effectiveness.

Employing a methodology that widened the lens beyond high poverty elementary schools in San Vicente County might have produced findings with broader generalizability. Doing so, however, would not have illuminated the characteristics that are of particular importance in the target environments. Also, the fact that the two chosen schools have substantially out-performed other schools in the county and in the state with similar demographics predicted that there was something noteworthy about the environments of these schools that fostered teacher effectiveness. A desired outcome of the research was to gain insights from successful teachers working in these schools that could inform teachers, school administrators, and other educational leaders striving to improve student achievement in similar environments.

Significance of the Study

This study concludes that effective teachers in high poverty schools in San Vicente County not only are successful at leading their students to high levels of competency on the California Standards Test (CST), but they also equip their students with tools necessary to succeed in the world, recognizing the challenges their students face as a result of societal structural inequalities and their own poverty. Achieving these outcomes with their students requires compassion, and compassion in the context of teaching in high poverty schools includes authentic caring, development of social capital and critical pedagogy. Additionally, these elements of effectiveness are supported by collaborative professional relationships between teachers who accept the elements of this construct and data and accountability.

The study also concludes that while state mandated academic standards are clearly defined and measured, and professional development often focuses on equipping teachers with skills aimed at improving performance on assessments designed to measure student achievement of these standards, little attention is paid to defining other outcomes identified by effective teachers as necessary for the success of their students. Further, since these outcomes are poorly defined and are deemphasized or not valued, achievement of these outcomes is not assessed and little professional development exists to support teacher effectiveness guiding students toward these outcomes. Finally, the

subject teachers described how student attainment of social emotional outcomes supports academic achievement goals.

As a result of hearing the voices of the teachers who are the focus of this study, teachers and school leaders should be encouraged to explore policies and practices that identify the academic and social emotional outcomes necessary for students in high poverty school environments to succeed in their futures. Educational leaders charged with teacher training, induction, and professional development responsibilities should listen to these voices to provide opportunities for teachers to strengthen the skills and to value the qualities associated with effectiveness: authentic caring, development of social capital, and employment of critical pedagogy while recognizing the value of skills associated with collaboration and effective use of data for supporting effective teaching.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

High poverty schools face increasing pressure from “Program Improvement,” STAR Testing, and the Academic Performance Index (API) to improve student achievement. These measures, born of the standards and accountability era, all identify significantly lower student achievement on standardized tests for students attending high poverty schools. A consequence of these measures has been efforts to identify the characteristics of effective teachers, and considerable research has explored the distribution of qualified and effective teachers. Many would define teacher effectiveness as the ability to improve student achievement on these annual standardized tests, but others pursue a more nuanced approach to describing effectiveness including a broader definition of “effective” based on more comprehensive outcomes than state mandated standardized tests are designed to measure.

Goe, et al. (2008) synthesized research about the various ways effective teaching can be conceptualized and measured. Their study for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality was intended to help states in the development of mechanisms for establishing teacher effectiveness. They argued that the major challenge to measuring teacher effectiveness is the lack of agreement on what an effective teacher is and does. They wrote, “clarifying the way *teacher effectiveness* is defined is important for two reasons. First, what is measured is a reflection of what is valued, and as a corollary, what

is measured is valued” (p. 4). Sanders and Horn (1995) discussed the value of employing standardized assessments and alternative assessments. They concluded, logically, that before choosing an assessment tool, one should determine if the information the tool will provide is sufficient or appropriate to answer the question at hand. In order for students in high poverty schools to achieve the goals their families and the teachers have for them, they must attain knowledge and skills in addition to those measured by the California Standards Test.

The purpose of this study is to develop a description of effectiveness specific to teachers at high poverty schools, to understand how best to support teacher effectiveness at these schools, and to identify the outcomes teachers at these schools seek for their students. The description proceeds beyond mere achievement on standardized tests although closing the achievement gap of performance on these instruments contributes to the description. Central to addressing this issue is exploring whether teachers who are effective at these high poverty schools possess skills, qualities and/or beliefs that are especially important to be effective in these particular environments and to meet the particular needs of the students at these schools. I am also interested in what characteristics are good predictors of teacher effectiveness, what motivates effective teachers to work and to remain in high poverty schools, and what conditions support effectiveness in low-SES schools. Finally, I am aim to explore the relationships between principals and teacher effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

This study proceeds from a pragmatic worldview as defined by Creswell & Clark (2006). The goal of the study is to describe teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools so that instruction matches the particular needs of students in these environments. Like many others, this study explores the relationship between student achievement data and the qualities of effective teachers. This study is designed to go a step further than most by focusing on the voices of teachers to generate a more nuanced description of teacher effectiveness. Additionally, this study focuses on high poverty schools whereas few other studies have made this distinction.

The development of my framework for effectiveness in high poverty school environments began with Cammarota and Romero's (2006) "critically compassionate intellectualism" and my own understanding of teacher effectiveness that evolved over more than twenty years as an educator in the public schools. Cammarota and Romero's approach showed success meeting the needs of disadvantaged Latino/a students in Tucson, Arizona. The elements of this approach are compassionate educator-student relationships, critical pedagogy, and social justice consciousness. As a result of this study, I have refined a framework that describes "compassion" as the central theme of effectiveness for teachers in high poverty schools, and I have identified authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999), development of social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010) as the essential

elements of compassion in the context of teaching effectiveness in high poverty schools. In addition, collaboration and data/accountability are identified as themes supporting effectiveness. The study concludes that effective teachers at high poverty schools in San Vicente County not only are successful at leading their students to high levels of competency on the California Standards Test (CST), but they also equip their students with tools necessary to succeed in the world, recognizing the challenges their students face as a result of societal structural inequalities and their own poverty.

Methodology

Studies included in this literature review were identified primarily through online data base searches and subsequent “branching.” Proquest Education Journals, ERIC (EBSCO), and Google Scholar were searched using keywords including “teacher,” “quality,” “effectiveness,” and “definition,” “description,” “compassion,” “social capital,” collaboration,” and “sorting.” Additional searches included “value added” to identify studies using significant student achievement data sets to explore teacher effectiveness. The most significant studies have used statewide data from Tennessee, Texas, and North Carolina.

Overview of the Review

This study aims to identify the characteristics and support necessary for teachers in high poverty schools to be effective with all of their students and to identify the outcomes teachers in these environments seek for their students. Improving the

effectiveness of the instruction provided to students in high poverty schools should lead to improvement in their academic achievement and other identified outcomes that will prepare them for success beyond their schooling. Throughout California, Hispanic, low-SES, and English Language Learner students are not achieving well in school, and an important factor contributing to this lack of success is the ineffectiveness of their teachers meeting their academic needs. The concepts contained Linda Darling-Hammond's (2004) "Inequality and the Right to Learn: Access to Qualified Teachers in California's Public Schools" help explain the scope of the problem in the state. The author cited growing inequalities of access to quality teachers in California. She asserted such inequities threaten students' basic rights to a quality education. Her review of research concluded that, "student achievement gains are much more influenced by a students' assigned teacher than other factors like class size and composition" (p. 1940). Darling-Hammond, like many researchers, based her claims on student performance on state mandated assessments, not the broader needs of students attending high poverty schools including equipping students with the tools necessary to combat issues of social and structural inequities.

This review of the literature will begin by examining literature on effective, high poverty schools, focusing on the role of teacher effectiveness in these environments. Next, the review will explore the relative impact of teachers on student achievement and then present studies that have attempted to identify the teacher characteristics that predict

effectiveness improving student achievement. The review will then introduce definitions and descriptions of teacher effectiveness that stretch beyond “value-added” measures of improving academic achievement on standardized tests including compassion, social and cultural capital, critical pedagogy, and social justice goals. Finally, the review will examine studies that have identified the conditions and practices that support teacher effectiveness, particularly in meeting the needs of students in high poverty environments.

Characteristics of High Achieving, High Poverty Schools

Researchers seeking to identify the characteristics of effective schools serving high poverty student populations typically identify student academic achievement on standardized assessments as the lone indicator of effectiveness. These researchers note that effective schools, as they define them, are characterized by clear focus on attainment of standards, skillful use of formative and summative assessment data, and collaboration among teachers. Marzano (2006), for example, described in detail how teachers could effectively use classroom assessment systems to improve measured achievement of identified academic standards. Qualitative studies identify additional teacher characteristics that appear consistent with achievement of social emotional outcomes that empower students in high poverty environments for success beyond school.

An EdSource (Williams et al., 2010) study of 303 middle grades schools throughout the state of California explored the question, “Why do some middle grades schools clearly outperform others on standards-based tests even though they serve similar

student populations” (p.3)? The study identified policies and practices that contribute to improved student achievement on standardized tests. The study found that the factor that most distinguishes high performing schools from low performing schools is “an intense focus on improving academic outcomes.” Teachers at successful schools were described by their principals as having the ability to use student assessment data to improve learning, an understanding of adolescent developmental issues, the ability to collaborate effectively with peers, the ability to make personal connections with students, and expertise working with English language learners.

This study, though comprehensive, did not ask principals to identify the outcomes they or their teachers seek for their students. Rather, the study was limited to describing the conditions and policies that support achievement of one set of outcomes: student achievement of academic standards. The researchers identified teacher characteristics like understanding of developmental issues and the ability to make personal connections with students as supporting academic achievement outcomes. These characteristics also support non-academic “social emotional” student outcomes, and these findings suggest that seeking social emotional outcomes is congruent with seeking academic outcomes.

Reeves’ (2003, 2004) study of “90-90-90 Schools” included analysis of accountability data and site visits and concluded that high-achieving schools have “a laser-like focus on student achievement” (p. 187). In the schools in his study, 90% of the students in schools qualify for free and reduced lunch, 90% of students are ethnic

minorities, and 90% of the students met or achieved high academic standards. His work identified characteristics that were common among these schools: focus on academic achievement, clear curriculum choices, frequent assessment of student progress, emphasis on non-fiction writing, and collaborative scoring of student work. As in the EdSource study, social-emotional outcomes were not identified or measured. Also, Reeves' 90-90-90 Schools study viewed collaboration, data/accountability, and high expectations through the lone lens of achievement on academic assessments.

Chenoweth (2009) employed qualitative methods to explore the characteristics of nine "It's Being Done Schools," and her design allowed for introduction of teacher characteristics that support social-emotional outcomes. The schools in her study are all located in high poverty communities that disproportionately serve poor children of color, and they all have shown either high academic achievement or rapid academic improvement. Though each of these schools demonstrated different characteristics to meet the unique needs of its student population, each of these schools also clearly demonstrated five essential elements: teacher collaboration, a laser-like focus on what students need to learn, formative assessments, data-driven instruction, and personal relationship building. Though this study also focused on the achievement of academic standards as measured by standardized tests to define successful schools, the qualitative methods of the study uncovered elements consistent with social emotional outcomes. For example, while describing evidence of "authentic caring" (Valenzuela, 1999) at his

school, one of the principals was explicit about long-range outcomes his school seeks for students. He said, "It's not just about being successful in high school. We work for greater accomplishment. We work for students to be successful, to take care of themselves and to take part in society."

The Teacher Makes the Most Significant Impact on Student Achievement

Strong consensus has developed around the theory that the most important determinant in student learning outcomes is the teacher. Hattie (2003) reviewed and synthesized over 500,000 studies of the various influences on student achievement and followed up with classroom observations and interviews with researchers and practitioners. He concluded that a clear distinction could be drawn between expert and experienced teachers. He wrote, "Students who are taught by expert teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students (2003, p. 15). He found that student characteristics such as prior cognitive ability (1.04 effect size), disposition (.61 effect size), and parent involvement (.41 effect size) provide the greatest impact, accounting for 50% of the variance. However, of the factors that can be influenced by schools, the teacher is clearly the most significant, accounting for 30% of the variance in measured student learning outcomes. Among the influences with teacher as the source, feedback (1.13 effect size) and instructional quality (1.00 effect size) were the most pronounced.

The McKinsey Study, “How the World’s Best Performing School Systems Come Out on Top” (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) used student achievement data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to identify the world’s top performing school systems and the systems showing rapid student achievement improvement. The researchers examined the achievements of these systems, surveyed current literature, and interviewed more than 100 experts, policy makers, and practitioners. The report concluded that the three things that matter most in the pursuit of student academic achievement are, “getting the right people to become teachers, developing them into effective instructors, and ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child” (2007, p. 2).

Many have used value-added measures to demonstrate teacher influence on student achievement on standardized tests. Using data from the Tennessee Class Size Experiment (or Project STAR), Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges (2004) concluded that if teacher effects are normally distributed, the difference in student achievement gains between a 25th percentile teacher and a 75th percentile teacher are over one third of a standard deviation in reading and almost a half of a standard deviation in math. Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) employed the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) to examine the relative effects of several factors including teachers, class size,

prior student achievement, and classroom heterogeneity on student achievement, and concluded that teacher effects “are the dominant factors affecting student academic gain” (p. 57). The TVAAS has been used to produce estimates of school and teacher effects “free of socio-economic confoundings” (Sanders & S. P. Horn, 1995).

Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) similarly concluded that there is “strong support for existence of substantial differences in teacher effectiveness, even within schools” (p.2) and described the critical nature of achievement on standardized tests. The authors based their conclusions on administrative databases, some covering every teacher within a state. In answering the fundamental question, “Do the tests measure skills that are important or valuable?” (p. 5), the authors concluded in the affirmative, noting that standardized test scores are closely related to school attainment, earnings, and aggregate economic outcomes. They failed to recognize, however, that structural societal biases that favor students who fare well on standardized tests also favor the same privileged segments of the population throughout their schooling and in the attainment of earnings and aggregate economic outcomes. In other words, students attending high poverty schools are disadvantaged by the structures that establish the standards that standardized tests measure, the measurement tools, the structures of school systems, and the structure of the economic systems that have led to their placement in high poverty schools in the first place (Delpit, 2006; Freire, 1970; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; G. R. Howard, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; Zentella, 2005).

Searching for Observable Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Though Hanushek (2007) and others (Hattie, 2003 ; Kane & Staiger, 2008; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996) similarly concluded that teacher quality significantly impacts student achievement, researchers differ in their findings about the influence of teacher characteristics such as credentials, training, and experience. Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) concluded that variables often used to determine entry into the profession and salaries, including post-graduate schooling and licensing examination scores, explain little of the variation in teacher quality. The most often cited studies on teacher effectiveness do not specifically examine issues of effectiveness for students in low-SES schools or the particular needs of student in these environments.

Several studies have concluded that identifiable teacher characteristics have only a negligible effect on student achievement. These findings imply other more subjective qualities contribute to teacher effectiveness. Though Hanushek (2007) explained that teacher experience and teacher education bear little systematic relationship to student outcomes, Nye, et al. (2004) found that teacher experience and education were each nearly always positively correlated to student achievement. These two factors, however, were found by Nye, et al. to explain no more than 5% of the effect on student achievement in math and reading. Rivkin, et al. (2005) examined student achievement data from a University of Texas, Dallas study and concluded that having a masters degree

does not improve teaching skills. Further, they concluded that there appeared to be significant improvement in teaching skills after the first year and smaller gains after the next few years. There was little evidence of improvement, however, beyond three years. Some of the measured increase in effectiveness in the first year likely was due to individuals who were unsuited to teaching leaving the profession after one year.

Others have identified teacher characteristics they believe to have significant correlations to student academic achievement outcomes. Konstantopoulos (2009) studied the effects of teachers on various subgroups of students and concluded that all students benefit from effective teachers. Further, there was some, although mixed, evidence that teacher effects were more pronounced in high poverty schools. Lankford, et al. (2002) concluded that non-white, poor, and low performing students were disproportionately taught by less qualified teachers in their study of teacher qualifications and student demographic and achievement data from throughout New York state. The authors assessed qualifications based on ranking of the college where teachers earned their bachelors degree, years of teaching experience, and scores on the National Teachers Examination. The authors inferred a relationship between these qualifications and lower student performance, but they did not present statistical analysis to support this conclusion.

Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2007) measured correlations between objective teacher characteristics and student achievement more closely. Their study examined ten

years of statewide teacher attribute and student performance data in North Carolina. They found the following significantly and positively correlated with increased student achievement: years of teaching experience, possession of a regular credentials (as opposed to an emergency or provisional credential), national board certification, and performance on standardized tests required for teacher licensure. However, they also found, as did Rivken, et al., that possession of masters degree did not predict teacher effectiveness, and, in some cases, was negatively correlated with teacher effectiveness. The authors similarly did not find a significant correlation between the quality of a teacher's undergraduate institution and student achievement.

Others (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Achinstein et al., 2004; Deschenes et al., 2001) have explored the proposition that teacher characteristics are overemphasized a strong predictor of student achievement because the mismatch of teacher qualities and practices and the needs of students leads to lower student achievement for students in high poverty schools.

Principals Use Subjective Analysis to Accurately Predict Effectiveness

There is evidence that principals, using subjective analysis of teacher quality rather than the teacher characteristics described above, can accurately identify teachers most effective at improving student achievement. Jacob and Lefgren (2005) studied 202 teachers in grades second through sixth in a mid-sized school district in the western United States. The authors found correlations of .32 (math) and .36 (reading) between

principal assessment of teachers' ability to raise math and reading standardized test scores and students' actual math and reading scores. The authors noted that principals are particularly good at identifying teachers associated with the largest and the smallest student achievement gains. Similarly, Borman and Kimball (2005) concluded that "better teaching," as defined by better ratings on a standards-based evaluation system employed by a Washoe, Nevada school district, appeared to be related to better student performance on standardized assessments. They found that, "the difference between 'bad' and 'good' teaching is equivalent to as much as one-fifth of a standard deviation in achievement" (p. 17). Finally, Fuller, Loeb, Arshan, Chen, & Yi's (2007) survey of 267 California principals found that principals believe they can accurately assess teacher quality. The principals said their inability to fire teachers was their greatest constraint to improving student achievement. Though the authors noted that principals only wanted to release one or two teachers per campus, they did not explore the frustration principals described in improving the effectiveness of all of their teachers.

These studies of principals and their success identifying the teachers most effective and least effective improving student academic achievement as measured by standardized test scores should not be interpreted as suggesting a panacea to the achievement gap. The studies provide implications for relatively small slivers of the teaching population: the very most effective and the very least effective teachers in relation to standardized test scores. Further, none of these studies focuses on how

principals can support teacher effectiveness for the vast majority of their teachers, and the studies also do not differentiate for the outcomes for students sought by teachers at high poverty schools.

More Comprehensive Descriptors of Teacher Effectiveness

The need for a more comprehensive description of teacher effectiveness for teachers at high poverty schools emanates from the lack of conclusive evidence that observable characteristics predict teacher effectiveness improving student standardized test scores, particularly for students at high poverty schools, and from the narrow definition of effectiveness implied by basing the definition of effectiveness on standardized test scores. Goe, et al's (2008) report for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality called for more comprehensive measures of teacher effectiveness recognizing that the contexts in which teachers work vary so greatly. Though they noted, "There is little empirical evidence of the validity of these various methods for measuring teacher effectiveness, and in many cases, there are not standardized instruments for data collections," (p. 48) they argued that decisions about what ought to be measured and how it should be measured ought to be left up to local decision makers and caution that what is measured communicates what is valued. They recommended five points to incorporate in definitions of teacher effectiveness including expecting all students to learn at a high level, contributing to positive attitudinal and social outcomes for students, using diverse resources to monitor student progress

formatively, developing appreciation for diversity and civic-mindedness, and collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents, and educational professionals, especially to meet the needs of students at high risk of failure. The authors noted that student achievement growth should be measured, but they urged that alternative measures to value-added or other test-based growth measures be considered.

Also reacting to definitions of teacher quality based solely on student achievement measures, Wechsler and Shields' (2008) report for The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning reviewed recent literature and considered input from administrators, classroom teachers, and professors of education to identify a more comprehensive definition of teacher quality and to advocate for a deeper understanding of teacher quality than test scores alone can provide. Their definition is,

High quality teaching occurs when teachers come to the classroom with a rich toolkit of craft knowledge and skills that they utilize following a set of effective practices, and which lead, over time, to student learning. High quality teaching occurs in a supportive environment where teachers work as part of a professional community within a workplace that fosters continuous learning on the part of children and adults. (p. 5)

They concluded that for quality teaching to occur, teachers must be recognized as professionals and surrounded by strong leadership, ample, appropriate instructional

materials, and well-maintained facilities. In fact, they make the controversial claim that all teachers can be effective if provided with the proper support,

Mirroring assumptions that all students can learn if provided the right conditions, including teacher quality, policy makers need to create programs built on the assumption that all teachers can provide quality teaching if provided the appropriate supports and differentiated opportunities. (p. 8)

They further advocated for use of “sound data as the basis for analyzing quality teaching and strengthening practice,” (p. 8) and they called for increased attention to the professional development needs of experienced teachers, noting that the emphasis has been on the considerable needs of newer teachers.

Day and Gu’s (2007) research supports the idea promoted by Wechsler and Shields that support for teachers ought to be differentiated to meet the varied needs of teachers so that all teachers can be effective. The goal of study was to understand factors that contribute to effectiveness throughout a teacher’s career. In a study of 300 teachers in England, Day and Gu explored issues of teacher effectiveness throughout the professional life phases of teaching careers and determined that teachers do not necessarily improve effectiveness with experience and that expertise is not collected in an even, incremental way. Further, teachers were found to be at greater risk of being less effective later in their careers. The study suggested professional learning opportunities and approaches school leaders ought to pursue take account of the personal, workplace,

and external scenarios that likely occur at different points in teachers' careers.

Conclusions were drawn without running statistical tests to measure significance.

Others have sought to develop comprehensive definitions of teacher effectiveness. Nagy's (2006) survey of 335 elementary, middle, and high school principals (181 responses) in Rhode Island identified qualities that are difficult to measure in her quest to develop a definition of "exemplary" teacher. The researcher measured a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between input and output criteria, and determined that principals' views are heavily biased toward outputs (observable classroom behaviors) rather than inputs (coursework and tests required for certification). Principals ranked three (of 39) characteristics as the most important on the five point Likert scale. They were "have a passion to help students learn and grow" ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 0.4$), "has high expectations for themselves and their students" ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.4$), and "is caring, empathetic and fair" ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.5$). Nagy included all Rhode Island public school principals and did not distinguish more effective and/or more experienced principals from less effective or less experienced principals. Naspo (2005) studied state-level policy making in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and North Carolina to understand how definitions of teacher quality were developed. Naspo found that policy makers believe their role should be limited to defining minimum teacher qualifications, and that effectiveness is ultimately not quantifiable and therefore ought not be within the purview of state-level policy.

Compassionate Student-Teacher Relationships

The theme of “compassion” consistently emerges as a critical element of teacher effectiveness among those who seek to develop a comprehensive understanding of effectiveness (Cammarota & Romero, 2006; Goe et al., 2008; M. Howard, 2008; Nagy, 2006). Howard’s (2008) study recognized that compassion is critical to student achievement and that a highly qualified teacher (as defined under No Child Left behind) is not necessarily an effective teacher. Through her review of literature, she identified five dimensions of effective teaching: professional qualities, efficiency, compassion, passion and context. She interviewed ten third through fifth grade teachers who had demonstrated success improving tests scores of students in high poverty schools and determined their perceptions of the importance of the five dimensions. The Evaluation and Research Department of the school system identified teachers whose Effectiveness Index values were greater than +2.0 on the 2005-2006 End-of-Grade reading and mathematics tests. Compassion was cited as having the most impact on student success, and the study found that an effective teacher is able to successfully integrate all five dimensions of teaching into classroom practice.

The “compassion” that Cammarota and Romero (2006) described is reciprocal. Both the students (and, perhaps at the elementary school level, the parents) and the teacher understand the lives and the struggles of each other. The authors noted that students needed to see teachers “as complete human beings and interact with us on an

emotional level before engaging with us intellectually” (p. 20). They drew their description of the difference between “authentic” caring and “aesthetic” caring from Valenzuela (1999) and explain the quality of the mutual positive regard. Cammarota and Romero wrote that while “aesthetic caring is tantamount to treating students like objects, seeing them only as blank slates that need to be inscribed with academic skills, and not as complete people with real-life problems” (p. 21), authentic caring includes “real interest in the students’ overall well-being” (2006, p. 21).

Valenzuela (1999) described the misunderstanding between students and teachers about what it means to “care about” school, and suggests approaches to meeting the broader needs of students. She asserted that teachers typically focus on non-personal content and are reluctant to build authentic social ties with students. Teacher discourse about caring centers around impersonal language like “standards,” “goals,” and “strategies.” Conversely Mexican culture understands caring in terms of a “moral ethic of caring that nurtures and values relationships” (p. 22). Withholding social ties from Mexican American youth reinforces their belief that schooling is “impersonal, irrelevant, and lifeless” (p. 22). Moreover, the word “*educación*” as understood in Mexican culture has a broader definition than the word “education” in the American lexicon. “*Educación*” connotes “competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others” (p. 23).

Effective Teachers Recognize and Build Upon Strengths

Researchers exploring the intersection of social emotional and academic outcomes have described the importance recognizing the strengths, or capital, all students bring to the classroom. Zentella (2005) argued that “unscientific notions of race and language and essentialized views of “Americans’ versus ‘others’ impede crucial national conversations about immigrants and their children” (p. 1). She also emphasized the value of “tapping into productive resources that students bring from home” (p. 2). Among these productive resources are concepts of family, community, and language. She described the value of bilingualism, but also noted that “teachers who incorporated the communities ‘ways with words’ in their classes helped students expand their repertoires dramatically” (p. 7).

Valdés’ (1996) ethnographic study of ten Mexican immigrant families also revealed the mismatch of the culture of school and the culture of home and community the students in her study experienced. She described the goals of the school and the school’s expectations of parents. She then explained how these concepts contrasted with the parents’ goals for their children and how parents had a different concept of supporting education. She wrote,

For the children, the teachers, and the parents, the school context presented many challenges. Teachers tried their best and appeared to fail. Children brought with

them skills they had learned at home and found them inappropriate. Parents felt helpless, confused, and angry. (167)

While the school's goals were merely academic, the goals of the families included physical survival and the health of their children, developing their children's capacity to make a living, and developing the "behavioral capacities for maximizing the cultural values central to them" (p. 188). According to Valdés, prestige, intellectual achievement, and wealth were the values emphasized at the school, while to the families, these values were less important than morality and family loyalty.

Delpit (2006) described how the current standards and accountability regime devalues the lives, cultures, and experiences of students. She argued that schools must teach students the academic skills they need to be successful in society, but they must do much more. She wrote, "When we strip away a focus on developing the humanity of our children, we are left with programmed, mechanistic strategies designed to achieve the programmed, mechanistic goal of raising test scores" (p. xv). She explained that effective teachers not only teach their students the academic skills necessary to be successful, but they also teach students "the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life" (p. 45). Further, she argued that effective teachers allow students to access the codes of power from their middle class experiences while valuing and nurturing the expertness that comes from their students' life experiences.

Researchers focusing on resiliency theory also emphasize the power of seeing all students as capable of drawing from their strengths. Medoff's (2010) understanding of resiliency theory focused on the strengths of individuals and on the importance of a supportive environment. She explained that, "Resilience refers to a pattern of behavior that demonstrates that a person is doing well despite being exposed to significant risk or adversity" (p. xiv). Resilient children, she argued, feel in control of their lives and are confident in their strengths, and they obtain this confidence and sense of control as a result of being taught social skills to address challenges relevant to their lives.

Similarly, the Search Institute's survey of nearly 150,000 6th to 12th grade youth in 202 communities across the United States (Search Institute, 2003) supported that organization's application of resiliency theory. Their research found that their 40 identified "Developmental Assets" promote positive attitudes and behaviors while protecting youth from harmful and unhealthy choices. Developmental Assets are described as the positive relationships, opportunities, values and skills that young people need to grow up to be caring and responsible adults. Central to the Search Institute's framework is the concept that all youth possess strengths that can be nurtured through support of adult role models, positive peer influence, caring school climates, and a sense that the community values youth. (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). In San Vicente County, a 41st Asset was added to the list based on community input: positive cultural identity.

Effective Teachers and Social Capital

Stanton-Salazar and Dorbusch recognized the intersection of social capital and authentic caring in effective teachers. They wrote,

In the study of school inequality, the analysis of social networks reveals how success within the educational system for working-class and minority youths is dependent on the formation of genuinely supportive relationships with institutional agents. (1995, p. 1)

They described “institutional agents” as individuals, most often teachers and counselors in the schools, who are able to transmit informational resources including academic support and advice, evidence of aesthetic, not authentic, caring. Though these teachers “care” about the academic achievement of the students, and they “care” about their general well being, there is no indication that they connect with their students authentically.

Cammarota and Romero found that to be effective helping their students gain the skills and knowledge they need, teachers in high poverty schools must explore their own deeply internalized beliefs about race. They wrote,

Teachers cannot become authentic caregivers to students of color unless they merge their caring with counter-hegemonic content that dispels notions of racial inferiority and recognizes the wealth of knowledge, culture, and understanding of every student who walks in the classroom (2006, p. 22).

Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau's (2003) ethnographic study of parental networks, a central dimension of social capital, provides more insight into the disconnect between school structures at many high poverty schools and the subgroups of students who are struggling academically at the schools. They defined social capital as the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families access through their social ties. The authors compared how middle class parents and low SES parents accessed school systems in different ways leading to different results. They found, "the network ties connecting parents of school peers is primarily a middle class phenomenon" (2003, p. 320). Middle class parents meet and get to know each other through structures like soccer games, little league, and the PTA. Poor and working class families, conversely, tend to build networks based on familial ties. When it comes to addressing problems in the school, like a poor teacher or inappropriate teacher behavior, middle class parents respond en masse, and "force" action from the school. The authors found that while the networks available to working class or poor families did little in the arena of schooling, they help considerably in other aspects of life like transportation, child care, emotional and financial support.

Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch's (1995) study sheds light on issues and potential of social capital for schools serving large Mexican American student populations like the high poverty schools in San Vicente County. They addressed "both the constraints on and consequences stemming from the formation of personal ties with those who control

institutional resources” (p. 10). They found that while bilingual Mexican origin students had greater access to the social capital available at the schools than did English only Mexican-American students,

English-dominant students may be acquiring an oppositional stance toward "the system," bilinguals are in a potentially optimal position. On the one hand, they have acquired sufficient mainstream cultural capital to share in the resources enjoyed by dominant group members and, on the other hand, they have retained sufficient trust in the system to believe that cultural accommodation will ultimately produce desired returns. (p. 10)

They noted those who did well in school typically described very weak ties to the school in the form of informational support from only one or two institutional agents. The authors noted that the ability to conceal or downplay markers of cultural foreignness contributed to the ability of form ties to non-familial institutional agents. Language and cultural barriers denied many immigrants opportunities to build relationships that would lead to social capital transference even when they expressed values consistent with traditional American ideals of hard work and material success.

Attinasi (1997) described the deficient educational environments of schools that serve high percentages of multi-cultural and language minority students. He described “a conspiracy of silence” (p. 280) in which neither teacher nor student attempts to exert effort, “and neither disturbs the other’s very different perceived school or after school

sub-culture” (p. 280). This lack of understanding of each other’s reality results from the absence of authentic caring. Of course, the prophecy of low expectations fulfills itself.

Finn’s (2009) study described how pedagogy and expectations correlate to the social status of the students in the school resulting in the reproduction of socio-economic stratification. The study concludes, “I’d like to hope a child’s expectations are not determined on the day she or he enters kindergarten, but it would be foolish to entertain such a hope unless there are some drastic changes made” (p. 56). Finn explored five schools categorized as “executive elite,” “affluent professional,” “middle class,” and “working class” based on the backgrounds and social status of the families that attend the schools. At the working class schools, teachers exerted considerable control, demonstrating Freire’s oppressor-oppressed relationship. Students were rewarded for docility and obedience and punished for initiative and assertiveness. Materials were closely guarded, and negative consequences were evident for failing to follow established behavioral procedures. The students’ response to this oppression, Finn found, was resistance in the form of vandalizing school property and resisting teachers’ efforts at control.

Matching Pedagogy to Student Needs

Identifying effective instructional practices that meet the particular needs of Hispanic students is critical. Hispanic students comprise 36.8% of the public school student population in San Vicente County and 50.4% of the student population in

California. The API for California Hispanic students resulting from the 2009 administration of the STAR test was 715. The API was 898 for Asian students and was 838 for white students (California Department of Education, 2010). Padrón, Waxman, and Rivera (2003) synthesized research on educational factors and conditions relevant to Hispanic students and concluded that Hispanic students are disproportionately taught by unqualified teachers, attend at-risk school environments, and are taught using pedagogy that does not match their needs. In describing at-risk environments, the authors intentionally identify the school structures and pedagogy as deficient rather than describing students, their culture, and their communities as deficient. They also described practices and programs that have proven effective with Hispanic students. These successful practices and programs emphasize building a sense of community in the classroom, empowering students and their community, and basing prevention and intervention programs, “on the co-constructed educational goals of the group for which the intervention is being designed” (p. 14).

Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001) similarly described a historical “‘mismatch’ between the structure of schools and the social, cultural, or economic backgrounds of students identified as problems” (p. 525). The authors argued that, “whole schools, whole systems, whole neighborhoods must change to reap the benefits of reform” (p. 543). To enact reforms without matching systems to the needs and backgrounds of the targeted students reinforces social, racial, and ethnic inequalities.

Achinstein, et al. (2004) described state and local policies and practices that are intended to address the achievement gap but that are not aligned with the social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of students. The authors described the creation of a lower track of teachers as a result of these practices. School cultures socialize teachers in high poverty schools to reinforce lower expectations for their students (Achinstein et al., 2004; I. Horn, 2007). High poverty schools also seemed to offer teachers less autonomy and required a more scripted curriculum (Achinstein et al., 2004). Ironically, these practices, though perhaps well intentioned, seemed to be contributing to the ineffectiveness of teachers serving in high poverty schools. The practices are doomed to failure because they emanated from perceived deficiencies of students in urban schools rather than focusing on deficient school structural systems.

Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) recognized the shortage of effective teachers in high poverty and urban schools and also focused their attention on school structures and increasing the effectiveness of the practices teachers use to meet student needs. They and others (Cammarota & Romero, 2006; Padrón et al., 2003) argued that the key to improving teacher effectiveness is supporting teachers in their development and implementation of pedagogy that investigates and draws from the social contexts of the lives of students.

Schools that have improved student achievement for traditionally underserved populations have created culturally responsive systems. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell,

echoing Deschenes, et al. and Padrón, et al., argued forcefully that systematic structural design of urban schools “essentially predetermines their failure” (p. 1). Rather than accept the argument that urban school failure results from cultural deficiency on the part of students and community, the authors identified examples of urban school success that proceed from recognition of urban community and culture as assets. Cammarota and Romero’s critically compassionate intellectualism embraced critical pedagogy to empower high school students to become “critical agents of social and structural transformation” (p. 16) and to challenge oppressive structures. Their approach led to improved student achievement for the twenty students enrolled in their program in Tucson. Finally, Waits et al. (2006) identified twelve Arizona “beat the odds” schools with high Latino population that showed either steady improvement or steady performance on third grade reading or eighth grade math state-administered standardized tests. A signature value of these “beat the odds” schools was accountability. Successful schools serving Latino students knew, “if students weren’t learning, the school needs to change” (2006, p. 25), and “if every student in the classroom isn’t learning, the school isn’t doing its job” (2006, p. 25).

Cammarota and Romero (2006) describe their perspective of cooperative learning as centered on principles of critical pedagogy. They see cooperative learning as a vehicle to level classroom hierarchies and to provide students with opportunities to create and pose questions. In classrooms centered on cooperative learning from a critical pedagogy

perspective, students construct meaning from their own experiences perspectives. The authors explained,

The attainment of knowledge should never occur from the distribution of an absolute, irrefutable fact, but rather as process of discovery in which educator and students work collectively and democratically. (p. 466)

This perspective of cooperative learning differs from the common understanding of this strategy. Fisher and Frey's (2007, 2008) "gradual release of responsibility" (GRR) model includes four stages of structured teaching: "I do it," "We do it together," "You do it together," and "You do it alone." While the authors draw upon constructivist learning theory and note that "conversations are critical for learning" (2007, p. 33), these conversations take place within a "focused lesson" that leads students step-by-step to the narrowly defined academic outcome chosen by the teacher and, likely, selected from state standards. The leveling of hierarchies is not a goal. In fact, the design places bilingual students in a "student" role in relation to English only students who assume a "teacher" role.

Supporting Effectiveness

Researchers who have sought to understand the inequitable distribution of effective teachers have uncovered insights into how teachers in high poverty environments can be best supported. Darling-Hammond (2004) asserted that the single greatest source of educational inequity is the disproportionate distribution of less trained

and experienced teachers to the classrooms of poor and minority students. Howard (2003) reviewed literature related to the impact of teacher shortages on urban schools and made recommendations to address the problem. He recommended improving working conditions in urban schools including decreasing class size and increasing teachers' roles in school-wide decision making. He also noted the importance of strong, effective principal leadership and suggested that physical improvements including desks, books, supplies and the general repair of the building are critical. Finally, he noted the important role partnerships with teacher training programs play in providing research and training for urban schools and well as in wisely placing students teachers in optimal urban school settings. Howard's findings suggest that improving the described teacher working conditions in low-SES schools not only decreases teacher turnover over but also leads to improved effectiveness for all teachers.

Horng's (2009) study sought to understand the causes for the inequitable distribution (or "sorting") of teachers across California. Her study derived from research that concluded that "poor, non-white, and low-achieving students are far more likely to attend difficult-to-staff schools, characterized by high rates of teacher attrition and limited teacher applicant pools" (p. 690). She concluded that teachers identify working conditions including facilities, administrative support, class sizes, and salary as significantly more important than student characteristics when selecting a school in which to work. Similarly, Loeb, Darling-Hammond and Luczak (2005) and Darling-

Hammond (2003, 2006) cited working conditions, including administrative support, resources for teaching, and teacher input into decision making as particularly significant barriers to retaining quality teachers in high poverty schools.

These studies pointed to lower salaries and the stress of working with students and families with a wide range of needs. Loeb, et al. found that when issues of salary and working conditions are addressed, the influence of student characteristics on turnover is substantially reduced. Improved teacher preparation programs and strong induction and mentoring programs can make a difference, according to Darling-Hammond (2003). The research cited above suggest that the conditions that lead to higher rates of teacher turnover in high poverty schools also mitigate against teacher effectiveness. In other words, perhaps teachers leave high poverty schools because of the difficult working conditions and because the working conditions make it difficult to improve student achievement.

Conclusion and Implications

Considerable research and even current popular media attention has focused on defining teacher effectiveness (Gladwell, 2008; Green, 2010). Much of this attention has ignored the unique challenge of describing effectiveness for teachers in high poverty schools, and there is an urgent need to improve the quality and effectiveness of the teachers serving students in these schools. The ineffectiveness of these teachers contributes to the achievement gap and confounds efforts to narrow the gap (Darling-

Hammond, 2004). Teachers with lower objectively defined qualifications serve students in low SES schools (Bacolod, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Plattner, 2008), and many researchers have concluded that hiring and assigning teachers based on objectively defined characteristics will improve achievement and high poverty schools, in large part because broad consensus has built around the concept that a child's teacher has the most significant impact on a academic achievement. Little research, however has focused on the unique needs of students attending California's high poverty schools.

Increased attention to standardized test results may be tipping the scales more decisively in the direction of aesthetic caring, especially at high poverty schools under intense pressure to improve standardized test scores as a result of the standards and accountability movement including No Child Left Behind. There is a danger in these environments of teacher attention being increasingly drawn to academic achievement issues and away from developing truly compassionate relationships, which, ironically, would contribute to better test scores in the end.

It is important to identify the particular needs of the students in San Vicente County's high poverty schools and to know how to identify and support teacher effectiveness focused on meeting the particular needs of the students in these schools. Standardized test results do, in fact, measure achievement of desired academic outcomes. However, achieving high levels of proficiency on the California Standards Test is not a

sufficient goal for San Vicente County's or California's or high poverty schools. Schools that have improved student achievement for traditionally underserved populations have created culturally responsive systems. Compassion, social capital, and critical pedagogy are concepts that will be explored in this study to determine their role in the effectiveness of teachers in the subject schools.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The study aimed to describe the characteristics of effective teachers at high poverty schools in San Vicente County, California, to identify the outcomes teachers seek for their students, and to describe how effectiveness is supported in these environments. Further, the study was designed to refine a framework of teaching effectiveness for the target environments. The study employed an analytic induction approach to data collection. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note that analytic induction is employed to develop a descriptive model of a particular phenomenon or question.

In this study, the particular phenomenon was effective teaching in high poverty schools, and the question was how these teachers' effectiveness can best be described and supported. Interview and observation protocols were designed and employed to continually test and to continually revise the conceptual framework and to develop a more nuanced, rich description of the characteristics of effective teachers in high poverty schools and to develop a more nuanced and rich understanding of how these teachers are best supported.

Design

A comparative, purposive case study design (Achinstein et al., 2004) was selected in order to spotlight the characteristics that are of particular importance in the description and support of teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools achieving high levels of

student achievement. The design emphasized the voices of identified effective teachers to understand their backgrounds and worldviews and to gain their perspectives on their students, their work, and their professional development. The study design identified “effective” teachers in two high performing, high poverty elementary schools in San Vicente County. These schools were selected primarily because they were anticipated to be good sources of effective teachers to populate the study. The two school sites were chosen purposively based on shared characteristics necessary to explore the research questions. The schools were selected based on the following: percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch was greater than 75%, 2010 Academic Performance Index (API) was greater than 800, the schools significantly outperformed schools with similar demographics on the 2009 and 2010 administrations of the California Standards Test, the schools were in different districts, and the schools each had the same principal for at least four years through spring of 2010.

The study focused on two teachers from each of the two schools. The subject teachers were also selected purposively by being identified as cases representative of effective teachers at their high poverty schools. Drawing participant teachers from two schools meeting these criteria increased the pool of potential subjects while offering the benefit of two distinct environments from which to develop a description of teacher effectiveness. The procedures used to select focus teachers included nominations by colleagues who were asked to identify “effective” teachers. Principal interviews and

teacher interviews and classroom observations by the researcher confirmed these teachers to be “effective.” The purpose of these processes was not to imply that these individuals were the “most effective” teachers in the county or even in the particular schools. Rather, the goal of the nomination and selection process was to identify representative effective teachers.

Employing a methodology that widened the lens beyond high poverty elementary schools in San Vicente County might have produced findings with broader generalizability. Doing so, however, would not have illuminated the characteristics that are of particular importance in the target environments. Also, the fact that the two chosen schools have substantially out-performed other schools in the county and in the state with similar demographics predicted that there was something noteworthy about the environments of these schools that fostered teacher effectiveness. A desired outcome of the research was to gain insights from successful teachers working in these schools that could inform teachers, school administrators, and other educational leaders teachers striving to improve student achievement in similar environments.

Others have successfully employed similar research designs. For example, the design for this study closely resembled the comparative, purposive case study design employed by Achinstein, et al (2004). In order to understand how the interaction of state policies, local conditions, and teacher characteristics affect teacher tracking, Achinstein, et al, chose a focal teacher from each of two schools in their study. As in this study, the

schools were chosen purposively as were the individual teachers, and the design allowed for understanding of two distinct school environments.

Delpit (2006) also employed a case study design in her quest to understand the problem of declining numbers of teachers of color entering the field of education. Her study sought insights from individual teachers to assist university faculty in the preparation of future teachers of color. Delpit chose a personal narrative approach because she found the university community typically did not value this perspective in its research into the reasons individuals choose to enter the field of education and/or to stay in the field. Further, the voices of minority individuals were drowned out by the dominant culture. Similarly, the goal of this research is to isolate and to amplify the voices of teachers working in high achieving, high poverty schools since a broader study would cause the unique perspectives of these teachers to be lost in the sea of teacher experience that includes the entire range of schools and teacher effectiveness.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note that selecting more than one site and/or multiple cases can increase generalizability. Including more than one school in the study allowed for identification of themes present in these two environments. However, early in the study I recognized that although both schools included in the study could be categorized as “high poverty” based on their Title One status and their percentage of students who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program, the two schools served very different communities economically, culturally, and in terms of language diversity. The

study therefore evolved to identify not only themes common to the two schools, but also themes of particular importance in one setting or the other.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked in the public schools in three districts, all in the same county, for more than twenty years, and my experience in the wide variety of the county's schools inspired the focus of this study. My experiences include working as a teacher, dean, and associate principal at high poverty Title One high schools, as a principal of a high performing, high socio-economic status suburban middle school, and as an assistant superintendent of human resources for a socially-economically diverse elementary school district. These experiences and my training as a teacher, counselor, and administrator contributed to my understanding of school environments, my ability to identify characteristics of effectiveness, and my skill conducting teacher observations and interviews.

I personally collected and analyzed all of the data. Subject teacher nomination surveys (See Appendix A) were described and distributed during September staff meetings after school at each of the two sites. No one besides me came in contact with the surveys or saw the results of the surveys. Similarly, I personally conducted and audio recorded all interviews. The audio files were transcribed by a professional transcription service located overseas. I also conducted all classroom observations.

During the course of the study, I took care to present myself as an interested colleague/educator/student rather than as an assistant superintendent in a nearby school district. My position of authority as an assistant superintendent necessitated my decision to conduct research in schools outside of my district of employment, and though I have worked in three different districts, the schools in the study are not in those districts. I chose schools meeting the target criteria with which I had limited professional and personal familiarity in order to increase the likelihood that none of the potential or eventually chosen subject teachers would be known to me before the survey.

Research Questions

The central research question is, “What are the characteristics that are especially important for teachers to be effective in high poverty schools?” Many researchers searching for the characteristics that predict effectiveness have focused on objective measures including teacher standardized test results, teacher education and preparation levels, and teacher experience. This study employed qualitative methods including semi-scripted interviews and classroom observations to understand more subjective teacher characteristics that contribute to effectiveness. A secondary research question was, “What conditions support effective teachers in high poverty schools?” In addition, the study answered the question, “What are the outcomes that teachers in high poverty schools seek for their students?”

A goal of the research was to develop more nuanced understanding of concepts like “compassion,” “authentic caring,” “social capital,” and “critical pedagogy” as they relate to teacher effectiveness. The research also explored teacher levels of awareness of the impact of culture and language in high achieving, high poverty schools.

Context

Schools were selected because they were identified as high performing schools serving high poverty communities in San Vicente County. The two schools selected for the study were identified as “high poverty” based on having 75% or more of their students participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program. Despite high levels of poverty at both schools, some demographic data collected for the October 2008 California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) data collection differed significantly (See Table 2). Though the rates of participation in the federal free and reduced lunch program are similar at the two schools, at Amber School, 66.0% of the students were identified as English Language Learners compared to 51.8% at Ryan School, and 52% of parents at Amber School reported that they were not high school graduates compared to just 15% of parents at Ryan School. Table 2 also reveals a more ethnically diverse student population at Ryan School than at Amber School, though the majority ethnic group at both schools is Hispanic/Latino. Data for all San Vicente County schools are also included to better understand the context of these schools within the county.

Table 2

Demographic Data for Amber and Ryan Schools and the County from 2008-09 School Accountability Report Cards and the County Office Website

	Amber School	Ryan School	San Vicente County
Enrollment	429	394	261,945
English Language Learners	66.0%	51.8%	25.9%
Free and Reduced Lunch	78.1%	76.0%	36.2%
Percent of Parents Who Did Not Graduate from High School	52%	15%	N/A
Hispanic or Latino	69.9%	51.0%	36.8%
White, not Hispanic	7.9%	9.1%	24.2%
Multiple or no Response	8.4%	5.6%	4.1%
African American	5.6%	6.3%	3.0%
Asian	5.1%	13.2%	25.9%
Filipino	1.2%	11.2%	4.9%

The two schools were also identified as “high performing” based on earning a similar schools ranking of “10” on the California Department of Education’s 2010 Base API Report. Table 3 shows API data for the two schools based on the 2006 through 2010 administrations of the California Standards Test. Ryan School earned the highest API among the 100 schools in the state most demographically similar to it, and Amber School had the second highest API among the 100 most demographically similar California schools. The similar schools ranking is determined by identifying the 100 schools in the state that are most similar demographically to each of the state’s schools. Some of the characteristics included in demographic analysis are percentage of students participating in the federal free and reduced lunch program, pupil mobility, parent education levels,

pupil ethnicity, percentage of teachers who are fully credentialed, and percentage of pupils who are English language learners (ELL's) (California Department of Education, 2009). Schools within the similar schools band are assigned a decile score based on their Academic Performance Index.

Table 3

Academic Performance Index Comparison Between Amber and Ryan Schools

	Amber School			Ryan School		
	Growth API	Median API for Similar Schools	Similar Schools Ranking	Growth API	Median API for Similar Schools	Similar Schools Ranking
2010	810	744	10	894	774	10
2009	810	741	10	861	774	10
2008	674	730	2	842	761	10
2007	642	728	1	767	751	9
2006	602	701	1	784	753	9

Table 3 also demonstrates the growth in academic performance at the two schools as measured by the API. Ryan School's growth from 2006 to 2010 was 100 API points. Throughout this period, the school's similar schools ranking improved from nine to ten. Amber School's improvement has been even more dramatic. The school improved 208 points from 2006 to 2010, and the school's similar schools ranking improved from the first decile to the tenth. Attention to improvement in API scores was noted throughout the study as an environmental factor affecting effective teaching.

The teachers chosen to participate in the study are demographically representative of the teachers at their schools. Table 4 shows that the teaching staffs at both schools are

overwhelmingly white, female, and monolingual. All four of the teachers in the study are white, female, and monolingual. Neither school had any teachers new to the profession during the year of the study. The staff survey (see Appendix A) included questions asking teachers their number of years teaching at their current school and years of teaching overall.

Table 4

Demographics of the Teacher Staffs at Each School

	Amber School	Ryan School
Classroom Teachers/ Resource Teachers	16/ 2	15/1
Female / Male	17 / 1	15/1
White	17	12
Latino	1	1
African-American	0	1
Asian-American	0	2
Bilingual	1 (Spanish)	1 (Spanish)

At the start of the year of the study four teachers came to Ryan School as transfers from other district schools as a result of the district's decision to increase maximum class sizes in grades kindergarten through third grade from 20:1 to 25:1. The two Ryan School teachers participating in the study reported 10-19 years teaching at the school and 10-19 years of total teaching experience, and these are the largest experience cohorts for Ryan School. At Amber School, maximum class size for kindergarten through third grade classes was raised from 20:1 to 23:1 the year of the study, and this increase led to the transfer of one teacher into the school and three teachers out of the school. One of the

teachers participating in the study fell into the 4-9 years teaching in the school and total years teaching categories. Ten of the twenty Amber teachers reported 4-9 years of teaching and the school, and eight of the twenty teachers reported 4-9 years of teaching experience overall. The other teacher reported 10-19 years teaching in the school and total teaching experience. Two other teachers reported more experience teaching at Amber School.

Participant Selection

Teacher Selection Process

The study focused on two identified “effective” teachers in each of the two identified high poverty schools in San Vicente County. The focus teachers were selected based on nomination surveys (See Appendix A) completed by teachers at their schools. All of the teachers at Amber School participated in the survey, and all but one of the teachers at Ryan School participated in the survey. Each of the selected teachers was nominated by at least four colleagues, and all had earned tenured (“permanent”) status and had served at least three years in their current school. Follow-up interviews with principals (See Appendix B) were designed to confirm the selected teachers as effective and to identify teachers the principals believed to be “effective.” In addition, the researcher sought teachers working in different grade levels and teachers at a range of stages of their careers.

Selection was confirmed after I interviewed the teachers (See Appendix C) and

observed at least one hour of teaching. I have fourteen years of experience interviewing and evaluating teachers as an assistant principal, principal, director of human resources, and assistant superintendent of human resources in a variety of public school settings. I did not know any of the selected teachers prior to the study.

The teacher selection process and the study resembled *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* in which the Ladson-Billings similarly sought to understand, “what happens in classrooms where teachers, students and parents seem to get it right” (2009, p. vii) in her study focusing on African American students. Like this study, Ladson-Billings sought nominations from colleague teachers and principals to identify effective teachers, but Ladson-Billings’ nomination process began with parents. Her work challenged the idea that, “African American children are just like white children but just need a little extra help” (p. 10). She found that the eight successful teachers she identified varied significantly in their methodologies but all focused on “student learning, developing cultural competence, and cultivating a sociopolitical awareness in their students” (p. xi).

Subject Teachers

Susan—Amber Elementary School

Susan is a 59 year old female second grade teacher who identifies as Caucasian. She speaks one language: English. She is married, and she has two children. Her two children attended public schools in the district. Her 32 year-old daughter graduated from

the University of California and also earned a masters degree from a public university in the Midwest. Her son, age 27, attended a local community college before graduating from the local state CSU campus. She earned her bachelors degree after attending two California State University (CSU) campuses, and she earned her teaching credential at National University while she was serving as a long-term substitute.

She grew up in the Midwest, and has lived for more than thirty years in a much more affluent neighborhood in the same school district as Amber School. Before her career in education, she worked with her husband in the family printing business. She described her upbringing (Christian, Lutheran) and the upbringing of her husband as very religious, but she and her husband both stopped attending church after they were married. She described her work as her “church,” implying that the service she gives the students at Amber School is equivalent in value to the service she was raised to believe she should give to her community.

This is Susan’s twelfth year teaching at Amber School, and she has not taught anywhere else. Altogether she has worked at Amber School in a variety of capacities for over twenty years. She began her work as an instructional assistant and eventually agreed to serve as a substitute teacher when the school regularly was not able to attract substitutes to fill classrooms for teacher absences. In fact, she accepted her first regular teaching assignment in the fall of 1999 because the school was unable to find a qualified

long-term substitute for a teacher who was expected to miss the year because of a medical leave.

Susan was named by four of her peers as a teacher admired for her effectiveness in the staff survey that began the study. No other classroom teacher had more nominations. Through the survey, her colleagues noted her ability to engage students through instructional creativity and the use of diverse instruction strategies. Her principal confirmed her selection as an effective teacher, noting that she is “one of the school’s number one advocates” and referencing her commitment and belief in her students and her view of the staff as “family.” She referred to Susan as “the mom that helps everybody and organizes everybody and keeps everybody on track.” While she regularly provides others with assistance, her principal said, she also readily asks others for help, too, modeling the collaborative spirit of the school. She also noted that as a result of her long tenure at the school, Susan knows Amber School as well or better than anyone.

Melissa – Amber Elementary School

Melissa is a 28 year-old female first grade teacher who identifies as half Polish and half Irish. She speaks one language: English. Her maternal grandparents speak Polish, but her mom does not. She described this language and cultural heritage as an important part of her upbringing. She is married and has no children. She described her husband as half Hispanic/Latino and half white. She described her mother-in-law is a first generation Mexican-American who was discouraged from speaking Spanish by her

Mexican-born parents. She and her husband are Catholic, and she said that though they do not regularly participate in the church now, she intends to raise her children Catholic.

Melissa grew up in San Vicente County and attended a prestigious parochial Catholic school from kindergarten through eighth grade. She then attended a prestigious, local all-girls high school. Melissa studied nutrition at a CSU campus three hours away from home, and she wanted to either go into nursing or teaching. She was influenced to choose teaching based on her exposure to the profession: her mom teaches music at an area Catholic School. She also draws support from the experiences of her mother in law, a former teacher. Melissa attended the local CSU campus for her teaching credential.

This is Melissa's fourth year of teaching, all at Amber School. She was assigned to this school for her second student teaching placement, and her master teacher at the time is now the school's principal. At the end of her student teaching she was offered two teaching positions including one in a neighboring district. She chose Amber School because of her familiarity with the school and her confidence in the principal and assistant principal who were in their first years at the school and were establishing a supportive climate. She also appreciated that the principal told her the grade level assignment when offering her employment. The other school district would not identify the school or the grade level assignment.

Melissa was named by three of her peers as a teacher admired for her effectiveness in the staff survey. Only one teacher, Susan, was listed by more of her

peers. The teachers that nominated her mentioned her organization, classroom management, use of data to drive instruction, and willingness to collaborate with other teachers as evidence of her effectiveness. Her principal described her as “phenomenal,” “a natural,” and “probably one of the most effective teachers on the staff.” She also noted that she serves in leadership roles on district level curriculum committees. In addition, her principal said that even though she is a relatively new teacher, teachers often choose to observe Melissa teaching model lessons because she is recognized as one of the school’s most effective teachers.

Gloria—Ryan Elementary

Gloria is a 40 year-old fifth grade teacher who identifies as Caucasian. She speaks one language: English. She is in her fourteenth year of teaching, all at Ryan School. She was born and raised in the city and school district where she now works. Gloria is married and has two boys, ages ten and six, who attend a Catholic parochial school in the same city where she lives. She started dating her husband when she was seventeen, and she converted to Catholicism ten years later when they married. Her faith is a very important part of her life, and it provides her support in her work and contributes significantly to her sense of purpose as a teacher. She said,

Religion is never absent. I mean you can’t talk about it in the classroom, and for me that is really hard because there are some great stories, the morals, the golden rules, the things that you can really count on. That you can’t talk about it is hard,

but they are always there for me . . . But for me personally, I go around to each one of these chairs on the first day of school and I say a blessing over each one of them.

Gloria finished her credential in fall in December 1995. She subbed in various schools in the district where she now works after finishing her credential, and she knew she wanted to work in the district because she grew up there. She also subbed in a few other districts. She subbed a lot at Ryan School, and she became comfortable there. She said that she was very visible in the staff room, and eventually she went to the principal and told her, "I am a good teacher and you like having me, and here is my resume." She was hired for the following school year.

Gloria was listed by five of the fifteen teachers who took the survey as an example of an effective teacher. Both her former principal and her current principal identified her as a very effective teacher. One teacher wrote the following about Gloria,

Knowledgeable with curriculum. Very creative. Open to teaming with other teachers. Good at relating to children and designing lessons that both teach and interest them. Is willing to stay after school and provide additional support with homework and class work. Connects with students' families.

Teresa—Ryan School

Teresa is a 40 year-old second grade teacher in her sixteenth year of teaching, and they all have been at Ryan School. She speaks one language: English. Teresa grew up

in a nearby city within San Vicente County, and identifies as a fourth generation resident of her hometown. She describes her ethnicity as Caucasian, and she explains that while her family came from Croatia, Germany, and France and her grandfather spoke Croatian at home, she considers herself “Americanized.” Teresa attended only public schools in San Vicente County. She says she was influenced to be a teacher by her mother, a public school teacher in the county, and as a result of having a very weak sixth grade teacher.

Teresa first attended a nearby CSU campus. She did not like it, so she transferred to a local community college and then to another CSU more than four hours away. She played competitive, intercollegiate soccer throughout college, and she ascribes part of her success and attraction to working at Ryan School to her competitive spirit.

I played soccer in college, and I am competitive with things. And I like challenges, but it is not necessarily about winning or test scores. It's about the process of getting there. If I can go from this level to this level, even if the child's reading two years below standard, it's that process. And that's where I have seen it [competitiveness] more than looking at a single test score or a number on a paper.

Immediately after graduating from college, she enrolled in the teaching credential program at the CSU closest to home. She would have stayed at her alma mater to pursue her credential except that credential program was on probation because it could not meet the requirement that all students work in ethnically diverse schools.

Teresa student taught in a neighboring district where she was selected to be a paid student teacher. In other words, she was a highly sought after student teacher. She also substitute taught regularly in the district in which her mom taught, a district with a much higher percentage of Spanish speaking students than are enrolled at Ryan School. She wanted to teach there too, but she believes she was denied a job because she does not speak Spanish.

The principal wanted to hire me, and there were three applicants. I was the only one credentialed of the three of us, but because I did not speak Spanish, even though it was not a bilingual classroom, the district would not hire me. So I was kind of turned – I am going to wash my hands of that. That just showed me what kind of district they were. It didn't matter how effective you were or not. They were going based on speaking Spanish when it wasn't a bilingual classroom.

An administrator who met her during her student teaching recruited her to work at Ryan School when he became superintendent of the district.

Teresa was nominated by five of her peers as an effective teacher. She was described by those who nominated her as a team player who goes out of her way to help other teachers and as “warm and caring.” Both her current and past principal also strongly endorsed her as an example of an effective teacher, saying that she “teaches with her heart and considers the feelings of her students.”

Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects

I met with the principals of the two schools several times before data collection began. During these meetings, the methods and scope of the research were presented. Both principals were concerned that the research not interfere with the daily instructional program at the schools.

The risk of loss of privacy was explained to all of the participants. The only people with access to the research data were my dissertation advisors and I. Names and identifying information of individual participants were changed or omitted in the study. The names of the schools, districts, and county were changed to pseudonyms. The research data has been kept in a secure location.

Data Collection

The study employed qualitative methods including a nomination survey of all teachers at participating schools, interviews of each school's principal and the subject teachers, and classroom observations. Interviews with principals (See Appendix B) and subject teachers (See Appendix C) were semi-structured (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). The researcher spent approximately 24 hours on each of the two campuses from August through December 2010.

- A twenty minute "nominating" survey (See Appendix A) was conducted during a faculty meeting at each of the participating schools. The research plan was

described, and the nomination survey was distributed to teaching faculty members in attendance along with the corresponding implied consent information.

- “Nominating” interviews (See Appendix B) with each principal were conducted. These interviews each lasted approximately one hour and took place in the principal’s office. At Ryan School, an additional interview was conducted with the former principal since he had served as principal for the thirteen years previous to the study. This interview occurred away from campus at a coffee shop.
- Subject teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendix C) three times. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and all occurred in the teachers’ classrooms either during a preparation period, at lunch or after school. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Transcriptions were sent to subject teachers to ensure accuracy and to invite additional comment or clarification.
- The researcher performed at least four nonparticipant classroom observations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008) of each of the subject teachers using an observation protocol (See Appendix D) designed to explore the research questions. Observations occurred at different times of the school day with students present. The researcher also observed two grade level team meetings. In addition, the

researcher noted teacher interactions with parents, students, and other faculty and staff members before and after observations and interviews.

The amount of time spent observing subject teachers interacting with students was found to be insufficient to serve as a significant source of detailed evidence of the elements of effectiveness. However, observations provided insight into classroom dynamics, climate, and methodology, and the researcher followed-up on these observations in subsequent interviews. In addition, the amount of time spent in classrooms contributed to increased rapport between researcher and teacher.

Internal Validity

The selected subject teachers are intended to represent model “effective teachers.”

- The data collected about their characteristics, perspectives, practices, and responses to
- support are intended to provide insight into teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools.

The subject teacher selection process was critical to minimizing threats to internal validity related to subject characteristics. Subject teachers were selected based on nomination survey of their teacher peers and interviews with their principals. In addition to eliciting names of perceived effective teachers, surveys and interviews also elicited characteristics of effective teachers, and the interviews and observations of subject teachers confirmed the presence of these characteristics. In other words, the selection process included a check to be sure that subject teachers had the characteristics their peers and their principals believed them to have.

I was aware of the potential threats to validity resulting from my position of authority as an assistant superintendent. I did not conduct research in my district of employment, and I did not know any of the subject teachers or their principals prior to the study. My position was disclosed to all participants, and they were reassured that participation in the study would in no way affect their status within their district because their responses would not be shared directly with anyone in their district, and they had multiple opportunities to review and revise their responses.

Internal validity was increased by establishing a trusting relationship with participants and by collecting data in situations that were comfortable and non-threatening to participants. All interviews took place in teachers' classrooms. As the interviewing sequence progressed, all four participating teachers described increased ease with participation including personal awareness answering questions. Also, an outcome of multiple classroom observations and interviews was increased familiarity with the researcher and comfort with his presence. Once I began to probe for the elements of effectiveness more deliberately, teachers became quite comfortable discussing the role of compassion in their teaching, and they became quite eloquent and detailed in describing the presence of compassion in their teaching. Interview transcripts were shared with participants, and participants were invited to elaborate upon and/or to clarify their comments. In addition, drafts of sections of the findings were sent to each of the

participants to allow for review of analysis and interpretation and to check for factual accuracy.

The research design facilitated the development of more nuanced understanding of the descriptors of effective teachers in two distinct ways. First, the participating teachers entered the study prepared to describe effective instructional strategies, the use of data to drive instruction and to measure their effectiveness and their students' achievement, and the value of collaboration and teacher teams to support effectiveness. The spiraling nature of the interview sequence facilitated greater depth and breadth in the development of these themes. Second, throughout the interview sequence, the teachers gained comfort discussing social justice consciousness, describing the role of compassion in their practice, and exploring the potential of critical pedagogy. The process of being interviewed, reading transcripts, and returning for further interviews stimulated reflection on these issues that predictably will change the teachers' practice.

External Validity

Achinstein, et al (2004) wrote, "Although case study findings are not generalizable, they provide opportunities to generate hypotheses and build theories about relationships that may otherwise remain hidden" (p. 563). The study generated theories about the characteristics and practices that contribute to and support teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools. Since the study was conducted in San Vicente County, school demographics and conditions are similar to those in many other California schools,

particularly those in San Vicente County. School leaders and teachers will be able consider the applicability of my findings to their own contexts in order to increase effectiveness meeting the academic and other outcomes they seek for their students.

Data Reduction and Analysis

At the beginning of the process, six portions of the database were created: one for each of the two schools and one for each of the four subject teachers. All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. Interview transcripts were reviewed for accuracy after they were received from the transcription service. Transcripts were then sent to interviewees as an additional check for accuracy of intent and meaning.

Data sorting began after the completion of the staff survey and the principal nomination interviews using the constant comparative method (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Transcriptions of interviews and surveys were closely reviewed for evidence supporting six major themes: compassion, critical pedagogy, social capital, team, data, and district/school support. Initial themes were based on three sources: Cammarota and Romero's critically compassionate intellectualism framework, my initial framework for effectiveness, and the staff surveys. Two themes emerged from the staff surveys: team and data. The frameworks were eventually synthesized and refined to create a new effectiveness framework.

Some initial data analysis occurred during the sorting process. As all data were entered into databases organized by themes, data were reviewed and sorted, and the most

prominent themes were identified. Transcript sections were cut and pasted into the database based on adherence to the various themes. Additional themes were added as data that did not seem to fit with other identified themes emerged from the surveys, interviews, and observations. Themes were combined with others as part of the process of identifying the most prominent themes in the new effectiveness conceptual model.

Final analysis occurred during the preparation of the presentation of the data (Chapter Four). Since the goal of the study was to create one conceptual model for teacher effectiveness, the six portions of the database were reviewed to identify the themes that were most prominent among the four subject teachers. The presentation of the data allowed for separate descriptions of the identified themes for each of the subject teachers.

Chapter Four: Report of Findings

Overview

I was initially drawn to Cammarota and Romero's (2006) critically compassionate intellectualism because I found the authors' description of the construct's three component concepts to be similar to the qualities I have observed in effective teachers in a wide range of school environments during my twenty-two years of public school service. The authors' three component concepts are authentic caring, social justice consciousness, and critical pedagogy. Prior to this study, I often explained that while hiring or describing effective teachers, I believed that effective teachers care deeply about their student's academic success and futures, work hard for their students as a result of connecting with their lives and cultures, and employ effective teaching strategies that led their students to high levels of achievement.

As a result of this study with its focus on high poverty environments and my review of the literature, including the influence of Cammarota and Romero's work, I have refined and revised my original framework. I have found that effective teachers in high poverty environments demonstrate compassion, and the essential elements of this compassion in the target environments are authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999), development of social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010). Additionally, "high expectations for all students" is a theme that is present in all three elements of compassion, and high expectations bind the three themes. These and other themes that

describe and support teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools that emerged through analysis of the survey results are presented in this chapter.

Three themes, authentic caring, social capital, and critical pedagogy, have been explored and described specifically for high poverty schools in San Vicente County. Though the study began with the themes identified in Cammarota and Romero's work and my own observations of effective teachers, the study design allowed for synthesis and refinement of these "effectiveness" frameworks. The design also allowed additional themes to emerge through staff surveys, principal interviews, subject teacher interviews, and classroom observations.

Through this process, the theme of "reflection" has been added to the descriptive definition of effective teachers at high poverty schools in San Vicente County. In addition, "accountability/data" and "collaboration," have been identified as supports to teacher effectiveness in these environments. These themes emerged through the staff surveys at both schools and were reinforced during interviews with principals and subject teachers and through classroom observations. The themes supporting the compassion framework (authentic caring, social capital, and critical pedagogy) were less pronounced in the survey but emerged more prominently and were developed more fully in the interviews and observations.

The outline of this chapter reflects the three main elements of the research design. The three main sections of the chapter are introductions of the two schools, presentation

of the survey data, and presentation of the four subject teachers. The presentation of the schools is largely based on principal interviews and research focused on the demographics of the individual schools. Presentation of the survey data is based exclusively on the data from the surveys. Finally, the discussion of the subject teachers is derived from subject teacher interviews, observations, and principal interviews. The format of this section and the themes explored emerged from the principal interviews, teacher surveys, and data reduction and analysis.

Introduction of the Two Schools

Introduction to Amber School

Amber School serves over 400 kindergarten through fifth grade students in the Mason Elementary School District, a small, mostly suburban K-8 district of just over 4,000 kindergarten through eighth grade students. The school community is surrounded by some of the most affluent neighborhoods in San Vicente County. It would be easy to miss this community hidden between the expressways and boulevards that whisk travelers from affluent neighborhoods to high technology business parks or Disneyland-like shopping malls selling Gucci, Burberry, and Diesel. People familiar with San Vicente County geography are often surprised to learn of this pocket of poverty on the west side of the valley.

While once this school was maligned for its poor performance, it is now seen as a jewel of the community. The walls of the recently renovated buildings are painted with

bright yellows and oranges. The asymmetrical, single story architecture feels modern and progressive, mirroring the innovation and accomplishment of the school over the past several years. The school proudly and defiantly contrasts with the stark rows of portable classrooms that comprise a charter school claiming the opposite side of the campus. That school serves students of privilege from throughout the district and even the county. This school serves the working class and first generation immigrant families of the surrounding neighborhood who walk their children to school, are welcomed to create community events on the campus and to shape school policies, and who know that their school has received recognition in local and national media for its rapid improvement of student achievement data.

The school's demographics are distinctly different from the other schools in the district. Amber School is the Mason School District's only designated Title One school. While 78% of its students participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program, only 28% of students district-wide participate in the program. Similarly, while 66% of Amber students are English Language Learners, only 19% of district students are classified as EL's. Only 13% of district parents reported that they did not graduate from high school compared to 52% of Amber School parents.

Pride and purpose permeate the campus. All those who were asked recited the same story to explain the school's dramatic turnaround. School staff reported that they felt unsupported and misunderstood until four years ago. During the 2006-07 school year

a new superintendent arrived, and he appointed a new principal and for the first time assigned an assistant principal to the school. All three newcomers were perceived as committed to improving the school and to listening and understanding the unique needs of the school's staff, students, and community. Four years prior the school had the lowest API in the county. During the 2000-10 school year, the school was flooded with requests from media, educational researchers, and principals clamoring to find the secret to the school's 136 point API gain, one of the largest improvements in the state. Over the four year period from 2007 to 2010 the school's API rose from 642 to 810.

"Tanya" is in her first year as principal, but she has worked at the school for more than fifteen years. Her predecessor was promoted to a position in the district office to implement district-wide the strategies that have been so successful at Amber School. Last year Tanya was the assistant principal, and the year before she was a teacher on special assignment. She said, "They pulled me out of the classroom and the three of us (principal, assistant principal, and Tanya) made decisions, trained people, coached people, and pulled data." These descriptions of an administration that supports instructional improvement through coaching focused on measureable results recurred throughout the staff survey, subject teacher interviews, and classroom observations. When asked to describe an effective teacher for her school, she answered easily and without hesitation, and her response represents the outcomes she sought through her coaching and now as principal,

I think it's someone who is obviously engaging and flexible and a team player.

And also compassionate with the kids. You know when you walk in and you see the students engaged in groups. You just know. Just caring to the kids, but firm.

They know the curriculum, and the students are engaged. They might have groups going on or lots of Kagan [cooperative learning] strategies, and they just have a lot in their toolbox. But I think this is really just the engaging piece where the kids are having fun and are focused. Yes, you see it on the scores, but you see it when you walk in the classrooms.

She said that during her fifteen years at the school there has always been strong staff camaraderie and a shared belief that Amber School students could succeed. This camaraderie has translated to a strong, well-developed focus on grade level teams where teachers share responsibility for all of the students in the grade level.

Though Tanya's response emphasized elements of compassionate teaching, "standards," "assessment," and "data" are the concepts most prominent at Amber. The school's rhythm from professional development to grade level "professional learning community" meetings, to day-in-day-out observable, in-the-classroom activities reflect the preeminence of these concepts. Teachers at Amber School feel the urgency of the standards and accountability mandates, but now that they have seen the dramatic rise in their test scores, they embrace accountability because it is measuring and documenting their effectiveness.

The testing timeline was rigorous (See Table 5), but teachers embraced it because the results for these assessments guide their practice and lead to improved performance on the CST. This testing cycle dominated teacher planning and the instructional day. Teachers at Amber were frequently seen individually testing students while other students were working independently. Even kindergarten and first grade teachers begin preparing students for the CST by simulating standardized testing environments while implementing the schedule. While Amber teachers described the struggle to complete testing within the windows, they did not challenge the value of the assessments.

Table 5:

Amber School Assessment Timeline 2010-11

	First Testing Cycle	Second Testing Cycle	Third Testing Cycle
Math Benchmarks	Sept. 13-17	Nov. 29-Dec. 3	Feb. 28-March. 4
ELA Benchmarks	Sept. 27-Oct. 1	Dec. 13-17	March. 7-11
Reading and Oral Language Assessment (ROLA)	Aug. 24-Sept. 17	Nov. 1-19	March 1-17

Increasing parent participation in the school has been a focus at Amber, and the emphasis is based on the belief that increased parent participation will lead to increased test scores. Though the teaching staff is nearly 100% monolingual English speaking, support staff greet parents in Spanish, and typical school committees and structures such as the Home and School Club and English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) have

been adapted to resemble community based organizations more than traditional school structures.

Tanya said the spirit of welcoming began five years with a principal who, though she stayed only one year at Amber, brought with her the philosophy of the parent participation school where she previously worked. She said that principal was the first to give parents a voice. For example, some parents said they wanted a *Cinco de Mayo* Festival, so the principal, according to Tanya, said, "Fine, but you will organize it, and it will become yours." And then they wanted school uniforms, and the principal, according to Tanya, said, "Okay we will do uniforms. If that's what the parents want, we will do it. But you form the committees. You shape the policy."

Just as the school's ELAC more resembled a community based organization than a state mandated program, the Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) program has been interpreted and implemented to support the integration of parents into the daily life of the school. Parents attend English classes on campus, and students visit them in the adult class at recess. Parents visit classrooms and learn about what the homework is and how to read the report card. The principal said students see their parents are caring about their education and learning English on the same campus at the same time as their children.

Tanya believed teachers who are a fit for the school and its community "find" the school and "settle in, put down roots." There has been little teacher turnover. For

years, however the staff also shared a frustration that a series of principals came through the school implementing their favorite program without gaining input of staff and leaving the school one or two years later. She clearly described ownership or respect for the students, and suggested that the teachers who remained at the school respect the students and have high expectations of them too. She described how teachers defend Amber student to other teachers in the district.

This is where I need to be. You would go to district meetings with other schools, and teachers would say, “Oh. Those kids.” And some days they talk about us, and it’s like “No, these are ‘our kids’ and they are good kids.” So there was always that. I was really glad I was here. Always glad.

Introduction to Ryan School

Ryan School serves approximately 400 kindergarten through sixth fifth grade students in the San Marcos Unified School District, a K-12 district of more than 10,000 students. The former and new principals and teachers take pride in the school’s reputation for outstanding academic achievement, noting that though it is one of the three highest poverty schools in the district, it earned the district’s third highest API, 894, in 2010.

The neatly arranged rows of classrooms, the expansive blacktop and fields, and the school’s multi-purpose room and office were all clean, well maintained, and inviting. The surrounding neighborhood feels much the same: quiet, carefully planned, and spacious for a school and neighborhood with “urban” demographic characteristics. Four-

plexes and single family homes surround the school. Before school, at break and lunch, and after school, teachers warmly interact with all students as they pass by. Parents are greeted politely and respectfully as well, though they are infrequently seen in classrooms. At the end of the day a few parents can be seen on campus to greet their children or to talk to teachers, though many pick them up along the street in their cars. The local YMCA staffs the school throughout the day, and the transition from the regular school day to the Y's after school program seems seamless, if not integrated into the instructional program.

A visitor to the school might assess it as very typical of public elementary schools in San Vicente County. Like many of the county's schools, the largest ethnic group is Hispanic/Latino with 51% of the student population. The rest of the school's population resembles the diversity of the county: 13.2% of the students are Asian, 11.2% are Filipino, 9.1% are white, and 6.3% are African American. However the school serves a decidedly underprivileged community. At Ryan School 76% of students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program compared to 36.2% county-wide, and 52% of the students are not yet fully English proficient, compared to 25.9% county-wide.

It is clear after interviews with staff that the culture and the success of Ryan School have been largely shaped by the vision and personality of its former principal. "Jack" was principal for thirteen years until his retirement at the end of the last school year. His description of teacher effectiveness emphasized student academic

achievement far more than other outcomes including social-emotional outcomes. However, developing a sense of community among students was described as critical to the success of the school. When I asked him about the culture of the school, he easily located and then handed me a three page document entitled "Ryan Culture." This document is broken into four parts. The first three are philosophy, staff, and programs and activities. The final section is entitled, "Why Ryan is Successful," and it lists 20 statements, generated through a survey of the staff several years ago. The common theme among the statements is collaboration, and this theme emerged clearly throughout this study. The statement of philosophy, the first section of the culture document, was reflected in this study's findings as well. It reads,

Ryan School is the essence of a professional organization. By setting high expectations and standards, and by providing a rigorous academic program and focused approach, it is our intent and our belief that students can and will succeed. Every child is important at Ryan, and all staff share the responsibility of educating our students in a safe, secure, orderly environment. This goal is accomplished through on-going cooperation, a willingness to share and to grow as we learn new procedures, methodologies, and techniques, and by meeting school-wide issues and problems together in an open, straightforward, collaborative manner.

In conversation with Jack, it was clear that he is proud of the accomplishments of his school, particularly the culture he created with his staff. He plays competitive

basketball, and he readily applied sports analogies to his explanations of the success of the culture of the school. In particular, it was clear that he saw himself as principal like an effective head coach whose role it was to create a cohesive team. His personal drive to compete, to win, to be the best along with an unwavering belief that the students in his school can achieve at high levels seemed to inspire the school's commitment to achievement. This set of motivators was far more pronounced than any sense of urgency brought on by district, state, or federal accountability policies. Of course, Ryan School felt little pressure from those policies in large part because their performance has routinely eclipsed all external accountability targets.

He surrounded himself with teachers committed to the team concept. He embraced the challenge of achieving success with students from underprivileged backgrounds, and he expected teachers coming to his school to have the same drive that he modeled and articulated. In describing his staff, he said, "I always referred to them as the Green Berets of the district. They are an elite group that understands the value of hard work and collaboration and trusting each other."

Jack saw teacher collaboration as a critical element of teacher effectiveness. He said he would not want a teacher who was good in the classroom but not good in the staff room. "I've got a team concept. She's not only got to be good in the classroom. She has to be good in the staff room. She has to be good with me." This focus on collaboration as an indicator of effectiveness was well developed in the staff survey and the subject

teacher interviews. The two subject teachers in the study, though among the few teachers he did not select to work at the school because they worked at Ryan before his arrival, emerged as strong examples of the type of competitive, team players he wanted for the school. During interviews, Jack said he would hand applicants a copy of the school's philosophy, emphasizing the elements of teamwork and collaboration, and use that as a basis for the interview and selection process along with the more typical questions of pedagogy and curricular knowledge.

Jack's approach to parents was to provide the best possible school for their students and to be responsive when they brought concerns to the school. However, he said he learned over his years at the school that reaching out to parents did not prove to be an effective use of time. For example the school tried curriculum nights for a few years. "They didn't work. Only eight or nine parents showed up," so they stopped doing them. He explained that, in general, the parent community has not had the advantage of higher education, and many parents were not high school graduates. He also described the limited English proficiency of parents as a barrier to their participation in the school. However, the education level of the parent community has risen in the past several years, he said, and he attributed changing demographics to the draw of high API scores. Most importantly, he believed the parents to be very trusting of the school, and he held himself and his teachers accountable to that trust.

Jack's approach to implementation of a data and accountability system resembled that of a coach implementing a strategy to help his team meet the challenges of a new opponent. He discovered the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment system at a conference he attended one summer. He thought the regular, standards-aligned benchmark assessments would help teachers adapt their practice to the measured needs of students. He solicited teachers to preview the program, and with their support, the system, including its regular assessments and frequent grade level regroupings based on specific standards-aligned student needs, was implemented the next year.

The system was implemented in a manner consistent with the school's philosophy. In fact, the school's commitment to collaboration, especially across grade levels, facilitated the implementation. Jack was quick to point out the difference between the re-grouping his school does and "tracking." He emphasized that there is constant movement in and out of groups, and students "are not doomed to be blackbirds forever and ever." Rather, once the next assessment is given on another standard, the students are regrouped again. The groups change over and over throughout the year.

The school pledge encapsulated the strong, clear vision the principal had for his school, and that vision permeated the school during the period of this study, the first semester after his departure:

- As a Ryan School student, I know I am the main person in charge of my education.

- Today is a new day, and I will do my best to act with responsibility.
- If I want to be respected I know I need to show respect to others.
- I am an important person with high goals for myself.
- I will not let myself or my community down.
- I will do my best!

The pledge emphasized for students the same balance between individual and community/shared responsibility that emerged as indicators of effective teachers.

Presentation of Survey Results

Surveys of teachers were conducted during September staff meetings at both of the schools. All twenty Amber School teachers completed the survey, and sixteen of the seventeen Ryan School teachers completed the survey. While the primary purpose of the surveys was to obtain nominations of effective teachers from their peers, a secondary purpose was to gain the perspectives from the larger school teaching communities about how effective teaching is described and supported in their particular school environments. The subject teachers were found to possess these characteristics of effectiveness, and the subsequent interviews and classroom observations allowed for deeper exploration and development of these themes and the themes of the original conceptual framework.

At both schools, the themes “accountability/data” and “collaboration” emerged through the staff surveys as closely aligned with effective teachers. The format and application of the survey instrument successfully encouraged the description of these two

themes. Reflection also emerged as an important theme, and though some aspects of authentic caring, social capital, and critical pedagogy were indicated in the survey, these themes were less pronounced. The survey also revealed teacher perceptions about the relationship between parent communities and teacher effectiveness.

Describing Effectiveness: Overview

Survey questions were designed to allow teachers at the beginning of the school year to describe teaching effectiveness. These questions asked teachers to share their teaching goals for the year, to describe how they would know if they had a successful year of teaching, and to explain how they evaluated their teaching effectiveness for the previous school year. Overwhelmingly, teachers at both schools described effectiveness based on student academic assessment data, though other indicators, including social emotional outcomes and proficiency implementing identified instructional strategies were also indicated. The theme “reflection” also emerged as a characteristic of teacher effectiveness.

Since “assessment” emerged as a significant theme for each school, a rating scale (See Table 6) was developed to identify how individual teachers assess their effectiveness and to explore the variation of responses between the two schools. On one end of the spectrum, rating “1,” teacher academic assessment data was not mentioned as an indicator of effectiveness. At the other end of the scale, rating “5,” summative academic

assessment data, like the CST, was the sole indicator of effectiveness. Each of the teacher respondents received a rating on the scale based on the totality of their survey responses.

Table 6

Scale to Measure Teacher Description of Effectiveness

1	The teacher does not mention assessment of academic achievement outcomes (standardized assessments or informal assessments) as a measure of effectiveness. Effectiveness is indicated by proficient application of identified teaching strategies and/or by student social-emotional outcomes.
2	Social-emotional outcomes are mentioned indicators of effectiveness. Summative, standardized academic test data is not mentioned as an indicator of effectiveness. The teacher may mention a focus on teaching to standards, his/her own perception of student learning, some formative assessment data, and/or may refer to student attitude about learning as an indicator of effectiveness.
3	The teacher's responses indicated that he/she seeks a balance of social-emotional outcomes and academic achievement as indicated on standardized tests. There may be recognition that one set of outcomes leads to the other. Formative and summative as well as informal assessments may be cited. Proficient application of teaching strategies is not mentioned as an indicator of effectiveness.
4	Student academic assessment data, both formative and summative, is used to indicate effectiveness. Neither social-emotional outcomes nor proficient application of teaching strategies are mentioned as indicators of effectiveness.
5	Teaching effectiveness is measured exclusively by end of the year, summative assessments. Formative assessments, social-emotional outcomes, and proficient application of teaching strategies are not mentioned as indicators of effectiveness.

Analysis of the data showed that Amber teachers placed a higher emphasis on assessment of academic achievement as an indicator of their effectiveness than did teachers at Ryan. Conversely, Ryan teachers placed a greater emphasis on social-emotional outcomes as an indicator of their effectiveness. However, teachers at both schools tended to describe effectiveness as a balance between academic achievement

outcomes and social-emotional outcomes. Table 7 shows that 50% of Amber teachers rated “3” on the scale with eight more teachers rating a “4” or a “5.” The mean rating for Amber teachers was 3.45. The same figure shows that the majority of Ryan teachers rated a “2” on the scale. The mean rating for Ryan teachers was 2.67. This finding of Amber teachers’ relative emphasis on student academic achievement data as a measure of effectiveness and Ryan teachers’ relative emphasis on indicators in addition to academic achievement data is consistent with qualitative data collected through principal interviews, subject teacher interviews, and observations of subject teachers.

Table 7

Teacher Distribution on the Description of Effectiveness Scale

Number of Teachers Receiving this Rating Scale	Amber Teachers	Ryan Teachers
1	0	0
2	2	8
3	10	5
4	5	1
5	3	1

Describing Effectiveness: Amber School Teachers

At Amber School, nearly all teachers indicated that they measure their effectiveness based on their students’ achievement on standardized tests though the responses of many teachers indicated they view effectiveness as a balance between student achievement on standardized tests and other social-emotional outcomes. One of

the questions asked teachers, “How will you know if you have had a successful year of teaching?” Eighteen of the twenty respondents included achievement on standardized tests as an important indicator of effectiveness, and the answers of eight of the twenty respondents included student achievement on standardized tests as the *only* indicator of their effectiveness. The following are three typical responses to this question,

- “The students come out more equipped than when I started. STAR STAR STAR. I have developed a bond with my class.”
- “We use data extensively to monitor our students’ progress. We don’t need to wait to the end of the year to assess success.”
- “Feel bonded with students, classroom community. Students’ work/tests show mastery of standards. Students’ maturity/emotional levels have grown.”

It is important to note that the question asked teachers to explain how they measure their own effectiveness as opposed to how others assess their effectiveness. The first of the listed responses referenced the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) test, the annual standardized test administered statewide in California. Clearly the respondent is emphasizing the importance of the STAR test on his/her view of his/her effectiveness as a teacher, yet the teacher also cites his/her goal of creating a community in the classroom. The third respondent seemed to emphasize the creation of community more than the first respondent. Further, this teacher notes they he/she assesses her effectiveness based in academic achievement of her students, and he/she uses assessment

data not only from standardized tests but also from class work. The second and third examples indicate the presence of both formative and summative measures in their assessment of their students' achievement, implying that they do not solely rely on the end of the year STAR test to know if they were effective guiding their students to achievement of desired academic outcomes.

Similarly, teachers' answers to the question asking them to explain the effectiveness rating they gave themselves for their teaching in the previous school year were dominated by academic assessment data as a measure of teacher effectiveness. This question also does not ask teachers how others assess them; it allows teachers to provide their own explanations of teaching effectiveness. Six of the respondents only cited student academic achievement data in their explanation for the effectiveness rating they gave themselves. A typical answer that included only academic achievement data was,

I looked where my students started the year and compared it to my end of year data. Most students were at grade level or one level below their ILA (Reading Scores). Most students at or approaching grade level in math.

The ILA is a benchmark assessment given several times throughout the year at Amber school, and this teacher uses the results to measure her own effectiveness.

Six answers suggested a balance of academic and social-emotional outcomes as indicators of teaching effectiveness for the year. For example, one teacher wrote,

Thirteen of my 20 students were on grade level by the end of year. Most started with little or no skills. Three were close to grade level. One was far below, and three repeated because they were young. They learned social skills and to be respectful to all.

While academic assessment data, especially data from standardized tests, was clearly the most common type of indicator teachers at Amber School used to gauge their own effectiveness, they also had other less clearly defined social-emotional outcome goals, and the teachers who mentioned these goals did not cite measurement systems other than their own judgment to explain how they know students have achieved desired goals.

Nearly all of the indicators of effectiveness other than academic achievement listed by Amber School teachers could be described as social-emotional outcomes. These outcomes included building a sense of community within the classroom, promoting positive interactions between students, developing respectful, responsible students, and helping students develop “a strong, positive sense of self.” None of these concepts were particularly well developed, and they did not emerge prominently in other parts of the survey.

For example, teachers might have listed pursuing strategies to achieve these social-emotional goals in their answers to the question, “As you think about the coming school year, what goals do you have for your teaching?” However the answers to this question were almost exclusively limited to pursuit of improved instructional strategies

targeting academic outcomes or improving specific academic outcomes without mentioning pursuit of improved instructional strategies. Also, few teachers explained the effectiveness rating they gave themselves for the previous year by discussing student achievement of social-emotional goals.

Describing Effectiveness: Ryan School Teachers

At Ryan School, while many teachers cited achievement on standardized tests as an important indicator of effectiveness, other desired outcomes were prominent as well. The composite of responses revealed a balance between the concepts of achievement on standardized tests and other targeted outcomes as did the responses of the Amber School teachers. The Ryan School responses skewed more toward including social emotional outcomes as essential to effectiveness than the Amber School survey responses did. For example, in response to the question, "Think forward to the end of the year. How will you know that you had a successful year of teaching?" three of the sixteen teachers only listed student achievement on standardized tests in their response while seven more teachers included this outcome along with another outcome. Six of the teachers provided responses that did not include achievement on standardized tests. The following responses were typical of those that included achievement on standardized tests and another outcome:

- I look at class work and weekly tests for growth. I can also tell by the students' attitude being positive.

- Most of my students will be at/above grade level. My students will miss being in my room because it was “fun while learning.” I’m tired and need a summer break. That means I worked hard.
- Happy kids. Outstanding scores.

The responses that included academic achievement data were less focused on the end of the year, high stakes STAR assessment than the responses of Amber School teachers. The first answer above likely refers to a teacher-made or teacher-selected (as opposed to school-wide and agreed-upon) formative assessment. The emphasis on happy, positive students that is apparent in all three of these responses was also typical of the responses that did not include student academic achievement. For example, one teacher responded, “My kids are independent learners who can solve their ‘own problems.’ My kids and I are having fun in the classroom.”

The three teachers who only referenced achievement on standardized tests provided answers similar to those provided by the teachers at Amber School. One of the teachers wrote, “I look at the growth level of each student. What did they come in with and what tools are they leaving with? I never really know the scope of my success or failure until results of CST are posted.” This teacher’s response diverged from the responses of her colleagues who referenced formative assessment results as indicators of student achievement and from the majority of her colleagues that referenced desired outcomes other than academic performance as indicators of effective teaching. However,

this answer revealed a strong sense of responsibility for the student achievement of her students. This teacher clearly believed she is critical to the academic success of her students.

The responses to the question, “How did you decide how effective you were as a teacher last year?” also suggested that the teachers at Ryan School emphasize social-emotional outcomes more than the teachers at Amber School do. Ten of the responses to this question included references to achievement on standardized tests plus another desired outcome. One of the responses only included achievement on standardized tests, and four of the responses did not mention achievement on standardized tests. A typical, if more developed than most, response was,

Parents gave me feedback (letters and email), and we are talking about parents who normally aren’t involved in school. My students tested well on the state test and other assessments. My grade level partners and I moved a lot of children up levels in reading and math. The kids were sad it was summer.

While student achievement on standardized tests was clearly an important indicator of effectiveness for this teacher, it is clear she also valued the communication from parents and, likely, the conditions she established that led to the communication from parents. Additionally, she referenced the teamwork that was required to lead students to improvement in reading and math. The answer suggested that an important

outcome for her is creating a sense of community for parents and students and teaching parents how to access the educational system to advocate on behalf of their students.

Another teacher's response illuminated the conflict between the primacy of achievement results on standardized tests on the one hand and other social-emotional goals on the other. This teacher wrote,

I do the best that I can as a teacher. I like to see the whole child succeed and their confidence improve. However, the proof is in the CST results. If they do well as a class, then I am doing my job.

This answer suggests that the teacher has a "whole child" approach to her teaching and desired outcomes for students, and it also suggests that she believes that others measure her effectiveness only by the CST.

Most of the outcomes other than academic achievement that Ryan School teachers noted as indicators of their effectiveness could be categorized as "positive, happy students" and "a sense of community and belonging in the classroom." Like the Amber School teachers, Ryan School teachers more often listed these outcomes as goals for the coming school year than they mentioned academic achievement as evidence of their effectiveness in the previous school year. Also, like the Amber School teachers, Ryan School teachers did not mention how they would measure achievement of these outcomes at the end of the year though there was considerable description of how academic achievement goals are measured. Several teachers did mention these social-emotional

outcomes in response to the question, “As you think about the coming school year, what goals do you have for your teaching?” but none of the respondents mentioned pursuit or improvement of instructional strategies to achieve these outcomes.

Reflection: Amber and Ryan School Teachers

“Reflection” emerged as an important element of effectiveness, particularly in the responses to the question that asked teachers to explain the effectiveness rating they gave themselves for the previous school year. The range of these responses revealed complex understandings of teacher effectiveness, and the answers emphasized the importance of teacher reflection and the balance between assessment of academic achievement data and other target outcomes. In other words, respondents indicated an understanding that teachers make a significant difference in student achievement, and they understood the need to reflect upon and modify their practice to meet the needs of students. Here are three typical responses that illuminated the theme of reflection.

- I differentiated instruction for my students and implemented many hands-on learning experiences. By looking at my students’ work from the beginning of the year and the standards they need to meet by the end of the year, I feel I was pretty effective as a teacher.
- It was only my second year teaching in regular ed. I considered growth I made from my first year. Data came from various assessments and interventions.

- I had taught the grade for four years and felt like I had really learned the curriculum and created a curriculum that was engaging and effective.

Most of the students were on grade level at the end of the year, even those that came in very low.

These responses again demonstrated the prevalence of Amber School teachers describing their own effectiveness based on the achievement of their students. Alternatively, teachers might have assessed their performance based on the implementation of particular strategies and accounted for the lack of student achievement by referencing presumed student deficits. The respondents referenced their own growth as teachers in meeting the needs of their students.

Reflection emerged as a prevalent theme for the teachers at Ryan School just as it did for the teachers at Amber School. Several questions provided opportunity to describe how teachers reflect on their teaching effectiveness. The composite of responses indicated a commitment to adjusting practice to meet the needs of students as well as accepting responsibility for student learning. For example, the following response was representative of the respondents. "I considered the progress of my most needy students from when I first met them to year's end. I always hope that I have learned with them to do better in the future." This teacher's response explicitly referenced his/her desire to learn along with students and also explicitly articulates his/her commitment to guiding all students to success. Other responses referenced personal challenges that impeded the

teachers' effectiveness. These challenges included having a baby mid-year, adjusting to life after a spouse passed away, and returning to full time teaching for the first time in over ten years. None of the Amber School teachers referenced personal life challenges in their answers to the survey questions.

Supporting Effectiveness: Overview

The staff surveys also were designed to begin the exploration of the second research question, "How is effectiveness supported in high poverty schools?" Two questions, "What is it about this school that helps or supports you to be an effective teacher?" and "What is it about this community that helps or supports you to be an effective teacher?" were specifically designed to address this research question. One other question, "If you were talking to someone considering accepting a teaching job at this school, what are three or four things you would mention to *encourage* him or her that this is a good place to teach?" also provided insight into how teachers believed their effectiveness to be supported. These questions limited teacher responses to support within their schools and within the school's community. The subject teacher interviews revealed a broader base of support for some of the teachers including support from their families.

Two themes, collaboration and accountability/data, emerged at both schools as the most significant factors supporting effectiveness. Several teachers at the two schools also cited school administration as a support to their effectiveness. Views of the two schools'

parent communities varied widely from parents being considered a significant hindrance to effectiveness to parents being a moderate support to effectiveness.

Supporting Effectiveness: Amber School Teachers:

Nearly every teacher cited colleagues as important contributors to their effectiveness, especially in response to the questions designed to elicit information about how effectiveness is supported. The theme “support from colleagues” can best be described as “collaboration.” Five of the responses to the question, “What is it about this school that helps or supports you to be an effective teacher?” used the word “collaboration” explicitly. Support from colleagues was also the dominant theme in response to the question, “If you were talking to someone considering accepting a teaching job at this school, what three or four things you would mention to encourage him/her that this is a good place to teach?”

Survey responses suggested that teachers feel supported by their colleagues in a variety of ways. Teachers cited grade level teams, flexible grouping options that aid differentiation, sharing of ideas and best practices, and moral support as examples of the support for their effectiveness that they get from colleagues. The range of types of support noted by respondents was explored more deeply in interviews and observations with subject teachers.

Amber teachers also cited a broad range of ways they feel supported by the administration, including, in several cases, the district office. Several teachers said that

administrators provided all of the materials they needed and also made themselves available to provide sound, professional assistance. Teachers also cited professional development. A few teachers mentioned their respect for the two administrators as strong, former teachers who had worked at the school.

Teachers overwhelmingly described the parent community as a significant barrier to their effectiveness and to the academic achievement of the students at Amber School. In response to the question asking teachers to share three or four challenges to teaching at Amber, sixteen of the twenty teachers listed the parents as a barrier to their success as teachers. Below are several typical responses:

- Language barrier with parents, students. Students have a lot of challenges at home. Poverty, language, parent not around. Students come and go more than normal.
- Lack of support for children at home due to language or lack of supervision.
- Non-supportive parents. Location not desirable. No parent volunteers.

The most common phrase in response to this question was, “parents not supportive.” This deficit view of the capital the Amber parent community is capable of providing the students and teachers at Amber contrasted with the optimistic view of the parent community held by the principal, Tanya, and described above.

Though several teachers were able to cite some assets parents provide in assisting in the achievement of students and the effectiveness of teachers, these responses came only when specifically asked how the community supports teacher effectiveness, and most respondents did not include teachers under the umbrella of “community.” Most of the teacher respondents interpreted “community” to mean the teacher community, not the surrounding parent community, and this pattern reinforced the theme of collaboration among staff. Some of the words used to describe the parent community’s support for effectiveness included “giving,” “faith in teachers,” “high expectations,” “excellent parenting skills,” “role models for children,” and “strengthening.” The consensus seemed to be that the parents are increasingly active in the school community, and parents who take English classes on the campus were seen as role models. One teacher wrote, “Excellent parenting skills despite language and SES challenges (respect for parents).” Teachers appreciated that parents do not challenge teachers.

Throughout the survey teachers saw themselves as supported by assessment data, supported by each other, and supported by administration. They did not feel supported by parents, and in fact saw the home life of their students as an obstacle to be overcome, though little insight was provided into what actually happens at the homes their children. The deficit view of the parent community contrasted with the principal’s description of the parent community’s growing influence and contribution to the school and with the

sense of teacher efficacy that emerged from the survey and that seemed to emanate from the success teachers have had raising academic achievement.

Supporting Effectiveness: Ryan School Teachers

Teachers at Ryan echoed their former principal's emphasis on teamwork and collaboration in their responses to survey questions designed to determine how effectiveness is supported at Ryan School. Nearly every teacher emphasized the role collaboration plays in their practice, and their survey responses provided a rich description of the value teachers at Ryan School place on collaboration. Typical responses to the question that asked, "What is it about this school that helps or supports you to be an effective teacher?" were:

- Support and team effort. Friendly staff. Everyone supports everyone. None of the clique stuff.
- Collaborative- grade level and across grade levels. Leadership- principal supports time to do what needs to be done including providing planning time, materials and supplies for instruction.
- Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. We all have the same goals and desires. We support each other.

The descriptions of collaboration emphasized collegiality, sharing of best instructional practices, and a shared responsibility for the success of students, particularly across grade level teams. The emphasis on collaborative use of data to provide

differentiated instruction for students was present, if less pronounced, than it was in the survey responses of Amber School teachers. In addition, when describing their colleagues who they believed to be effective teachers, respondents noted that effective teachers were particularly skilled at collaboration, suggesting that they view collaboration as both an indicator of and a support for teacher effectiveness at Ryan School.

Another theme that emerged in several of the survey responses was respect for professional judgment. A typical comment on this theme was, "I'm treated as a professional. My opinion is sought out and respected. We feel safe-- no one is 'out to get you.'" This theme, and the theme of collaboration, both illustrated how the former principal, Jack, was viewed as supportive of their effectiveness by creating a culture of respect for the professional judgment of teachers and a culture that promoted and emphasized collaboration.

Responses to the questions designed to gauge teacher perceptions of how the community supports teacher effectiveness revealed a more nuanced understanding of the role parents play in the success of the school than did the responses of the Amber School teachers. While the Amber School teachers saw parents as unsupportive or even a hindrance to their effectiveness and to the academic achievement of their students, Ryan School teachers were more apt to describe parents as supportive while noting the challenges parents face in supporting the education of their children. Some of the challenges noted by teachers included the long hours that parents work, the poverty of the

community, and the inability of parents to help with homework. Some teachers also focused on their own challenges helping parents to be supportive. These teachers typically described their own inability to speak Spanish as a hindrance to helping parents play a larger role in their success of their students. All of the teachers who responded to the question asking how the community helps or supports them to be an effective teacher referred to parents in their response. The typical response noted that teachers feel valued and respected by parents.

Summary and Discussion of Survey Findings

The survey instrument helped identify effective teachers at the two schools. The teachers who were selected to be subject teachers were nominated by their peers and were described by the nominating teachers and their principals as possessing the qualities of effectiveness that emerged from the various questions of the survey. The subject teachers were also confirmed to be effective teachers possessing qualities of effectiveness consistent with the survey results through interviews and observations.

The structure, content, and application of the survey instrument served to identify and to amplify the themes of accountability/data, collaboration, and reflection as critical to effective teaching in the two high poverty schools in the survey, and the analysis of survey results demonstrated how these themes differ at the two schools. Survey responses helped to inform the subsequent interviews of principals as well as the interviews and observations of the subject teachers. The responses also suggested that while teachers at

the two schools view these themes as indicators of effectiveness, the themes also serve to support effectiveness.

Two other themes, “principal leadership” and “respect for professional judgment” were also noted in the survey response analysis. Principal leadership was cited indirectly in most cases as a support for teacher effectiveness, yet it was clear from the responses teachers gave credit to school administration, and in the case of Amber School, also district administration, for creating the conditions that allowed accountability, collaboration, and reflection to flourish at these two schools as indicators of and support for teacher effectiveness. Respect for professional judgment was noted by teachers at Ryan School as a support for their effectiveness, but this theme was much less pronounced than collaboration and accountability. This theme was not prominent in the Amber School teacher responses.

The elements of compassion are evident in the survey responses. The elements are developed and refined further as a result of the interviews and classroom observations. These elements are authentic caring, social capital, and critical pedagogy. The teachers at both schools clearly described high expectations for their students, and this theme is integrated into each of the elements of compassion, and “high expectations” serves to bind the three elements to form the concept “compassion” as it applies to teacher effectiveness in high poverty schools. Also the discussion of social-emotional outcomes for students illuminated teacher focus on building relationships with students.

Interestingly, the parent community was seen as a barrier to teacher effectiveness in the Amber School survey results.

The survey did not elicit significant commentary on critical pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, cooperative learning, or any particular pedagogical strategies. Critical pedagogy was explored and developed through teacher interviews and observations. Finally, the role parents play in supporting or inhibiting effectiveness emerged through the surveys as central to the theme of social capital. Poverty and language status were also mentioned in the surveys as factors affecting teacher effectiveness.

Discussion of Subject Teachers

Overview

Each of the subject teacher sections begins with data supporting the teacher's nomination as "effective." Principals prominently described caring, awareness of issues of social and cultural capital, and effective pedagogy in their endorsements of the subject teachers, and the four subject teachers richly described caring as a central element of their practice and philosophy of teaching. Interview questions and classroom observations were designed to identify and to develop the three elements of "compassion" for each of the subject teachers. The presence of "compassion" in each of the subject teacher's practice is described by exploring the component elements: authentic caring, social capital, and critical pedagogy. This framework for compassion as an indicator of