

TEACHER VISION, TEACHER CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS,  
CLASSROOM ROBUSTNESS AND STUDENT  
CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS

By

LEICHA SHAVER

Bachelor of Science in Education  
Northwestern Oklahoma State University  
Alva, Oklahoma  
1987

Master of Science in Education  
Northwestern Oklahoma State University  
Alva, Oklahoma  
1988

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
May, 1999

Thesis  
1999P  
S533+

TEACHER VISION, TEACHER CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS,  
CLASSROOM ROBUSTNESS AND STUDENT  
CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS

Thesis Approved:

*L. Ann Restone*

Thesis Adviser

*Janice Ann Beth*

*Jeff E. Leggett*

*Kate M. Perry*

*Wayne B. Powell*

Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first acknowledge and give thanks to God for blessing me with the health, strength, and determination to enter and pursue such an endeavor. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and I consider it a privilege and honor to accomplish this milestone in my life.

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone that was instrumental to the completion of my dissertation. To Dr. Joseph Licata, who served as my first chairperson and dissertation advisor, I extend my gratitude for your guidance and support. To Dr. Nan Restine, who serves as my chairperson and dissertation advisor currently, thank you for the kindness, patience, and support that you have given to ensure this educational endeavor was completed. She was most encouraging at a time when I needed encouragement the most. To Dr. Katye Perry, I extend my appreciation for assisting with the statistical procedures of the research. She provided valuable assistance to the writing of this dissertation. To my other committee members, Dr. Pamela Bettis and Dr. William Segall, I extend my appreciation for their contributions and assistance.

To Dr. Lynn Arney, who invited me to apply as a doctoral candidate to Oklahoma State University and pursue a terminal degree, I owe a deep debt of gratitude. Her encouragement and guidance have been instrumental to me throughout the program. Her insistence led to my applying for the Minority Lectureship Program, a program that provided numerous opportunities for me to network and experience academia fully.

My gratitude is also extended to the individuals in the Tulsa Public School District. I would like to thank the superintendent and principals for being gracious and cooperative and allowing me to utilize their schools. I would like to extend my appreciation to the teachers and students who were willing to respond to the surveys.

I wish to express my warmest appreciation to my family for being so loving and patient as I completed the doctorate program. I would like to give special thanks to my children, Robert and LaToya, who sacrificed their mother's time and attention so that the dissertation and program would be completed. To Raymond, my loving husband, his total support and constant words of encouragement will not soon be forgotten. He was unrelenting in his efforts to provide assistance when needed. My appreciation is also extended to my wonderful parents, Roy and Betty Young, who encouraged me to set goals and high expectations as a young child. To my sister and brothers who all contributed to the completion of this milestone in some way, thank you. And last but certainly not least to Teresa Newson, a very good friend that I met as the result of the doctorate program, I have found a friend for life. Going through the doctorate program together made our friendship even more special. She became an excellent sounding board for me whenever times got tough. The accomplishment of this milestone has not only helped me to grow professionally and academically, I have grown personally as well. Obtaining my doctorate has led to a new appreciation and admiration for my wonderful supportive family and friends.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Definitions of Construct.....	7
Teacher Vision.....	8
Classroom Robustness.....	9
Central Life Interest.....	9
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Propositions.....	11
Methods.....	14
Procedures.....	14
Significance of the Study.....	16
Organization of the Study.....	16
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	18
Social Systems Theory.....	18
Teacher Vision.....	21
Central Life Interest.....	23
Classroom Robustness .....	29
Summary.....	36
III. METHODOLOGY.....	37
Research Design.....	37
Data Collection.....	37
Instrumentation.....	38
Analysis of Data.....	43
IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	45
Descriptive Results for the Instruments.....	47
Vision.....	48
Central Life Interest.....	50
Robustness.....	51
Inferential Results.....	52
Results for Proposition One.....	52
Results for Proposition Two.....	55
Summary.....	57

V.	DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	58
	Overview of the Study.....	58
	Summary of Findings.....	60
	Proposition One.....	60
	Proposition Two.....	60
	Discussion .....	61
	Conclusion and Implications.....	63
	Recommendations for Theory.....	65
	Recommendations for Practice.....	65
	Recommendations for Further Research.....	67
	 REFERENCES.....	 71
	APPENDIXES.....	78
	APPENDIX A- CLASSROOM VISION INVENTORY.....	80
	APPENDIX B - CHARACTERISTICS OF ROBUST CLASSROOMS.....	82
	APPENDIX C - ROBUSTNESS SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL.....	84
	APPENDIX D - CENTRAL LIFE INTEREST ( student form).....	86
	APPENDIX E - CENTRAL LIFE INTEREST ( teacher form).....	88
	APPENDIX F - CONSENT FORMS FOR STUDENTS.....	90
	APPENDIX G - TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM.....	92
	APPENDIX H - STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM.....	94
	APPENDIX I - LETTERS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, PRINCIPALS TEACHERS.....	96
	APPENDIX J - DISTRICT ENDORSEMENT LETTER.....	99
	APPENDIX K- CODING KEY.....	101
	APPENDIX L – IRB APPROVAL FORM.....	103

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS.....	47
2.	DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS FOR THE CLASSROOM VISION INSTRUMENT.....	48
3.	DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS FOR THE STUDENT CENTRAL LIFE INTEREST INSTRUMENT.....	50
4.	DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS FOR THE ROBUSTNESS INSTRUMENT.....	51
5.	SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF ANALYSES FOR PROPOSITION ONE .....	52
6.	SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF ANALYSES FOR PROPOSITON TWO.....	55



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In teaching, as in every craft, there are masters from whom apprentices can and should learn. Although perfect agreement on who deserves the titles of master and apprentice may not exist, it is likely that in every school system, at least a handful of teachers would be called outstanding by almost any standard. One such person, Jaime Escalante, has been highlighted in the popular press (Lambert, 1988) and in a motion picture (Musca, 1988).

Escalante, a Bolivian native, taught math to Latino teenagers in a poverty-stricken area in Los Angeles, an area plagued with crime, and drugs, gangs and characterized by low expectations and hopelessness. Escalante set high expectations for his students, thus forcing them to commit to a high regimen of academically related activities. His students had to attend school an additional ten hours each week. In addition, students had to use their spare time to complete homework and study (Lambert, 1988).

One way to measure Escalante's success is by the large number of students that passed the advanced placement calculus exam, an examination taken by one percent of high school juniors and seniors each year. Maria Tostado, Escalante's principal, boasted about how he effectively taught ideas and concepts, not just computations. His

students were taught to apply concepts, not only to mathematical equations, but to real life scenarios as well (Lambert, 1988).

How did Escalante get his students excited about learning?

According to the dramatization in the film, he elevated students' views of what they could be and equipped them with the knowledge and skills necessary to get there. To Escalante, mathematics was "the way to a brighter future, better jobs and a better quality of life." He considered math "the great equalizer." Escalante reminded his students that bankers and engineers were afforded the good life and that those who work for minimum wage were not. Explaining that engineers and bankers knew math, others did not.

Escalante challenged his students by stating, "Go ahead, quit school and be forced to wait on tables for the rest of your life. Stay in school and eventually own a chain of your own restaurants." "Go to work at the plant so you can buy a used car? Why not stay in school and someday be able to buy a new car every year for the rest of your life." He encouraged his students to learn skills possessed by very few others. He warned female students to think about their future. Escalante suggested to students that, "Math gives you alternatives besides just having babies. You can rely on yourselves rather than being forced to depend on some man who may take off when you need him most."

He reminded students constantly that learning math would give them a key to any door they wanted to open in life. “You can do it, if you are willing to make the sacrifices required of you in this class.” One can argue that Escalante’s methods were somewhat less than conventional and, clearly beyond the boundaries of traditional methods. However, one might also speculate that at the heart of what he did is a vision, a clear and compelling view of what his students could be and the future he desired for them. Once students shared this view of the future, the teacher could legitimately demand student sacrifices necessary to reach the desired future goal.

Escalante advocated a challenging vision for his classes. For him, and central to his advocacy, was the claim that what is taught, math in this case, is essential to the realization of a desired future. Escalante captured national attention with his theatrical tactics in teaching. He had students waiting in line to enroll in his classes. Students taking Escalante’s course could expect extraordinary experiences. Escalante's classroom, a former band rehearsal hall, was described as unusual. Colorful toys were used to illustrate concepts and equations. Numerous examples can be cited which reflect Escalante’s flamboyant style. What might seem peculiar to some was quite the norm to Escalante and his class. He appeared to know no boundaries as he explored uncharted territories in his pursuit to help his students succeed. To get their attention he might

swat them with a pillow. He used many manipulatives to demonstrate new concepts. Escalante implemented different strategies to accomplish his task. In an attempt to boost self confidence he sometimes selected weaker members of the group to serve as leader. Having an opportunity to lead and problem solve, Escalante claimed, fostered leadership skills, and transformed passive students into aggressive participants contributing to the problem solving process (Lambert, 1988).

Even though the brief description above is taken from a newspaper report and a motion picture rather than empirical research, these depictions suggest that a teacher's challenging vision for students and a supportive classroom climate are related to student commitment and academic success. Put another way, Escalante's vision became the student's *raison d'etre*. His vision and the classroom environment he offered became the central focus or life interest of his students.

School in general, and Escalante's classes in particular, became more important to these students than television, dating, or other social activities. The teaching profession as a whole might benefit from a greater understanding of persons such as Escalante.

#### Theoretical Framework

Escalante may not be too dissimilar from other very gifted teachers who initially appear to be anomalies in comparison to their colleagues. On the other hand, rather than serving as a deviant case for theoretical understanding of classroom life, Escalante's story might be viewed as being consistent with and reminiscent of theoretical grounds advanced

long ago by Talcott Parsons (1958), and Thelen and Getzels (1960) in describing the school class as a social system.

From Thelen and Getzels' (1960) perspective, school classrooms can be viewed as miniature social systems exhibiting an institutional (nomothetic) and an individual (idiographic) dimension. The institutional, or nomethetic dimension is composed of organizationally sanctioned roles and is the normative aspect of the social system. In the case of school classes, these roles are typically teacher and student. School organization specifies certain role expectations or prescribed behaviors for teachers and students that are directed toward goal attainment. However, teachers and students are unique individuals with their own desires and personalities, or what Thelen and Getzels (1960) term need-dispositions. The interplay between role expectations and individual needs tends to explain why no two individuals exhibit identical patterns of behavior or choice in carrying out their classroom roles.

For instance, Escalante carried out his role differently from other teachers, probably because of his particular background and personality (need-dispositions, desires or aspirations). What is noteworthy about Escalante is that he was able to fulfill his personal idiosyncrasies and needs through behaviors that were consistent with his formal role expectations and classroom or school goals. Further, through the use of a compelling vision, he was able to legitimize his role expectations for students in terms of each student's individual needs and aspirations for the future. He did so through dramatic use of language and insightful empathy that penetrated his students' interpersonal defenses and uncovered and enhanced their most intimate sense of self worth. As their role

expectations became more and more consistent with their needs, students were more than willing to make the sacrifices required by the vision they came to share with their teacher.

While changes in role requirements and the expression of student personality needs might be motivated by a teacher's advocacy for students, actual changes are probably a function of interaction within the classroom group (Thelen & Getzels, 1960). The interplay between role expectations and individual need-dispositions produces collective value choices and subsequent group norms or informal standards of behavior. Negative sanctions, applied to enforce these norms, range from a gentle nudge on the shoulder from a fellow student, or a teacher's swat on the head with a pillow, to full expulsion from the class. Smiles from fellow classmates, or the teacher's granting a leadership position to a student, might be examples of positive sanctions.

According to Thelen and Getzels (1960), classroom groups can be differentiated by the special ways members integrate institutional role requirements and group norms, and express their collective intentions. In a sense, this special blend of formal and informal social structure can be understood as the group's culture, or perhaps better, climate. In Escalante's story, classroom climate was characterized by challenging activities that highlighted the discrepancy between students' performance and class intentions and goals. Teacher advocacy of students' ability to overcome this discrepancy tends to make goal attainment a dramatic or robust undertaking by the student group (Licata & Johnson, 1989; Willower & Licata, 1975). Students who accept these challenges and abide by the group's formal and informal requirements usually do so because they feel a sense of belonging (Thelen & Getzels, 1960).

In Escalante's case, a classroom climate developed in which the intentions of the students were congruent with their adopted vision. Sacrifices for the group intentions and vision provided evidence of a strong sense of belonging. Classroom activities probably monopolized students' attention and efforts to a point where they claimed that the school (rather than other activities) constituted their central life interest (Dubin & Goldman, 1972).

To recap, Thelen and Getzels (1960) compare characteristics of school classrooms to social systems theory. Both have established role expectations for its members as well as behaviors that enable certain goal attainment. Each promulgates certain group norms and sets standards for behavior by producing group value choices resulting from the interaction of role expectations and individual need dispositions. The distinguishable features of each group are developed by the manner in which members integrate institutional role requirements and group norms and convey collective intentions (Thelen & Getzels, 1960).

This phenomenon can also be described as the groups' climate. According to Licata and Johnson (1989), group climate or classroom climate can be categorized as "robust" when certain responses are elicited to motivate student learning.

#### Definition of Constructs

Hoy and Miskel (1987) have claimed that schools obtain legitimacy in society by producing valued outcomes. They identify Parsons' (1959) four functions of (1) adaptation to the environment, (2) goal attainment, (3) building solidarity (integration), and (4) commitment to system values (latency) as "an excellent model" for understanding valued outcomes. Thus, in effective classroom systems, teacher vision seems to link with

student goal attainment and the need to adapt to challenges. A supportive classroom climate provides a setting in which students and teachers demonstrate their solidarity by successfully integrating the activities necessary for goal attainment. When students and teachers make school or classroom activities their central life interest they are exhibiting a relatively high degree of commitment to organizational values.

Since school and classroom effectiveness are understood as producing valued outcomes for society, and teacher vision focuses on student success in meeting challenges in the external environment, the key constructs involved in this investigation are informed by the social systems theory and a view of school and classrooms as open systems (Meyer, 1978). The key constructs are teacher vision, classroom robustness, and central life interests.

#### Teacher Vision

Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), in their study of school principals, define vision at the school level as the principal's capacity to differentiate between how things are and how they might be. They note that principals with vision are often able to motivate others to the point that they too work to achieve that vision. Applying this notion to teacher leadership in classrooms, teacher vision is defined as a teacher's expressed view of what the students can be. For example, teachers like Escalante, have a challenging vision about what their students can accomplish. They have the ability to move their students to make personal sacrifices toward fulfilling their vision. In Escalante's case, he was very successful in moving his students toward his vision and in compelling them to make sacrifices such as spending time after school each day and sacrificing time on Saturdays.



For the purpose of this study, the Classroom Vision Inventory (CVI), a modification of the School Vision Inventory (Greenfield, Licata & Johnson, 1992), is employed to assess student perceptions of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a classroom vision (See Appendix A).

### Classroom Robustness

Classroom climate can be characterized by challenging or robust classroom activities that stimulate student empathy over the discrepancy between their performance and class intentions and goals. Certainly, Escalante's classroom appeared to be an example of a robust classroom climate for student learning. Willower & Licata (1975) define classroom environmental robustness as the perceived dramatic content of classroom structure. Environmental robustness is measured by the Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD) using statements such as, "My classroom is..." Students respond to bipolar adjectives such as interesting-boring, challenging-dull, meaningful-meaningless, or stale-fresh (Licata & Willower, 1975). Multauf, Willower, and Licata (1978), Estep, Willower, and Licata (1980), and Licata & Wildes (1980) are examples of classroom level research using RSD (See Appendixes B and C).

### Central Life Interests

Each person chooses from a broad span of events that he or she may engage in each day. However, given the opportunity, most choose the activities that they feel are most interesting and worthwhile. These activities tend to consume a majority of the person's time, energy, and effort. Dubin (1956) characterized such activities as an individual's central life interests.

Hoy and Miskel (1987) associate Parsons' (1959) latency function with the school's need to maintain the integrity of its values and motivational patterns by maintaining high

central life interests in school among students and teachers in order to be effective. Consistent with Dubin and Goldman (1972), Hoy and Miskel, (1987) define central life interests as a set of attitudes that name the choice an individual makes to perform a specific activity in a particular environment. When school or classroom activities become a teacher or a student's central life interest, other life activities that require attention, energy, and personal commitments become secondary.

The assumptions are that students with a central life interest for school would probably choose to do homework over playing countless hours of Nintendo and are more likely to frequent the library than the usual hangout with friends. The desire a student has to achieve good grades would also be part of his/her central life interest. Students might stay after class to ask questions as opposed to rushing home to spend several hours on the telephone and be more inclined to give up their leisure time, time typically spent in non-school activities.

Escalante was able to stimulate his students in such a manner that they were willing to devote more of their personal time to schoolwork. A requirement for Escalante's class was a commitment from students to spend four hours each Saturday, to be prepared to stay late after school, to complete as much as thirty hours of homework each week, and to take ten weeks of summer school. The ten weeks of summer school exceeded traditional public summer school by two weeks.

However, students were not alone in making sacrifices. When they arrived for four hours of instruction on a Saturday morning, their teacher was waiting for them. When they completed thirty hours of homework each week, their teacher graded the homework. Escalante chose to do so in place of spending time with his own family and friends. While

Lortie (1975) reports that the professional arrangement and work incentives of school might explain high central life interests for teachers, conceivably teachers who effectively transfer a vision to their students may exhibit a relatively high central life interest in school.

A modification of Dubin and Goldman's (1972) measure of central life interests was developed by Miskel, Glasnapp and Hartley (1975) for use with school teachers. This instrument, the Central Life Interest (CLI) questionnaire is employed with teachers (CLIT) in this study. Another revision of the CLI is used to collect information about the central life interests of students (CLIS) (See Appendix E and D).

#### Statement of the Problem

Escalante's story stimulates curiosity about teacher vision as an important classroom construct. While this construct has been investigated with school principals (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986), little is known about teacher vision in classrooms. Although Escalante's story suggests a possible association among teacher vision, student perceptions of a robust classroom climate, and the central life interest of teachers and students, there is a paucity of research that explores these relationships in school classes. The shortage of classroom level research and findings about the effect of teacher vision, teachers' central life interests, and classroom robustness on students' central life interests is the key problem addressed in this study.

#### Propositions

Research conducted by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) suggested that many of the principals who effectively advanced a vision share similar characteristics. Topping the list was each principal's ability to effectively communicate his/her vision to the faculty, staff,

and community. Principals possessing such a skill might be successful in promoting a vision, persuading teachers to accept it, and motivating them to work to fulfill the vision.

These principals were also more likely to develop a work environment that was conducive to good professional practices as well as student learning. Teachers with a vision that ties student needs and aspirations to classroom goals may be similar in their ability to encourage students to sacrifice their time and energy. Such involvement would result in students' valuing school activities over non-school activities.

Among those willing to make personal and professional sacrifices toward accomplishing a vision is the person in the leadership position. This was just as true for the principals described by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) as it was in the accounts of Escalante's conduct (Lambert, 1988). Teachers who internalize the vision they advance for students may over-invest themselves to the point of sacrificing time for their own children.

In such cases, the vision becomes the teacher's. Certainly, when students observe their teacher making such sacrifices, they are more likely to take classroom activities seriously. The leadership dynamic involves the students' perception of their teacher's willingness to make sacrifices for the class; the subsequent motivating influence on students is the impetus for the first proposition.

**Proposition One: There is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision and students' views of class as their central life interest.**

Thelen and Getzels (1960) suggest that classroom groups can be differentiated by the ways members collectively integrate institutional role requirements and group norms, and express their collective intentions. They refer to this special blend of formal and informal social structure as classroom climate. As an example of such differentiation, Licata and Wildes (1980) have characterized a robust classroom climate in terms of spontaneous student involvement in classroom tasks, so much so that if the teacher were to leave the room, the students would continue their involvement with tasks. Students express empathy, not only for other members of the class, but for the activities themselves. Students think of the classroom as "fun" and look forward to attending. Leadership emerges naturally from the student group.

There is little formal emphasis on differentiating the status of students and teacher. The classroom atmosphere is informal and students hold a degree of autonomy over their own workspace. The class is a place for meeting friends and where peer relationships among students are as integral a part of classroom interaction as relationships with the teacher.

The teacher is a dynamic focal point of classroom instruction, confident and open to student questions. Dress is varied, casual and sometimes very colorful, possibly a nonverbal clue of openness and valuing individual expression. The teacher displays a sense of humor, joking, laughing, badgering students, often calling students by nicknames. She tends to halo expectations for student accomplishments. Students are viewed as self-motivated and trustworthy. The teacher is confident and responds to student questions in

depth. A table has been included which lists the characteristics of a robust classroom (See Appendix B).

While this vignette of classroom climate is derived from a summary of observations in robust classrooms done nearly a decade prior to the report of Escalante's unusual accomplishments, the resemblance between this vignette and Escalante's classroom is apparent. Given such a classroom setting, a second proposition follows.

**Proposition Two: There is a positive relationship between students' perception of a robust classroom climate and students' views that classroom activities are central life interests.**

These propositions serve as the rationale for a larger multi-variate scheme or model predicting a high-level student interest in school as the central life interests, the likeliness a student has for choosing school activities over non-school activities. Next to student achievement, students' central life interests are thought to be a primary student outcome. The key independent variables, derived from the propositions are 1) teacher effectiveness in advancing a classroom vision, 2) teacher central life interests and 3) classroom robustness.

## Methods

The sample for this study was generated from a secondary school population consisting of sixty-seven mathematics and English high school classrooms in an urban school district in the Southwest. Forty-two classrooms were selected for the study. These classrooms were randomly selected from a population of sophomore, junior, and senior level mathematics and English classes in the district. In addition, the classroom teacher had to agree to participate in the study in order for the classroom to be selected. In an

attempt to develop a model that is nested in Thelen and Getzels (1960) conception of the school class as a social system and inspired by the Escalante story, the researcher focused this initial inquiry on students and teachers at a grade level that Escalante might have taught.

### Procedures

The researcher gained permission from the school district administration prior to conducting the study. Each teacher participating in the study was asked to do so voluntarily. A list of randomly selected alternates was used to replace those teachers who chose not to participate. Only students who provided their teacher with a signed parental consent form were allowed to participate in the study. The teacher response form and a minimum of no less than 40% of the students in a class were required for participation in the study. Again, those classes unable to meet the level of participation required for the study were replaced with randomly selected alternates.

Each student completed the Classroom Vision Inventory, the Robustness Semantic Differential and the Central Life Interests Questionnaire Student Form. Each classroom teacher completed the Central Life Interest Questionnaire Teacher Form. Demographic data was collected on teachers and students.

The instruments were administered in the spring of 1998 to each teacher and student in the sample classes. Respondents were informed that their identity and the identity of the class, school, and district would be kept confidential in reporting the findings of this study. The instruments were given to students by a data collector to ensure student anonymity and encourage students to be honest when completing the instruments.

The data collector was someone other than the students' teacher. Each data collector administering the student instruments sealed the completed student and teacher instruments in an envelope addressed to the researcher. All instrument packets were coded or numbered and included an explanation to data collectors so that the researcher could follow up on any packets that were not returned.

### Significance of the Study

Esclante provided successful illustrations of the effects of teacher vision on student performances. His vision was his view of what his students should strive to accomplish in their lives. His vision motivated students to accept challenges to make their lives better through education. He used unconventional as well as conventional methods to accomplish his goal. Drawing from the information provided by earlier studies, the purpose of this study is to accumulate more specific information about the effect of teacher vision, teachers' central life interests, and classroom robustness on students' central life interests.

### Organization of the Study

This research investigated the effect of teacher vision, teachers' central life interests, and classroom robustness on students' central life interests. An introduction to the study, theoretical framework, definition of constructs, statement of the problem, propositions, research design, and significance of the study, and an explanation of the organization of the study have been included in this chapter. The remainder of study is organized as follows.



Chapter II presents a review of the related literature, including an overview of the social systems theory. The important constructs, teacher vision, classroom robustness, and central life interests are discussed more intricately.

Chapter III includes the research design, the data collection process, the instruments, and information on data collection and analysis procedures. Analysis of the classroom data collected by schools, including teacher and student responses to the instruments, is presented in Chapter IV. Also included in Chapter IV is a restatement of the propositions and pertinent data for accepting or rejecting the propositions.

The final chapter provides a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, the conclusion, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study explores the relationship between teacher vision, central life interests, and classroom robustness. Chapter two presents the literature germane to the study. The information is reviewed in four sections, which provide a background for the constructs. The following sections will first discuss research and related literature regarding the social systems theory followed by the constructs: teacher vision, central life interest, and classroom robustness.

#### Social Systems Theory

Talcott Parsons (1958) began early studies on the notion of the social systems theory. His theory provides the theoretical framework for this study. Parsons described human behavior using three different schools of thought that were prominent during his era. Studies describing social behavior had been attempted by Utilitarians, and Classical Economists, Positivists, and Idealists. Utilitarians and Classical Economists advanced a rationalistic and individualistic theory of behavior; Positivists' theory explains sound behavior as determined by scientific laws; the Idealists interpreted human behavior in terms of emanations from the framework of cultural values (Parsons, 1961). Other researchers saw the social phenomenon in terms of an organism or an environment and as behaviors or responses.

Parsons (1961) observed that each school of thought had identified a crucial aspect of the truth about behavior; however, none captured the concept, the same way Parsons perceived it. Parson's task was to merge the works of the three schools. He saw a need to

develop the general theories into one that would incorporate the salient aspects of each. Grounded in Parsons' work was the voluntaristic theory of action. Parsons' theory was based upon the assumption that human behavior is perceived as action, action performed by actors in specific situations, with applications of various tasks, beliefs, and measurable principles (Parsons, 1961).

Thelen and Getzels (1960) continued in the same vein of thought as Parson. They provided a theoretical framework for viewing schools and classrooms as a social system. They postulated that the classroom group has characteristics similar to those of any other working group. Central to their structure is the idea that all group members combine collectively to reach goals. Thelen and Getzels (1960) believed that the groups' functions exist within a system that is controlled by management. It should be noted that the groups' existence is predicated upon the existence of other groups or institutions. These conditions are key to all organizations as described by Thelen & Getzels (1960).

Relative to the general characteristics, each member of a group has a unique personality. These different personalities operate within clearly delineated parameters. Parson (1961) viewed the classroom as having very distinct features similar to other groups. Classrooms have set roles with prescribed behaviors and learning is understandably the classroom's primary goal. The teacher has the role of leader. Teachers are empowered by law to hold their title and position.

Each teacher must receive training and certification from an accredited institution. The classroom activities are performed within the larger framework while many other operations are being performed simultaneously. Teachers are responding to students'

needs while simultaneously students are responding to teacher behavior. The classroom interactions occur serially within the framework.

In constructing the conceptual framework for viewing classrooms, Thelen and Getzels (1960) perceived the social system as having two types of phenomena that are simultaneously independent and interactive. First, groups have prescribed roles and expectations to achieve desired goals. Second, the members of the group have individual personalities and need-dispositions; and when coupled with the group's shared relationships, they constitute the social behavior. The social behavior as described by Thelen and Getzels (1960) is a dimension of the following variables: institutions, roles, and expectations. These variables comprise what they term the nomothetic dimension in a social system. The idiographic dimension is composed of the individual, personality, and need-dispositions.

Roles are the most compelling component of the professional structure and they determine the behavior of the actors or members. Thus roles are defined in terms of role-expectations. Equally important, roles are defined by one another and can not function independently. It is the collective interactions between role expectations and individual need-dispositions that produce shared value choices and, indirectly, group norms. The sanctions applied to the classroom group can be either negative or positive. Escalante's story shows that he exercised positive sanctions by granting his students leadership roles, implementing challenging activities, and providing powerful motivation.

Thelen and Getzels (1960) asserted that classroom groups are distinguished by the manner in which their members unite institutional role prerequisites and group norms and affirm their intentions. In exploring the concept of classrooms as a social system, it is

understood that each member identifies with the goals of the system so that these goals become part of their individual needs. Further, group members believe that the expectations are reasonable goals. Belonging is also an integral concept to the group members. It is important for members to believe that they share common emotional ties and rational doctrines.

The nature of the classroom is decided by the teacher's response to particular student behaviors. However, the teacher's response is based upon his/her ability to interpret the student's behavior as an operation inside the social system or classroom. The interpretation of such behavior makes it possible for the teacher to understand not only the group but the individual as well. And can ultimately lead to the employment of a systematic approach that will empower students to take their position in the classroom social system as well as other social orders (Thelen & Getzels, 1960).

#### Teacher Vision

Adolph Hitler, Martin Luther King, Ghandi, and Jim Jones were all leaders with a vision. While it may not seem to most people that these four leaders had anything in common, they did all share a unique gift. These leaders each had a vision about what they thought ought to be and the ability to move others to make personal sacrifices toward fulfilling their vision. Licata, Greenfield, & Teddlie (1990) define vision as the capacity to see the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be and the ability to compel others to act on those possibilities and to make personal sacrifices toward realization of the vision. Escalante was very successful in moving his students toward his vision. He knew that his students were able to achieve and maintain high standards. His task was getting the students to believe this and work toward that end.

The effects of teacher expectations on student achievement are well-documented (Brophy & Good, 1986). Key descriptors of teachers are confidence and determination, and effective teachers believe and act in a manner that communicates to students that they can and will learn. Such teachers treat students' failure to learn as a challenge, not as the student's lack of ability or background (Brophy & Good, 1986). In education, the principle of the self-fulfilling prophecy is clear; students act and learn in accordance with the expectations of their teachers. When students are expected to learn well, they do so, and when students are expected to learn poorly, they do likewise. Examples of either scenario are prevalent in many schools.

Teachers who exhibit behavior that demonstrates high expectations clearly believe they know what students can accomplish. This belief and knowledge is manifested in a teacher's vision. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) have identified an element of school effectiveness as the principal's vision of what his or her school can become. They interviewed principals who had a reputation for making a difference in their own schools. One of their purposes for conducting the study was to explore teachers' views of their principal's vision.

Effective principals were described as possessing three distinct characteristics. Effective principals were proactive and quick to take initiatives. They were resourceful in adapting to the demands of their roles, so that time was available to address their personal objectives as principals. And they exhibited vision or moral imagination. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) defined vision as the capacity to see the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be and the need to compel others to act on possibilities. According to Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), moral imagination was the trait of

changing the school to fit the principal's image.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) suggest that the implementation of a particular principal's vision was contingent on the principal's capacity to create working relationships with teachers as individuals and on a shared concern for good practice and the best interest of the students. Each principal provided a climate that was conducive to sharing ideas and interacting with others within the school and a clear understanding of goals and objectives, thus establishing expectations. Each principal was able to articulate his or her vision to the degree that it moved others to make sacrifices in order to realize the vision.

Results from the current study are expected to generate similar findings with regard to teachers and students as the level of analysis. Viewing teachers as leaders offers a new dimension for educators as they search for greater measures of school improvement. Other teachers share Escalante's ability to motivate and compel students to make personal sacrifices in order to realize a vision. These teachers should not be considered the exception to the rule, but rather the rule. It is clear that additional studies are needed to explore the concept vision. Critical to the literature addressing leadership in schools will be initiatives exploring teachers as leaders.

#### Central Life Interest

Individuals move in and out of multiple life spaces during the day and not all of these social settings or life spaces have equal salience. Preferences may be for any one of several activities or social experiences. Each person chooses from the activities available in daily life and these become the attachments and involvements from which satisfaction is derived (Miskel & Gerhardt, 1974). These interests are primary sources of personal

satisfaction for the individual. Within these segmented social experiences of the individual, one or more of the institutional settings in which behavior occurs may become more important to the person (Dubin, Champoux, & Porter, 1975). This preference for certain settings reflects the person's central life interests.

Early studies on central life interest attempted to establish the work place as the central interest for industrial workers. The assumption was that a good job, that is, a job characterized by high independence, reliability, and complexity was expected to produce high job satisfaction and high central life interest (Dubin and Champoux, 1977).

Researchers found a direct correlation between an individual's job performance and job satisfaction, level of commitment, and central life interests. The results of early studies on central life interest, which were conducted with blue-collar workers are discussed first, followed by studies conducted with teachers.

Robert Dubin's (1956) study with three middle-western plants and nearly 1,200 workers revealed important findings. The employees were asked to fill out questionnaires examining whether they viewed their job and workplace as their central life interest. "Central life interest" was defined in this study as the task chosen for completion in a given setting. Four hundred and ninety-one participants agreed to take part in the study. The participants responded to forty questions about events that had a possibility of occurring either in their work setting or in a specific place in the employee's community.

The study asked questions that referred to the workers' organization and how they viewed behavior in the workplace. They responded to technological aspects of the workplace, their interaction with one another outside of work, and common occurrences



they experienced in the work setting. The following is a sample of the questions asked: I am most interested in a) things about my job, b) things that I usually do around the house or the community, c) just about everything I do. Responses were scored as job-oriented, non-job-oriented or as indifferent. The first category job-oriented, described to individuals selecting their profession as their central life interest. The second option was non job-oriented, individuals choosing to do things away from their job. The third and final option was a neutral response. Individuals that did not show a preference were considered neutral.

The assumption before the study was that workers would view their work setting as their central life interest because of the time and devotion each worker seemed to exhibit. However, the study yielded quite different results. The results indicated that the majority of the workers did not view their job or work setting as their central life interest, even though a large number of workers had developed a basic attachment to their job.

The study was significant because it provided empirical tests for myths long held by industrial managers and the beliefs that jobs were the central life interest of most employees. It provided much needed data to begin efforts aimed toward participatory management and ignited the movement for the industrial industry to focus on human relations. A greater emphasis was then shifted to finding ways to involve workers and help to restore the work place as the employee's central life interest.

Individuals selecting the work setting as their central life interest find ways to expand their opportunities and increase their chances for success within that setting. These individuals tend to excel in the work setting if given the chance and become high performers. They are typically more concerned about the quality of performance and

experience higher job gratification as well. This does not mean however, that individuals for whom the work setting is not the central life interest don't excel. The differences can generally be found in their motives. Primary reasons for becoming a high performer for someone who does not prefer the work setting might include monetary incentives, position, and status. Even though the individual may develop attachments to their job this does not constitute a high central life interest for work. The individual who does not have a preference for the work setting may experience discontentment and find it necessary to fulfill only minimum requirements for performance (Dubin, 1968).

Dubin (1968) asserted that many employees regard their job, as simply a means of providing them with necessities for living. He found in many of his studies that work was not viewed as the central life interest for most individuals, including organizational managers. Only 24 percent of the individuals participating in his study of blue-collar workers could be viewed as job-oriented. In a subsequent study conducted by Dubin and Goldman (1972), they found that 40 percent of the middle supervisors and practitioners were work-oriented. They concluded that the work setting does not need to be an individual's central life interest in order to guarantee maximum performance in the work place.

Ruh, White, and Wood (1975) advanced the proposition that personal environment and values coupled with the independent variables associated with work contribute to the degree of work commitment. Individuals high on commitment tended to view the work setting positively while those individuals on the other end of the spectrum viewed work as only a means to an end. Ruh, White, and Wood (1975) who are responsible for identifying the changeability of job involvement. They suggested that involvement was

not a consistent factor. An individual's level of involvement is directly affected by his/her value system. If the value system changes, the attitude or involvement towards work may be adversely affected even though the work setting remains unchanged.

In 1975 Dubin, Champoux, and Porter examined the connection between central life interests and the organizational commitment of blue collar and clerical workers. They concluded that individuals strongly involved with their job see the work setting as engaging and fulfilling. Non job-oriented individuals are attracted to salient aspects of their job but not the work environment itself. Individuals with a flexible focus do not develop any particular preference for any aspect of the work place. They have a changeable view of the work place and its ability to yield personal satisfaction. Their findings suggest that an individual's perception about his/her job is strongly related to his/her job orientation. Dubin, Champoux, and Porter also discovered that individuals having interests outside of the work setting are not more likely to hold negative views about their job, although many lack work commitment.

Earlier Dubin and Goldman (1972) studied central life interests and teachers. They developed the initial Central Life Interest Questionnaire designed for school use. The questionnaire provided statements to determine behaviors people preferred to complete and the setting in which they preferred to perform the behavior. Early researchers believed that work was the primary basis of satisfaction for many people. Researchers further assumed that work was the central life interest for individuals. Dubin's (1968) studies supported these assumptions by providing a framework to understand individual involvement and attachments that form in the work setting.

Miskel and Gerhardt (1974) investigated perceived bureaucracy, teacher conflict, central life interests, voluntarism, and job satisfaction. Their study postulated that inherent to organizations and schools alike, formal rules are imposed to relegate members to set roles. It further postulated that conflict resulting from this bureaucratic model was unavoidable. The researchers thought that central life interest and voluntarism were predictors of job satisfaction.

The findings were consistent with earlier studies conducted on blue-collar workers. Voluntarism and central life interests correlated positively with satisfaction. Subsequent findings revealed that veteran teachers reported higher levels, of central life interests relating to their job.

Central life interest as a predictor of positive job satisfaction is significant. The ramifications of a teacher's choosing school as their central life interest and a place where they experience job satisfaction are of tremendous benefits for students. Teachers characterized as job-oriented would seek to experience fulfillment in their job. Fulfillment derived from helping students to make academic gains. For these teachers education is viewed as a rewarding profession.

An individual may focus on the home, the family, the work, a hobby, or some other area, depending on the individual's value system. Individuals tend to seek self-realization in one of the aforementioned areas. Those who find fulfillment of their life goals in work itself usually find the work setting challenging and rewarding and view their job, or the classroom as it may be, as their central life interest. Having a job or workplace as a central life interest means that many features of the occupation are

particularly salient to the individual. It is reasonable to expect these individuals to have a considerable investment in their job (Dubin & Champoux, 1977).

To summarize, individuals who view the work environment positively and work hard to perform at high levels typically have a self-image that is closely related to their job. Their job directly influences their self-satisfaction and they are fulfilled with their career. It is therefore a logical predication that central life interests are associated with job satisfaction and job performance (Dubin, Champoux, and Porter, 1975).

### Classroom Robustness

The term "climate" has become widely used to describe teachers' perception of the classroom. Principals, teachers, and parents use the term readily, yet consensus has not been reached on its meaning. "School climate" is a broad term that refers to teachers' perceptions of the general work environment of the school (Hoy, & Miskel, 1987).

Research supports the notion that schools with healthy climates are better. Healthy schools are places where relationships are open, teachers tend to be more productive, administrators are more responsive, and student achievement is notably higher (Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990).

According to Hoy and Miskel (1987), school climate is influenced by both the formal and informal organization, personalities of participants, and organizational leadership. For the purposes of this study, school climate will be defined as the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members. School climate is that sustaining characteristic of the school environment that is experienced by its participants, affects the behavior of its participants, and is the shared or collective perceptions of behavior in school (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).

One way to view climate in schools is to view schools as organizations.

Organizational climate is most often described using as a personality metaphor that examines the atmosphere of the school in terms of its openness. The most well known conceptualization and measurement of the organizational climate in schools is the initial study of elementary schools by Andrew W. Haplin & Don B. Croft (1962). They developed an instrument that consisted of sixty-four items that were grouped into eight subtests. Four of the subtests referred to the characteristics of the faculty group and described different components of teacher-principal interactions. The eight dimensions of school climate were hindrance, intimacy, disengagement, esprit production, aloofness, consideration, and thrust.

Haplin & Croft (1962) identified six basic school climates along a continuum ranging from open to closed. Open climates have a high degree of trust and esprit and low disengagement. This combination creates an environment that fosters a sincere relationship between teacher and principal. Principals are supportive in their leadership style and teachers strive to develop better working relationships with their colleagues and have a strong commitment to organizational goals. Closed climates have low esprit and thrust and high disengagement. This combination encourages a principal to follow established routines.

In schools with positive climates, people care, respect, and trust each other. According to Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991), teachers in a healthy school are discernibly committed to teaching and learning. They maintain higher expectations, setting high but achievable goals for students. Student performance is essential and the promotion of academics is the focus. Teachers strive to provide an organized learning

setting. Furthermore, students reportedly work harder on their schoolwork, are highly motivated, and demonstrate a higher degree of respect for other students equally committed to education.

Academic emphasis is an important part of a healthy school. While a healthy climate does not insure high academic achievement, it does create an environment where high achievement is likely to occur. When school health is linked with a strong drive for high achievement, the learning environment is orderly and serious. Teachers in this environment believe that students will achieve. Students in this environment are committed to doing their best, thus creating a climate that promotes a successful school (Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp, 1991).

Escalante created a climate that challenged traditional classrooms. He used colorful toys to teach concepts and helped students break many of the barriers that inhibited them, barriers which tend to prevent students from asking questions and providing feedback. Escalante set high but achievable goals for his students and promoted an orderly and serious learning environment that was supportive of the class goals and objectives. Students in Escalante's class developed a high degree of trust for him as well as other students and were instilled with a sense of pride for themselves and their classmates.

Since the development of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) in 1963 by Haplin and Croft, numerous studies have dealt with various aspects of school climate. Several studies were conducted from a macro viewpoint, comparing complete schools with other schools. Tanner (1966) investigated the relationship between social behaviors and school climate. He found no relationship between climate and problem solving modes of cooperativeness, competitiveness, and aggressiveness. Social

insight correlated positively with open climates in elementary and junior high schools and negatively with open climate in senior high schools. Teachers tended to rate elementary schools as more open, and senior high schools as more closed.

Richens (1967) conducted a study in 1967 to compare the organizational climates of urban and suburban high schools. His study compared thirty urban and thirty-three suburban high schools located in Detroit and the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The staff perceived no significant relationship between classroom climate and the geographical location of the high schools.

In 1967 Gentry and James conducted a study with the assistance of one of their students, James Hinson, to compare school climate in Negro and White schools in a large urban school system. There was evidence that Negro schools exhibited primarily a paternalistic or closed climate and White schools primarily a materialistic or open climate. Hinson and Gentry described Negro faculties as having low morale and being highly disengaged, and the principal as one who emphasized production with a modest degree of consideration. White faculties were described as having high morale and the principal as being hard working and considerate (Gentry & James, 1967). While the discernible differences might arguably be attributed to external variables, that does not negate the fact that open schools are characteristically perceived as good places. The school climate can determine such descriptors as trust, commitment, cooperation, loyalty, and teamwork.

Looking within the school, a number of studies have dealt with the effects of climate on pupil achievement and other variables. Millar (1965) studied the effects of climate on achievement in the Edmonton schools. The global concept of climate had no direct relationship on student achievement but the subtest, Intimacy, correlated positively with



achievement ( $r = .29$ ). Feldvebel (1964) directed a study dealing with the same subject, climate versus achievement. He also found no relationship between the global concept of organizational climate and student achievement. He found a correlation between the subtests Consideration ( $r = .39$ ) and Production Emphasis ( $r = .39$ ).

Three years later the study was repeated; however, the researcher investigated the selected variables associated with students. The study did not show a relationship between climate and four student variables: (1) achievement, (2) self-concept, (3) classroom behavior, and (4) absence or tardiness. However, the findings were consistent with Millar and Feldvebel's earlier findings and added validity to the consideration and production emphasis construct.

Anderson (1965) studied the differences in perception of climate between members of the same subgroups, composite perception of subgroups within the same school, and between-school differences of comparable subgroups. He found no significant relationship when the climate of the schools was the main determiner. However, when differences in sub-tests were used, the Thrust and Espirit dimensions were statistically significant when subgroups of the same school were compared. No relationship was found in the between-school differences, but the presence of the principal did have a constant discernible effect on perception.

Appleberry (1969) explored the relationship between the organizational climate and the pupil control orientation of the school. Schools with more open climates were significantly more humanistic in their pupil control ideology than schools with more closed climates. Teachers, but not principals, in more open schools were significantly

more humanistic in their pupil control ideology than teachers serving in more closed schools.

Other studies have dealt with some of the main determiners of organizational climate, the faculty, the teachers, and the principal. These studies have generated much attention for the construct "loose coupling" as a means of measurement in formal organizations. Coupling, as defined by Logan, associates effectiveness to a pattern or organizational and interpersonal mechanisms that serve to link management characteristics and selected elements of the school's social environment. McLeod (1969) found that the smaller the school, the more open the climate, and the larger the school, the more closed the climate. While caution has been advised in studies linking the elements of school organization, climate, and social structure to school effectiveness, base line research has established some variables that merit consideration. Logan, Ellett, and Licata (1993) conducted a study designed to explore the relationship of Structural Coupling, Robustness, and School Effectiveness. The study explored the relationship between the teacher perceptions of the structural coupling in their schools and their perceptions of school robustness and

Willower and Licata (1975) were prompted by Anderson's research to investigate a different aspect of the learning environment, what they termed the element of drama that takes place in the classroom. They thought that a connection exists between the classroom structure and the students' and teachers' perceptions of the classroom environment. In their initial studies they compared two schools with very diverse characteristics. The first school was described as being custodial-oriented with a closed climate, while the second school was humanistic with an open climate.

Results yielded from the study were much different than expected. The school that was custodial-oriented with a closed climate exhibited a higher degree of classroom robustness. Students tended to view custodial-oriented classrooms as more robust than humanistic classrooms. Students viewed their classes as challenging, active, and positive. Willower and Licata expected students to indicate that the humanistic and more open classrooms were more robust. They attributed the results to the tension-created element that they thought existed within the school. What students perceived as rigid and strict in the custodial-oriented classroom creates the tension that students described as robust.

Their research contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the school climate, as it provided an explanation for the relationship between pupil control and robustness (Willower & Licata, 1975). The more controlled the learning environment, an environment characterized by routines and rigidity, the less likely the students will perceive the classroom as robust. While students perceived classrooms characterized as spontaneous, exciting, and dramatic as being robust.

The topic of robustness invokes images of Purkey's (1978) early work on inviting classrooms. Teachers create either an inviting or disinviting classroom for students. Purkey reported two main premises regarding the Invitation Theory. Students' first invitation to learning is developed from their view of the teacher's attitude toward them. Students then develop their second invitation to learning from the associations they make in school, and how well they excel. This would suggest that teachers must demonstrate positive attitudes toward their students in order to render the most effectual invitation to learning. Students must be seen as valuable, capable, and deserving (Purkey 1978).

Educators have the responsibility to provide the best learning environment for all children. To do this, it imperative to establish a positive atmosphere as well as an extensive, well-defined curriculum. In Edmonds' (1979) model of effective schools, he argues that strong administrative leadership, high performance expectations, a safe and orderly environment, an emphasis on basic skills, and a system of monitoring student progress constitute an effective school climate. According to Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp (1991), school climate studies contribute greatly to reforms that explore specific means for improving student academic achievement.

### Summary

It is critical for schools to understand which variables affect student academic success. Further studies must be conducted to understand what affects student achievement. Because the vast majority of students spend most of their school day with a teacher, it only seems natural that teachers would have the strongest effect on students. The literature not only confirms this fact, but studies suggest that when teachers advance a vision, their effect on students becomes even stronger. The research presented results from varied studies that offer explanations regarding two constructs that affect student central life interests.

Evidence suggests that teacher vision and classroom robustness both provide a rationale worth exploring. Some common threads continue to flow throughout the literature regarding the ability of teacher vision, teachers' central life interests, and classroom robustness, and their ability to predict students' central life interests.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to determine the effect of teacher vision, central life interests, and classroom robustness on student central life interest. This chapter includes a discussion of the research design, including site, setting, sample; data collection; instrumentation; and data analyses.

#### Research Design

The sample for this study was generated from a secondary school population, consisting of sixty-nine mathematics and English high school classrooms in one urban school district in the Southwest. Forty-two classrooms were used for this research study. These classrooms were randomly selected from a population of sophomore, junior, and senior level mathematics and English classes in the district. In order to develop a model that is nested in Thelen & Getzels (1960) conception of the school class as a social system and inspired by the Escalante story, the researcher focused this initial inquiry on students and teachers at a grade level that Escalante might have taught. Because these students are in high school, they should have had enough experience with secondary school that the concepts in this study would be meaningful. On the other hand, the researcher understood that this sampling strategy limits the degree to which findings can be generalized to other grades or to other districts.

#### Data Collection

This researcher gained permission from the school district administration prior to conducting the study. Each teacher participating in the study volunteered to do so. Randomly selected alternates replaced those teachers who chose not to participate. Only

those students who provided their teacher with a permission slip signed by a parent were allowed to participate in the study (See Appendix F).

The teacher response and a minimum of no less than 40% of the students in a classroom was the level of participation required for the study. Again, only the classes that were able to meet the level of participation were allowed to participate. If a class did not meet the level of participation required, a randomly selected alternate replace that class.

Each student completed the Classroom Vision Inventory, the Robustness Semantic Differential and the Central Life Interest Questionnaire Student Form. Each classroom teacher completed the Central Life Interests Questionnaire Teacher Form. Demographic data was collected on teachers and students (See Appendixes G & H).

The instruments were administered in the spring of 1998 to each teacher and student assigned to a sample class. Respondents were informed that their identity and the identity of the class, school, and district would be kept confidential in reporting the findings. Teachers in the sample completed their own instruments. A data collector administered the questionnaires to students. The data collector was someone other than the students' teacher. The student and teacher instruments were completed and returned in a sealed envelope addressed to the researcher. All instrument packets were coded with an explanation to data collectors so that the researcher could follow up on envelopes not returned.

#### Instrumentation

Robert Dubin developed the Central Life Interest (CLI) questionnaire in 1956. The CLI measures a person's central life interest by describing specific behaviors and asking

for the setting in which the respondent desires the behavior to be performed. Individuals responding to the questionnaire are given an example of an expressed behavior and three different settings for the performance of the behavior: the work place, outside of work, or no preference of setting (Dubin, 1956). The questionnaire covered the technological aspects of the environment, as well as informal personal relations.

Dubin implemented the initial questionnaire with industrial workers during the mid 50's. The instrument contained forty items designed to investigate the extent to which a worker's job and job setting determined central life interest. In 1972, Dubin and Goldman revised the forty- item questionnaire and reduced it to thirty- two items. The revised CLI questionnaire was given to middle managers and specialists. In 1975, Dubin, Champoux, and Porter altered the 32-item CLI to allow for a more accurate method of scoring. They administered this revised questionnaire to blue collar workers.

Recalling Dubin and Goldman (1972), teachers might be viewed as specialists, because of the training and certification process they must complete before they can perform their duties. Miskel and Gerhardt (1974) called the CLI questionnaire the Personal Life Interest (PLI) questionnaire and used it with teachers. The teachers were asked to indicate the setting in which they desired that a behavior be performed: job, non-job, and no preference. Miskel and Gerhardt (1974) reported the Alpha coefficient as .54. In 1975, Miskel, Glasnapp, and Hartley revised the 32-item questionnaire and developed a shorter, 7-item questionnaire to be administered in schools. Alpha reliability for the short form was .73. The research using educators as the unit of analysis yielded strong evidence that a correlation exists between specific variables in the school and

central life interest (Miskel & Gerhardt, 1974; Glasnapp & Hatley, 1975; Miskel, DeFrain, & Wilcox, 1980).

In this study, the seven-item CLI measure was completed by teachers. A revised version of this form was employed with students. A four point Likert scale was used. The following student samples are from the revised version of the central life interest instrument. Teacher sample items are listed following the student sample items as they appeared on the instrument:

SCLI - Things that interest me do not happen in this class

SCLI - My main concerns are about this class

TCLI - My central life interests lie outside of my job at school

TCLI - My central concerns are job related

Respondents marked one of the following responses; strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Strongly disagree was scored as 1, disagree was scored as 2, agree was scored as 3, and strongly agree was scored as 4. The total instrument scores range from 7 to 28. The higher the score the more likely the individual is to be school oriented. The lower, the score the more likely the individual is to be non-school oriented (See Appendixes D and E).

Greenfield, Licata, and Johnson (1992) developed the School Vision Inventory (SVI) to provide a measure for Blumberg and Greenfield's (1986) concept of school vision. The SVI is comprised of 14-items that measure the degree to which the principal is able to get others in the school and community involved in the implementation of the principal's vision of what the school ought to be.



Teachers use a true or false scale to respond to the items. True has a score of 1, and false yields a score of 0. The total instrument scores range from 0 through 14. The higher the score, the more effective the vision. Sample items are "My principal has a vision of what this school ought to be," "My principal effectively exchanges ideas with teachers to achieve this vision," and "I make personal sacrifices to accomplish this vision."

In developing the SVI instrument, Greenfield, Licata, and Johnson (1989) computed principal and varimax rotation factor analyses using individual teacher and mean school item scores. The factor analyses categorize the items in the questionnaire into three sub-scales. All 14-items loaded at about .40 or better in the teacher and school varimax analyses. Using individual teacher and school mean item scores, the alpha reliability coefficient for the 14-items were .85 and .87 respectively (Greenfield, Licata, Johnson, 1989).

The three sub-scales identified in the SVI instrument are vision internalization, vision exchange, and vision sacrifice. Vision Exchange is made up of five items that measure whether the principal is effective in exchanging ideas about a school vision with all the members in school, with superior administrators, and with the community. The second sub-scale is referred to as Vision Internalization. Vision Internalization is made up of four items that measure the degree to which the principal has been effective in getting others to accept or internalize the school vision. The third sub-scale is the Vision Sacrifice. Vision Sacrifice is made up of five items that measure whether the principal encourages individuals to make sacrifices to accomplish his or her vision. The Vision

Sacrifice sub-scale also measures whether individuals make those sacrifices (Greenfield, Licata, & Johnson, 1989).

For the purposes of this study, a modified version of the School Vision Inventory was administered. The items were reworded to make them relevant to the classroom setting. A four point Likert scale was used instead of the true-false response (Logan, Ellett, & Licata, 1993). This modification of the SVI, called the Classroom Vision Inventory (CVI), is employed in this study (See Appendix A).

The CVI is composed of fifteen items that measure the degree to which the teacher is able to get students and others involved in the implementation of the vision of what the class can and ought to be. Students used a four point Likert scale. Strongly disagree was scored as 1, disagree was scored as 2, agree was scored as 3, and strongly agree was scored as 4. The total instrument scores range from 12 through 48. Sample items of the revised vision inventory are

SVI - My principal has a vision of what this school ought to be.

CVI - My teacher has a vision of what students in our class can become.

Licata and Willower's Environmental Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD) employs Osgood's, Suci, and Tannenbaum's (1957) technique to assess the dramatic content of an organizational structure. To develop the environmental measure they used twenty-five pairs of polar adjectives to discriminate between dramatic and non-dramatic concepts. The original field test consisted of one hundred and thirty six elementary and secondary teachers, two hundred high school students, and one hundred and thirty six elementary students. They each completed the RSD instrument to generate individual item mean scores. T-tests were used to compare the mean scores for the environmental

robustness concepts. A single factor accounting for 68% of the test variance was discovered when the factor analysis of the responses was completed. The test-retest reliability method produced the final ten scale Robustness Semantic Differential form (Licata & Willower, 1978).

Robustness measures have been used in numerous studies of schools and classrooms. The RSD has also been used with students, teachers and principals to assess the beliefs and attitudes of individuals. The measure has correlated positively with classroom level student learning and retention (Ortiz & Ellett 1988) and school level student achievement (Ellett, & Licata, 1982; Morris & Ellett, 1987). Multauf, Willower and Licata (1978), Estep, Willower and Licata (1980) and Licata and Wildes (1980) employed the RSD with the concept "My Class is..." in studies of elementary and secondary school classes. These studies employed the following nine adjective pairs (adjectives in bold type are robust): **interesting-boring, fresh-stale, meaningful-meaningless, powerful-weak, active-passive, important-unimportant, challenging-dull, unusual-usual, action packed-uneventful**. The nine pairs employed a six-step response scale with items scored from 6-54 from left to right with no regard for assumed polarity. The higher the student score, the more robust the student perceived their classroom was (See Appendix D).

#### Analysis of Data

Descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were utilized in the analysis of the data phase of the study. Descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, central tendency measures, and measures of dispersion) involving selected demographic variables were employed to assist the researcher in describing the group of subjects selected for the study. Additionally, the statistical procedures explored the descriptive statistical patterns of the interval level instruments used in the study, i.e., the CVI, CLI, and RSD. Inferential

procedures employed in the study included Pearson's Correlation for analyzing both Propositions One and Two. Specific inferential procedures used in the study included the following analyses:

**Proposition One:**

**There is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision and students' viewing their class as their central life interest.**

**Analysis of Data Procedures:**

**Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were generated between the students' CVI and the students' CLI scores. In addition, specific items of the CVI and CLI were inter-correlated to examine for specific significant relationships between the instruments.**

**Proposition Two:**

**There is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of a robust classroom climate and students' view that classroom activities are central life interests.**

**Analysis of Data Procedures:**

**Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were generated between the RSD and the CLI to analyze proposition three. In addition, specific items were inter-correlated between the RSD and the CLI to determine specific areas of relationships between the two instruments.**

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Chapter IV presents the results and findings of this study in two major sections. The first section presents a descriptive summary of the results generated from the demographic information obtained in the study. The frequency distributions of the demographic variables are reported. Also included in section one are the descriptive results calculated from the instruments in the study, (i.e., the CVI, SCI, and the RSD).

The second section consists of the results of the inferential statistical analyses employed in the study. This section restates the three research propositions and the results of the procedures used. Pertinent data are presented to either reject or fail to reject the propositions at a significance level of  $p < .001$ .

More than 40 classrooms responded to the Classroom Vision Inventory (CVI), the Student Central Life Interest Instrument (SCLI), and the Robustness Semantic Differential Instrument (RSD). Table 2 summarizes the student results on the Classroom Vision Inventory.

The CVI is composed of fifteen items that measure the degree to which the teacher is able to get students and others involved in the implementation of the vision of what the class can and ought to be. This instrument asked each student to respond to questions that indicated whether they willingly made personal sacrifices to achieve their teacher's vision. Students reported how well they thought their teacher communicated the vision to others; and reported how well they thought their teacher worked to encourage others to make sacrifices to realize the vision. The total instrument scores ranged from

15-60. The higher the score the greater the perception students had that their teacher effectively advances a vision of what the class can be.

Table 3 summarizes the student results on the Central Life Interest Inventory. The SCLI is composed of seven items. The items describe a specific behavior and ask respondents to express a preferred setting in which they desire to perform the behavior. A modified version was developed for students. The seven items are scored on a 4-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The total instrument scores ranged from 7 - 28. The greater the score the more likely the student's central life interest will be associated with classroom related activities.

Table 4 summarizes the teacher results on the Central Life Interest Inventory. Approximately forty teachers responded to the Central Life Interest Instrument. The Teacher Central Life Instrument (TCLI) is composed of five items. The items describe specific behaviors and ask respondents to express a preferred setting in which they desire to perform the behavior. The seven items are scored on a 4-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The total instrument scores ranged from 7 - 28. The higher the score the greater the probability that teachers responded as having high central life interest associated to his/her job.

Table 5 summarizes the student results on the Robustness Semantic Differential Instrument. The RSD is a semantic differential type measure of environmental robustness for the concept "my school ". The RSD revealed how students viewed their classroom climate. Students responded to nine adjective pairs. The adjective pairs discriminate between dramatic and non-dramatic concepts in the classroom. The nine

pairs employed a six-step scale with items scored 1 - 6 from left to right with no regard for assumed polarity. The instrument scores range from 10 - 60. The higher the score the more robust the student perceived his/her classroom was.

### Descriptive Results

Table 1

Demographic Variable

<u>Teachers</u>			<u>Students</u>		
Gender	N	%	Gender	N	%
Male	13	7.7	Male	63	24.8
Female	21	53.8	Female	145	37.3
Missing	15	38.5	Missing	224	46.5
Total	39	100.0	Total	432	100.0

Results from the Vision instrument revealed that the average mean score was 3. Students used a four point Likert scale. Strongly disagree was scored as 1, disagree was scored as 2, agree was scored as 3, and strongly agree was scored as 4. The mean score indicates that students agree that their classroom teacher has established a vision. According to Blumberg and Greenfield's (1986) definition of vision effectiveness the instrument can be examined by its three sub-scales. Students reported how well they believed their teacher effectively exchanged ideas with others to achieve the vision.

Students reported whether they perceived their teacher was effective in getting others to accept the vision. And finally students reported whether or not they perceived that others were willing to make sacrifices to accomplish the vision. Sacrifices were not relegated to teachers only but everyone involved in the educational process. Further investigation of the data indicates that there is an overwhelming agreement by the students to the concept of vision.

Table 2

Descriptive Results for the Classroom Vision Instrument

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
My teacher has a vision of what students in this class can become.	3.07	.51
My teacher's vision can be achieved.	3.07	.58
My teacher's vision serves the best interests of all the students in the class.	2.94	.64
I share my teacher's vision.	2.91	.67
I have accepted my teacher's vision of my own free will.	3.00	1.58
My teacher works with the students to achieve the vision.	3.01	.57
My teacher works with other teachers to achieve the vision.	3.04	.06
My teacher works with our parents to make sure we achieve the vision.	2.91	.66



<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
My teacher works with the principal to achieve the vision.	2.91	.62
My teacher works with members of the community (business owners, religious leaders, public officials, and other parents) to achieve the vision.	2.81	.70
My teacher regularly encourages students in my class to make personal sacrifices (do extra homework, complete extra classwork, ask questions if we don't know the answer) to help us achieve the teacher's vision.	3.28	1.59
I make personal sacrifices (spend my spare time doing my homework rather than playing with my friends, do extra classwork ask questions when I don't know the answer) to achieve the vision.	2.86	<u>S.D.</u> .65
Other people in my school make personal sacrifices (help my teacher when asked, and make sure my teacher gets the things needed to teach us) to achieve the vision.	2.88	.64
My teacher regularly makes sacrifices (spends a lot of time before and after school in the classroom, answers questions whenever students ask for help, brings things to help encourage us to work) to achieve the vision.	3.07	.78
Other classes that I am taking are more important to my future than this one.	1.83	.78

---

Students tended to agree to the Central Life Interest concept. Results from the Student Central Life Interest instrument revealed that the average student score for five out of seven items on the central life interest instrument was 3. An average score of 3 suggests

that students perceive themselves as being school oriented. Descriptively, the teachers' responses to the Teacher Central Life Interest instrument seem to parallel the students.

Table 3

Descriptive Results for the Student Central Life Interest Instruments

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Things that interest me do not happen in this class.	2.12	.67
My main interests in life involve many things I do in this class.	2.82	.66
When I am worried, it is usually about things relating to this class.	2.61	1.21
I believe that other things are more important than this class.	2.16	.76
Most of my energy and time is used to help me succeed in this class.	2.61	.69
In talking to friends, I most like to talk about things that happen in this class.	2.74	.84
My main concerns are about this class.	2.67	.68

Responses from the Robustness Semantic Differential instrument showed that students revealed some indecision and were divided with items 1,3, and 7. The average student score for the remaining items 2,4,5, and 6 was 3. Agree was scored as 3. The score suggests that students viewed their classroom as having a robust climate.

Table 4

Descriptive Results for the Robustness Instrument

---

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Interesting – Boring	2.46	1.01
Stale - Fresh	2.99	1.13
Meaningful – Meaningless	2.26	.99
Unimportant – Important	3.22	1.29
Unusual – Usual	2.91	1.27
Weak – Powerful	3.21	1.20
Active – Passive	2.36	1.03
Challenging – Dull	2.54	1.08
Uneventful – Action-Packed	2.73	1.04

---

## Results

Results of the inferential statistical analyses employed in the study are presented in Tables 5 and 6 relative to each of the three propositions posited by the study. For greater readability a coding key has been provided stating each item found on the instrument (See Appendix K). Items from the central life interest instrument and the robustness semantic differential were paired to determine the correlation coefficient. Each table uses an abbreviated variable to represent the statement on the survey that it corresponds with. The items that correlated positively are presented in the two tables.

### Proposition One:

There is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of their teachers' effectiveness in advancing a vision and students' viewing their class as their central life interest.

Results of the Pearson's Correlation procedure produced a correlation coefficient of  $r=.35$  ( $p<.001$ ) which indicates a significant positive correlation between the SVI and the SCI. This result supports Proposition One. Only significant inter-correlations are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

### Significant Results of Analysis for Proposition One Pearson Correlation: Vision With Central Life Interest

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
V2 with C1	-.09	.047
V3 with C7	.11	.023
V4 with C1	-.13	.006

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
V4 with C2	.14	.004
V4 with C4	-.10	.042
V4 with C5	.10	.033
V4 with C6	.12	.008
V4 with C7	.13	.004
V6 with C2	.11	.015
V7 with C1	-.09	.047
V7 with C2	.10	.032
V8 with C1	-.14	.004
V8 with C2	.17	.000
V8 with C4	-.13	.007
V8 with C6	.14	.002
V8 with C7	.13	.005
V9 with C1	-.11	.021
V9 with C2	.16	.023
V10 with C2	.16	.001
V10 with C1	-.13	.004

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
V10 with C5	.11	.018
V10 with C6	.16	.001
V10 with C7	.14	.004
V12 with C2	.10	.038
V12 with C5	.11	.016
V12 with C6	.14	.004
V12 with C7	.11	.025
V13 with C4	.10	.032
V13 with C6	.14	.003
V14 with C1	-.11	.016
V14 with C2	.16	.001
V14 with C6	.21	.000
V14 with C7	.15	.001
V15 with C1	.30	.000
V15 with C2	-.23	.000
V15 with C3	-.15	.002
V15 with C4	.26	.000
V15 with C6	-.21	.000

---

Proposition Two:

There is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of a robust classroom climate and students' view that classroom activities are central life interests.

Results of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients generated for Proposition Three revealed  $r=.26$  ( $p<.001$ ) which indicates a positive significant relationship between Robustness Semantic Differential and the Student Central Life Interests. Proposition Three is accepted. Only items with significant inter-correlations are reported in Table 7.

Table 6

Significant Results of Analyses for Proposition Three Pearson Correlation Coefficients:  
Robustness with Central Life Interest

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
R1 withC3	-.11	.045
R1 withC4	.12	.026
R2 withC1	-.18	.001
R2 withC2	.16	.002
R2 withC6	.22	.000
R2 withC7	.23	.000
R3 withC5	-.11	.026
R3 withC6	.11	.026
R4 withC7	.11	.036

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
R5 withC6	.14	.006
R5 withC7	.10	.048
R6 withC1	-.12	.015
R6 withC2	.12	.013
R6 withC6	.17	.000
R6 withC7	.15	.002
R7 withC6	.10	.042
R8 withC2	-.11	.040
R9 withC1	.14	.006
R9 withC3	.16	.003
R9 withC4	.13	.007
R9 withC6	.22	.000
R9 withC7	-.17	.001

---



## Summary

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of teacher vision, central life interest, and classroom robustness on student central life interest. Several potentially important relationships were found. Both propositions were supported. The independent variables are all predictors of student central life interest. Teacher vision was the strongest predictor in the study, which supports earlier findings of Licata, Greenfield, and Tedlie (1990). The findings on vision confirmed what has been established about principal as leaders pursuing a vision.

Central life interest is a good measure of attitude. The findings support those of Miskel and Gerhardt (1974). Based on the data analysis teachers who are highly interested in their jobs are more likely to positively influence student central life interests. Findings regarding classroom robustness support findings by Licata and Wildes (1980). Also consistent with the theoretical groundwork advanced, students who viewed their classroom as robust tended to exhibit higher central life interest for school activities.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes an overview of the study, a summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions and implications from the results of the study, and recommendations for theory, practice, and further research.

#### Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide classroom level research and findings about the effect of teacher vision, teacher central life interests, and classroom robustness on students central life interests. Further intentions of this research were to (1) determine if a positive relationship exists between students' perceptions of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision and students' views of their central life interest; and (2) determine if a positive relationship exists between students' perception of a robust classroom climate and students' views that classroom activities are central life interests.

Preparation for the study included a selective review of the literature relating to vision, classroom robustness, and central life interests. Review of the literature included discussion of social systems, specifically Thelen and Getzels' Social System Theory. Discussion of these topics and rationale for selection of the School Vision Inventory, Robustness Semantic Differential, and Central Life Interest Instruments for measuring perceived vision, classroom robustness, and central life interest were provided in Chapters I, II, and III.

Several high school classrooms in an urban school district in Tulsa, Oklahoma were surveyed as the pilot study. Further details regarding the instrumentation and the pilot study may be found in Chapter III.

This study utilized the following surveys; Classroom Vision Inventory, Robustness Semantic Differential, Student Central Life Interests, and Teacher Central Life Interests. These instruments were used to determine if students' perception of teacher vision, teachers' central life interest, and classroom robustness were predictors of students' central life interest. The superintendent was sent a letter that explained the study and asked permission to solicit the cooperation of the local high school principals. Several high school principals agreed to participate; however, they indicated that the final decision would be left up to the teachers and students.

Forty-two mathematics and English high school classrooms participated. In the classes used to report information for this study, at least 40% of the students in the classroom responded to the survey instruments. Students choosing to participate in the study provided parental consent forms. The teachers and students who decided to participate did so voluntarily. Measures were taken ensure anonymity. Several of the respondents, both students and teachers chose not to fill out the demographic information sheet. Based on the demographic information returned, teacher and student samples were primarily female.

The Classroom Vision Instrument was used to determine whether students perceived their teacher as having and advancing a vision. Students indicated whether or not they thought their classroom was robust by completing the Robustness Semantic Differential instrument. Students and teachers both completed the Central Life Interests instruments.

Final analysis of data gathered from the respondents was provided in detail in Chapter IV in narrative and tabular form presenting frequency distributions and percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

The three research propositions examined were:

1. Is there a positive relationship between students' perceptions of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision and students' views of class as their central life interests?
2. Is there a positive relationship between students' perception of a robust classroom climate and students' views that classroom activities are central life interests?

### Summary of Findings

#### **Proposition #1**

**Is there a positive relationship between students' perception of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision, and students' views of class as their central life interests?**

#### **Finding**

**The first proposition asserts that students are able to distinguish and report if they believe their teacher advances a vision. This study reveals there is a positive relationship between students' perception of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision, and students' views of class as their central life interests by the students in this sample. The researcher fails to reject proposition one.**

#### **Proposition #2**

**Is there a positive relationship between students' perception of a robust classroom climate and students' views that classroom activities are central life interests?**

#### **Finding**

**The second proposition asserts students' perception of robust classroom climate, and students' views of classroom activities as central life interests are independent variables. The researcher fails to reject proposition two.**

## Discussion

Findings from this study were consistent with Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) notions of vision. Leaders with a vision are able to motivate others to the point that they work to achieve the vision and regard it as their own. In this study the leader is the classroom teacher; in Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), the leader was the principal. Students reported whether or not their teacher advanced a vision. There was a positive relationship between student's perception of their teacher's effectiveness in advancing a vision and student view of their central life interest.

Additionally, the majority of the students who perceived their teachers as advancing a vision also perceived the class as their central life interest. According to Blumberg and Greenfield, when a vision is effectively advanced, others will make personal sacrifices toward fulfilling the vision. Several of the students responding to the survey indicated that class was their central life interest which suggests that they spend their leisure time doing school related activities. Students also perceived their teacher as willing to make sacrifices to advance the vision.

The central life interest instrument was originally developed for use with industrial workers. Management wanted to affect productivity and they knew individuals that had strong ties to the work place were more likely to perform at higher levels. This goal is not too dissimilar from education. Schools seek to increase levels of academic achievement among its clients, the students. Similar to industrial workers, individuals in the educational social system that have strong ties to school are more likely to work more effectively in achieving the goal.

Further findings support the work developed by Willower and Licata (1975) that characterized effective classroom climate as robust. Robust classrooms are perceived as

being dramatic, challenging, and interesting. The students measured environmental robustness by responding to the Robustness Semantic Differential instrument. Students completing the survey indicate that there is a positive relationship between students' perception of a robust classroom climate and students' views that the classroom activities are central life interests.

The Escalante story provides an excellent vignette for viewing the constructs vision, classroom robustness and central life interest, however some limitations should be noted. While Escalante painted a vivid picture of what student success should look like, it can be argued that his view only provides one measure of success. He presented his students with the financial benefits of achieving an education. Escalante narrowly depicts the advantages of an education. There are other measures that can determine success that do not involve money or economic status. Measures that need to be considered when advancing a vision to students.

Students may not aspire to become a banker, lawyer, or a doctor and they should not be led to believe that these jobs are the only means of achieving success. Reservations are encouraged in linking a good education to certain occupations. Students need to understand that education opens doors of opportunity. Opportunities to make choices and remove invisible ceilings that may exist for individuals.

As was revealed in this study, viewing teachers as leaders postulates a new paradigm. Teacher preparation programs must fully explore new techniques and strategies for preparing teachers. Traditionally teachers are seen as the facilitators of knowledge. This practice is changing due to growing demands society has placed on educators. Teachers are being asked to play many new and different roles. Preparation programs must be

prepared to go beyond training teachers to be facilitators. Teachers must view education as an avocation not a vocation.

Teachers must consider the impact and influence they have on student's lives. No longer can the role of leader be reserved for principals and other central level administrators. Further studies need to be conducted on viewing the classroom teacher as leader. After all, next to their peers, the classroom teacher has more contact with students than any other figure in the school. Blumberg and Greenfield's (1986) vision model and Willower and Licata's (1975) Environmental Robustness model are both good predictors of higher student central life interest.

### Conclusions and Implications

The overall results tend to support existing theories regarding the relationships among the independent variables and student central life interest. For example, teachers who effectively advance a vision and motivate students to work toward its accomplishment will more often have students that exhibit high central life interest for school. Less support exists, however, for the predictive value of environmental robustness. Students showed some indecision on three of the nine statements on this instrument. The average student score for the remaining items on the instrument was 3. The score indicated that students agreed that their class had a robust climate. While most students perceived their classroom as robust, some of the scores could have easily fallen below the acceptable scoring needed.

It is also noteworthy to mention the comparison of teachers' and students' central life interest scores. The study revealed that teachers had higher central life interest toward their job as compared to students' central life interest toward their class activities. There are several reasonable and speculative variables that could account for this discrepancy.

Teachers may exhibit higher central life interest toward their job because of monetary incentives and job benefits. Teachers are also further along in the maturation process than students and should conceivably have a better understanding about commitment and its significance. Students, on the other hand, are generally perceived as being less mature and are unable to set goals. Their time and energy seemed to be consumed by the commercial era in which we live. However, for the predictive value of this study it should be noted that both students and teachers scored highest on the statement about school and class being a main interest.

Despite this discrepancy in the central life interests results, the fact remains that students who perceived their teacher as effectively advancing a vision viewed that class as their central life interest. A classroom with well-defined goals nurtures high expectancy for student academic behavior, thus influencing student learning and student acceptance of responsibility.

There are implications for teachers viewed as leaders. Leaders are traditionally endowed with certain privileges and power in order to accomplish the task required. If teachers possessed such an empowerment the benefits for students would be significant. Teachers might be given true autonomy as well as the authority and resources to facilitate the learning process. Inherent in the current educational system, are obstacles that impede teachers from obtaining even the most simple, necessity. It is this researcher's feeling that giving teachers freer access to instructional resources and empowerment to be decision makers in their own classrooms will only generate greater job commitments. This could lead to more teachers employing a vision within their classroom, increased central life interests in school, and higher levels of job performance. This study is significant because it provides base line data regarding teachers viewed as leaders. Additionally, the study



investigated variables that determine how students spend their leisure time. Implementing practices that positively influence student behavior has been a challenge for educators for many years. Findings in this study revealed that visioning might provide a framework for viewing the phenomenon that takes place in the classroom that effect student behavior. Individuals contemplating a career in education need to be mindful of the expectations and leadership requirements that are needed to be effective. With the ever-increasing demands that are placed on teachers, leadership training needs to become an integral part of teacher preparation programs.

#### Recommendation for Theory

The Classroom Vision Inventory and the Robustness Semantic Differential used as predictors of student central life interest, is statistically significant, however the some of the variance remains unknown. Therefore, the true predictive value of the model is speculative. Further studies might result in more support for existing theories on teacher vision, classroom robustness, and central life interest.

The modified version of both the School Vision Inventory and Central Life Interest Survey used for measuring teacher vision and student central life interest warrants additional exploration. Replicated studies using the revised instruments can provide greater support for their predictive values.

Appraisal of teacher performance by colleagues and parents, as well as self-evaluation on the existing vision measure, could improve the predictive significance of the independent variables. The correlation coefficients for the variables in the study present numerous possible research questions. It would be appropriate to investigate further the correlation between the variables and other contributing factors that increase predictability.

## Recommendations for Practice

Two primary recommendations related to this study are directed to the universities and colleges of higher education. The first is continuation of research in the area of teacher vision and its relationship to classroom effectiveness and student learning. As the literature reviewed by this researcher has well documented, the need for an understanding the importance of teachers advancing a vision and motivating students to make sacrifices to fulfill the vision is worthy of attention in teacher and administrator preparation.

The second recommendation is that courses offered for future teachers should emphasize recognizing personal leadership style and the importance of developing leadership skills that have been shown through literature to be effective in the classroom. Additionally, in preparing future teachers, courses should devote much attention to the importance of developing a robust classroom climate which is conducive to student overall development and learning.

It is this researcher's feeling that new teachers do not consider the significance of their position. Similar to principal as leader in the school, the teacher is the leader in the classroom. It is crucial to the student learning process for teachers to be viewed as leaders and endowed with the theoretical background to help develop an environment conducive to good professional practices as well as student learning. Teachers with a vision that can tie student needs and aspirations to classroom goals may also be able to encourage students to sacrifice their time and energy. The importance of the teacher vision should be emphasized to students seeking teacher certification.

The first recommendation offered for building principals is that they be fully aware of the importance of recruiting and retaining teachers that espouse some a vision about the

educational process. As the literature asserts, leaders with a vision are often able to motivate others to the point that they too work to achieve the vision (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1986).

It is the feeling of this researcher that the principal can gain insight into the teaching beliefs of a prospective teacher by discussing, during the selection process, what that teacher looks for in a principal's leadership behavior. Additionally the notion of teachers viewed as leaders could relieve principals from their roles as managers. As building managers, most principals spend their time and energy on regulatory procedures and practices. Empowering teachers as leaders will allow principals an opportunity to shift their attention from the customary duties that occupy so much time to other pursuits that enhance curriculum and instruction. Such pursuits would benefit the entire school organization. Teachers and principals should share complementary roles not adversarial roles as is case in several schools.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

A similar study needs to be conducted with a few possible variations. A larger sample size should be utilized in order to add greater validity to the statistical procedures employed. Additionally, a larger sample size would add greater validity to the entire study and its ability to generalize the results to another population. In a greater attempt to explain some of the variance a qualitative study should be considered.

A qualitative study could provide more information about which aspects of the classroom impact student's leisure time. It might also give the researcher specific demographic data. Many of the participants did not share demographic data in this study. The demographic information would help to make connections to teacher experience more relevant. A qualitative study would also make it easier to assess whether or not students

had a good understanding of the constructs, which would make the researcher's ability to generalize the findings even stronger.

Additional studies may also involve a different age group for comparison purposes. Elementary age students might reveal other information that could prove pertinent to the development of the concept of teacher vision. It is interesting to note that in the researchers pilot study elementary age students were utilized. Even though thorough instructions and clear definitions had to be provided by the test administrator, for the constructs, students still had a sense of which teachers advance a vision. More interesting was the fact that students were able to communicate what teachers did that determined whether or not they would complete both class work and homework.

Further recommendations would be to give the survey at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of the school year. The results might reveal further information relative to which student perceptions have taken place in the classroom during the school year. This information could prove particularly useful in determining student perceptions of teacher vision. Results at the beginning of the year may differ from results reported at the end of the year. The discrepancy in the results might suggest that sufficient time is needed to effectively communicate and advance a vision. The sub-scales of the vision instrument also meritorious of further investigation. Examining the sub-scales would provide more specific information about the vision instrument and which items constitute the greatest variance.

Caution is advised when administering the revised version of the central life interest instrument. Although it is a modification of the original central life interest instrument, it investigates a different member of the school social system. Although in both scenarios the

setting is the same, students are asked questions about how they view the classroom while teachers are asked questions about how they view their job.

Identification of demographic differences would determine what significance if any can be attributed to these variables. Of particular interest for future studies would be to determine how gender match or years of teaching experience might be perceived by students, serves as predictors of which teachers effectively advance a vision. Perhaps qualitative investigations would be more successful in determining what students perceive as vision.

Studies comparing classrooms perceived as robust and non-robust is worthy of further investigations. More research is required to determine which factors are relevant for creating a classroom climate that is conducive to the learning process. Schools have an obligation to provide an enriched learning environment conducive to developmental growth. Schools that provide students with a feeling of significance, a sense of competence to social growth, and a belief that they have some control over important aspects of their environment will enable students to feel more comfortable, feel greater self-worth, and consequently experience greater academic success (Haplin & Croft, 1962).

Generally, studies exploring school effectiveness examine achievement scores. Widespread studies are now beginning to explore other measures as predictors of school effectiveness. As educators seek to improve curriculum and instruction, they must be mindful of the fact that student successes are not relegated to the classroom. Clearly, knowing which educational variables influence how students spend their time outside the classroom is vital to educational practitioners. Central life interests closely tied to schools postulates an index worth exploring in order to achieve greater levels of school effectiveness.

Continued studies on school improvements are imperative. Exploring concepts such as teacher vision, environmental robustness, and central life interests may prove to be a valuable endeavor and subsequent step to such theory development. Perhaps some may view the findings on teacher vision, classroom robustness, and central life interest a useful starting point for new inquiry. The least one might expect from such inquiry is a better understanding of what elements of the school social system effect how students spend their leisure time. At best one might expect to find new information to make schools more effective places for students.

## References

Anderson, G. (1965). The relationship of organizational climates and subgroups in elementary schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, Tucson.

Appleberry, J. (1969). The relationship between organizational climate and pupil control ideology of elementary schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater.

Blumberg, A. & Greenfield, W. (1986). The effective principal (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brophy, J. & Good, T. (1986). The behavior and student achievement. Wittrock, M. (Eds.), In handbook of Research on Teaching (pp. 328-375). New York: Macmillan.

Dubin, R. (1956). Industrial workers worlds: A study of the central life interests of industrial workers. Social Problems, 3, 131-142.

Dubin, R. (1968). Human relations in Administration. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Dubin, R. & Champoux, J. (1977). Central life interests and job satisfaction. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 18, 366-377.

Dubin, R. & Champoux, J. (1975). Worker's central life interests and personality characteristics. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 6, 165-174.

Dubin, R., Champoux, J., & Porter, L. (1975). Central life interest and organizational commitment of blue-collar and clerical workers. Administration Science Quarterly, 20 (3) 411-421.

- Dubin, R. & Goldman, D. (1972). Central life interests of American middle managers and specialists. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2, 133-141.
- Edmonds, R. (1979) Effective schools for the urban poor. Educational Leadership, 37, 15-24.
- Ellett, C. & Licata, J. (1982). The perceptions of organizational roles, robustness and work environment: A regression analysis. Journal of Educational Administration. 20 (1), 33-44.
- Estep, L., Willower D., & Licata, J. (1980). Teacher pupil control ideology and behavior as predictors of classroom robustness. The High School Journal, 63, 155-159.
- Feldvebel, A. (1964). The relationship between socio-economic status of the school's patrons, organizational climate in the school and pupil achievement level. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, Illinois.
- Gentry, H. & James, B. (1965). A comparison of the organizational climates of Negro and white elementary schools. The Journal of Psychology, 60, 171-179.
- Greenfield, W., Licata, J., & Johnson, B. (1992). Toward measurement of school vision. Journal of Education of Administration, 30 (2 ), 93-99.
- Haplin, A. & Croft, D. (1962). The organizational climate of schools (Report No. SAE 543-8639). United States Department of Health and Education, Cooperative Research Branch, USOE Research Project (ERIC Document Service No. ED 002897)
- Hinson, J. (1965). An investigation of the organizational climate of the elementary schools in a large urban school system. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens.



Hoy, W. & Miskel, C. (1987). Educational administration: Theory, research and practice (3rd ed.). New York: Random House.

Hoy, W., Tarter, C., & Bliss, J. (1990). Organizational climate, school health, and effectiveness: A comparative analysis. Educational Administrative Quarterly, 26, 260-79.

Hoy, W., Tarter, C., & Kottkamp, R. (1991). Open school/healthy school: Measuring organizational climate. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Kim, J. & Kohout, F. (1975). Multiple regression analysis: Subprogram regression. In N. Nie, C. Hull, J. Jenkins, K. Steinbrenner, and D. Bent (Eds.). SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Lambert, M. (1988, June 13). Higher math thrives in an L.A. barrio. Associated Press Inc. Baton Rouge Morning Advocate, 1-2B.

Licata, J., Greenfield, W., & Tedlie, C. (1990). Principal vision, teacher sense of autonomy, and environmental robustness. Journal of Education Research, 84 (2), 93 - 99.

Licata, J. & Johnson, B. (1989). Toward a synthesis of inquiry on environmental robustness. Planning & Changing, 20 ( 4), 215-230.

Licata, J. & Wildes, J. (1980). Environmental robustness and classroom structure: Some field observations. The High School Journal, 63, 146-154.

Licata, J. & Willower, D. (1978). Toward an operational definition for environmental robustness. Journal of Education Research, 71, 218-222.

Logan, C., Ellett, C., & Licata, J. (1993). Structural coupling, robustness and effectiveness of schools. Journal of Education Administration, 31 (4), 19-32.

Lortie, D. (1975). School teacher: A sociology study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maurer, J. (1968). Work as a "central life interest" of industrial supervisors. Academy of Management Journal. 11 (3), 329-339.

McLeod, R. (1969). Relationship of staff size and selected staff variables to the organizational climate of elementary schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Meyer, J. & Cohen, E. (1978). The structure of educational organizations. In W. Meyer (Ed) Environments and organizations, 78-109. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Millar, D. (1965). Organizational climate and achievement. The SCA Bulletin, 4 (4), 36-39.

Miskel, C., DeFrain, J., & Wilcox, K. (1980). A test of expectancy work motivation theory in educational organizations. Educational Administration Quarterly, 16 (1), 70-92.

Miskel, C. & Gerhardt, E. (1974). Perceived bureaucracy, teacher conflict, central life interests, voluntarism, and job satisfaction. Journal of Educational Administration. 10, 84-97.

Miskel, C., Glasnapp, D., & Hartley R. (1975). A test of the inequity theory for jobs satisfaction using educator's attitudes toward work motivation and work incentives. Educational Administration Quarterly, 11, 38-54.

Miskel, C., Glasnapp, D., & Hartley, R. (1972). Public school teachers work motivation, organizational incentives, job satisfaction, and primary life interests: Final report. Washington DC: Office of Education Department of Health, Education & Welfare.

Morris, B. & Ellett, C. (1987). School environmental robustness, holding power and achievement: Implications for effective middle schools. In Council of Middle School Research: Selected Studies.

Multhauf, A., Willower, D., & Licata, J. (1978). Teacher pupil-control ideology, behavior and classroom environmental robustness. Elementary School Journal, 79 (1), 41-46.

Musca, T. (Producer), & Menedez, R (Director). (!988). Stand and Deliver [Video]. (Warner Home Video, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522)

Northby, A. (1958). Sex differences in high school scholarship. School and Society, 86, 63-64.

Ortiz, E. & Ellett, C. (1988). Learning, retention and perceived robustness in computer-assisted learning environment. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Osgood, C., Suci, G., & Tannenbaum, P. (1957). The measurement of meaning. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Parsons, T. (1958). Some ingredients of a general theory of formal organization. In A Haplin (Ed), Administrative Theory in Education, 40-72. New York: Macmillan.

Parsons, T. (1959). The school class as a social system: Some of its functions in society. Harvard Educational Review, 29 (4), 297-318.

Parsons, T. & Black, M. (Eds.). (1961). The social theories of Talcott Parsons. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Purkey, W. (1978). Inviting school success: A self-concept approach to teaching and learning. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.

Richens, G. (1967). Urban and suburban high schools: A comparative study of organizational climate. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Michigan, East Lansing.

Ruh, R., White, J., & Wood, R. (1975). Job involvement, values, personal background, participation in decision making, and job attitudes. Academy of Management Journal. 18 (2) 300-312.

Thelen, J. & Getzels, H. (1960). The classroom group as a unique social system, In The dynamics of instructional groups. The Fifty-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, 52-83. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smedley, S. & Willower, D. (1981). Principal's pupil control behavior and school robustness. Educational Administration Quarterly, 17 (4), 40-56

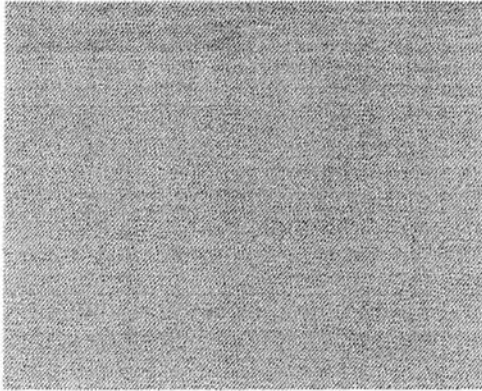
Sommerville, J. (1969). An investigation of the relationship between the school organizational climate and self-concept, level of aspiration, and opinion of students about school. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Tanner, H. (1966). A study of the relationship between the organizational climate of schools and the social behavior of selected school administrators. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Willower, D. & Licata, J. (1975). Environmental robustness and school structure. Planning and Changing, 6(2), 120-127.

## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
CLASSROOM VISION INVENTORY



Read each statement carefully. Think about how well the statement describes your class. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your class by shading in the appropriate response circle.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

1. My teacher has a vision of what students in the class can become. →
2. My teacher's vision can be achieved. →
3. My teacher's vision serves the best interests of all the students in the class. →
4. I share my teacher's vision. →
5. I have accepted my teacher's vision of my own free will. →
5. My teacher works with the students to achieve the vision. →
7. My teacher works with other teachers to achieve the vision. →
8. My teacher works with our parents to make sure we achieve the vision. →
9. My teacher works with the principal to achieve the vision. →
10. My teacher works with members of the community (business owners, religious leaders, public officials, and other parents) to achieve the vision. →
11. My teacher regularly encourages students in my class to make personal sacrifices (do extra homework, complete extra class work, ask questions if we don't know the answer) to help us achieve the teacher's vision. →
12. I make personal sacrifices (spend my spare time doing my homework rather than playing with my friends, do extra class work, ask questions when I don't know the answer) to achieve the vision. →
13. Other people in my school make personal sacrifices (help my teacher when asked, make sure my teacher gets the things needed to teach us) to achieve the vision. →
14. My teacher regularly makes sacrifices (spends a lot of time before and after school in the classroom, answers questions whenever students ask for help, brings things to help encourage us to work) to achieve the vision. →
15. Other classes that I am taking are more important to my future than this one. →



APPENDIX B  
CHARACTERISTICS OF ROBUST CLASSROOMS

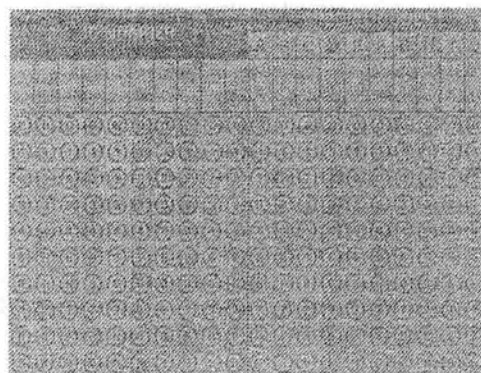
ENVIRONMENTAL ROBUSTNESS  
TABLE  
CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH AND LOW ROBUSTNESS CLASSES

High Robustness Classrooms	Low Robustness Classroom
Spontaneous student involvement in task; task activity would probably continue in the absence of the teacher.	Student and teacher view much of task as a chore. It is doubtful that students would continue their work in the absence of the teacher.
The teacher seems to be moving dynamic focal point for the class.	The teacher establishes a stationary position or focal point in front of the class.
The classroom appears to be a place for meeting with friends and where peer relationships among students are an integral part of classroom interaction as relationships with the teacher.	The teacher seems to dominate interaction in the class and there is very little opportunity for interaction among students.
Student leadership seems to emerge naturally from the student group resulting in reduced status differentiation between students and teacher.	Teacher dominance tends to stifle students leadership and reinforce status differentiation between student and teacher. Social distance between teacher and student is strictly enforced.
The class atmosphere appears "shoplike," informal with students holding a degree of autonomy over their work space. The teacher consults rather than supervises.	The class atmosphere is formal and autocratic stressing close supervision of student work by the teacher.
The teacher tends to "halo" expectations and attitudes about students and their work. Students are viewed as trustworthy and predominantly self-motivated.	The teacher tends to hold negative expectations and attitudes about students and their work. Teacher doubts student ability to be self-motivated.
Students see the class as "fun" and look forward to attending it.	Students see the class as a "dull, boring routine."
Teachers tends to be flexible in administering classroom rules and regulations.	Teachers tend to be more custodial, less humanistic, in pupil control ideology and behavior.
The teacher is relaxed and confident and is likely to respond openly and in depth to student questions and even pursue the students line of thought.	The teacher rigidly enforces rules and exceptions are rare or non-existent.
The teacher's dress is varied, casual, sometimes colorful and appears to be a nonverbal clue of openness and the valuing of individuality.	The teacher seems to be on guard at all times, defending his domain, responding briefly or tersely to student questions.
Students appear to move around freely either through "brinkmanship" patterns or through flexible classroom structure.	The teacher's dress is often uniform-like, unvaried and colorless. It tends to suggest standardization and impersonal relationships with students.
Teacher displays a sense of humor, laughing, joking and badgering students; often calling students by nicknames.	Student movement is restricted. Brinkmanship, long pencil-sharpening trips, yawning openly, feigned confusion over assignments, allows student movement.
The students seem to express empathy, not only for one another but for classroom activity. This sometimes results in students "acting out."	Teacher remains expressionless, uses little humor and ignores the informal system of students.
Student misbehavior is a low risk activity.	Emotional inhibition seems to be encouraged in the classroom. Student empathy with each other and classroom activity is at a minimum. Student misbehavior is a high risk activity.

(Willower and Licata, 1990)

APPENDIX C  
ROBUSTNESS SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL

Read each statement carefully. Think about how well the statement describes you. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes you by shading in the appropriate response circle.



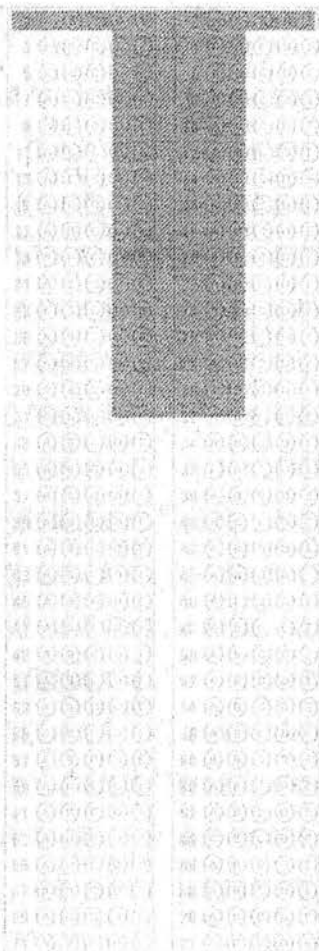
Very                  Quite                  Slightly

**USE #2 PENCIL  
ONLY**

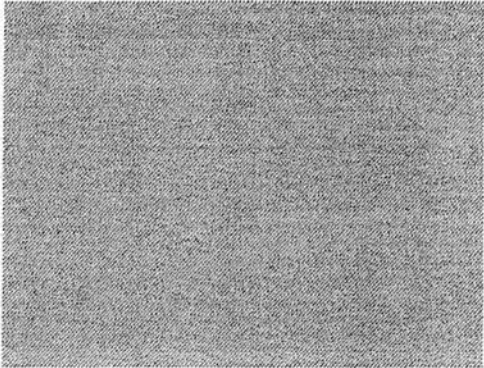
Slightly                  Quite                  Very

GRADE 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th

		My class is:						
	A	B	C	D	E			
Interesting	A	B	C	D	E	Boring		
Stale	A	B	C	D	E	Fresh		
Meaningful	A	B	C	D	E	Meaningless		
Unimportant	A	B	C	D	E	Important		
Unusual	A	B	C	D	E	Usual		
Weak	A	B	C	D	E	Powerful		
Active	A	B	C	D	E	Passive		
Challenging	A	B	C	D	E	Dull		
Uneventful	A	B	C	D	E	Action-packed		



APPENDIX D  
CENTRAL LIFE INTEREST  
Student Form



Read each statement carefully. Think about how well the statement describes you. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes you by shading in the appropriate response circle.

Strongly Agree

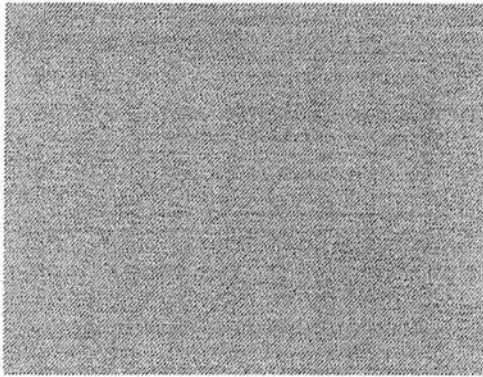
Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- 1. Things that interest me do not happen in this class. →
- 2. My main interests in life involve many of the things I do in this class. →
- 3. When I am worried, it is usually about things relating to this class. →
- 4. I believe that other things are more important than this class. →
- 5. Most of my energy and time is used to help me succeed in this class. →
- 5. In talking to friends, I most like to talk about things that happen in this class. →
- 7. My main concerns are about this class. →

APPENDIX E  
CENTRAL LIFE INTEREST  
Teacher Form



Read each statement carefully. Think about how well the statement describes you. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes you by shading in the appropriate response circle.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

- 1. My central life interests lie outside of my job at school. →
- 2. My main interests in life are closely related to my job in the school. →
- 3. When I am worried, it is usually about things related to my job. →
- 4. I believe that other things are more important than my job at school. →
- 5. Most of my energy is directed toward my job. →
- 5. In talking to friends, I most like to talk about events related to my job. →
- 7. My central concerns are job related. →





APPENDIX F  
CONSENT FORM

April 1, 1998

Dear Parents:

My name is Leicha Shaver, I am a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I am conducting a study to investigate student central life interest. This study will attempt to explore the connection between teacher vision, central life interests, and classroom robustness and how they predict student central life interest. I am interested in the extent to which teachers influence the way students choose to spend their free time. I want to know if students are given a chose will they choose to spend their personal time completing school related activities or non school related activities.

Students who volunteer to participate in this study will be asked to fill out three short survey forms. It will take approximately 10 minutes for the students to complete the surveys. A data collector will be appointed by your child's principal and will administer the surveys to each student. The data collector will not be your child's teacher. All participants in this study are voluntary and will not be identified by name or number. All participants will be assured of complete confidentiality of all responses. No student will be identified in any way, results will be report in statistical form only. If students choose not to participate in the study their decision will not result in a penalty.

If you agree to have your child participate in the study please sign below in the space provided for parent signature and have your child sign in the space provided for student signature and return the permission form to school. Students will be instructed to return the permission slip to the data collector. Parents and students are free to withdraw their consent any time during the study by following the procedure outlined in the guidelines below. Refusal to participate will not result in any type of penalty to any student. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely

Leicha Shaver, Principal Investigator

---

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent for my child to participate in this study at any time after notifying the principal investigator. If I wish to withdraw or have any questions regarding the study I may contact Leicha Shaver at (918)595-2611. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

---

Parent's Signature

Date

---

Student's Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

## Teacher Information Sheet

### Instructions:

Please complete this form by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in blanks where indicated.

#### 1. Gender

Male                       Female

#### 2. Subject Assignment

Math                       English

#### 3. Education

- Baccalaureate Degree
- Graduate Work (no advanced degree)
- Master's Degree (or equivalent)
- Graduate work beyond Master's (no advanced degree)
- Sixth Year Degree
- Graduate work beyond Sixth Year Degree (no advanced degree)
- Doctorate

#### 4. What is your average class size

Less than 15;     16-20;     21-25;     26-30;     30 +

5. Number years teaching experience in this district (including this year): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Total number years teaching experience (including this year): \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many years have you taught under the present principal (including this year): \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX H  
STUDENTDEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Student Information Sheet

Complete this form by checking or filling in the appropriate blanks.

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASSIFICATION: \_\_\_\_\_ Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior

RACE Check One

Black/Non-Hispanic B ( )

Alaskan/American Indian \*I ( )

Hispanic H ( )

Asian/Pacific Is. A ( )

White/Non-Hispanic W ( )

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

1. Sports

\_\_\_\_\_ Football \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball \_\_\_\_\_ Baseball \_\_\_\_\_ Track \_\_\_\_\_ Wrestling

Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Fine Arts

\_\_\_\_\_ Band \_\_\_\_\_ Chorus \_\_\_\_\_ Glee Club \_\_\_\_\_ Debate \_\_\_\_\_ Drama (Plays)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Clubs

\_\_\_\_\_ DECA \_\_\_\_\_ Careers & Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_ Science Club \_\_\_\_\_ Pep Club

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Council

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ None of the above

EDUCATION

Check the highest education of your parents: (Indicate mom or dad on the line.)

( ) High School \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Junior College \_\_\_\_\_

( ) GED \_\_\_\_\_

( ) College \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX I  
LETTERS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AND  
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

February 28, 1997

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Leicha Shaver, I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. I am preparing to study a certain aspect of student behavior. I would like permission to randomly select sophomore, junior, and senior level math and English students from every high school in the Tulsa Public School District. Approximately 40 eleventh grade math and English classrooms will be needed for this study.

This study is an attempt to explore the connection between teacher vision, central life interests, and classroom robustness and how they predict student central life interest. While the construct of vision has been investigated with some school principals, little is known about teacher vision in classrooms.

Each teacher will be asked to fill out one short survey form, their students will be asked to fill out three short survey forms. Each teacher participating in the study will be asked to do so voluntarily. Students will be asked to participate after providing their teacher with a permission slip signed by their parent. Only students that have parental consent will be able to participate in the study.

Site Administrators at each school will be asked to participate in this study. After their consent has been obtained a packet with copies of the Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD), Central Life Interest (CLI), School Vision Inventory (SVI) will be given to each site administrator. Each principal will be asked to appoint a data collector not associated with the principal's office. The data collector will be responsible for distributing the instruments to all teachers that voluntarily participate in the school. The teacher will return the completed instruments to the researcher in single, postage paid, self addressed envelope provided by the researcher.

The teachers in this study will include only those who volunteer to participate. All teachers and students will be assured by the data collector of complete confidentiality with their responses. No teacher or student will be identified, and results will be reported in statistical form only.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leicha Shaver



Dear Principals,

My name is Leicha Shaver, I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. I am preparing to study a certain aspect of student behavior. I would like permission to randomly select eleventh grade math and English students from every high school in the Tulsa Public School District. Approximately 40 eleventh grade math and English classrooms will be needed for this study.

This study is an attempt to explore the connection between teacher vision, central life interests, and classroom robustness and how they predict student central life interest. While the construct of vision has been investigated with some school principals, little is known about teacher vision in classrooms.

Each teacher will be asked to fill out one short survey form, their students will be asked to fill out three short survey forms. Each teacher participating in the study will be asked to do so voluntarily. Students will be asked to participate after providing their teacher with a permission slip signed by their parent. Only students that have parental consent will be able to participate in the study. Upon site Administrator's consent a packet with copies of the Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD), Central Life Interest (CLI), School Vision Inventory (SVI) will be given to you. After the packet has been received please complete the following procedures:

1. Appoint a data collector not associated with the principal's office or the evaluation process established in the building.
2. Assign the duty of collecting and distributing the instruments to all teachers and students that voluntarily participate in the school.
3. Have each teacher fill out one short survey form.
4. Have each student fill out three short survey forms.
5. The data collector will follow-up with all teachers in the study to ensure that all instruments are returned in a timely manner.
6. Each packet will have a code number so that the researcher can follow-up with the data collector on late returns. The code number will serve no other purpose in this study.
7. The data collector will return the completed instruments to the researcher in single, postage paid, self-addressed envelope provided by the researcher.

The teachers in this study will include only those who volunteer to participate. The students will include only those who have parental consent. All teachers and students will be assured complete confidentiality. No teacher or student will be identified, and results will be reported in statistical form only. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leicha Shaver

**APPENDIX J**  
**DISTRICT APPROVAL**

TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING,  
IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT



Date: February 28, 1997

To: Leicha Holland, Principal  
Hawthorne Elementary School

From: Dr. Robert Nelson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Nelson', is written over the printed name.

Re: Research Review Committee Report

Your request to administer teacher and student surveys to Tulsa Public Schools High School Students and staff has been approved. School and teacher participation is optional and student participation is optional and contingent on parental approval.

We wish you well in your academic endeavors and look forward to the day we honor you as Dr. Holland.

Copy: James Furch,  
Executive Director  
High Schools  
Dr. Jerry Roger

APPENDIX K  
CODING KEY

### Coding Key for Table 3

#### Vision Instrument Items

- V1 - My teacher has a vision of what students in this class can become.
- V2 - My teacher's vision can be achieved.
- V3 - My teacher's vision serves the best interests of all the students in the class.
- V4 - I share my teacher's vision.
- V5 - I have accepted my teacher's vision of my own free will.
- V6 - My teacher works with the students to achieve the vision.
- V7 - My teacher works with other teachers to achieve the vision.
- V8 - My teacher works with our parents to make sure we achieve the vision.
- V9 - My teacher works with the principal to achieve the vision.
- V10 - My teacher works with members of the community (business owners, religious leaders, public officials, and other parents) to achieve the vision.
- V11 - My teacher regularly encourages students in my class to make personal sacrifices ( do extra homework, complete extra homework, complete extra glasswork, ask questions if we don't know the answer) to help us achieve the teacher's vision.
- V12 - I make personal sacrifices (spend my spare time doing my homework rather than playing with my friends, do extra classwork ask questions when I don't know the answer) to achieve the vision.
- V13 - Other people in my school make personal sacrifices (help my teacher when asked, make sure my teacher gets the things needed to teach us ) to achieve the vision.
- V14 - My teacher regularly makes sacrifices (spends a lot of time before and after school in the classroom, answers questions whenever students ask for help, brings things to help encourage us to work) to achieve the vision.
- V15 - Other classes that I am taking are more important to my future than this one.

#### Central Life Interests Items

- C1 - Things that interest me do not happen in this class.
- C2 - My main interests in life involve many things I do in this class.
- C3 - When I am worried, it is usually about things relating to this class.
- C4 - I believe that other things are more important than this class.
- C5 - Most of my energy and time is used to help me succeed in this class.
- C6 - In talking to friends, I most like to talk about things that happen in this class.
- C7 - My main concerns are about this class.

#### Robustness Items

- R1 - Interesting - Boring
- R2 - Stale - Fresh
- R3 - Meaningful - Meaningless
- R4 - Unimportant - Important
- R5 - Unusual - Usual
- R6 - Weak - Powerful
- R7 - Active - Passive
- R8 - Challenging - Dull
- R9 - Uneventful - Action-Packed

APPENDIX L

IRB FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 01-20-98

IRB #: ED-98-050A

Proposal Title: **THE EFFECT OF TEACHER VISION, CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS, AND CLASSROOM ROBUSTNESS ON STUDENT CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS**

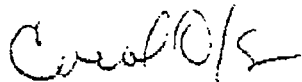
Principal Investigator(s): Nan Restine, Leicha Shaver

Reviewed and Processed as: Continuation

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

---

Signature:



Date: January 12, 1999

---

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance  
cc: Leicha Shaver

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Leicha Young Shaver

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: TEACHER VISION, TEACHER CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS,  
CLASSROOM ROBUSTNESS AND STUDENT CENTRAL LIFE  
INTERESTS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Anniston, Alabama on May 12, 1963, the daughter of  
Roy and Betty Young.

Education: Graduated from West Side High School, Gary, Indiana in June  
1981; received Bachelor of Science Degree in Education, Northwestern  
Oklahoma State University in May 1987; received Master of Science  
Degree in Education, Northwestern Oklahoma State University in July  
1988; received Elementary Certification from Northwestern Oklahoma  
State University in July 1987; received Administration Certification,  
Northwestern Oklahoma State University in July 1990; completed Doctor  
of Education Degree, Oklahoma State University in May 1999.

Professional Experience: Elementary school teacher, Tulsa Public Schools,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma August 1988 - May 1991; Minority Lecturer, Oklahoma  
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, August 1991 - May 1992; Assistant  
Professor, Education & Psychology and Acting Director of Student  
Teaching and Field Experiences, Northwestern Oklahoma State University,  
Alva, Oklahoma, August 1992 - July 1993; Elementary Principal, Tulsa  
Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 1993 - present.

Professional Organizations: Phi Delta Kappan; Tulsa Association Elementary  
School Principals; Association of School Curriculum and Development;  
National Alliance of Black School Educators; National Association for  
Female Executives Women's Foundation.