

MODELING MALENESS: THE ASSUMED  
NEED FOR MALE ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL TEACHERS

BY

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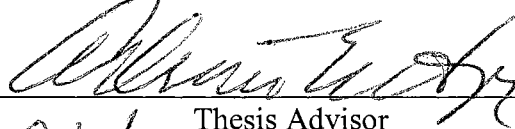
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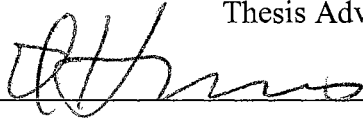
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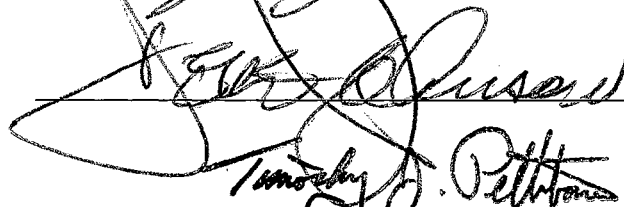
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Dean of the Graduate College

## DEDICATION

For two women who understand males,  
Alamito V. White and Joan M. White

Joan White, my wife, who reared my daughter and son, stayed married to me, and is quite simply the kindest most supportive person I have ever known.

Alamito White, an educator and my mother, who raised three sons and a daughter, who was never fooled by children, and who thinks I can write.

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## CHAPTER I

### Design of the Study

Discussions of the diversification of the American teaching force have generally focused on two areas: (1) the under-representation of people of color in the teaching force and (2) the under-representation of females in administrative positions (Klecker & Loadman, 1999, p. 504). Gutmann (1987) summarizes the problem in schools as follows:

As long as women are hired as elementary school teachers in far greater proportions than men, and men are hired as school administrators in far greater proportions than women, schools will teach children that “men rule women and women rule children.” (Gutmann, 1987, p.113)

Female educators are the majority of elementary teachers in self-contained classrooms. There is an assumption that male teachers are needed, especially in the primary grades, to balance the gender numbers just as there is an assumption that there are more women needed in secondary school classroom teaching positions (Johnston, McKeown, & McEwen, 1999, p.55; Kaufman, Westland, & Engvall, 1997, p.120; Thornton, 1999, p. 41; Williams, 1989, p. 253).

Calls for more male teachers are prevalent in current gender debates in education. “A dominant argument in this debate is that boys are often alienated from school because of a lack of male role models in feminized areas of the school curriculum and in primary

schools” (Roulston & Mills, 2000, p. 221). Improvements have been made, but many more female administrators are needed at all levels (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997).

Males in elementary teaching are neither looking for nor getting unequal remuneration. What they might get is a ride on the “glass escalator” (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 41; Williams, 1992, p. 256). Part of the cause of disproportionate numbers in male to female teachers and male to female administrators is that well-meaning administrators advise and facilitate the movement of good male elementary teachers from the classroom and into administration.

There are other reasons so few men are in elementary education. “Research on occupational stereotypes confirms that images of jobs are actually images of people who hold those jobs” (Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995, p. 565). The negative stereotypes surrounding men who do “women’s work” can push men out of specific jobs. However, to the extent that they channel men into more “legitimate” practice areas, their effects can actually be positive. Instead of being a source of discrimination, these prejudices can add to the glass escalator effect by pressuring men to move out of the most female-identified areas, and up to those regarded more legitimate and prestigious for men. If more men are needed as elementary teachers, why does management push them to ascend the glass escalator from classroom teaching to management positions (Williams, 1992) in contrast to the “glass ceiling” where, for most women, upward mobility stops (Davies-Netzley, 1998)?

Although men mentioned gender discrimination in the hiring process, for the most part they were channeled into more “masculine” specialties within these

professions, which ironically meant being “tracked” into better paying and more prestigious specialties. (Williams, 1992, p. 257)

In feminist research no evidence is found that more male elementary teachers are needed to transform education. It is widely accepted that more men are needed to balance the gender population in elementary education. Guarding the boundaries of masculinity adds a significant weight to that balancing act. The struggle for territory or the maintenance of boundaries is the struggle for power. The boundaries of masculinity become blurred when viewed through the lenses of alternative masculinities and gender as a social construct (Paechter, 1998). Although gender identity is of concern to parents from the birth of the child, it becomes more of an issue to students as they leave the primary grades and approach middle school and high school.

Montecinos and Nielsen (1997) report that there are no studies focusing on male preservice teacher experiences. “The paucity of research in this area precludes a better understanding of factors within teacher education that contribute to men’s interest in the field or deter them from entering and remaining in the field” (p. 49). However,

It is quite possible that a sensitive, nurturing man could be perceived by others, most notably parents, as providing a role model that is inappropriate for young boys. Some parents may not want their children exposed to nurturing, caring, or what the parents may construe as “soft” males. (King, 1998, p. 5)

Considering gender a social construct blurs even further the educator’s job, whether female or male, to appear as an example, a role model. Nilan (2000) concludes, “...that masculinity is above all a social identity accomplishment” (p. 53). Are male teachers needed in a profession perceived as primarily feminine in order to guard the

boundaries of masculinity and the accomplishment of social identity, or is there more to it?

### *Statement of the Problem*

In discussing children's responses to Kohlberg's dilemma concerning the theft of drugs to save a life, Gilligan (1993) points out that the 11 year old boy and girl, Jake and Amy, "...both highly intelligent and perceptive about life, though in different ways, display different modes of moral understanding, different ways of thinking about conflict and choice" (p. 32). Jake used power, even violence, to solve the problem while Amy used a system of connections or reasonable persuasion. If women model a morality or moral decision-making based on care and connectedness while men model a morality of justice and individualism, then children need to be exposed to both views.

However, socialization into expected gender roles reinforces notions of role-appropriate moral orientations. Caring is socially constructed as female, and teaching in the primary grades is equated with caring (King, 1998, p. 17).

One role, which we enact with our students, is caring for. It includes wiping noses, soothing fighters, and comforting parents. Another role is caring about, which we enact in a professional stance, toward "the children" with our colleagues. These two stances, and the moderate level of dissonance they induce, are common to all primary teachers, male *and* female. (King, 1998, p. 75)

Everyone concerned is looking for the good example, the mentor, the leader, the dependable, and the role model. Why do we need men in the elementary school as role

models? Does the assumption of the need for male elementary teachers imply that women educators are not fulfilling a need that is vital to student development? What is the nature and construct of that need?

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to examine administrator, parent, and teacher perspectives about the need for more male teachers in the elementary schools and compare the reasons for that need to the purposes male teachers in the elementary schools report for entering the profession. And if individuals agree with the research suggesting that male elementary teachers are needed as male role models, record and analyze those character traits or behaviors recognized as attributes of an appropriate male role model (Mancus, 1992; DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Eisler, 1998).

### *Objectives of the Study*

Three objectives guide this study:

Objective Number 1: To explore reasons for the assumed need for (more) male teachers in the elementary school.

- Determine which members of the school community believe that more male teachers are needed in elementary schools.
- Document who holds that view and why.

Objective Number 2: To explore reasons given by male elementary teachers for their choice of career.

- Document what male elementary teachers provide as reasons for their career choice.
- Document what male elementary teachers believe allows them to stay in the classroom and what draws them away.

Objective Number 3: To compare the perspectives provided by school community members and male elementary educators.

- In what ways do the reasons for the career choice of male elementary school teachers match the expectations of parents, administrators, and teachers?
- In what ways do the reasons conflict?
- What attributes of a male elementary teacher role model result from this comparison from the point of view of the school community as well as the male elementary educator?
- How do these attributes support the characteristics of role model presented by Mancus (1992, pp. 126-127), DeCorse & Vogtle (1997, pp. 38-42), Eisler, (1998, p. 425).

### *Theoretical Structure*

“The Mythopoetic Men’s Movement” assumes that a deep, essential and transcultural ‘manhood’ exists but has been lost to modern men since the rise of the women’s movement and the advent of absentee fathers. Their weekend

retreats, workshops and seminars seek to retrieve that essential male identity through the manly nurture and initiation of men by other men.

In essence, the argument, as presented by Kimmel and Kaufman (1994), is that in a world perceived to be female-dominated, men are deemed in need of proper male role models in order to become “real men.” Women cannot perform this task because it requires the rejection of that which is female. The agenda for the Mythopoetic Men’s Movement is to reproduce the traditional norms of masculinity and femininity, to turn the clock back to a time when men were secure in their identity as men. There are elements of this reactionary perspective in public and political calls for more male role models in teaching. There is, however, no adequate definition of what is meant by “role model” in the context of teaching despite its widespread use. (Thornton, 1999, p.50-51)

Conflicts have arisen as there is not a definition for a male role model. The assumption that we need specifically male role models rather than both male and female role models in the elementary schools tends to support the notion that a hegemonic masculinity model is the model needed. A study was conducted to determine the influence of male teachers on elementary school children’s stereotyping of teacher competence.

An analysis of descriptive data indicates that boys with male as well as female teachers made the most egalitarian attributions to male and female teachers. Data suggest that the inclusion of men as members of the elementary school faculty could be most beneficial to boys. (Mancus, 1992, p. 109)

Although mass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity, not all boys and men display the same kind of masculinity, nor do they experience 'maleness' in the same way. Social class and subcultures profoundly affect the presentation and representation of masculine identities. Moreover, masculinity as a particular configuration of gender is constituted in relation to local contexts within the meritocratic discourse of schooling. It is concluded that masculinity is above all a social identity accomplishment. (Nilan, 2000, p. 53)

Mancus (1992) discusses the "feminization" of schools caused by both male and female teacher's expectation and reward for good student behavior. Good student behavior is seen as feminine. When seating charts are made, teachers know that a mixture of boys and girls in a group will reduce inappropriate behaviors. As students see that male teachers expect the same good behavior patterns as female teachers then students experience a feminine attribute assumed by the male teacher/role model.

Conversely, male elementary teachers report that they are asked to be a disciplinarian even for students who are not in their particular classroom. The expectation of the male disciplinarian at school relates directly to the experience of many children at home when they hear the threat, "Just wait 'til your father gets home (or back from deployment in the military community)!" Expecting good behavior and rewarding good behavior, although a very reasonable way to rear a child for either the male or female parent or teacher, is seen as feminine. When the good behavior isn't forthcoming, then do parents expect a more heavy-handed male approach? Some parents say that their children require a strict disciplinarian and see a male teacher providing that. To add further confusion, the teacher must administer the heavy-handed discipline without touching the



child. In order for parents to articulate what they want the teacher to do about inappropriate behavior at school, they must realize the difference between school/home behavior expectation and disciplinary action (behavior correction). If that concern and realization can be expressed to the community of educators including institutions of higher learning preparing teachers, then much could be accomplished in preparing the teacher to role model good behavior, to express reasonable behavior expectations, and to discipline appropriately. Good behavior control in the classroom would not be seen as only nurturing expectations nor nurturing do or die disciplinary action, but a reasonable combination of the two. "The optimum arrangement would be a faculty with female teachers who are high in instrumental competence and male teachers who are high in nurturing capacity, while both groups maintain healthy sex-role identities" (Mancus, 1992, p. 113).

The problem is:

That is, while women's roles have begun to broaden and overlap more with men's roles, men have not been allowed to adopt roles that have been traditionally allotted to women. One of the major reasons for this is that parents and peers have proven to be very adept at punishing male gender role transgressions. Research consistently shows that men are more often punished by those around them for displaying feminine-typed behavior, while women's cross gender behavior is more often tolerated, or is punished less harshly and less consistently. (McCreary, Wong, Wiener, Carpenter, Engle, & Nelson, 1996, p.508)

A male elementary teacher knows more about what he cannot do rather than what he can do in his relationship with his students. "...men struggled to do the appropriate

thing rather than what, to them, comes naturally” (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 43).

King’s (1998) notion of care as a model for teaching applies. Elementary teachers know that they must care for, and care about, children, but the process of care in either sense is different for male and female teachers.

A male teacher is somehow predisposed to be better at discipline.

By default, female teachers are less able to provide appropriate discipline.

These assumptions are made without regard to what is meant by discipline and what kind of teaching behaviors would be more likely to facilitate productive discipline. Rather, the preceding relationship drawn between male and discipline adopts an authoritarian and external approach without critical examination. (King, 1998, p. 100)

In a study by Gilbert and Stead, “The findings...lend support to the idea that jobs are perceived as either male or female and that this perception can influence the way that job candidates are viewed” (1999, p. 240). “Gender typing is the process through which occupations come to be seen as appropriate for workers with masculine or feminine characteristics, that is, occupations could be said to be feminized, masculinized, or, more generically gendered” (Britton, 2000, p. 424; Murgatroyd, 1982; Roos & McDaniel, 1996). There is a fear that this phenomenon, among others, causes young male teacher trainees to avoid elementary teaching. “Many of the men in my sample identified the stigma of working in a female-identified occupation as the major barrier to more men entering their professions” (Williams, 1992, p. 262).

Roos and McDaniel (1996) stated:

Comparing engineers, truck drivers, and physicists, with librarians, secretaries, and kindergarten teachers, makes it clear that society views some occupations as “male” and some as “female”, over and above the fact that men and women typically work in these areas.

An occupation’s “sex composition” and “gender type” are linked, both theoretically and empirically. “Sex composition” refers to women’s (or men’s) representation in occupations, while “gender type” refers to socially constructed perceptions of an occupation as “male,” “female,” or sex-neutral. (p. 2)

The idea further complicates the concept of a male teacher role model because elementary teaching is seen as a feminine or feminized occupation.

Can “real men” as personified by John Wayne, or only the “the new man,” who has changed his children’s diapers, work in the elementary school classroom and exhibit both feminine and masculine characteristics while modeling masculinity appropriately? West and Zimmerman said, “We argue that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort,” and further, “we contend that the ‘doing of gender’ is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, pp. 126-129). In context, people approach aspects of their job in masculine (seen as the norm), feminine (seen as a deviation), and genderless or gender neutral ways while trying not to appear to be androgynous.

For example, the pervading femininity/masculinity ideology has as a perennial feature the representation of male as norm and female as deviation, so that, to take

one case, “progress” for women (and for society as a whole) is viewed unproblematically and as occurring when women are able to incorporate more and more ‘masculine’ tasks and roles. There is much less impetus for men to incorporate “feminine” tasks. (Gergen & Davis, 1997, p. 162)

There is a conflict for male elementary teachers because the opposite is true in the teaching profession, especially in the elementary school, where the norm is feminine. Men in caring professions threaten gendered work differentiation, but apparently at a cost. Women are allowed by society to assume masculine characteristics in the workplace. However, “It became clear from discussions that where women working with young children was viewed as a natural extension of the mothering role, men opting for primary teaching may be perceived as unnatural, odd” (Thornton, 1999, p. 46). “If we fail to do gender appropriately, we as individuals—not the institutional arrangements—may be called to account (for our character, motives, and predispositions)” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 146). In elementary teaching, men are expected to adopt roles now allotted to women. If they do not, the business of schooling, at least co-educational schooling, stops. However, society stigmatizes men who adopt or display “feminine-typed behavior.” A rigid adherence to remaining within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity results in stress if feminine behaviors are expected at work.

Traditional male role attitudes, especially those on the Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS; Thompson & Pleck, 1986), reflect the belief that men (a) should be in high status positions in our society (e.g., through their occupational success, wealth, politics, community involvement), (b) should act in ways that show they are physically and emotionally toughened (e.g., not showing pain, keeping

emotions locked inside), and (c) should avoid anything stereotypically feminine (e.g., jobs, hobbies, interests) (McCreary, Newcomb, Sadava, 1998, p. 82).

King (1998) recorded that the men (male primary teachers) in his study regarded gender as not as important as the impact of the teaching behavior, regardless of how it may signify gender (p. 105). As it departs from the traditional male role attitudes, the influence of that important teaching behavior should reflect the best characteristics of the amalgamation of the nature/nurture dichotomy. The attitude reported by King may not be widespread through American culture.

The decade of the 1990's has witnessed increased research interest in the issue of masculine ideology, masculine role identification, and masculine role conflict or stress. Traditional masculinity was the constellation of values, traits, and behaviors that the dominant American culture viewed as the gold standard for males to achieve. (Eisler, 1998, p. 422)

Eisler and Skidmore's (1987) study found that one outcome of male gender role rigidity is masculine gender role stress. "Masculine gender role stress (MGRS) is an individual difference variable describing the stress that may result from a man's fear that he is not meeting societal expectations for masculinity" (McCreary et al. 1996, p. 508).

Teachers are expected to care for and care about children.

The use of care as a model for teaching is not without philosophical, ethical, and economic objections. Women's use of care, as a naturally occurring attribute, has been used against women's claims for professional status as teachers. Men's choice to participate in relatively less valued work can be seen as a threat to a patriarchal set of work transactions. (King, 1998, p. 83)

The male elementary teacher confronts a droopy tightrope.

It would thus appear that the citadel of learning and culture is constructed in such a way that those who are to become full citizens have to think and behave in certain ways. These ways...are those of middle-class white males. The challenge is to find ways of constructing the citadel differently and more inclusively, or, alternatively, of making it possible for a variety of truly equal citadels to co-exist.

Paechter, 1998, p. 35)

### *Procedures*

This study is to be conducted within an American military community in the Isles District. Personnel from three Department of Defense Dependents Elementary Schools and parents within those communities are to be interviewed and questioned concerning their opinions on the need and the value of male teachers in the elementary school. Interviews were conducted with six administrators, 12 elementary teachers, and six parents, and three members of staff with close contact to elementary students. No students were interviewed. An attempt was made to proportionally match the gender and race of the people interviewed to the gender and race population numbers within the schools and the community.

### *The Researcher*

The researcher has been a teacher for 41 years. The student age range has been from five to 85 years in classes from preschool handicapped through kindergarten and elementary, middle school, high school, and college. There have been many shifts of emphasis in education over this career course. There has never been a change in the attitude of the education community concerning the need for quality teachers. From 16 millimeter movies to computers, whatever the technology that was meant to disseminate information more readily to motivate students to learn has never replaced the humanity of the teacher. The humanitarian as teacher is busy in the diverse areas of a school: coaching, hands-on science classes, the reading circle, in art rooms, language classes, the band room, and the counselor's office, wherever an esprit de corps is developed to enhance willingness to learn. My bias lies in not experiencing the teacher's gender or race as essential to motivating students.

### *Data Needs and Sources*

Confirmation is needed from the constituency available for this research to ratify views about the need for male teachers in elementary education: parents, administrators, and teachers. Data is required from male teachers addressing the reasons for becoming or not becoming an elementary teacher. Female elementary school teachers' opinions on the necessity and value of male elementary school teachers are important as either confirmation or contrast to the male response. The data obtained from sources outside the

classroom, parents and administrators, clarified the thesis central to this study— expectations. Care must be taken to note evidence of bias on the part of male administrators as they have opted out of the classroom and are part of the problem when the concepts of the glass ceiling and glass escalator are considered.

If this study simply confirms that male elementary teachers are needed to serve as role models, then little is achieved. If the conclusions drawn from the data also form the attributes of an appropriate role model, new and useful information is available.

If a meaningful definition of a role model and the aspects of the teacher/gender role to be modeled can be determined, it would be useful to those groups as well as teacher trainees in colleges and universities, to school administrators, to practicing teachers and to those consultants who propose to fill any gaps in teacher preparation.

### *Population*

The teachers to be interviewed are Department of Defense Dependents' Schools teachers in the Isles District. The parents to be interviewed are members of the United States military community.

Whether the military community population is comparable to other or civilian communities poses a generalizability or transferability problem. For instance, there are single parent families in the military community, but there is no unemployment. When asked, most Department of Defense teachers will say that they, as expatriates, are different from their friends who teach in the United States, as they are less insular and more tolerant. The greater exposure to different cultures could liberalize or expand the



perceived requirements for a good role model; however, the military community is seen by some as the conservative extreme.

### *Data Collection*

The long interview was employed to gather data because “it gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, see and experience the world as they do themselves” (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). Questions, which guide the interviews for each population group, are included as Appendix A. I interviewed teachers, parents, and administrators using the attached protocol. Data from interviews were used to determine the perceptions of each subject on the issues of gender and role model perceptions.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis followed the ethnographic approach as defined by Merriam (1998), “...an ethnographic study focuses on the culture and social regularities of everyday life” (p. 156). Coding and data analysis was accomplished using the category construction method Merriam (1998). “Categories and subcategories (or properties) are commonly constructed through the constant comparative method of data analysis” (p. 179).

### *Significance of the Study*

The parents of students in elementary schools are primarily interested in the relationship between their child and the classroom teacher. The parents are much less likely to request a conference with the librarian. English as a second language, race, age, abilities to cope with handicapping conditions, and gender are issues raised when parents attempt to request a teacher for their children. The administrator of an elementary school wants to see all the constituents of the school and community happy and the business of the school running smoothly and effectively. The teachers have any number of reasons to teach, but to teach effectively they must balance, or coordinate, the wants and needs of the students, the parents, and the administrator. This study proposed to address the gender issue, the need for male teachers in the elementary school and the reason(s) for that need. It would be helpful for teachers and administrators to know what parents expect of male elementary teachers. It would be helpful for male teachers to know what administrators expect. It would be helpful for parents to articulate their expectations.

### *Research*

Although a discipline or task might be taught or modeled well and although the mentor might do all that is necessary to facilitate learning, there are other aspects of personality and behavior that are important to the parent and the student. The parents' connection to the school is their child, the student. Research in the area of home/school relationships must account for the notion of teacher exemplars and how completely

teaching behaviors fit the widely differing perceptions and needs of parents in diverse communities. More male teachers are needed in the elementary schools, as there is an imbalance to female teachers. The researcher sought to find other reasons for the need for more male teachers. If, as the literature shows, one of those needs is for male role models, then this study should define that role for the benefit of the people who have to fill it.

### *Practice*

Parents soon realize that their children learn from parental example and realize, thereafter, that the student/teacher relationship has some similarities to the parent/child relationship. The notions of guarding the boundaries of masculinity, alternative masculinities and role models are issues not only to elementary teachers, and the parents of impressionable elementary school children, but have been problematic to organizations such as the American military establishment and the Boy Scouts of America.

There are single parents in the military. There is also the situation caused by troop deployment from the military community. The children are left in care of, or with, the mother who becomes a single parent for months at a time. The mothers look for a male role model or influence during these times of family separation. It is significant at these times that there are female Boy Scouts of America troop leaders, which conflicts with the controversy and legal debate on the issue of male homosexual involvement in the Scouting organization. That is not to say that parental homophobia is comparable to having a female troop leader for your child's scouting activities. It does speak to the issue of the role model.

The reverse is also common. In the military community there are cases where the mother is also active duty military and the father is left behind to care for the children during deployments. It is significant at these times that the parent is expected to fulfill the children's needs as well as maintain his job. The current military social structure appears to make it possible, not easy, for the parent to fulfill the single-parent role. Do these single parents, who are single only for the extended deployment times, see schoolteachers as role models for their children? What behaviors do they expect? Are their expectations similar to civilian communities?

A large number of parents have said to me that their son or daughter has been a problem and a male teacher is what the child needs. I guess what they are saying is that there aren't any female teachers who have good classroom or discipline techniques. (King, 1998, p. 52)

### *Theory*

As there is not a balanced population of men and women teachers and administrators in the school systems, the problem needs research and attention. As attitudes and norms change from the effects of feminist research and feminist activism, we should begin to see results. If the school community sees a need for more male teachers as role models, then what are the role model characteristics? In what ways does the good role model interact with the school community that determines that the role model needs to be male? I have found no mention in feminist literature of a need for a female role model or a male role model for female students. "I have also been told that I

was the selected teacher for a certain child because *he* needs a male teacher. I have not yet been told that I have been selected because *she* needs a male teacher” (King, 1998, p. 43).

If there is a consensus of role model attributes, these attributes are significant to teachers in training, to administrators, to consultants and to parents. If Goffman (1963) is right, and “...there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports” (p.128), then we are in trouble.

### *Summary*

The process of this research involves listening to people who have been elementary school students and are now the parents, teachers, and principals of elementary school students. The findings of this study:

- discover the subjects’ views of the necessity for male elementary school teachers.
- discover some of the reasons male teachers choose a career in elementary education.
- discover whether the subjects’ opinions agree with current literature that male teachers are needed as role models.
- provide information to male elementary teachers concerning male role model attributes.

The conclusions drawn from this study might close a perceived gap in the research. The literature does not tell teacher trainees what is expected of them as role models, only that they should be one. Parental voices should be heard regarding the behavior they find appropriate for male teachers of very young children.

### *Reporting*

Chapter II contains a review of related literature.

Chapter III provides structure and methodology.

Chapter IV presents data.

Chapter V analyzes data.

Chapter VI summarizes, concludes and presents implications for research, theory and practice.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

To understand and discuss the complexity of the relationship between men and society and the effects of the search for and maintenance of masculinity, the literature defines the various constructs of masculinity. The acceptance that masculinity or gender is a construct is assumptive to this discourse. The literature shows that gender construction, among other things, is a process of the acquisition of power and that the notion of power and empowerment is political (Mac an Ghail, 1994). The purpose of this review is to connect the perspectives of the forms of masculinity to common practice in the elementary classroom, to include literature that addresses the questions concerning the need for male teachers in the elementary schools, the causes of that need, the need for male role models, the valued characteristics of a role model, and the problems caused for male elementary teachers by conflicting social standards.

#### *The Need for Male Teachers*

There has not been a great deal of research on the need for males as teachers in the elementary schools. The question has to be asked whether the issue is of interest to

feminist research and whether writers in men's studies see the need. Where the problem is mentioned, it is said to lead to the following self-fulfilling prophecy. "This lack of male role models in the early years of schooling may be a limiting factor in recruiting more males into the profession" (Klecker & Loadman, 1999, p. 505).

This lack of male teachers, especially at the primary levels, results in an imbalance in the female to male teacher population.

Recent statistics for England and Wales reveal a significant increase in the imbalance in numbers of males and females in primary school teaching. There is a growing belief among educationalists that as a consequence, a proper balance of male and female adult roles in their differing approaches to children's learning is not be [ing] maintained in the educational experience of younger children.

(Johnston, McKeown, & McEwen, 1999, p.55)

All the research found agrees with this point and found it true for populations other than Great Britain.

The Danish labor market is slightly less segregated by gender than those of the other Nordic countries. Men and women each work within their clearly defined spheres of the labor market. The women's sphere is characterized by an emphasis on providing services or taking care of people, while looking after the material world is largely regarded as a typical man's job. (Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993, p. 92)



*Reasons for Male Influence in the Classroom*

Aspiring to a balance in all things is an admirable effort. At the same time there is a pragmatic rationale for the need for male influence in the classroom. Based on responses to the Teacher Gender and Competency Instrument, Mancus (1992) predicted that boys will be more likely to see themselves as academically competent and thus be more inclined toward achievement when they have some male teachers. Likewise, they will be more likely to share authority and express nurturing behavior when they see male teachers doing so. (pp. 126-127)

Using the National Education Association figure of 13% male elementary teachers in America, Paul Burden, chair of the Department of Elementary Education at Kansas State University indicated that many principals and school administrators hope that percentage will increase. Male teachers can become positive role models for children. Males in elementary education have an advantage in getting a job in the elementary schools because schools want to balance the gender distribution.

Part of the reasoning behind the demand for more male elementary teachers is the availability of more male role models for children.

Some children come from single-parent families, and more often it is with the mother, so the child may grow up without having much interaction with men. I think schools recognize this and they see an advantage to having positive male role models and giving some exposure for children with men and male teachers.

Another aspect is if we can get more male teachers at the elementary level, there's a possibility that more male students would consider teaching as a realistic

possibility when they are a little bit older and ready to make college and career decisions. (Kansas State University, 2000, p. 1)

While recognizing the female majority in elementary education, Mancus (1992) disagrees with some of Burden's points. Whereas Burden speaks of children, Mancus suggests that additional male faculty members are most beneficial to boys. She does agree, however, "over-identification with a 'masculine' or 'feminine' orientation and singular gender models can result in sex-role stereotyping and restrict development of the individual" (p. 111). Mancus further states, "It also appears from our data that the presence of some male teachers in the school is not enough to influence boys to consider careers as teachers" (1992, p. 126-127).

There is disagreement between male and female students in education and pre-service teacher training. Johnston, McKeown, and McEwen (1999) report that male trainees strongly agree with the statements

'If there were no male teachers in primary schools, children would be disadvantaged' and 'all primary school children should be taught by a man for at least one year', is indicative of something akin to a moral stance. The corresponding responses of female trainees place significantly less value ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the contribution of a male presence in primary teaching. (Johnston et al., p. 60)

Mancus (1992) conducted a study to find what effect the presence of male teachers in the elementary school would have on children's stereotyping behaviors, their assessment of male and female teacher competence, male student interest in becoming teachers, and whether the effect was different for male and female students. She found:

as greater balance between male and female elementary school teachers is achieved, non-stereotypic responses and egalitarian projections of positive and negative qualities on male and female teachers are likely to increase for girls and boys.

Although boys receive immediate and noticeable benefits from teacher gender balance, girls benefit too. The passive adjustment of many girls to school due to over-identification with same sex teachers is a sleeping menace to healthy sexual-social development and to academic achievement later. Significant increases in number of non-stereotyping responses made by treatment school children over control students, regardless of sex, provides evidence that girls and boys are less rigid in their gender-role assignments when they have both male and female teachers. (Mancus, 1992, p. 126)

The American Association of University Women's (1992) report, entitled *How Schools Shortchange Girls: A Study of Major Findings on Girls' Education*, addressed 40 critical gender equity issues in schools that included among the other points, "teachers, administrators, and counselors must be prepared and encouraged to bring gender equity and awareness to every aspect of schooling" (pp. 84-88). deMarrais and LeCompte (1999) added three items to the AAUW list including, "educators must examine their treatment of males and females in schools to avoid rigidity in gender roles; neither males nor females in school contexts should be forced into stereotypic positions" (pp. 325-326). It is assumed that deMarrais and LeCompte are referring to both teachers and students.

In *Changing Schools That Shortchange Girls*, a condensed excerpt of the AAUW report, it was discussed that:

recommendations to form a new, enlightened education policy that would ensure that the US provides the best possible education for all its children. This report [AAUW] synthesized all available research on girls in school and found compelling evidence that girls are not receiving the same quality, or even quantity, of education as their brothers. (Education Digest, 1992, p. 41)

Not everyone is in agreement, however. Rita Kramer (1992) voiced a no holds barred rebuttal:

All these charges [in the AAUW report] are either false or misleading, and no wonder since “How Schools Shortchange Girls” is based on a body of research some of which is outdated, much of which is trivial (unpublished doctoral dissertations and obscure publications) and some of which was done under the auspices of the organization issuing the report—a little like quoting yourself as an authority for your own opinion. (p. 48)

Kleinfeld (1998) is of the same opinion and reported that the data on which the AAUW report was based had apparently vanished. The report and the opinions in contention speak to the need for teachers who address the needs of all students. If girls are being shortchanged in schools presently, it is to be remembered that the majority of teachers are female.

Speaking to the notions of gender role rigidity and stereotypic positions in the context of schools:

More men in teaching, representing masculinity’s variety of forms, could help.

Such an outcome might also benefit all our pupils, through eventual teacher representation of the range of femininities and masculinities, and the provision of

positive and varied role models for disaffected male pupils (Thornton, 1999, p.51).

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) see a need for males in the elementary classroom to fulfill roles for children, especially for boys. These roles are often left out or incompletely modeled by society. “Critical to the definition of an effective teacher is the ability to be a role model of a successful individual” (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 38).

DeCorse and Vogtle quote from their research interviews.

There’s a certain type of person for the younger grades. Someone that kids can look up to, is a good listener, understanding, gives kids encouragement, and teaches them how to solve their problems. Maybe females are better in primary, and males in upper elementary. But the model is changing; lots of fathers are caregivers, so they can be teachers too...my only male teacher was a real role model...He made us feel like one big family. The kids I’ve worked with need role models; many have no male influence in their life, and they’re your friend within five minutes; they take a shine to you because you are male. (1997, pp. 38-42)

Measor and Sikes (1992) do not agree that the whole story is evident concerning the processes of gender construction and differentiation, however they note the following:

There is no doubt that society does communicate patterns for us to identify with, and that these act as a frame and may constrain our choices. However, what we need to understand is how we come to make individual choices from within that frame, and to build up a “script” for ourselves. (p. 13)

And, another “One of the factors that researchers have identified as important for pupils is the attitudes and expectations of teachers” (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p.62).

Archer and Lloyd (1988) discussed models of development as a way to get past the merely commonsense view of the nature/nurture dichotomy. In constructing a developmental model, the controlling influence must be ascertained and result in an influence strong enough to negate other influences.

For example, if it is decided that every child must learn a particular skill irrespective of his or her initial ability, performance will be monitored in relation to an “ideal” imposed from outside until it matches this. A similar but more continuous process could occur with gender-role learning, a boy’s or girl’s behavior being continuously matched against standards shared by parents, teachers, and other children. (Archer & Lloyd, 1988, p. 270)

In summary, the need for a male influence in an elementary school classroom is not shown to be for improvement of instruction. Across the board, educators and researchers disagree on the need for a male influence in an elementary school classroom. There must be more than a need for balancing the number of male to female teachers. The possibility is noted that boys who have experienced a male teacher in their elementary school years might be more likely to consider teaching in an elementary school. Male elementary teachers can fulfill a role for children from families without other male contacts. The benefit of having a male teacher in the elementary school is shown to concern behavior and that benefit is mainly for boys. Girls and boys experience non-stereotypic behavior resulting in less rigid gender role assignments.

### *Reasons Men Leave Teaching*

Is elementary school teaching a satisfying career for men? There have been very few studies looking at job satisfaction of male elementary teachers beyond the preservice and entry level. In a study with a sample of 2225 recent graduates from 12 teacher education programs who were employed as teachers, Loadman and Klecker (1993) found that when asked about plans for “five years from now” male teachers were more likely than females to be planning a career move to school administration (14% of male respondents; 3% of female respondents).

In most school systems it is generally true that teaching is a profession in which women work and men supervise.

The unequal distribution of power among men and women is one of the most salient features of the profession, one that undermines its status. As long as teaching is considered to be “women’s work,” neither it nor its participants (male and female) will enjoy the power and prestige they seek. (deMarrais and LeCompte, 1999, p. 191)

Roos and McDaniel (1996) used gender queuing to connect the concepts of sex composition and gender type as they apply to occupations. A drop in earnings, lack of opportunities for entrepreneurship, a shift in job tasks and skills are reasons that men leave a profession. As employers then look at the job queue, more females are available for the job. As the occupation becomes feminized tradition takes over and keeps it feminized. Men who would work at these professions are working in a place with less power.

Edley and Wetherell (1995) explain that:

the feminist perspective on men sees the substance of masculinity as a set of power relations. The primary factor determining the shape of masculinity is politics. Men, that is, adopt those forms of activity and identity which bring them the maximum rewards, both materially and in terms of self-esteem. (p. 208)

Edley and Wetherell address the issue as a response to feminism and the social changes in women's positions. Can a man be a feminist?

This is a social movement which is not going to go away. It has developed a powerful critique of some forms of masculinity and men's actions. It is also linked to quite profound shifts in social organizations such as employment patterns. The question for men is how to be a man in this new context, let alone a "real man." (p. 196)

Arnot (1984) expands on that point with the following.

In the USA it has been said that masculinity and success with women is defined by the size of the paycheck. In the context of male working-class life in Britain, the importance of work, of a job and a wage are well-known features of working-class masculinity. Middle-class boys, on the other hand, may stay in the educational system into their mid-twenties. Nevertheless, there is a close link between men's salary level and their sense of achievement as men. (p. 45)

If she is right, adding low teaching salaries to a job which some find suspect for "real men" encourages men to leave the teaching profession.



Williams and Villemez (1993) agree and concluded from data in their study that:

...three groups of men who have accrued economic advantage from gender segregation: men who aspire to female jobs but are escalated into better, more male-defined positions; men who gain experience and supervisory status in female jobs; and men who gain experience in male jobs and stay in predominantly male-defined occupations. (p. 87)

### *Reasons Male Teachers Are Not Needed*

Connell (1989) posits that schools have been seen as “masculinity-making” devices. If so, and if male teachers are meant to model a socially acceptable masculinity, then they will have to go beyond ‘role’ to some sort of politically correct area which boys will not necessarily see in an advantageous light. Boys know that they have an advantage.

Schools do not simply adapt to a natural masculinity among boys or femininity among girls. They are agents in the matter, constructing particular forms of gender and negotiating relations between them.

It is clear that the “sex-role” model will not work; but as yet there is no widely accepted account of the process of gender formation to take its place. It is equally clear that the logic of compensatory programmes has little relevance to the privileged sex. Educational work on gender with boys must take a different shape—but what that should be, no one is very clear. (Connell, 1989, pp. 291-292)

The following is further opinion that the teacher as role model is in a difficult position. The problem for the teacher lies in modeling gender or gender influenced behavior while trying to change stereotypic traditions held by the students. Bem (1993) states emphatically that

although the existence of a DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association) category called Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood demonstrates irrefutably that at least a small percentage of children in America do not conform to the gender scripts of the culture, almost every parent, teacher, and developmental psychologist already knows that the large majority of American children—especially those of preschool age and early elementary-school age—are rigidly gender conforming. Children regard a broad range of artifacts and activities as exclusively appropriate for only one sex or the other, and even more important, they strongly prefer same-sex playmates and gender-appropriate toys, clothes, and activities for both themselves and their peers. (p. 111)

In trying to determine their role in the elementary classroom as appropriate, the teacher, male or female, confronts the conflicting issues in McCreary's (1994) study. Males are cautious to deviate from a traditional masculine gender display or role because the sexual orientation model predicts that a man acting in a feminine capacity is more likely perceived as a homosexual than a female acting in a masculine way. The social status model does not hold up, at least within McCreary's (1994) study which tested the social status and sexual orientation model predictions.

The social status model predicts that males are punished because feminine behavior is lower in status than masculine behavior. The data addressing the social status model did not show that male role characteristics are more desirable than female role characteristics.

In fact, the main effect for the gender role manipulation showed the opposite of what was expected: female-valued characteristics were perceived to be significantly more desirable than male-valued characteristics, stronger indicants of psychological well-being, and a better indication of someone who is held in high regard. (McCreary, 1994, p. 527)

Research conflicts with the widely accepted notion that teachers can influence the gender identification of students. As teaching is undervalued materially and in terms of self-esteem, teachers of either gender, who are meant to model the role that students will approach in society, have impossible jobs. Eisler (1998) states that there are many influences.

We need to understand why men vary substantially in their identification with prescribed (traditional) definitions of masculinity and their commitment to culturally determined masculine roles. I also am comfortable with the notion that different stages of ego identity development, in part, underlie men's conformity or nonconformity with presumed reference group norms. However, I take issue with the notion that one's masculine identity develops in relationship to a single reference group. It seems more probable that developing males identify with and internalize the perceived values of individual males such as one's father, beloved friend, or a sports hero. Additionally, I would maintain that identification with

more than one reference group, for example, peers, heroes, relatives, and so on is typically involved in forming one's gender identity. Finally, I would argue that men navigate through several reference groups, especially when they are younger, to establish their masculine identity. (p. 424)

Bem (1993) reports that the social-structural theorists see that the responsibility for the construction of conventionally gendered women and men is not childhood socialization.

It is the assignment of women and men to different and unequal positions in the social structure. That different and unequal assignment constrains both children and adults psychologically, by channeling their motivations and their abilities into either a stereotypically male or a stereotypically female direction. It also constrains them more coercively, by restricting their ability to step outside their assigned positions should they be motivated to do so. (p.135)

The theory does not acknowledge teacher influence, but seems to suggest that someone needs to motivate them 'outside their assigned positions'.

"As socializing agents, children have determined which activities are masculine and which are feminine by their play behaviors" (Wynn & Fletcher, 1987, p. 81). Older children recognize the arbitrary nature of sex roles, but primary and pre-school children do not sense gray areas. All rules are clear-cut and binding, and those rules are policed by peers. Breaking the rules brings peer disapproval (Carter & McCloskey, 1984). Wynn and Fletcher (1987) say,

At one time, sex role learning was considered an appropriate goal of socialization.

With the move to greater equality between the sexes, however, this assumption is being questioned....Sex stereotypic behavior will most likely disappear in

preschool programs when adult society is no longer regulated in this fashion.

Stereotypes are always a generation out of date—that is their nature. (pp. 83-86)

In getting closer to an irreducible level, Davies (1989) states the following:

As children learn the discursive practices of their society, they learn to position

themselves correctly as male or female, since that is what is required of them to

have a recognizable identity within the existing social order. Far from 'sex'

naturally giving rise to certain gendered practices, it would seem that the

possession of a particular set of genitals obliges the possessor to achieve the ways

of being what appear to be implicated in the particular set of genitals they happen

to have. Teachers who attempt to stretch the boundaries of what will and will not

be taken to be masculine and feminine in the interests of establishing non-sexist

educational practices must contend with this specific understanding on the part of

the children they teach. (pp. 237-238)

Allan (1993) reports, "Thus, many men felt they were given a hiring preference because of the public's demands for more male role models, but were at a loss to identify what this work consisted of" (p. 122).

### *Female Teachers*

The ideas found in *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* by Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (1998) have been adopted by one school district in DoDDS as a hallmark of good teaching and classroom management. The origins of *Best Practice* began with a movement toward school decentralization and reform in Chicago in 1990. "One problem in Chicago's reform process was immediately apparent: no one was paying enough attention to actual, day-to-day teaching, and learning" (p. vii). The three authors printed and distributed a newspaper entitled *Best Practice 1*. It was filled with information concerning best educational practice concerning the traditional school curriculum areas and the best practice recommendations were illustrated with stories from Chicago teachers using classroom experiences. This publication was expanded into the book expounding reform in most areas of K through 12 school curriculums and using actual teacher experiences to illustrate the ideas.

Of those exemplary teachers and best practices included there are 33 examples of female elementary teachers and one male elementary teacher. There are three female elementary administrators supporting best practices compared to two male administrators. There are six male high school teachers mentioned with four female high school teachers. One male high school administrator is mentioned while no female high school administrators are included. Of authors mentioned, 11 are male and nine are female. Conversely, of seven in-service workshops noted in the book, female teachers conducted six (Zemelman et al., 1998).

No matter how competent the individual feels in any discipline, teaching that discipline is a considerable risk. Brandon's (2000) study, showed that

Female teachers' self-efficacy regarding specific teaching competences was significantly lower than that of their male counterparts before teaching practice. However, after teaching practice, there was no significant difference in prospective male and female teachers' perceptions of their ability to perform the competences. Female teachers felt as confident as male teachers. (p. 42)

### *Peer Influence*

Children self-segregate in the classroom. When one first grade boy in the group refuses to use pink paper, the rest follow quickly in asking for another color.

Peers and peer interactions have long been thought to play important roles in the socialization process in general and in sex role socialization in particular. From the perspectives of the major theories of sex role socialization, peers provide information for children about sex role standards directly and indirectly. (Carter, 1987, p. 101)

As soon as the teacher-modeled intervention is removed, the original behavior bows to the greater influence of peers or parents and returns. For instance, elementary teachers note this phenomenon. Students returning to school in the fall exhibit the same speech dysfunction that was corrected or improved the previous spring due to the summer break influence of not practicing or the influence of siblings or parents with the same problem.

The fact that interaction with other-sex peers and cross gender behavior can be enhanced through adult intervention but return to baseline levels once the intervention ceases indicates the difficult task facing those who wish to encourage the development of “androgynous” behaviors and attitudes among children. Given the structure, composition, and nature of children’s peer groups and affiliation tendencies such a task, however admirable, becomes a formidable one. (Carter, 1987, pp. 117-118)

Carter agrees with Davies (1989) concerning the difficulty of confronting kid culture.

### *Families and Other Influences*

Connell (1989) found in Australia that the schools were probably not the greatest influence in the formation of masculinity. Although working with older students the finding seems applicable to this study. Connell finds that equity programs are aimed mainly at girls in order to comply with equal opportunity efforts. The question remains as to how to reach boys when a ‘role-reform’ logic is inadequate.

In most cases in the study I would judge the childhood family, the adult workplace or sexual relationships (including marriage) as being more potent. Teachers need to bear this in mind: they are not dealing with issues in a social vacuum. Nevertheless, schooling is the next most powerful influence across the board, and in some cases and some situations it is decisive. It may also be the most strategic, in the sense that the education system is the setting where an open debate about the democratization of gender relations is most likely to happen, and



can gain some purchase on practice. It has already done so in relation to the education of girls; not in relation to the education of boys. (Connell, 1989, p. 301)

In summary, it is not certain that men are needed as role models in the schools, or to be more precise, it isn't certain that the sex role model works. In any case, people who have experience working with children know that the majority arrives at school as gender conformists. A male, working in an occupation filling a role that the children usually experience as female, might only confuse the issue.

As far as exemplary teaching, females are cited as just as effective, if not more so than male teachers. Apparently, whoever attempts to influence the children will have to look to the parents to maintain the effect. Perhaps it is the parents who have to be convinced that male teachers and fathers are more than disciplinarians, then the children arrive at school with different attitudes. More research is needed.

### *Teachers, Society and Culture*

Teachers and administrators have many more concerns than gender construction during the school day, however, the relationship of children to the rest of society and their culture is important in the process of learning. Children's day-to-day experience of their peers and the adults around them is organized. It is aspects of this organization that is the fun and terror of teaching. Teachers feel that they can get it wrong and it is the unclear messages concerning what is right that drives some male teachers out of the elementary classroom. If Bem's (1993) report is correct, maybe teachers should relax at least 50% of the time. Bem (1993) reports that:

the theoretical perspectives on the social construction of gender that have dominated the social science literature for the past fifty years have emphasized socialization, situational constraint by the social structure, psychodynamic conflict, or identity construction by the individual. The first and second emphasize something that the culture does to the individual, whereas the third and fourth emphasize something that goes on with the individual's psyche. (p. 133)

Male teachers in the elementary school risk breaking the symbolic order of the cultural organization of schools as discussed by Gherardi (1994). Problems occur when various members of the cultural population do not agree to or understand the appropriacy of the performance. Gherardi speaks not only to the gender "we are," but also to the gender "we do" (West & Zimmerman, 1987), and the gender "we think," i.e., what we attribute to one gender is by default denied to another.

In our working lives we create both material products and the symbolic product of a role assumed by a sexed body and performed by a gendered actor for an audience which not only judges the appropriacy and coherence of the performance with the symbolic universes of gender, but actively participates in the production of competence rules. Grounded in the male and female is a symbolic order which pervades the whole of the cultural system and which displays considerable transcultural stability. (Gherardi, 1994, p. 597)

By entering the elementary classroom, male teachers break the symbolic order. Roos and McDaniel (1996) speak to the problem in their discussion of sex composition and gender type. "'Sex composition' refers to women's (or men's) representation in occupations, while 'gender type' refers to socially constructed perceptions of an

occupation as 'male,' 'female,' or sex-neutral" (p. 2). "The dilemma, therefore, is this: can we do gender without second-sexing the female, and how?" (Gherardi, 1994, p. 594).

Male teachers, if they are to model masculinity, must do so without second-sexing anyone.

### *Problems, Alternatives, and Minorities*

Androcentrism, male centeredness, and gender-polarization, the difference between men and women used as an organizing principle of social life, are cultural lenses which Bem discusses. Although she would prefer to combine them into a gender schema lens, she states the following.

Where androcentric and gender-polarizing social practices so narrowly constrain the roles of women and men that there are few choices, if any, about how to be a woman or a man, the internalized lenses of androcentrism and gender polarization serve exactly the same function in individual gender formation that all internalized cultural lenses serve in creating a cultural native. That is, they make the preprogrammed societal ways of being and behaving so normal and natural that alternative ways of being and behaving rarely even come to mind. (Bem, 1993, pp. 151-152)

Here then, is perhaps a place where teachers can work. Here is a possibility of a role model having an influence. We model or at least do not discourage alternatives.

Connell (1989) puts Bem's notions of gender construction into the culture of school.

The sources of information about sexuality and gender available to boys are often narrow and reactionary. It would seem an appropriate purpose for education to introduce its pupils to the whole truth about an important area of their lives: to gay sexuality as well as straight, to the range of gender patterns across the world, to issues of rape and domestic violence as well as happy families. To do this requires prioritizing the experiences of those who are usually silenced or marginalized, especially women. This is not likely to be easy to do with many adolescent boys, but it is at least a coherent educational goal and one that may call on motives of curiosity and sympathy to expand horizons. (Connell, 1989, p. 301; AAUW 1992; deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999)

Casper, Cuffaro, Schultz, Silin, and Wickens (1996) address an issue which cannot be a part of the Department of Defense Schools experience. There are single parent families, but not single sex families. Casper, Cuffaro, Schultz, Silin, and Wickens (1996) interviews revealed:

confusion amongst gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation. Many school personnel shared questions: Would children growing up with two parents of the same sex have access to what they considered to be “appropriate gender role models”? Do girls need to have a male parent in order to recognize their own femininity? Do boys need a father in order to exhibit masculine behaviors? Do boys need a mother in order to recognize their own masculinity? Confusion about gender and sexual orientation led teachers to wonder whether children raised in gay or lesbian families would grow up to be gay or lesbian themselves. In general, most lesbian or gay parents did not have these concerns. They simply wanted both

male and female adult—relative, friends, and teachers in their children’s lives who represented diverse cultures, careers, and sexual orientations. (p. 274)

This study addressed the issue of male role models without differentiating males into ethnic groups. No matter the ethnicity of the teacher, the role model issue remains. Student connection and responses to a male teacher would have to be affected by ethnicity. If we need more males in elementary school teaching, then we need more males from various ethnicities.

In reporting some of the issues, Brown and Butty (1999) found that the literature rarely includes issues faced by African American male teachers. The literature does report the changing demographics involving the students and teachers and points up the need for more minority teachers and the need for minority teachers to serve as role models for all students.

The projected growth in the size and diversity of the student population, the aging and increasingly gender-imbalanced teaching population, and high teacher attrition rates all contribute to the serious need for new teachers, and especially for teachers who reflect the national diversity.

The relationship between African American students and African American male teachers is a symbiotic one—that is, the number of African American males who go into teaching is influenced by the number of African American males who attend college, which is in turn influenced by the number of African American high school graduates and so on. Unfortunately the pipeline that moves African American students from public school to public school teaching is a leaky one (pp. 281-282).

Brown and Butty report these statistics:

...by the year 2000, only 2 of the 40 teachers that the average U. S. student will have during his or her K-12 school career will be members of a minority group. Although more minorities are attending college, currently only 5% of all college students are minorities, and that figure represents the pool of students preparing to enter into all professions, not just teaching. Attracting anywhere close to a representative number into urban or large county classrooms is thus an unrealistic expectation.

Clearly, not enough minority teachers will be prepared unless new methods of recruitment and preparation are developed. Particularly for African American male students, many of whom may lack appropriate father figures or role models, this is an unacceptable ratio. The need is particularly acute in early childhood and elementary classrooms. (1999, p, 283)

### *Perspectives on Masculinity*

Feminist research challenges the male role as central to humanity. Seeing masculinity as a construct provides a framework for a psychological approach to men and masculinity that questions traditional norms for the male role, such as the emphases on competition, status, toughness, and emotional stoicism, and that views certain male problems (such as aggression and violence, homophobia, misogyny, detached fathering, and neglect of health) as unfortunate but

predictable results of the male role socialization process. (Levant & Pollack, 1995, p. 1)

Various groups have posited perspectives on masculinity. Role theorists, functionalists, and culturalists illustrate the range of perspectives.

### *Role Theorists*

Role theorists see the substance of masculinity as a set of social scripts; a collection of 'stage directions' telling men how to act like men. Role theorists do not concern themselves with why these scripts take the forms they do. Where the issue has been addressed, theorists have suggested that the constitution of the male sex-role is determined by the needs of society. Sex-roles reflect the specific division of labour (labor) between men and women in meeting these needs. The male individual learns to be manly. He has it drummed into him. (Edley & Wetherell, 1995, p. 207)

### *Functionalists*

Edley and Wetherell (1995) further report that the functionalist school saw the functioning of society as analogous to that of a living organism. All segments of society work together to satisfy the requirements of society in much the same way that the parts of a living organism work together for its basic needs.

Bem (1993) contrasts the functional or traditional culture where children are taught skills essential to daily living and the welfare of the community to:

The institutionally structured experience of children in modern middle-class America, where everyone from six to sixteen spends seven hours a day, five days a week, forty weeks a year, in rigidly age-segregated classrooms being taught material that frequently has no immediate value to either themselves or anyone else in their community.

The point should be clear. The kinds of human beings that children and adults become depend on their daily social experience; and these social experiences are, in turn, preprogrammed by institutionalized practices—which are themselves but one embodiment of the same cultural lenses that are also embodied in cultural discourse. (pp. 139-140)

Edley and Wetherell (1995) add the following:

The social relations perspective on men sees masculinity as a set of distinctive practices which emerge from men's positioning within a variety of social structures (such as work and the family). As such, masculinity takes its shape from the institutions in which men are embedded. (p. 207)

### *Cultural Perspective*

Tradition enters the discussion from the cultural perspective.

Masculinity is a concept which gets transmitted from one generation to the next through talk and texts. The cultural viewpoint does not specify a particular model



of the male subject. As such, it does not compete with role theory or psychoanalytical perspectives in explaining how boys become men. However, it does imply that the meaning(s) of masculinity have to be learned or somehow internalized, for they come to structure the very ways in which men perceive both themselves and their social environments. (Edley & Wetherell, 1995, p. 208)

The teacher role model in a social construction should be doing more than modeling gender in all its forms. As students experience the daily grind Bem (1993) spoke of they are in constant contact with their teacher. As far as male teachers are concerned, Lavant (1995) posed the question concerning men in general:

What will the new men, the men of the 1990s and beyond, be like?...Many will still value strength, self-reliance, and reliability. Many will still show care by doing good for others, looking out for them, and solving their problems. Many will still be logical and still live by a moral code. But we can hope that fewer will continue to be strangers to emotions. They will have a greater appreciation of their own emotional lives and an ability to express emotions in words....Anger will retreat to an appropriate level, and they will be more comfortable with sadness and fear. They will feel less afraid of shame....They will be the fathers they wanted for themselves. (p. 234)

Lavant's hopes contrast sharply with Brannon's (1976) much earlier notion of masculinity as embodied in four themes: No Sissy Stuff, The Big Wheel, The Sturdy Oak, and Give 'em Hell.

*Conflicts and Double Standards*

Females are rewarded for certain masculine behavior while males can be punished for some feminine behaviors. The nature/nurture roles are blurred in the elementary classroom. Problems, punishments and retributions occur when the observer's vision is likewise blurred. Teacher actions are misunderstood or misinterpreted when parents, administrators or other teachers observe or hear about only a portion of a school day (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; McCreary, Wong, Wiener, Carpenter, Engle, Nelson, 1996).

Levant and Pollack (1995) note that:

...the pressures on men to behave in ways that conflict with various aspects of traditional masculinity ideology have never been greater. These new pressures—to commit to relationships, to communicate one's innermost feelings, to nurture children, to share in housework, to integrate sexuality with love, and to curb aggression and violence—have shaken traditional masculinity ideology to such an extent the resulting masculinity crisis has left many men feeling bewildered and confused and the pride associated with being a man is lower than at any time in the recent past. (p. 2)

At the same time,

Parents, especially fathers, reward boys more than girls for displaying gender-congruent forms of play. This program of differential punishment for gender role transgressions leads many males to avoid what society has prescribed to be female-valued. Because they avoid the feminine role, males lack the ability to experience as much "femininity" as females experience of "masculinity" and as a

result, they encounter a greater degree of restriction in their gender role development and expression. (McCreary, 1994, pp. 518-519)

Masculinity becomes defined as avoiding anything perceived as feminine. McCreary reports little research as to why cross-gender behavior is less tolerated in males than in females. Whatever the reason the phenomenon leads to what Archer (1993) referred to as male gender role rigidity. The boundaries of masculinity require attention and protection.

However:

In addition, the argument that attitude toward one gender's role is not a meaningful construct because social standards for women and men are inherently defined in relation to each other is hard to reconcile with the often made observation that in recent decades social views of gender appropriate behavior have changed far more for women than for men. (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1994, p. 486)

Further, male children are now more often discouraged from feminine activities while female children are often encouraged toward masculine activities in the classroom. Conversely, a few years earlier, Block (1984) apparently did not find that true. Neither researcher considered children in the report, but it must be assumed that the socialization process they refer to started during childhood and that it occurs in some part at school.

The socialization process, then, apparently has differential effects on the personality development of men and women. For males, socialization encourages more androgynous sex role identities, since some traditionally feminine concerns (conscientiousness, conservation, interdependency) are emphasized along with the press to renounce negative aspects of the masculine role (opportunism,

restlessness, impulsivity). For women, the socialization process fosters the nurturant, submissive, conservative aspects of the female role and does *not* move them toward concerns or personal qualities conventionally defined as masculine—assertiveness, achievement orientation, independence. (Block, 1984, p. 165)

The pressure caused by contradictory expectations for male behavior has resulted in many coping strategies. Some men leave or do not enter the teaching profession due to ambivalence caused by the nurturing aspect of the job. Some male high school students pretend ignorance or refuse to be caught reading or going to the library. These conflicts are part of the cause for extreme homophobic reactions and the appearance of various men's movements such as the Million Man March and others.

The agenda for the Mythopoetic Men's Movement is to reproduce the traditional norms of masculinity and femininity, to turn the clock back to a time when men were secure in their identity as men. There are elements of this reactionary perspective in public and political calls for more male role models in teaching. There is, however, no adequate definition of what is meant by 'role model' in the context of teaching despite its widespread use. (Thornton, 1999, p. 50)

Classroom teachers attempting to balance who they are and who they think they should be in relation to students should consider the following:

...gender is not just located at the level of interactional and institutional behavior (the gender we do), but at the level of deep and trans-psycho symbolic structures (the gender we think). At both levels gender is socially constructed, but whereas in everyday interaction the contents of gender can be negotiated with relative

ease, in cultural archetypes the contents of gender have greater stability, to the point that we conceive them as universal and ahistorical constructs. (Gherardi, 1994, p. 593)

Gherardi (1994) describes two forms of doing gender: ceremonial and remedial. Ceremonial behavior involves maintaining gender through tradition while remedial behavior does gender situationally. "It is the way which we weave these two forms of behavior together that resides the possibility of doing gender without second-sexing the female" (p. 595). Gherardi defined second-sexing as "...the systematic devalorization of the female. The dilemma, therefore, is this: can we do gender without second-sexing the female, and how" (1994, p. 594)?

The dilemma for male or female teachers is to relate or model the above notion of not second-sexing females while not same-sexing male children.

It is up to future research, however, to determine how far the conceptualization and measurement of the gender role self-concept will evolve from their present states. It must be understood by all that the BSRI (Bem Sex-Role Inventory) and PAQ (Personal Attributes Questionnaire) were designed to measure only instrumentality and expressivity, and that other dimensions of masculinity and femininity must be determined and operationalized in order for gender role research to evolve. A starting point may be the development of a qualitative research programme, eliciting descriptions of males and females in order to determine new attribute dimensions. (McCreary, 1990, p. 270)

That advice formulates one of the objectives of this study.

If communities including the military community view elementary teaching as “women’s work” the male elementary teacher in Department of Defense Schools and other schools has to recognize that concept and consider it in his relationship to his students, their parents, and to his professional activities. If the male teacher sees teaching as ‘women’s work’ and consequently less valued, then he will join the rest who leave teaching within the first five years. King (1998) stated that men’s choice to work in a less valued profession and that women’s use of care as a professional attribute have been found objectionable. There is the dichotomy. Paechter (1998) spoke of reconstructing the citadel of learning and culture to achieve equity. The teachers, parents, and administrators who form the culture need a common understanding on many issues and work together towards restructuring the desired outcomes for students.

### *Summary*

This review of literature explores issues relating to the need for male teachers in elementary schools. In coming to an understanding of that need it has been necessary to read, consider, and relate research which addresses the nature/nurture dichotomy, gender constructs, gender modeling, gender display, sex-role stereotyping, role rigidity, and other stereotypic behavior. Research finds male teachers are valued as role models for students, but some researchers restrict the benefit to boys. The nature/nurture dichotomy for the male teacher is a dilemma as nurturing behavior is less valued and seen by some as contrary to male role modeling.

The literature shows that females are rewarded for masculine behavior on the job while males can be punished for feminine behaviors although the pressure is there to act as a nurturer. The conflicts result in coping behaviors. Too often that manifests itself in young male teachers leaving the profession or never entering teaching at the elementary level.

This study involves interviewing military parents and DoDDS teachers and administrators. Their responses will be compared to aspects of the literature in order to formulate conclusions regarding the expectations for male teachers in the elementary schools.

## CHAPTER III

### Methods

“Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories” (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). The assignment to these roles extends to both personal and professional domains.

The purpose of this study was to examine administrator, parent, and teacher perspectives about the need for more male teachers in the elementary schools and compare the reasons for that need to the purposes male elementary teachers in the elementary schools report for entering the profession. And, if individuals agree with the research suggesting that male elementary teachers are needed as male role models, record and analyze those character traits or behaviors recognized as attributes of an appropriate male role model.

### *Research Design*

This is a qualitative study consistent with the assumptions of a qualitative paradigm defined by Creswell (1994). “This study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture,



formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (pp. 1-2).

Of the three basic forms of educational research, I have used a critical research perspective defined by Merriam (1998). “...you would be interested in how the social institution of school is structured such that the interests of some members and classes of society are preserved and perpetuated at the expense of others” (p. 5).

The study fits well with Merriam’s (1998) “key philosophical assumptions” regarding qualitative research.

1. Individuals interacting with their social worlds construct reality.
2. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
3. Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork.
4. Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy.
5. The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive (pp. 6-8).

Creswell (1994) agrees with Merriam’s views on the qualitative paradigm differing only in nomenclature. This study relates reasonably well with his ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological approaches to qualitative research.

The methodology or process of the study was inductive. “Categories emerge from informants, rather than are identified a priori by the researcher” (Creswell, 1994, p. 7).

This study differs from Creswell’s description of qualitative research mainly in the use of the literature. “In a qualitative study use the literature sparingly in the beginning of the plan in order to convey an inductive design unless the qualitative design type requires a

substantial literature orientation at the outset” (p. 24). The study is based on feminist research. The notions of hegemonic masculinity and gender as a social construct are central in the literature and to presentation and analysis of the data. Much of the reading and analyzing of literature was done after deciding on the study and before fieldwork. I needed the thoughts and findings of other researchers before I could decide on the research questions and the content of the interview questions. That reading continues and offers new insights to the fieldwork and possibilities for further research.

### *Researcher*

The researcher has been a classroom teacher for 41 years and is coming to the close of that career. In that time I have found that the best practice of teaching lies in a humanities and humanitarian approach to constructivist pedagogy. That implies that children do not discover knowledge in isolation. Peers and facilitating teachers aid in that discovery. They show what they know by doing things, as well as write, talk, and read. A humanities approach to skills building requires time and is personal. The teacher is involved. The teacher approaches students and is approachable. Showing what you know on the student's part happens sooner than, for example, the responses to a written test. The student knows right away that the project is successful if it works. If it does not, the approachable teacher, the humanitarian is there to encourage another avenue. The students need your attention and sometimes all at the same time. In constructivist teaching, you urge, you maneuver, you nurture as well as demand effort.

My teaching experiences have proven to me that I am in a role society regards as subordinate, a role that involves considerable preparation in becoming an attention giver or nurturer. The education profession requires the teacher to serve, or to give attention, to parents, administrators, and fellow teachers as well as to the individual student and the class. These requirements or conventions are not internalized as filling the masculine role. Although expected to attend students, fellow teachers, parents, and management, the male teacher faces the subliminal label of a sexual suspect. This attitude is personified by male teachers in my school system who know, who are told that they should never touch a student. The suspicion is in direct relation to the age level and subjects taught, and by physical proximity to the students.

If society chooses to regard males as dominant, a dominant male in a profession seen as deviant for males becomes a good juggler of issues which must be kept in the air at all times. The issues involve relationships between the individual male teacher and administrators, parents, and teachers as well as his students.

I have taught for a short time in the United States at the high school and college levels and in the Department of Defense Overseas Schools for a much longer period. Half of my career has been spent teaching children from kindergarten to fifth grade and the remaining half in teaching middle and high school aged students. There are daily pressures encountered while dealing with students in the higher grades, but it has been with elementary level teaching that these pressures have reached more personal and higher priority levels. Teaching your discipline in high school and the preparation involved in doing well is different than elementary level teaching where nurturing the students is as high a priority as teaching them.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

To confirm notions gathered from the literature and from personal experience as a teacher, data was gathered informally from colleagues, male teachers in elementary schools, concerning the viability of this project. All were willing and sometimes enthusiastic about sharing information and opinions. I continually observed administrators and parents in their relationships to teachers and became interested in conducting interviews on a more formal basis. Students' reactions to me and to other teachers are a part of every professional day, but cannot be included in this study as informants. Data collection began formally with structured interviews complying with Department of Defense Education Activity research request regulations and with university Institutional Review Board approval.

### *Sample Selection*

To involve the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, DoDDS, community in this study, research permission had to be obtained by application very similar to that submitted for university Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix B). Approval was gained to work in three elementary schools in the Isles District (see Appendix C).

*The Actors*

Three groups of people were interviewed. School administrators (principals and vice-principals), elementary school classroom teachers and specialists, and parents of students in the schools are included in the study. The principals at each school agreed to be interviewed as well as to support the study to be conducted with the teachers in the schools. Male and female teachers, male and female administrators and in some cases, both parents of some students were interviewed. Teachers and administrators, who are also parents, wanted to speak to both professional and parental issues. One male pre-service teacher was interviewed as was one teacher aide, who also works and teaches at a youth center attended by children between the hours of school dismissal and the time their parents pick them up.

Although the male teachers were the primary focus of the study, I felt it was important to balance their thoughts with interviews conducted with female teachers, as it was important to hear views from both male and female parents. Elementary school specialists teach art, music, physical education, gifted and talented, special education, and other specialty areas. They often teach all students enrolled in the school, but have less responsibility for a class in the same sense as classroom teachers do. They have more contact and more direct responsibility for students than the principals.

The interviews were conducted with male and female administrators, parents, and teachers, the three groups that comprise the school community other than the children. The responses of these three groups, observations, and teaching experience provide

triangulation. The relationship of the literature to the fieldwork and personal experience have acted as guides for the path taken on this research project.

Creswell (1994) states that the qualitative paradigm parameters indicate a nonrandom selection of informants for data collection. “The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select information (or documents or visual material) that will best answer the research question. No attempt is made to randomly select informants” (p. 148). To that end, I interviewed all male teachers in the three schools with one exception.

### *Setting*

The study was conducted in three Department of Defense Dependents Schools. The schools are on military bases in one school district. The military bases and the schools vary in size. The mission of each base differs, but there is no difference in the military’s support for the schools on any of the bases. Base commanders regularly provide release-time for active duty military to attend school functions. In addition, there is great community involvement with the schools. Members of the military community actively support and hold offices in PTA, Booster Club, serve as mentors for special needs students, coach school sports, and much more. Although members of the military community volunteer in the schools, others, military spouses, teach full time.

The teachers have similar backgrounds and training although coming from all over the United States, as do the people in management. The exception is that there is at least one local national in each school to teach the culture of the host country. The military base is not a real home for anyone, but it is a place where all members of the

community attempt to create a microcosm of the United States. The tour of duty for a military family is usually three-to-five years; hence the school population is in continual flux. A military community differs from a civilian community in many ways, but of great significance is that the military is a highly socialist society with no unemployment. There are single-parent families, but every family has a breadwinner and every breadwinner reports to a military supervisor. The parents of the children we teach have the time, the opportunity, and are encouraged to take part in the children's education.

### *Events*

The informants were provided with a letter (see Appendix D) explaining the interview process and signed a consent form (see Appendix E) as proof of agreement to participate in the study. Each informant chose the time and place for the interview and understood that they could have a copy of the interview after it was transcribed and could change responses or decide not to allow the interview to be used. Some wanted a copy of the interview, but no one chose to exercise the right to change anything or withdraw participation. The protocol questions and other pertinent communication are included in the study as appendices.

### *Interviews*

The actors or informants were interviewed by using no more than six questions. However, other issues were brought up by the informants and sometimes with emotion.

They wanted to be heard. No one asked to be excused from answering any of the questions. Participants spoke at length on issues concerning male elementary school teachers and other aspects of school. The responses to the interview questions are now mixed with my thinking about and reactions to observations conducted over a long career in teaching. Having watched the contortions of male teachers on the playground when children run to them for a hug was mirrored in the frustration of the replies from male teachers and in the concern from parents. Parents spoke about teachers with some restraint, at first. They waited to a point well into the interview to voice concerns about male teachers. One parent used the term, “fluffy,” and the term, “gay” was used once by an administrator and once by a teacher.

#### *Data Recording Procedures*

The interviews were audio recorded on a hand held voice activated mini-cassette recorder. The tapes are numbered for identification and demographics are kept separately in a safe place to insure anonymity. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and copied to a floppy disk. Hard copies of the transcription are included with the disk, demographic information, and the informants signed permission to conduct the interview. These research materials are secured in a locked file cabinet and were available for review by myself and my dissertation advisor only.



### *Data Analysis Procedures*

Data analysis was conducted as each interview and, in some instances, as groups of interviews were conducted. The groups were sorted in my requests for participation as parent, administrator, or teacher. Sometimes the informant chose to answer questions from more than one point of view, (i.e., teacher/ parent, administrator/teacher/parent, pre-service teacher/parent, or any variant of the above groups by self-proclamation). They used phrases like, “When I was younger...,” “Before I was a parent...,” “Before I became an administrator, I taught...,” and “As a teacher I feel that..., but as a parent I feel that...”

The themes or categories are drawn from the replies to the questions asked in every interview, with some new themes coming from the informant’s wish to extend the interview beyond the questions asked. The themes are grouped in the data presentation section of this paper. “Categories should reflect the purpose of the research. In effect, categories are the answers to your research question(s)” (Merriam, 1998, p. 183). The data is presented as quoted information. The person quoted is identified as a member of one of the three groups, parent, teacher, or administrator as the point of view is relevant. It was not plausible to keep the groups separated as the replies indicated themes common to more than one group.

### *Verification*

“Determining the accuracy of the account, discussing the generalizability of it, and advancing possibilities of replicating a study have long been considered the scientific evidence of a scholarly study” (Creswell, 1994, p. 157). The steps in verification are covered under the following subheadings: internal and external validity and reliability.

Merriam (1998) states that:

Many writers on the topic argue that qualitative research, which is based on different assumptions about reality and a different worldview, should consider validity and reliability from a perspective congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying the paradigm (p. 200).

I would rather have approached this study with the notion of making a documentary film. Because the issues are personal which makes it difficult for all actors involved to achieve any commonality, seeing and hearing the issues played would make a common understanding more feasible. Creswell (1994) said, “Qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability in qualitative studies” (p. 157). “Trustworthiness” might be more readily achieved with the opportunity to see classroom activities. That notion aside, verification of this study relies on the following procedures to ensure internal and external validity. Reliability depends on the effort made towards internal and external validity. Reliability or generalizability is affected by the setting of this study, as the setting is atypical.

### *Internal Validity*

The conclusions are based on the data, in this case, from three sources of interviews. To make sense of the data, I try to use logical steps in analytic approaches based on discovering themes or codes and using an ethnographic research procedure, componential analysis, "...which shows differences among informants on select criteria" (p. 157). Likenesses and points of agreement are equally important for a multidimensional view. Data is collected from multiple resources. Informants for interviews know they have the right to change or withdraw any comments they have made. They know that they can add any later thoughts to the data. Some have agreed to further questions, or "member checks" serving as follow up when new issues arose during the data collecting process. This process has reinforced accuracy of information and helps the responses match reality. Observation is ongoing. A fellow member of the cohort and study group partner has been invaluable in serving as a peer examiner. I have been involved directly with the informants in the research setting personally and professionally. Familiarity with the interviews has been achieved by self-transcribing each tape, by listening to each tape repeatedly, and by reading each transcription several times. Themes and commonalities were highlighted and grouped as they were recognized. The informants did not remain in consistent groups as they spoke from different points of view within the interview.

My advisor has been constantly involved with the research process. Researcher bias has been addressed in the Institutional Review Board application for research, in this chapter and in Chapter 1. My years of teaching experience from kindergarten through

college level are bound to result in some bias concerning this study while it also provides an insight, which addresses internal validity.

### *Reliability*

Because what is being studied in education is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher at getting it, and because the emergent design of a qualitative case study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible (Merriam, 1998, p. 206).

Merriam places less importance on reliability and more on dependability and consistency. This study is congruent to Merriam's notion that the qualitative researcher, "...seeks to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it" (p. 205). I achieved dependability as the analysis and conclusions relate to the data collected. Presenting the data as quoted material collected from the interviews, the results should make sense to the reader. The common themes, which arose during the interview process, are presented in the data presentation section. The themes are derived from the opinions expressed by members of three groups in three settings. Generalizing from those opinions and statements as reactions to predetermined questions adds to the possibility of replication.

Replicability is possible using other military settings. Replicating this particular study outside the military community is a concern as some social aspects of a military

community are unique and different to the civilian sector. However, the issues addressed in this paper are approached in the literature as common to society around the globe.

### *External Validity*

The interviews were conducted with people who were in a unique situation, in the overseas military, at the time of the interview. All are citizens of the United States and have lived in communities in the United States. That cannot always be said for the children, the students in DoDDS schools, but they were not interviewed. There are many aspects of the overseas military community, the setting, which are not like a civilian community in the United States. However, the attempt is made to replicate home in the overseas location and the military community setting is replicated throughout the world. How that unique community relates to other or civilian communities is subject to further research. For instance, the parents' relation to their children is the same whether they live in the United States or are based overseas. The parents' relation to their occupation is not the same as the typical job within the United States. They are trained in how to react to torture and imprisonment, and are expected to face death if necessary in carrying out their duty. That ethos affects their observation of and reaction to the civilian community of teachers in the DoDDS schools. Merriam, 1998, defines external validity as "...concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (p. 207). The qualitative paradigm is inductive. If the general resides in the particular, then generalizability can be achieved with a nonrandom sample especially if bolstered with multiple points of view of different types of actors as data informants.

Merriam further states that rich, thick description, typicality, and multisite designs enhance the possibility of generalizability. The study provides enough rich, thick description to enable the reader to transfer an understanding to their own situation or to see that the study does not apply. Atypical aspects of the study are thoroughly explained. Three sites combine with three groups of interview informants to offer diversity in the data results.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Merriam (1998) said, “First and foremost, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant (s)” (p. 165). Creswell lists seven safeguards to protect the informant’s rights (pp. 165-166). The seven safeguards have been followed throughout the work on this study.

1. I presented all research objectives in writing to each informant and the objectives were verbally articulated before the informant signed the permission to be interviewed.
2. I obtained written permission from each informant before proceeding with the interview.
3. I provided all requested forms to the university Institutional Review Board. In addition, a request to do research was filed with the Department of Defense Overseas Education Activity in Washington, D.C., with local management including the District Superintendent, and with the principal in charge of each school site. Each had to sign the agreement before research could begin.

4. I informed each person interviewed that the interview would be recorded on a handheld cassette recorder.
5. I provided each informant with the opportunity to either decline or indicate a request for a copy of the transcript.
6. I have given foremost consideration to the informant's rights, wishes, and interests when drawing conclusions and reporting results of the data.
7. I made sure each informant understood that the final decision regarding anonymity rested with him or her. Each informant understood that they could rescind permission to use the information gathered from the interview.

### *Summary*

The research for this study is an attempt to discover concerns and opinions of three groups of people: elementary school teachers, their school administrators, and the parents of students in the schools. The issues are the perceived need for more male elementary teachers, the reasons for that need, male teachers as role models, nature/nurture roles in teaching, and the reasons male teachers in elementary education leave the profession. The literature from feminist research is basic to the study. The concept that gender is a social construct is assumptive to the discourse.

After reading the literature and considering my own experience in teaching, questions were developed to include in semi-structured interviews with school community informants from three school communities. The questions address the study question and the objectives set forward in Chapter I of this paper and are influenced by

the literature and my advisory committee. Informants consistently offered more information than probed by the questions. Kindergarten through college level teaching experiences have informed my selection of this area of study as well as the collection and interpretation of the data.

By asking for the opinions of elementary school teachers as well as of people who are aware of the responsibilities of teachers and can bring pressures to bear on the daily lives of teachers, I feel that there is a unique triangulation of data. The documents available from the community, from the teachers' union, and from the National Education Association and the National Census add to the validity of the study. The reliability of the study is maintained with thick, rich description as a hallmark of the qualitative paradigm of research. The issue of replicability is problematic as the study is conducted with informants who live and work on a military base outside the continental United States. Further, the most important constituents of the school community, the children, cannot be included as I don't have the right to question them, although some parents voluntarily reported information provided by their children.

There are gender and ethnicity issues in any organization. Ethnicity issues in education are not approached in depth in this study other than the attempt for an ethnic balance of the people interviewed, and the possible influence on analyses. Ethnicity should be approached in further research. The issue of gender is central to this study as the gender of teachers affects the opinions of the people interviewed in the data collection process. My bias towards the issues encountered in the reading and the research for this study lies in not experiencing gender or ethnicity as affecting the teaching of a particular discipline or in motivating students to learn.



Ethical considerations and standards are maintained at all steps in the research with the informants' rights in mind at all times. The standards are in accordance with the Department of Defense Education Activity and the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of Oklahoma State University

## Chapter IV

### Data Presentation

Why did I become an elementary teacher? It was easy. The drug culture was not a part of farm life in Oklahoma where I grew up unless you count smoking ordinary tobacco. The first marijuana I smelled was at a Parent Teacher Association meeting. I was teaching in a small DoDDS high school on an army base in Germany. Parents and teachers were just beginning to become aware of the teenage drug culture. We did not know the extent of the problem or how to recognize the problem where it existed. Something was wrong. Boys were growing long hair. This was the early 1960's.

The MP's (military police) were presenting aspects of the problem to a largely uninformed group of parents and teachers. The presenters decided that one of the points of awareness should be the recognition of pot by smell. They lit a small bowl of marijuana at the back of the room and waited for a reaction. The teachers in the front row began to look around for the fire while two NCO's (non-commissioned officers) began to search for a short in the wiring. Parents in the back rows had silly smiles and didn't move. Since that time a synthetic substance mimicking the odor of burning hash has been used in awareness meetings.

I loved teaching teenagers, but like the MP's pot I was burning out. There was a notion that the art teacher should know how to cope with the students thought to be on

dope or who were exhibiting antisocial behaviors. The pressures caused by the necessity to monitor behaviors that were not a part of my experience were great whereas actual teaching was of secondary importance. There were some wonderful moments of creativity in teaching and the results from students were different, and sometimes astounding, but I could not maintain personal and professional goals while working with some students who were escaping reality with a new kind of chemistry. The low point came when I nailed the windows shut in the second story art room because I could not be sure who might decide they could fly.

King (1998) wrote about caring for, and caring about, children and the moderate level of dissonance that this induces. After 11 years of high school teaching, I found the level of dissonance with teenagers moving from moderate to extreme. I switched to elementary teaching where I hoped to find moderation.

### *Respondents*

Respondents are introduced followed by their views on the apparent need for male elementary teachers. The domain of need is addressed by data using the following themes: gender balance, male influence, role model and male reaction to students. This information is followed by a note of caution from respondents for male teachers. The following domain of reasons to teach in elementary is explored through the themes of influence, positive reinforcement, job availability, abstract values, preference, and role model.

All respondents are adults connected to one of three Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) on a complex of military bases in the Isles District. DoDDS schools are located on military bases in countries all over the world including the United States. The student population of these schools is comprised of the dependent children of active duty military personnel, the children of civilians who are employed by the military and certain tuition paying students who attend as space allows. No children could be interviewed for this study. In the attempt to protect anonymity, all respondents are provided with pseudonyms. There were 27 interviews conducted. Six of these were administrators, 12 were elementary teachers, six were parents, and three members of staff with close contact to elementary students.

### *Parents*

There were five parents interviewed who were not staff, teacher, or administrator at the elementary schools. The parents are introduced in this section. The majority of DoDDS students' parents are active duty, uniformed military personnel. These military families move about the world as the Department of Defense sees fit on average of a move every three to five years. Consequently, every DoDDS student has attended several DoDDS schools as well as the usual public schools within the United States. Many attend local schools in host countries, especially in England due to the common language. There are a small number of home-schooled students. As a result of their chosen career, the military parent or guardian has experienced school systems varying enormously in size, location, and population. Many military parents were military brats themselves.

The children of the Department of Defense civilian employees including schoolteachers, administrators, technologists, and contractors attend DoDDS schools and are an active minority in the community. The spouses in the civilian and military families are hired as local hire teachers and substitutes for DoDDS schools.

*Anne.* I see Anne as just the sort of parent you want to have involved in your classroom. Anne knows the school and the teachers. In fact, the interview was conducted at the school. She was not only willing to be interviewed, but offered other parents' names as people willing to share opinions regarding the school. She has no questions regarding her role as a parent. She does face issues regarding her children and school squarely and immediately.

Anne is the parent of three children. She approaches school life as an extension of home. Anne has a plan. She works outside the home, but at a job where she is available to her children when they are at home. She speaks of her own childhood positively. She knows her children's teachers well and is very helpful in the classroom when parents are needed. She finds her children's teachers praiseworthy and lets them know that. She maintains that she would not wait to approach a teacher if she thought things were not going well.

*Lora and Sean.* Lora and Sean, parents, make a comfortable couple to be around. He is a stocky, quiet sort of guy. Lora is a person who flows through the day in softly fitting clothing and is ready to talk. She always wears a sculptural piece of silver jewelry that represents the family. They will come to the school offering help with anything they

can do, and have been active in parent/school organizations. Their children are self-assured and active in class and in extra-curricular activities. Sean has a friendly face and is thinking of teaching after retiring from the military. Sean works evenings so I have never seen him in uniform. When he visits school, he looks like a dad, not like a soldier.

*Bob.* Bob is a middle school teacher and the parent of two boys, one in the elementary school and one just entering high school. He said that he would never want to teach elementary, but he plans to become an administrator and would work in an elementary school in that capacity.

*Kellie.* Kellie, a parent, married to an educator and involved in school activities as well as substitute teaching, has two boys in elementary school. She wrote answers to the protocol questions. Time was one factor in this decision, but the other was to think longer about the answers as well as taking the chance to interview her children.

### *Teachers*

The typical DoDDS teacher has had teaching experience in the United States before applying for DoDDS. There are now many teaching couples. When I started teaching for DoDDS most teachers were single and we lived in Bachelor Officer Quarters with the military personnel. Most teachers will say that they came into the program to travel for two years and the local school board in the United States held their job for them. Then the reality of having the comfort of Little America on the military base and

the novelty and charm of living the European vacation takes over, and they stay, with few exceptions, until retirement. The core population of DoDDS teachers are well educated, experienced, and daring enough to leave family, friends, and country to start another style of living. They enjoy the best of both worlds, the security of the American military and the fun of the constant tourist. The balance of the teacher population is the locally hired spouse usually the wife of an active military member. There is the rare male spouse of a female active member of the military who substitutes or teaches full time. There are a few tourists who apply during their vacations and are hired just as school begins in the fall.

Of the teachers interviewed there were nine male teachers, three female teachers, one male student teacher, two male and one female member of school staff who have contact with children. Six administrators responded at times as teachers recalling past experience.

The male teachers are in self-contained classrooms or teach in specialist areas such as art, music, and physical education. The male teachers are introduced first, followed by the female teachers, the student teacher, staff members, and last, administrators.

*Jim.* Jim's students seem to take pride in being in his room. They assume bragging rights because he is a tough teacher and he is often the only male teacher at his grade level. Jim does not appear to be a man who would sing grammar rules with the children, but he does, and it works. His students remembered the grammar rules from third grade when I taught them language arts in junior high. Jim projects the persona of a dedicated, organized teacher. Although a kidder with colleagues and the students, he is

never frivolous about his job. He is a professional. The student teachers he has trained leave his classroom well prepared.

*Sam.* Sam is single, middle-aged, and very organized. His classroom is not messy although he does art and craft projects with his class. Sam prefers primary level teaching and has taught kindergarten. He has taught in the United States as well as in DoDDS schools and in another school system outside of the United States. He has witnessed parental concerns about male teachers come to the point of charges brought against teachers, but it has not altered his drive to teach elementary school.

He teaches primary level children presently, but has taught Kindergarten. “When I became a Kindergarten teacher, Wow! That was really something.” Sam has a straightforward down-to-earth quality. He is not pretentious, and he is always able to laugh at the unsolicited random acts of lunacy that are a part of all educators’ days.

*Ted.* Ted has elementary classroom teaching experience but made a career move into technology education. He does in-service training for teachers and works with groups of children by arrangement with the classroom teacher. He has a refreshing take on the sanctity of computers. They do not always work and it’s not always user fault. Many appreciate this attitude.

*Frazier.* Frazier didn’t drift into education. He changed his major in college and has chosen to stay in teaching, but mentioned mixed feelings concerning whether to



encourage his son to enter the profession. However, he never seems to have a bad day with the kids, and doesn't consider leaving the profession.

*Cameron.* Cameron worked with his father in advertising for over a year, but left the agency even though he was supposed to take over the business. Although Cameron has changed from classroom teaching to a career as a specialist in technology education, he has strong feelings that good teachers should stay in the classroom and out of administration. Cameron has handled tough situations and changes in teaching assignments without much trouble. He is excited about teaching and has strong opinions, which he stated in lengthy and rambling discourse. He had a lot to say about education and the duty of teachers.

*Huck.* Huck is demonstrative in his affection for his two children. He is reserved in all other ways. He gives the impression that you could ask for his assistance anytime. Huck will help out anyway he can. If there came the time he could not, he would give you an honest answer and that would be acceptable. You can trust Huck. The students react to him in just that way. Huck approached the interview willingly and his answers were calm and laconic. He does not raise his hand in faculty meetings to speak, but adds to the discussion if called upon. He has been a volunteer teacher in a third-world country.

*Greg.* Greg has taught several years in the classroom and even more as a special teacher who sees the students for only one subject. He has had experience in the military and jobs other than teaching. He has experienced society's negative opinion, but said that

he loves teaching and that he would not consider any other profession, not even school administration.

*Roger.* Roger is one of two people I know of who has never taught in the United States. He has always taught in the DoDDS system and retired shortly after this interview. He had experience at all levels of teaching, but ended his career as an elementary teacher. Roger knows how to get things done like getting a teaching job in DoDDS without the mandatory prior two years experience in the United States. You would never place him in an elementary classroom until you have seen him in action with little kids.

*Joan.* Joan is a very energetic teacher who has a wonderful family. She expresses the importance of family in her relationships with others, especially the children in her classroom. She is a thoughtful person who speaks her mind. There is no guile. Joan, an energetic outgoing teacher, said that we [society] make it bad for ourselves. Joan is a person who is noticed in a crowd. She is attractive and fun to be around. She is often in the company of people in business who do not value teaching as a profession. She reported that during conversations at business functions, when she mentions that she is a teacher, the conversation shifts to something else.

*Miranda.* Miranda is a teacher who combines the qualities of a good and caring parent, a loving mother, and an exceptional teacher. She is sensitive to the students as well as to her colleagues. She will often give me a clue as to which student to especially

notice for the time that I have her class in a specialist's area of the curriculum. Miranda is a teacher and a parent. In my observation, she shows the same concern for her students as she does for her children. She crams a lot into her days with the kind of job she does as a teacher combined with the care she shows for her children. As she gives a lot of herself, she expects a lot from her children's teachers.

*Margie.* Margie's schoolroom is a very busy place. There is no place to rest your eyes. Ideas hang from the ceiling, cover worktables, and are tacked to the walls. The hallways outside her classroom are covered with art work and writing samples. There is follow-up work reflecting all the projects carried out in specialists' classes. The children's self portraits are displayed next to their digital photographs mirroring the same toothy grins.

*Ben.* Ben was a student teacher at one of the Isles District Schools with special permission from the military. Ben took masters level courses in education on a military base and did his student teaching at a DoDDS elementary school. He is the father of two children and interested in their growth and education. He has almost enough years in the military to retire and had some interesting things to say about young people in the military. He was encouraged by the military establishment to prepare for teaching as a part of the Troops to Teachers program.

### *Staff Members*

The following respondents are three members of staff who have contact with children and who often responded as both parents and teachers during the interviews.

*T. J. T. J.*, as he is affectionately called, works with children in the elementary school and in the Child Development Center after school, on weekends, and all day during the summer. He is a father and retired from the military, but has a very youthful appearance. He was a single parent for several years before remarrying. He is very fit after years of working out and healthy living practices. He is referred to as the kid magnet. The children seem to trust him and want his attention. Although not tall, he is an imposing size and inspires confidence with a friendly smile and a demeanor that pushes no one away. It is easy to see why the elementary students and teenagers seek him out for a chat or if they are troubled.

*T. J.* depends on his military retirement to bolster the pay he receives for teaching. However, he talked more about the joy of working with children than pay.

*Jennifer.* Jennifer works at the school, knows the teachers and students well, and works with kids outside the school setting in Boy Scouts. She is a force within the school. As a part of her job, she monitors the lunchroom and has no difficulty in addressing a class as to their behavior while their classroom teacher listens attentively. She is able to let people know how she feels. She moves about her job quickly and with purpose. I wondered if she would have time for this interview. She made time as well as writing an

e-mail over the summer regarding her views concerning work with the Boy Scouts and the notion of role modeling. Jennifer makes decisions.

*Matt.* Matt is a male employee in an elementary school who works with children outside the classroom. He is a father, an observer of school life, and has thought about training to become a teacher. Although not a member of the faculty, the students will come to him on the playground for help or to settle a dispute. The students trust him to be fair. Phenomenally, he knows every student's name.

### *Administrators*

The typical DoDDS administrator is a former DoDDS teacher or counselor. The majority of administrators are home grown; they are from the DoDDS talent pool. They start as assistant principals after applying through an Education Career Placement process available to all DoDDS educators. The usual educational preparation applies. The administrators must change schools every five years in contrast to teachers who can stay in a location as long as a position is available. The administrators and the parents change whereas the teachers are fairly constant. The statistics are constantly changing, but my teaching experience has been with a majority of female with a few male assistant principals. The government follows its rules regarding gender and age discrimination.

The administrators have been interested in this study and have been supportive of the research process. They had strong and unreserved opinions about what teaching and

school management should be, and how students should be treated. As a group, their responses were more emotionally charged than teacher or parent responses.

There were two male and one female principal interviewed and three female and one male assistant principal interviewed.

*Les.* Les, a principal, is a parent and former teacher. He has had a stellar career as a student and a military career as an officer. As a principal, he was known for attention to detail.

*John.* John, an assistant principal, is a highly respected administrator, former elementary teacher, and parent. The parents in the community know his family and believe that he understands parental concerns. He is a former teacher who can speak to teachers as a colleague. The school community had high expectations for his move to administration. He has a down to earth quality that inspires trust. He is seen around the school more than in his office. He dresses very fashionably which the middle school kids notice. The elementary children respond more to a ready smile and high fives on the playground and in the area where students meet the bus.

*Joe.* Joe, a principal, is a well-known administrator in the DoDDS system. He is bigger than life in many aspects. His home and family are a large part of his existence. His wife is a teacher and is even more outspoken than he is. I would not believe that there is a secret in that household. They say what they think.

*Karen.* Karen, an assistant principal and former elementary teacher, talked about her change into administration. She said that she had no trouble accepting traditionally male tasks as a part of her job. She worked on the school grounds planning as well as digging in the soil to implement landscaping. She took over the job of organizing the supply room by dressing in old clothes and digging into the dust and piles of outdated materials. Soon the male supply team were following her lead and using her organization plan.

*Jean.* Jean is an assistant principal whom the faculty considered approachable. She was very busy keeping ahead of the duties she had, but the teachers felt that she found time for them. She had the reputation of being all business at times, but very fair. She was on the playground, in the hallway, and monitoring the lunchroom. The students knew who she was and what she stood for. She shared funny student stories during individual principal/teacher conferences and left anonymous notes and small gifts in teacher mailboxes when someone was having a hard time or to celebrate a victory.

*Elizabeth.* Elizabeth, a principal, is the communicator. Her answers to each interview question ran to a full page of single spaced transcription. She talks to the students while they are waiting to go into class from the buses. She talks to parents when they report to the office on business and when they pick up children in the afternoon. As a principal and friend, she often talks to teachers when they are free. However, she manages an organized faculty meeting that follows the agenda and terminates on time.

Her quiet time is in her office long after school is out, but I suspect she is answering the many e-mail messages that arrive daily.

The respondents differ in gender, age, experience in teaching and experience with children. Their only commonality is their connection to a Department of Defense Overseas School and their desire to replicate the curriculum, atmosphere, and activities of a stateside school with the addition of the culture of the host nation.

### *The Need for Male Teachers in Elementary Schools*

All educators and parents interviewed agreed that there is a need for male teachers in the elementary school. They addressed the need for a greater number of male elementary teachers, but there was more to it than that. The parents' perspectives regarding the need for male teachers are presented first. These are followed by the perspectives of educators, then administrators, and lastly the male teachers' reasons for becoming teachers as the two domains, need and motivation, are closely related. Neither administrators nor female teachers volunteered information regarding their reasons to enter education.

Like the educators, the parents expressed a need for a gender balance, but they also talked about other aspects of need more forcefully than did the educators. There were four principles of belief expressed as a rationale for the need for male elementary teachers: gender balance, male influence (the students' reactions to male teachers), role model, and the male teachers' reactions to students. The expressed needs seem heartfelt



but stand in counterpoint to words of parental caution and reservation, which are included at the end of this section.

### *Gender Balance*

The literature shows that there are more female than male elementary teachers. The comparative numbers are more equal in middle school and high school. There are more male than female administrators at all levels. Brown and Butty (1999) report

The projected growth in the size and diversity of the student population, the aging and increasingly gender-imbalanced teaching population, and high teacher attrition rates all contribute to the serious need for new teachers, and especially for teachers who reflect the national diversity. (p. 281)

Although their study concerns ethnicity, they felt that gender balance is a significant part of national diversity.

The literature talks about the need for gender balance in the teaching profession by saying that more female teachers are needed in higher education and as administrators and that more male teachers are needed in elementary schools. The literature lists statistical percentages of male and female teachers, but does not make recommendations for an appropriate ratio of male to female teachers that would indicate gender balance.

The respondents mirror the research. Respondents from all groups said that we need more male teacher because there are so few and they used the words gender balance, but when asked they could not say how many males were needed to achieve a gender balance other than the numbers should reflect society.

*Parents*

Anne said, “I guess it would be nice to see more male teachers. I don’t think we should have more one sex than the other.” However she followed that with, “It would be nice to see one or two [male teachers] in the elementary school. Like one in the younger grades and one in the upper—like sixth grade.” That statement does not indicate an equal number of male and female teachers.

Sean said, “I think, no matter what your position is in the school, it would be better to have more men involved.”

*Educators*

Joan talks about the real world although she doesn’t use the term national diversity.

We are preparing children for the real world, and this is supposed to be an environment where children live in a worldly environment where they learn appropriate skills and mannerisms. Male teachers are needed because they are part of the real society. I think that we think differently, and we react differently. We are two very different beings, males and females, but we need to listen to each other’s insights. It parallels the older/wiser theory. We respect people who are more experienced for what they know. So men and women can then respect each other for what they can offer because we know we have different attributes.

In our present school environment, because we are seeing a higher percentage of kids coming from broken homes, I have noticed that there are children that seek out the attention of a male or a female depending on which parent they are missing the attention from. Therefore, my point is, if you have both males and females in a school and a nice mix of those, you are offering that caring environment, that nurturing environment that some of our children need more today. I think a higher percentage of males would be a good goal. I don't know the specifics of what we could increase it by, but more than one or two in a school.

Ted addressed the issue that gender balance does not necessarily mean better classroom practices, and followed with the needs of society

The women do an excellent job, probably better than the men. I think the contact with males is good for the children because we have a lot of single parent families and sometimes there is a very limited male contact.

Frazier approached the gender balance question from a gender construct point of view.

The students need to see people of both genders in the educational field not just as authoritarian figures: the principals, policeman, the generals or whatever. We usually think of these as male roles and the students need to see that at least with education everyone can do the job as well as anyone else and there really isn't any difference.

Karen said, "I think that children need to see that males and females can both do a variety of jobs."

Elizabeth said, “Schools are almost like a reflection of a child’s home and I think it’s very important for a child to have a mother and a father.”

Jean said, “What we need in elementary schools is a balance, heterogenetic, heterogeneous group of teacher so that what we have in our population is reflected in our work force.

John said that the teacher population, “...should reflect the demographics of your community, as much as possible. When I say a balance, at least one, if possible, male teacher on each grade level.”

Les summarizes well by saying:

What I am looking for is simply a balance between the genders so that young people can see that there are multiple career paths to take, and that they can think about themselves, about their own interests and their own proclivities, and make up their own minds about what direction they want to go without feeling societal pressure.

### *Male Influence*

A male influence in the classroom was seen as a necessity by most respondents in context with single parent families or a military family with one or more parents away from home on temporary duty assignments (TDY). They wanted to see a male teacher counteracting the stereotypical thinking of who can be a teacher. A need was mentioned for a masculine point of view in committee and faculty meetings as well as in the classroom. Some people said that the influence needed is of a strong disciplinarian.

*Parents*

Jennifer said:

Male teachers in elementary schools are great. This is good because of single parent homes, fathers who are not active in their children's lives, and fathers who are TDY [temporary duty] a lot in military families. These children still get the influence of a man in their lives so they will know, early on, that both males and females can contribute to their lives and world.

Sean said, "Right now, you think of a teacher as being a woman and sometimes you picture the schoolteacher as being the old lady, you know."

Lora said that she wanted her children to see men other than their father as nurturing people.

*Educators*

Ted, speaking for the children, said:

They don't understand there is a gender difference if they're never in contact with these people. They need to know that there are gender differences, not to develop any fears of males, but to understand that males can interact with students, be teachers, [he paused and then said] and provide sports.

Les said, "In my experience, many parents think male teacher in elementary and think discipline." He said that most parents who request a male teacher are having

behavior problems with their son. Parents say that they are looking for structure and discipline and want a male teacher.

Frazier said that he refuses to take students into his classroom on request from parents or administrators for the sole purpose of providing a male influence for discipline. He thought parents assumed that male teachers were stricter disciplinarians and more authoritarian than the females.

I think if it's anything, it's probably the opposite. I think men can tend to be more laid back in a classroom. A male [disciplinary] influence isn't going to do you any good. If there are any aspects about being a male that a male brings to a classroom, I don't think it's necessarily discipline.

T. J. responded to the question regarding the need for male elementary teachers by saying that he had twenty years in the military. He had been a single parent with three girls, and depended on female teachers for their nurturing qualities. Conversely, he said

The way our society is, what our society has become, means a lot of single parent households. The majority of the time the single parent is a mom, and a male figure sometimes helps the parent in that. You know we [teachers] see children eight hours a day. The children see a female teacher for eight hours, then they go home and see mom another two or three hours. What we don't see is any men except for the principal or vice-principal in the education sector, versus, I have children with me eight hours a day [at the school and community center]. They respond differently, I'd like to think positively; it isn't always the case, but I try my best.

John, reporting on his early years of teaching, said that by having a male staff member in his first school a lot of things were looked at differently. He reported his colleagues saying, "I'm glad a man is on the staff because the kids could come to you instead of going to the principal." Some parents were more willing to talk to him than to the administrator.

Joe said, "Men in an elementary school setting tend to smooth the waters when it comes to complaining." He said that the female teachers say that they want males in meetings because it quiets everybody else down. The males get to the point.

In summary, the parent and administrator respondents react to male elementary teachers and recognize a male influence. The parents felt that their children reacted to male teachers by behaving differently. The male teachers reported being requested by parents for disciplinary problems, but did not like the idea. They wanted their influence to be felt in other than authoritarian ways, although they did complain about lengthy meetings and getting off the agenda. Apparently, the male propensity for adhering to the agenda is appreciated by administrators, male teachers, and reportedly, some female teachers.

### *Role Model*

Respondents often used the term, role model, in regard to male elementary teachers. The responses were similar but not the same to the notion of an influential male.

Jennifer said, "It [males in the classroom] gives children the opportunity to see positive role models of men interacting with children.

Lora was interviewed with her husband and the children were also there. She said: My husband is a very active father, but they [her children] need to see that what he does is right as a father because their friends' fathers might not do that. They need to see some role models. [They need to see] that men [other than their father] act this way. I think men need to go into these roles like women need to go into the roles [firemen], well, men need to be nurses and teachers or librarians.

Jean said:

I went to buy several bottles of wine so that I would not have to go back for a month. I got that look from parents. There is definitely a certain expectation that we model the kind of adult behavior that we want our children to become as they enter adulthood.

Cameron felt that ethnicity should be coupled with gender to properly represent the issue of the need for more male teachers. He told a black elementary teacher friend that he hoped that he would not go into administration. When the friend asked why, he answered

Because you are such a wonderful role model for these kids. Somebody like a young black boy who says you've got to go into basketball, baseball, or other sport, and here you are showing them you can be a caring, concerned individual. You don't have to be a jock. I hope you don't [leave teaching] because you are so good for these kids.

Cameron also feels that we need more Asian men in the classroom especially in the DoDDS schools in the Pacific where there are a few female Asian teachers, but



almost no male Asian teachers. The majority of the student population in the DoDDS Pacific region is Asian and Amerasian.

Anne said, "I'd like to see what is inside the classroom also outside the classroom." In talking about a particular teacher whom she considers a role model she said, "The kids know how he lives and how he carries himself."

In summary, the male teachers provide a substitute male when one is needed. By doing a good job in the elementary classroom, the male teachers prove to the students that a male can do the job. There are societies' expectations for role models or people in position to influence children.

#### *Male Reaction to Students*

The parents, teachers, and administrators reacted to a male influence in the elementary school and saw a need for it. Conversely, they reported that sometimes male teachers react to students differently than their female colleagues by using the ability to quickly deal with problems and get over it.

#### *Parents*

Jennifer, speaking as a parent and a member of staff said:

I do think that the male teacher handled things differently and was able to deal with certain behavior problems that came up. Probably not better, but quicker and with less emotion, maybe, than a female teacher. You know, it's not necessarily

good or bad, but I think sometimes male teachers can get over it quicker than female teachers.

I then asked, "It's not good teacher/bad teacher?"

She replied with:

No, dads get over things much more quickly than moms do. I've seen the way that you and other male teachers and even staff members behave with the girls and talk to them and everything. They get that positive thing going; it may help them not [to] have so many hang-ups when they get older when it comes to males. So I just think it's necessary; you need both.

Kellie said, "Men are more forgiving (or forgetting as some would say) and less likely to hold a grudge. That may be needed for some kids in the school and also the school climate."

Cameron told a classroom story concerning students who had been taught a lesson using a specific software program and they were using it for a project that had nothing to do with the lesson. They reminded him that he had taught a skill the week before and they were using it. "I told the kids I should be upset, but I can not be upset because you are taking something we have learned before and incorporating it into this in a very creative way."

Frazier talked about discipline and said that he has the kind of personality that lets a lot of things go past. "I am comfortable with what they do, and they learn what I do expect and what I do not expect. We all come to a happy medium somewhere in between."

Male teachers are seen to forgive or forget more quickly than female teachers. They appear to not fight as many battles, but to go for winning the war.

### *Caution and Reservation*

The administrators receive parental requests for male teachers, there is a shortage of male teachers in elementary schools, the male teachers report that finding a job is easier; however, the same respondents who want a gender balance in the schools, role models, and disciplinarians voice words of caution.

### *Parents*

Anne in discussing whether she would choose a male teacher for her children if given the choice, said

I'd have to talk to that particular teacher, because like I do now, I talk to the teachers to see exactly where they are coming from. I try to talk to other parents who have had that teacher to see their viewpoints on how they taught. I don't know if we need more male teachers.

Sean said, "So I think no matter what position, whether it is a special teacher, or a homeroom teacher, a gym teacher [male teachers are needed]—it's just you got to be careful what you do."

Lora followed with, “The sexual issue drives them [male teachers] away. I do not know what to do to overcome that. You can not, speaking as a parent; you can not just trust someone.”

Cameron said that if he should see a second or third grader crying that he would be reluctant to go to them and put his arm around them. “I would be reluctant to do that even though that is maybe what the kid would want.”

Frazier related a story about his fifth grade teacher who left teaching after one year. He could not cope with students in suburban Washington, D. C, “They needed someone with a lot of experience and he did not have that.”

In summary, being male does not solve all discipline problems in the classroom. There is a discomfort level for teachers and parents concerning the level of male nurturing possible. Respondents’ first reaction was often to advise a gender balance for the school staff, but that balance was never equal numbers of male and female teachers.

*“Why did I become an elementary teacher?”*

While talking about elementary education and the problems males encounter in the teaching profession, teacher respondents reminisced about becoming elementary teachers. The discussion concerned the reasons males leave elementary teaching, but the respondents often gave their reasons for becoming teachers. They were not asked to justify or explain their entrance into teaching, but it often came out in the interviews. Although many of the male teachers interviewed are parents, they mentioned the need for

male teachers from an educator's point of view, and often from a personal point of view in that they explained why they had become teachers or why they had remained teachers.

None of the teachers interviewed said that they had majored in social studies to become historians or in science to become scientists. The male teachers mention influence of former teachers and family, positive reinforcement from parents and students, job availability, the general notion of abstract values, that teaching is a worthwhile profession, preference of elementary over high school teaching, and role model.

### *Influence*

The most common cause for entering the teaching profession for males was the influence of former teachers or family.

Jim talked about his years in school and the influences of male teachers and his father compared to female teachers and his mother. He could get away with anything with his female teacher and his mom.

I had three male teachers when I was in elementary, but they weren't all there at the same time. And you still remember those guys' names. Those guys really made an impact on me. Mr. Farmer was the guy, I knew right then, I wanted to become a teacher just from him.

Ted said, "I had one male teacher in the fifth grade. He was a very good teacher. He may have influenced my desire to come into it."

John, an assistant principal and former elementary teacher, has taught several subjects at different age levels. He talked about his reasons for entering the teaching profession. "I came from a family of educators. I enjoyed teaching. I did a lot of volunteering in the school systems and decided that's what I wanted."

Ben, the student teacher said, "In my elementary [experience], I had two male teachers and they were encouraging."

### *Positive Reinforcement*

Male elementary teachers are the minority group. Consequently, they are noticed. The male teachers were positive about the attention they receive. The exception many felt was being chosen to take behavior problems.

Greg has taught all ages but had this report about the primary grades.

All parents that I've ever dealt with when I taught second and third grade have said that it's so good to have a man as a teacher for my child at such a young age because most parents, especially parents in my age range, had never met a male teacher until middle school or high school.

Frazier, popular with students and teachers took this realistic approach:

Probably, one of the most rewarding comments that I get from parents is, "My children finally enjoy going to school and they haven't before." Now, maybe they're not learning a damn thing, I mean, that could well be, but they enjoy being here and there's a lot to be said for that. We send them to these institutions, these schools and make them do different things and for some kids I can imagine that is

not a pleasant experience. If they only have one pleasant experience in their whole educational career, then I hope that's in my classroom.

I just heard from a former student today. Now in this age of Internet, I'm hearing from students that I've had long, long ago, and the comments that they tell me are nice. I mean, I've only heard from a handful. Maybe the rest of them are all cursing my name, who knows? The student I heard from today was an eighth grade girl. Strangely enough, all the other ones have been male. Isn't that interesting? Of all the students that I've heard from, only the one I heard from today was a girl.

T. J. told this story of parents' reaction to the consideration of his moving from a position as kindergarten aide. He reported that parents talk to him and hope that he will continue to be the kindergarten aide next year especially if they have boys entering school. They apparently want their children under his tutelage even as a teacher aide. There are believers in his views on what he called legal and earned authority.

[the parents ask] 'T. J., are you going to be in his kindergarten class—are you going to teach?' [I reply] 'I am not a teacher; I am a teacher's aide. I'm just a helper.' [They ask] 'Are you going to be in that class?' I'll say, 'Yow, I'm going to be there.' [They continue] 'Cause my son really wants to be in your class. They really want to be in your class.' [Finally] 'I am not the teacher. Ok?' This year I am not going to be in kindergarten. They want me to work in either the developmental pre-school or I will be a teacher's aide for one of the other ladies.

Jim said that he was often requested as a teacher for single parent families in the United States. He is still requested and not always by single parents or parents of a

problem child. “The kids, at the end of the day, come up and give you hugs and they are all saying how good you are and how much you have done for them. That is just another aspect of it, the rewards of it.”

John said that he came from a family of educators. “I chose to go into elementary school [teaching] because of many factors, one being it was a tradition of my family of educators, aunts, sisters, cousins.”

### *Job Availability*

The need for teachers to fill classrooms waxes and wanes with the population shifts. The larger teaching force is in the elementary schools. Early on, the male teachers knew they would have a better chance for a job at the elementary level because of job availability. There are fewer teachers teaching a greater number of individual students in the middle and high schools. They were advised or came to realize that as males they had another advantage over female pre-service teachers. They were the minority for affirmative action and that status appears to hold constant.

Jim said, “I knew I wanted to teach and I knew if I got into elementary I had a job because I was a man. I was a minority; I could basically be hired by any school district and they would want me.

Ted talked about his college days and said that in his introduction to education classes, his professor told him that he would be unlikely to get a job with his social studies major. However, the professor said that there was a demand for men in



elementary schools. He advised that there were more jobs available in elementary school and that it would not be much different than teaching high school. Ted said:

I got more job offers than the females who were hunting at the same time and a couple of places said [that] they wanted young males who will actually get out there and do stuff with the students.

John, a former teacher, said he found that as a pre-service teacher wherever he interviewed he would have a job whereas his female classmates did not.

### *Abstract Values*

The male teachers did not discuss the problems of teaching. They mentioned low pay but did not dwell on the subject. They did get louder and more animated when they spoke of the joy of teaching. That might seem an obvious response if you have stayed in teaching, but it is not true for all professions. Many people stay in a profession due to salary and other benefits even the location of the job. Most of those attractions do not apply to teaching. DoDDS has an edge on the location aspect if you like living outside the United States. The teachers talked about teaching in more abstract terms.

Jim said, "Some people might think of this [elementary teaching] as an easy job, but it's not. It's hard work, but the rewards are unbelievable. I mean it's never a dull day; it's always a different day."

Frazier did not major in education as an undergraduate. He made some changes, however, and became an elementary teacher.

I decided a long time ago that I wasn't out for the big bucks or the prestige. I thought, what jobs are available that really make a difference in society, to mankind, or whatever? I thought doctors certainly have an important job. Right behind them, I saw teaching as being worthwhile. I only went into the field because I thought it was a job that was worthwhile, much more worthwhile than a lot of the other jobs people have.

Cameron is excited about teaching. He said, "I became a teacher because I felt it was much more creative." He enjoys his job and likes kids.

We [male elementary teachers] have a lot of skills that we can bring to the classroom and that's the thing that attracted me to education. There are so many different avenues. I love being creative. I love being challenged. Every year is a new year, and it's a new group of students if you are in a self-contained classroom, and you can continue to challenge yourself by challenging the students in new and different ways, (deep breath) and to me that's exciting.

John followed the lead of members of his family by teaching.

Found out that it [teaching] was one of the best things going because of the fact that I was able to reach kids. Some of them had never seen a man in the classroom before and some were already in fifth grade. It was thrilling as well as revealing to me, how kids would react. I became a better individual.

Ben had worked at an elementary school as a student teacher as a part of a Masters Degree program and the Troops to Teachers program. He was active duty military at the time of the interview. He already had some of the zealous feelings that teaching would help him put into action.

When I started working here, it was an eye opener. I had my preconceived notions about elementary school teachers, but I didn't think that the job was this much. In the last five years I've seen a new breed of people. I've met a lot of what we call Airmen who are between the ages of 18 and 20 and they've got this attitude. I started seeing these people about five years ago and I wanted to see how they got this attitude. They feel like someone owes them something because they have made it this far. Because when I was raised, you said yes sir and no sir.

Being an elementary male schoolteacher you can do a lot to shape the students. That's one thing I would like to teach the kids, because I think it's something these older kids have missed.

### *Preference for Elementary Teaching*

Although many male teachers are in elementary teaching positions because of job availability, there are many who are there because they prefer teaching children to older students. Jim and Greg said that many of their friends and even the parents of children had asked them how they stand being around kids all day. The following are answers to that question.

Sam said that he thinks that teaching is important. Teaching is immediate interactivity for Sam. It is not just making an assignment and checking the results. He prefers working with manipulatives to grading papers and writing extensive plans.

I like getting down, I would rather get down on the floor and play with the kids and work with manipulatives than grade papers. I hate grading papers. I hate

writing stuff—lesson plans and things like that. There are guys who are just the opposite. They would rather be in the upper grades. Everything is cut and dried. This is it. This is the grade and then go on. I like more of the play aspect of it. So that's why I'm down in the lower grades.

Jim said, "People thought I was crazy when I went into elementary." His college friends asked him why he wanted to put up with kids. He answered

I love this age kids, I mean, you can get a lot done with them, and it's worth showing them that you can be a male and be an elementary teacher.

I mean it's okay to be an elementary teacher. You don't have to be middle school teacher, you don't have to teach science or math or social studies.

Greg said that parents have often asked how he puts up with little children all day. He answers that he prefers elementary teaching, never suffers teacher burnout, and has no intention of leaving the classroom.

### *Role Model*

The role model aspect of teaching for males has been discussed in a section of the study discussing the need for male teachers. It is repeated here to allow male teachers the chance to express how the concept affects them.

Huck was talking about times at school during troop deployment. The students exhibit a need for their teachers in many ways just as they show disrespect for their teachers at other times. The teachers are aware of the students' reaction to their

instruction as well as to their personality. Huck voiced that perception and it forms a part of his willingness to stay in elementary teaching.

So they [students] get huggy and they will always be happy to see you. You know you are only filling that role for forty minutes [as a specialist teacher]. But still it is something in their life that they recognize as something that is needed. You're a role model, a male role model in whatever you are doing, I guess.

In answering his college friends' taunts about ankle biters with a question, Jim asked why they wanted to teach kids in high school who did not want to be there. He is forthright in his opinion

You don't have to be a high school teacher. You can actually be an elementary teacher and be a role model too.

The male teachers realized there was a demand for male elementary teachers that gave them an advantage over females in finding employment. Their former male teachers had influenced them and volunteering in schools provided the impetus to try education as a career. There were family influences also. Families see a teaching degree as insurance. "If you don't get a job anywhere else, you can always teach." The experienced male teachers neither expressed that attitude, nor complained about the pay. They talked about the rewards of teaching. It was seen as a difficult but satisfying job. The male teachers described teaching as more worthwhile than other jobs. Teaching makes a difference in society. Moreover, they said that teaching elementary school is creative, challenging, and even thrilling because of the discovery or the realization that they had unique and useful skills to reach kids. The female teachers did not mention the reasons they chose teaching as a career.

*Reasons to Leave*

The respondents were encouraging about the need for male teachers and within that context gave males reason to consider staying in elementary teaching. The opinions from parents and administrators who had stated positive views regarding the need for male elementary teachers also give male teachers reason to leave the profession. The teachers, while talking about coping strategies and the reality of teaching, could give useful information to a college student considering teaching as a career. If a new or pre-service teacher heard the interviews, they would have heard reasons to reconsider entering teaching. None of the male teachers expected to make much money. They don't like their position on the salary scale, and they do not expect it to change. Aside from the economic aspect, according to the literature, the feminization of teaching resulting in the male minority role drives many out of the profession (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1999; Loadman & Klecker, 1993). However, none of the male teachers expressed occupational feminization (Roos & McDaniel, 1996) as a concern, although they spoke of their minority status.

Male teachers' friends use the terms "ankle biters" and "rug rats" for children to make jokes about elementary teachers. Elementary teaching is not considered as macho as a single discipline teaching position in secondary education. Obviously, none of these negative attitudes toward elementary teaching were seen as problems to the male teachers interviewed for this study. They stayed in teaching. I explore these negative themes first then return to encouragement to remain in teaching in the next section. The salient

themes were gender stereotypes, trust, discomfort with children, pay, preparation, and respect.

### *Gender Stereotypes*

Lora brought the subject up by saying, “Do you think it is because of the sexual stereotype?”

Sean answered, “I think it is. It is like a step up for a woman to try to take on a stronger man’s job, compared to a man going down to like being a teacher or a nurse or something.

Lora responded, “Right, like he could not be a doctor so he is going to be a nurse.”

Sean closed the discussion with, “Right, he could not do that so he is stepping down. It is like a step away out of responsibility.”

Administrators said that the majority of parental requests for particular teachers involved asking for a male teacher to help discipline a male student. Two male teachers said that sometimes they had been “dumped on” by getting more than a fair share of problem boys.

Cameron said that he taught in a school with six teachers working in fifth grade. He was the only male teacher and he was asked to take all children with behavior problem histories. Jim said that as a beginning teacher, he was the only male teacher in a school of 1500 students. He reported not only getting problem students, but was called from his class to the administrative offices to deal with children sent from other classes.

*Trust*

An administrator, Karen, said:

I just think that very often male teachers in early childhood feel like they are going to be under extra scrutiny because people want to know, “Why does that man want to spend that much time with little kids?” as if that is abnormal. But it is not, not in any way.

Lora mentioned the sexual issue of males seen as predators causing the loss of male teachers and followed by saying that a parent cannot trust anyone. The implication was that although that attitude is no easier to incorporate than accepting that all whites are racists by virtue of being white, you accept it and get on with bettering yourself.

The following conversation with Sam is powerful enough to be included verbatim. His reasons for teaching primary grades are the reasons others have given that males stay out of teaching. He has developed ways of functioning as a male teacher that helps to ensure good practice in the classroom and lessen parental concern. By doing so, he is able to stay in primary teaching.

I’m a man in the lower grades so I always have the door open. When I was [teaching] in the kindergarten, if there was a boy or a girl who said, ‘Oh, I can’t get my pants off,’ I would always make sure that the aide in the room was watching me unbuckle pants so that they could go to the bathroom. Just so we wouldn’t have that—and I made sure that I was never in the room alone.

I then wondered out loud, “Do you think the female teachers have to be concerned about that?” He replied,



I think they should be. I do not think they're concerned enough about it. Because society, parents, thinks a lady would not do that. You know you never can tell when someone will come out and say, "Hey, what did you do to my child?" But males are always looked upon as the predators.

Roger said, "I just get upset about it because how can people question my integrity as a human being?" Miles (1997) addressed the issue by saying

Trustworthiness, as an attribute of male identity, implies authority and control.

Men must be seen to be trusted and trustworthy. Male authority must be taken at face value and not questioned. (p. 485)

### *Discomfort with Children*

Women and children first. Most males are reared knowing this phrase whether they believe it or not. Children are meant to be seen and not heard. Fewer males might know this maxim, but after a day's work, they believe it. The real issue is not polite behavior or a nap; it is perception.

Sean, a male parent who volunteers at school, said that he felt very uncomfortable when children hung onto him, hugged him, or called him Dad. Les, a male administrator, said that societal expectations caused men to be uncomfortable around children. The implication was that society does not think that men are supposed to be comfortable around children.

A male teacher approached the issue in a different way. Frazier said male teachers probably require different personalities than other professionals in order to teach and care

for children. Two male teachers questioned men's perception of teaching. Sam and Cameron thought that some males feel that it is beneath their dignity to get on the floor and interact with children. Such activity is seen as beneath their stature. Roger said that in his experience he had seen male teachers start in elementary and find that through lack of preparation or attitude they could not handle it. They moved up to high school or out of the profession.

### *Pay*

Johnston, McKeown, and McEwen (1999) report that "The ranking of teaching as eighth in the list of [10] occupations is consistent with the general disagreement of respondents, regardless of gender, with the statement: 'teaching is a well-paid job (p. 59). Matt, a male parent and member of staff, said most men avoid teaching due to the poor pay. Interestingly, he blamed the poor pay on men in agreement with the literature. Griffin (1997) says that as early as colonial times women accepted less pay for teaching (p. 7). As salaries drop in a profession men leave. "A major explanation for why occupations feminize is because men downgrade some traditionally male occupations in their job queues, typically because the occupation deteriorated in some way" (Roos & McDaniel, 1996. p. 7).

Les, an administrator, thought problems caused by low pay replace the zeal to teach. He said, "Pay becomes an issue, often later, I think, after some of that idealism wears thin, which it will after awhile." He further stated that females might go into teaching with the idea that it will be a fulfilling occupation whereas a man might go into

teaching thinking that it is a stepping-stone to something else. It is not an irrational decision because the move to administration is the quickest and sometimes only way to increase salary. John, an administrator, felt that the issue of the inability to retain male teachers involved ever increasing responsibility without compensation.

### *Respect*

If you do not produce a saleable product, if you must attain an academic degree and continued education to do the work, and if you do not earn much money for the effort, why would you be respected? Recalling T. J.'s words, respect is earned not authoritatively imposed. The school children do not know how much money the teacher makes. They respect actions displayed in the classroom. Joe felt that that attitude is undermined by parent influence.

Matt, who graduated from high school in 1976, said that in the context of behavioral limits a line that was not crossed by his childhood peers is now erased. He was talking about schoolroom behavior. Ben, an active duty military parent, commented on a similar issue within the ranks and felt that the disrespect started in the schools at a young age.

Joe stated that the lack of respect and the lack of parental and community support were the major reasons people leave teaching. He was very emphatic, saying that this was the first, the second, and the third reasons for the loss of male and female teachers. According to Joan, a teacher/parent, it is not just the lack of respect from children; it is

society's attitude toward male teachers. She felt that her husband's business colleagues thought of her teaching as a hobby and that opinion lessened in regard to male teachers.

### *Preparation*

Making good grades in school does not in itself make a good teacher. Just so, good grades do not insure financial success in the business world. There has to be more than the ability to ace a test.

Frazier recounted an incident involving his fifth grade teacher who had the ability to teach, but had left teaching after one year because he didn't have the experience to cope with inner-city students.

Stereotypical thinking regarding gender, issues of trust, discomfort with the company of children, low pay, professional preparation, and respect from students, parents, and the rest of society were concerns for the practicing male teachers. The teachers voiced these concerns on a personal level while the parents and administrators identified and shared their concerns. Obviously, the teacher respondents were not concerned enough to leave teaching, but the percentage of male elementary teachers who leave teaching is high. Further research is needed to compare the negative aspects of teaching found in this study to the reasons given by former elementary teachers for leaving teaching especially those who did not become administrators.

### *Summary*

Male and female teachers, parents, and administrators were interviewed. The expectations regarding males' performance as teachers and human beings in the school setting are heard in the interviews with parents and administrators. The administrators who are parents and who have been teachers and the teachers who are also parents add to the richness of the responses. The insights gained from female elementary teachers provide balance to the interviews especially regarding conflicts, standards, and expectations.

The data presentation reflects the respondents' expressions of the need for male elementary teachers using gender balance, male influence, role model, and male teacher reaction to students as rationale. Some respondents followed the expressions of need for male teachers with words of caution.

The male teachers explained the reasons they became teachers and the reasons they remain in teaching. They cited the influence of teachers and family, positive reinforcement, job availability, abstract values, the preference of elementary teaching over the one discipline aspect of middle school or high school teaching, and role model.

The respondents gave the male teachers reasons to be discouraged with teaching elementary. The themes were gender stereotype, trust, discomfort with the company of children, pay, respect, and preparation. The teachers did not voice the same concerns for considering leaving education as the literature suggested.

## CHAPTER V

## Data Analysis

The Child is father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

*William Wordsworth (1770-1850)*

This portion of Wordsworth's poem, *My Heart Leaps Up*, is used as an example of paradox. The problems considered in the research conducted for this study are similarly ironic. One paradox lies in the need for male teachers to be nurturing facilitators in the elementary school, but they are warned against being perceived as too nurturing. The male teachers feel that they are expected and are requested to be strong disciplinarians, but the disciplinary hand must be a caring one.

You learn your fathering skills from your father, and, in many cases those fathering skills are very poor. If they [students] see nurturing kinds of skills in a teacher, and in a positive sense, they will learn. Maybe some of the parenting skills they've learned from the father will carry over, but they will also have other skills, male teacher skills, that they will be able to pass on to their children.

In this quote, Frazier, a teacher, parallels Wordsworth's paradox; the child is father of the man, and further states that the teacher can be a part of making that transition a better one.

This section of the paper seeks to confront and analyze the data without lapsing into the fun of finding only paradox or the cynicism of irony. It is too easy to consider the male concerns for working in a feminized profession as ironic in comparison to the female concerns caused by working in a male dominated economy. It is too easy and inappropriate to consider concerns voiced in either sector as merely whining complaints. I was surprised during the interview process to experience the length and intensity of some of the responses. The following section of the study is comparing the expectations of the respondent groups to the attitudes of the male teachers. Although the domains derived from the interview responses, all respondents did not approach every domain.

### *A Comparison*

If school faculty and committee meetings are reliable sources of information, then teachers expect a lot of each other, of themselves, and are often their own worst critics. Administrators and parents of the students in the schools also have expectations. Those expectations are high and are voiced at town hall meetings, School Advisory Council meetings, parent conferences, and through e-mail messages and phone calls to teachers, the school secretaries, and to the administrators. The demands of the school community concerning the classroom teacher are not unreasonable, but they are opinions based on emotion as well as on reality.

Expectations are based on and voiced as wants and needs. You hear the question, “What do I want for my child?” The answer is obvious, “The best.” What do the school community constituents, parents, teachers, and administrators, expect of the local school? The military community has come to expect the best. Where shall I buy my new home? The real estate agent uses the local school’s reputation as a selling point. The military community overseas wants and deserves schools that are as good as schools in the United States. Parents do not look to books and paper as making the difference. This reality is comparable to an old DoDDS proverb, “Make do with what you have.” Perhaps that is basic to any organization that depends on the availability of defense funds. The proverb does not apply to personnel or their performance. Coaches are expected to win, the band is expected to be loud and end the selection all at the same time, math is expected to be taught, and scores on SAT’s and Terra Nova tests are expected to be high. Parents expect that all students meet the requirements for college entrance. The expectations are high.

The third objective of this study purposed to compare the expectations of the school community, parents, administrators, and teachers to the expectations of male elementary teachers. I sought to explore the reasons male teachers gave for choosing elementary teaching as a career, or moreover, the reasons they have stayed in teaching and to compare those reasons to the expectations of the school community. The degree of conflict in these two notions is causal to the problem in this study. Indeed, from this conflict arises the framework of attributes that parents, teachers, and administrators expect of a male elementary teacher. Finally, I wanted to know the ways in which these expectations supported the characteristics of role model presented in the research literature?



Male elementary school teachers stated varying reasons for entering and staying in the profession. These were the influence of family and their teachers from elementary school, the positive reinforcement from parents and students, job availability, abstract values such as creativity, excitement, challenge, reward, worthiness, aspects of role model, and a preference to teach more than a single discipline.

### *Reasons to Stay in Teaching*

Jim said that teachers do not expect to make much money, but they do expect to have a job. Ted spoke of affirmative action enabling males to get a job in elementary education, but Frazier talked about entering the profession because teaching was a way to right society's shortcomings. It makes a difference. Cameron approached teaching as a challenge and the challenge renews daily. It is a chance to bring personal skills to the classroom. Jim said that male teachers stay in teaching because the job is exciting, the positive reactions of students are a daily reward, and teaching is more creative than other work experiences. Finally, as Frazier said, "Teaching is something I am good at. I can reach kids."

The reasons given to stay in teaching are that jobs are always available, teaching is worthwhile, and makes a difference in society, teaching is a challenge, creative, and exciting. Teaching allows a chance to use unique skills that males in other professions do not have or do not use, and it offers daily rewards for those involved. These reasons are compared to educator expectations of themselves and other teachers in the next section.

The male teachers who were interviewed for this study, who have obviously remained in the teaching profession, have stated their reasons for continuing in the teaching profession. These several reasons are grouped in the following domains: making a difference, using unique skills, abstract values of challenge, creativity, and excitement, worthwhile occupation, and that they find teaching rewarding. These domains and the parent expectations of teachers follow for a comparison.

Elementary classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators stated their expectations of male teachers. Their responses expound the qualifications necessary if you propose to call yourself a teacher. The teachers were talking about themselves and colleagues, but they sounded as though they were offering professional advice to new teachers. The following shows that what the educators say teachers should be doing as professionals matches the reasons that they gave for staying in teaching. Their advice or expectations are grouped with reasons given to stay in teaching; themes brought forward from the previous section: making a difference, unique skills, challenge, worthwhile contributions, and the rewards of involvement.

*Making a Difference.* Ted said that teachers have to interact with students; assure them that they need not fear males. The students should realize that males are not only authoritarian. They are people oriented to caring and care giving. Mike said that the male presence demonstrates that men can be good teachers and excellent role models. Frazier advised providing a good, a pleasant experience for students.

In speaking about stigma related to gender appropriateness, Les, an administrator, said that the education profession is behind some of the others [professions] getting past

gender stereotype, and we have to make more effort. He referred to the stigma of gender stereotype relating to appropriateness to the profession and the issue that males are thought by some parents to be the better disciplinarians.

Joe said that a lot of the members of the community think that male teachers in the elementary school may be gay.

Let's face it, that's a perception some people have. They want you to nurture kids; they want you to feel for kids, show feelings and emotions for kids, and yet if you do, you get burnt, or you can get burnt, especially in the States. It's not right.

Joan, a teacher and parent, said that parents wanted the teacher to reinforce what the parents were trying to do with their children. She spoke of positive experiences in her schooling and hoped her children would be able to say the same. She talked about a teacher who was also a coach. Her coach sounded like John, an administrator, when he talked about his early teaching experiences.

I really liked him, and you know what I liked about him? He related to us. He talked to us. He not only was our coach, but he knew about us; he knew about our families; he knew about our school life, and he would talk to us about those things as well as be our track coach. And also he'd have fun with us. He'd tease us or he'd joke with us.

Lora and Sean, parents, said they wanted teachers to be ready to nurture and prepare students, as they are not grown up yet. They want teachers to pay attention to students. Lora said that they, both girls and boys, would seek your attention even after they leave your classroom. Frazier, a teacher, reinforced that view when he spoke of the former students who contact him by e-mail.

Jim, a parent and a primary grades teacher, said that in elementary education, you have to teach in a way that shows them [students] that you are interested in them more than just in the classroom. You are interested in them outside the classroom also. You attend sports events, band concerts, and art shows, whatever is important to the students.

### *Worthwhile Contribution*

Karen, an administrator, eloquently listed the following as though she had prepared a statement for a faculty meeting or a Parent Teacher Organization meeting. If a person can fulfill the aspects of personality and professional behavior that she talks about, then they are worthwhile educators and teaching is a worthwhile profession. Her reaction must have been as close to the heart as it sounds as she had agreed to the interview only minutes before we began. She said that we need teachers who can expect the following.

[We need teachers who are] kind, caring, competent, loving, nurturing, someone who is willing to learn, willing to work hard, willing to take the hard knocks.

[We need] someone who can relate to parents, who can understand where parents are coming from, that this child is their heart and soul, and choose their words very carefully when talking to parents, someone who is open to having parents in the classroom, someone who is willing to connect to the school community, and support the school in any way. [We need] someone who is willing to put their heart and soul into the classroom, and (said with laughter) know that there are some classes—and then, there are other classes. I think, male or female, that's what we need. We need adults who will be positive role models and involved in

the community and involved in the school. You know teachers who go to sports events and community events. I really admire those people who do that. So male or female, it doesn't really matter. They both have those attributes. And [we need] someone who likes to get down on the floor and play, and hug, and talk, and sing, and can be silly when the need comes for it. You know they tell you, especially at the elementary level, never touch the children, don't hug the children. But my answer to that is, that for some of these children, we're the only hug they get all day. So, we hug the children. Leave the door open, but hug the children.

### *Unique Skills*

Huck, a teacher, and Joe, an administrator, said that you just have to be there. You're a male and you are there. Fathers cannot always be around. Margie, a teacher, said that if you are there, it follows that you must like to be around kids, otherwise get another job. Roger said to be sensitive and listen to those children.

Sam said to be ready to kind of act silly. Work on the floor—kids level. There is a play aspect to teaching.

Karen, an administrator, said to have patience. Margie, a teacher, said to be patient over time.

It's the baby steps along the way, the development of a school year, and watching a kid grow. It's a long, spread out period of time in development and then you start all over again. If you don't get a kick out of the kids, you need to find

something else to do. Expect to get more than your share of children perceived as needing an authority figure.

Joe weighed his words carefully while talking about male and female teachers. He said that he thought this study was important and he wanted to put emotions into words to express the following, but it was difficult.

I don't think that men really do anything more or different than women in the classroom except be a man. You're just there. Back when I started, I'm going to tell you what used to happen. You'd be the man in the building and you usually got stuck with the tougher kids because you were the man. It doesn't happen anymore. Now women are expected to do the same as men, which is great. They should be. But I just think a man in the building, a man, looks like a man, he's got a beard, he's got some hair, he's got, you know, whatever, but he's a man, he's different, it's just a different kind of a feeling. I think that's all it is. It's not a thing where men are better teachers or can do more than women; it's just that they have other things to offer. Manliness.

Jean, an assistant principal, addressed the unique skills of all educators rather than male teachers. She had these views dispelling the notion that administrators expect only males to be authoritarian and only females to be nurturing.

I've worked with men in preschool and children with disabilities programs. They were nurturing and loving with those children and I've seen some females who are in early childhood programs, who are excellent disciplinarians, and who know how to help students learn rules and behave appropriately at school. I think of elementary school as unisex. We all have a job to do and we are adults in our

culture and in our society and as adults that makes us responsible for bringing along those who come behind us, and that is the children of our society who need access to education. I think both females and males can do that.

All the male teachers have a plan to deal with issues, with actions that might not be perceived by parents as appropriate. Be aware that parents do not understand why you are a male elementary teacher and, conversely, why you care whether they understand. Sam, a teacher, and Karen, an administrator said to include everyone, and emphasized, do not exclude anyone, and have your door open all the time.

Kellie, a parent, said that she thought that male teachers could bring less emotion to some issues that arise with students, tolerate and encourage a fair competitive nature that boys tend to have more of, and bring a balance to the culture and personality of the school in general. "I think men bring a different tone and focus to organizations and groups/teams that create a positive balance."

They [her children] see a male as caring, nurturing, structured, disciplinarian, fair, competitive... not sure. I asked the kids about this one and my oldest, 13 years, stated reluctantly, that male teachers do give the kids more chances. I think I can agree with this in general for a difference between men and women. Men are more forgiving (forgetting as some would say) and less likely to hold a grudge. That may be needed for some kids in the school and also the school climate.

Frazier, a teacher/parent, spoke of expectations of teachers in terms of his son's experience in elementary. The implication is clear that this father expects a male teacher to react differently to his son.

He's had a lot of bad experiences with women teachers who were very, I hate the term, anal-retentive type people that couldn't see in him some of the attributes that were real positive. Couldn't look past his silliness or his not horribly disruptive behavior, but his inattentiveness. He wasn't always punctual getting his stuff done.

Anne, a parent, addressed the possible option of choosing a teacher for her children. She spoke of teachers generally, but male elementary teachers specifically. She talked about the importance of teachers to her family. Her beliefs and comments are counter to information from other interviews. Her strongly stated opinions do not allow the teacher to be the 'stopgap' for society's problems.

I'd want to talk to him to see what he expected in the classroom before I just stick my child in his class because he could be like a fluffy teacher who just lets the kids walk away. No, that is not an option with me, not at all. At night they have one parent and during the day they have another parent that disciplines, teaches, and provides them with stability just the same as the parent teaches and provides them with stability at night.

I don't think it's a teacher's place to teach fundamental things like religion. I think that's a parent's job. I don't think it's the teacher's job to have to teach about things like sex. To me, that's a parent's job. I'd rather teach my child about sex and religion than her getting it from the teacher or someone else because I can gauge what I say by her reaction. I know what we talk about at home; I know what she will understand more. I think that sensitive subjects like that; I don't think they should have to teach the child. Unfortunately, it's not



always like that. There are some parents out there who think the teacher should teach their child everything. To me, the teachers are there to teach how to survive academically in today's society. It's not the teacher's job to teach a child how to survive socially. It's my job to teach my son 95% of his social skills. I don't send him to school and expect the teacher to teach him that. I should teach him how to act in public. That's my job. The only thing I think I may have a problem with is if there was a male teacher teaching sex education. I'd want to sit in on one of the classes.

Jennifer, a parent, expressed what she expected from male teachers by relating her experiences with her sons' male teachers, their female teachers, and observations of her husband as a scout leader.

I do think that the male teacher handled things differently and was able to deal with certain behavior problems that came up, probably not better, but quicker, and with less emotion, maybe, than a female teacher. You know, it's not necessarily good or bad, but I think sometimes male teachers can get over it much quicker than female teachers.

This comment voices the implication made by Frazier, earlier, in reference to his son, "He's had a lot of bad experiences with women teachers who were very, I hate the term, anal-retentive type people that couldn't see in him some of the attributes that were real positive."

Jennifer also spoke about the situation at home and her husband in regard to their work with Boy Scouts.

Dads get over things much more quickly than moms do. I see that he has patience. I see him more when he is with his troop and cub scouts. He tries to treat all the boys the same. He tries to make them all aware of their positive qualities, and he talks to the boys and tries to show them the joy that he gets out of the camping and hiking, and working with them on their life skills. He tries to make it fun, but he also tries to teach them safety. They know that he means business if he tells them, "No, You're not doing that." They know where his limits are and they don't push it, and they do with me. I mean I see the boys do it all the time in the pack and the troop.

Anne clearly stated opinions concerning what teachers should and should not do. She wanted her children to have a male teacher who has a positive attitude, but there were limitations.

He [male teacher] enjoys what he's doing. I would want to be able to tell just by seeing him interact with his students that he loves his job, he loves his students, he takes his job seriously, he knows how to have fun. I want to see that he knows how to discipline without harshness, but if he needed harshness, he could be harsh.

### *Abstract Values—Challenge*

Lora and Sean talked about their children and other children in the school. The students recognize them because they are often at the school volunteering. They are

acquainted with the teachers and are frank in their appraisal of the school and the process of education. They had strong feelings about teacher/student relationships.

Lora- You do wish that every teacher got along with every one of his or her students. And, you know, that they could nurture them. And it's not always true. Especially the older they get. It's easier to nurture a five year old where it's harder to nurture a 10 or 11 year old.

I then asked, "Do you see it as a gender issue? Do you find that women are able to do that better than men, or is there any difference?"

Lora- I don't think so. Some of the women teachers I've seen are less nurturing than you [the researcher] are as a teacher. You know it's just in the manner of how they nurture.

Sean- I think it's how you are raised in the first place. It's just you got to be careful what you do.

Lora- You can't trust, speaking as a parent, you can't.

Sean- It really makes me feel uncomfortable sometimes when I go up to the school to help out with our daughters' class, especially Polly because she's younger. The little kids, boys and girls both, will hang on my arms and they have actually called me Dad a lot of times.

Lora- One little boy said to him once, "I wish you were my Dad." You know, and that's a little scary because he had his Dad at home. He is there in the home.

Sean- They hold my hand and give me hugs. It makes me feel uncomfortable sometimes.

Lora- I know when we were in Florida there was a no hugging issue. You were not allowed to touch the kids. But I always make an effort when I see a kid to touch them on the back and say hello and how are you. I think teachers should do the same when a child comes up to give you a hug. They should be able to hug them back. It's a comfort level.

It is worth repeating, Joe's experience as an administrator at this point. He is an administrator who has years of experience with parental concerns. He said that many concerns were ameliorated in his office without the teacher ever hearing about it.

Nonetheless, a lot of the members of the community think that male teachers in the elementary school may be gay. Let's face it, that's a perception some people have. They want you to nurture kids; they want you to feel for kids, show feelings and emotions for kids, and yet if you do, you get burnt, or you can get burnt, especially in the States. It's not right.

Lora continues-An elementary teacher, he needs to be a caring, sensitive person and he shows that to the children. That child takes with them what you've taught them and takes with them the love and care you've shown, but they also take with them if you were mean and ugly. So what you do to other people, those little people carry it on. That's a life experience; it's not just a teaching experience. But you know you've got young children and you can mold them in a classroom. Even if it's 30 kids, you still mold them somehow and they always remember Miss So and So that they had in first grade. You may not remember someone you had in 1990 in the classroom, but they are always going to remember whom they had as an art teacher in kindergarten or who their first grade teacher was. So if

you are not a nice person, they are always going to remember that about you. As far as what you need, what concepts a teacher needs to have, I'd say patience, caring, and nurturing of the children. That's what I would like to see more of.

Sean- I think really all they got to do is follow their heart.

John, an administrator said that society expects a lot from teachers.

When I was coming up earlier, I had to wear one hat or two hats, that of counselor and educator, but now they [teachers] have to have ten different hats on because parents—society expects the teacher to be the stopgap for all problems. A lot of people don't want to take that on because of the compensation. "You don't pay me enough."

Bob, a parent and a middle school teacher, addressed the challenge of elementary teaching then followed with some of the unique skills needed.

I think elementary school teachers have a much tougher job than I do. They [parents] expect you to like their kid. They expect you to like children. I think, for a male, this comes back to role model. I like kids, I like being around kids, I can love kids; I can share with kids and I can do things. I can walk down the aisles of the commissary [grocery store] and say hello to kids. If I was going to talk to any teacher, I would say the first thing, whatever age, you have to like kids. There are too many teachers who don't have a clue about what's going on in the kid's world and in their life. The other thing, you have to hang out with them after school.

You just have to enjoy talking to them.

Joe, an administrator, stated that you get a lot of requests from parents for male teachers.

The requests are always from parents who are having trouble with their little boy. And they think that this is the cure. They can't handle him, but maybe the teacher can. Maybe a male teacher can help turn him around.

Other administrators talked about parental requests for male teachers to help their boys. The administrators did not report that the parents wanted the male teachers to hug the children. They did say that parents wanted the teacher to "turn them around."

### *Abstract Values—Creativity*

This parent named one of the most difficult aspects of teaching, acquiring the respect of students. It is a creative process and the teachers who achieve it do not seem be aware of the phenomenon. They can not tell you how they have achieved it or when it was achieved. You hear this in the faculty room, "I do not know why he behaves for me."

T. J., a parent and staff member, talked about what he expected from the teachers of his daughters as well as what his responsibilities were in his work with children at a day care facility.

You know I hope I brought everything positive [to this job] that my dad and my mom taught me about just being, not necessarily a good man, but being a good human being.

You earn the respect of the child. It kind of goes back to being a supervisor in the military. One of the things that I learned, there are two types of authority that we can use, legal authority and earned authority. The earned authority is the one you can use when you can say, "Just do it for me because we

work together and I would like for you to do this.” The supervisors who didn’t have earned authority would say, “Well, if you don’t do this, these are the consequences.” Once you have the earned authority, then it’s, “Let’s work as a team and do this.”

Another parent, Matt, talked about an aspect of this process when he explained what he wanted to see in a male elementary teacher.

I think that it’s the firmness, but also showing that you care. I think that’s the two attributes that are really special in a male in elementary school. Knowing when to be soft and when to be firm. I think it’s the thing about making the choice. Being able to change and to have enough wisdom to know when you can change and when you can’t. I think that’s basically it.

### *Rewards of Involvement*

John, an administrator and former teacher, reminisced about beginning teacher experiences.

I went into a job; this was an agrarian group, a lot of farmers, 4H Club. I didn’t know what a—but shoot I was out there with the cows, and went to the meets that my kids had, and learned how. I went to the shows, cowboy hat and all that. I had to learn all that stuff, see, but I didn’t have to do that. I didn’t have to do that at all. I could have just come there, done my eight and left. But the thing about it was, it was important to the kids. You become part of the community. You know, I didn’t live there, but I knew all the individuals. I knew the kids; I knew what

they were involved with, and that makes an impression. I didn't do this because I'm going to earn some brownie points. No. That was an extension of me, and part of education is that you want the kids to succeed. You get involved in what they are involved in, and it was an education for me.

John advises that attributes are interchangeable. It does not matter what system you are in. He said that you have to be cognizant of what your roles are within the organization. He had experience in three differing organizations, DoDDS military schools overseas, and public and parochial schools in the United States. As an example, John compared his teaching experience in DoDDS to his parochial school teaching experience

In DoDDS you don't teach religion, but you have to make certain that you are aware that there are differences among people that you teach within DoDDS whose religious backgrounds may not be like yours. You must not have a blind eye or a biased eye to others beliefs.

He had the following experience in his first public school as a teacher.

Got there, only male staff member again. Teaching science, teaching reading, teaching physical education. I was the coach, all sports, at this particular elementary school/ junior high school. Even cheerleader sponsor. That is one of those things where you learn whether you really like the job or you don't. And the money, don't say anything about the money.

Could a woman have done the same thing? Possible. It's a possibility, but I, as a man, I thought that I'd brought about a change with the kids, and then my colleagues even said, "Hey, I'm glad that a man is on the staff because the kids could come to you instead of going to the principal." The parents come to you. By



having a male staff member at this particular school, things were looked at differently. So to me, there's pros and there's cons. But I don't see any negativism by having a male on the staff. The guys benefited. I'm talking about the girls and all the students when I say guys.

To me it's more; it's always been more than a job. It's been a love for it and with that love, I'm trying, I don't know if I can put it together. It permeates out of the individual so I can't really say. It comes with the—it's a total package. Those are my values along with the "company's" values—coming out in the education process. I think those are the values that we are looking for to make kids better citizens of the United States.

The following statement is included as a part of the reality of how educators feel. Les, an administrator, said, "Young teachers start noticing the low pay, often later after some of that idealism wears thin, which it will after awhile."

### *Worthwhile*

Frazier, another parent/teacher said that every parent is a teacher and every male teacher can influence future parents.

You learn your fathering skills from your father, and, in many cases those fathering skills are very poor. If they [students] see nurturing kinds of skills in a teacher, and in a positive sense, they will learn. Maybe some of the parenting skills they've learned from the father will carry over, but they will also have other skills, male teacher skills that they will be able to pass on to their children.

*Rewarding*

Joan, a teacher/parent, talked about the emotional needs of her students in relation to what is happening in their homes. She didn't say that the teachers replace the parents, but the parents have asked the teacher to reinforce something for them. She talked about the use of the mentorship program in the school as a good example of a time when a male besides the father was needed for one of the students.

I can go back to a real live situation without giving names. I had a student whose family had gone through a very emotional time and a breakup between the parents. I can only say that through luck and observation, he received a male mentor, and obviously that child really needed that male mentor as a role model during that difficult time in his life. It proved to be a very positive experience, and the child talked to that mentor about a lot of things. Because sometimes children just feel like they need to talk to somebody that's male. I think that is just natural, that we sort of bond sometimes and have a trust, and I'm sure there's times when those little young boys in our school just need to know that they're hearing it from a male because at that time it will have more meaning.

It's more frustrating than we would like it to be, but I have found that there have been times when, as a parent, or as a teacher supporting a family, that you can have [a situation] where you say to a teacher, "Can you just say this to my child and they will value it coming from you as a teacher." And that to me is a very crucial partnership between the student, parent, and teacher. That sometimes

teachers can offer that little bit of support in regard to some kind of an issue, behavior, or concern.

### *A Point of Departure*

In the following, Matt's opinion states that there is one area where teachers have to succumb to gender bias, although only one teacher mentioned a similar issue and said that he took care of these personal problems, but made sure a teacher aide was present. In a related discussion, another parent said that if a male teacher were teaching sex education that she would want to sit in on at least one class.

Matt, a parent and staff member, expressed these opinions regarding male and female teachers.

No matter if you are male or female, you are expected to do the same thing. I know that there's some things that, you know, we're talking about personal hygiene and things like that, a male teacher can't, obviously, do with a young girl. It's the same with a female teacher showing personal hygiene to a young boy. I mean those things just can't be done. They have to be done by the same gender. Other than that, I think it's pretty much across the board, you're expected to do the same things.

The parents and an administrator talked about teacher behavior outside the classroom while the teachers did not address the issue other than they said that you should support the students outside the classroom by attending community events.

Anne said:

Outside of school, basically what you do on your own time is your own business, but I would hate to think that there is a male teacher out there who is my son's or daughter's teacher and has all this positive energy, or positive stuff in the classroom, but then outside the classroom he's just a hellion or hell raiser. I'd like to see what's inside the classroom also outside the classroom.

Jean, an administrator, talked about the expectations of parents. She mirrored some of the things parents had said concerning teacher behavior outside the classroom.

When I go to the Class Six store [liquor store], I want to buy several bottles of wine at a time so I don't have to go back for a week or a month. You know, you get that look from parents because there is definitely a certain expectation that we model the kind of adult behavior that we want our children to become as they enter adulthood.

Miranda and other parents, Lora, Sean, and Anne said that their children take note of their teachers as the parents do. They expect the teacher to model a behavior they can respect in and out of the classroom. Miranda said

It doesn't matter what they wear, but somebody who holds their head up high and has that air of confidence. I think that should be in a male or female teacher. Somebody who is gonna' do as they say they are gonna' do. There are some things we can do as adults that kids can't do, but you know, we have to be careful not to let the kids see too many things that are not ok. The male teachers that my children have had, they are just the same outside as they are inside. When they are away from school, they are still good role models. They are still neat, they are still

well groomed, they are still pleasant people. I think it's good for any child to see that. Somebody that respects kids, they need to respect kids as being kids.

Kids' role models? They need to be able to see the male teachers respecting other people as well. I mean that's a good role model. Being as organized as you can be. But still, those are things that you see in a female teacher. So?

### *Attributes of Role Model*

There is more in the literature expressing the need for male elementary teachers as role models and to balance the gender representation than in expressing what a role model actually is. In this section, role model related statements from the interviews are grouped with the points made by the researchers, (Mancus, 1992; DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; & Eisler, 1998).

Mancus (1992) said that males and females choose same-sex models and that male and female children imitate same-sex more than opposite-sex teachers. She went on to say that sex-role identification is considered a natural and desirable function of childhood interaction with adults. She warned that over-identification can lead to sex-role stereotyping and restricts development. The conclusion can be drawn that over-identification can lead to the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity.

The respondents in this study address the issues of sex-role identification and gender balance. The overall message from respondents was that children are aware of and respond to adult behavior. In order to react to the awareness of children appropriately, as

can be understood from the following data, the respondents advise teachers to be aware of that fact, children are observant, and to exhibit teacher or role model traits accordingly. The following respondent remarks agree with Mancus (1992) and place the points the researcher made into the classroom experience. The same responses agree with DeCorse and Vogtle (1997). They reported that kids need someone to look up to.

### *Administrators*

The administrators said that students should come to understand that males are not only authoritarian. They said that behavior outside of school is important as parents and students notice. Elizabeth said that male teachers are different than female teachers. Joe said that you are a male and you are there. He said that girls need to see that men are teachers; education is for everyone, by everyone. Karen advised that children need to witness both male and female teachers doing a variety of jobs. Jean said that you do not treat boys differently than girls and that you model what you want the children to become.

John, Joe, Jean, and Les said that the demographics of the teacher population should reflect the demographics of the community as much as possible. John and Elizabeth said that you make a commitment of involvement, you stick to it, and the commitment is to children. Mary said that male teachers have a greater connection to children than other reference groups such as Sunday school teachers or Boy Scout leaders. Jean said that you do not treat boys differently than girls and that you model what you want the children to become.

*Parents*

Anne said to provide an image based on realistic behavior in and out of the classroom in opposition to the media reports of bizarre behavior of professional athletes and other popular culture icons and to be consistent. Although mentioning the rights of privacy, Anne said that it is difficult to respect a teacher who behaves radically differently in school than when they are out of school. She said that teachers provide stability during the day that parents provide in the evening or after school. In order to do that Lora said that teachers should nurture and prepare students while realizing that they are not grown up yet. The nurturing aspect is balance, in parent opinion, by the advice not to settle for less. Have high expectations. Do not be fluffy. Stay on task.

*Teachers*

Ted said that students should not fear males. Roger said that students should not fear males, but males should not be afraid to be male. A macho attitude, however, is regarded as wholly inappropriate. The teachers agreed with the parents and administrators on another point. Jim said, "Show that you are interested in the students outside the school as well as inside the classroom."

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) were more specific in naming attributes of a role model. They reported that kids need someone to look up to, a good listener, an understanding, caring, and encouraging person. They need someone on the cutting edge with a different pedagogy who teaches how to solve problems. There should be a balance

of the creation of a family atmosphere in the classroom. Non-feminine lessons should be presented. That is to say that not all problems are solved with cut and past projects that can be posted on the bulletin board, but solutions can be presented by tying, painting, and constructing. The resulting project can move and be placed with, an aspect fulfilling the mention in their research of the helpfulness of an androgynous attitude. I will take each of their points and follow it with respondent statements. Their first point, students need someone to look up to, was covered with the respondents' statements in agreement with Mancus (1992).

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) encouraged good listening skills.

Roger said to listen to children and be sensitive. Children need to talk. Lora, a parent, and Margie, a teacher, said the teachers, especially male elementary teachers, should be patient.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) encourage understanding children.

Three parents, Kellie, Jennifer, and Lora said to be forgiving, do not hold grudges, get over it. Another parent, Sean, said do not make the students cry. Ben, a parent/student teacher said to be fair, honest, and open. Keep your promises because children do not understand adults who make a promise that they cannot keep.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) advocate a caring attitude.

Parents and teacher/parents said to be caring, nurturing, and another parent added nice. Maggie said that you must love kids because teaching is a commitment. If you do not love children, do not teach. T. J. said that you should use earned authority rather than legal authority. He explained that earned authority comes from the child's respect, accomplished over time. Legal authority was explained as a child's respect for adult in



general and that the children learn they have to behave in ways to avoid punishment.

Jennifer and Matt said to talk to children, not at them, or above them.

All administrators said that male teachers can nurture children as well as female teachers. The male nurturing approach is sometimes different than the approach female teachers use, but the children are seen to respond appropriately. The difference is a positive one and a sought after goal. The result of gender balance is a more complete student understanding of society.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) said to be encouraging.

Elizabeth related a story of a male elementary teacher seeing a need and filling it without regard to curriculum or whether anyone else was attending to the same problem.

Miranda said that her daughter had told her that male teachers make you work hard, but the students were proud that they worked hard. Kellie said that she felt that male teachers encouraged fair competition. Three parents reported that male teachers are quicker to forgive than female teachers. Frazier said, "Remember that all parents are teachers, but not all teachers are parents, and yet the teacher must sometimes act like a parent."

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) mentioned using cutting edge pedagogy. Try the new and different.

Joe said that male teachers are not better than female teachers; by they bring something different, which children need.

A student told her mother, Miranda, that male teachers make you work hard, but the students enjoyed the different ways of learning.

Frazier said to think back to what you remember from school days, and provide good experiences and memories for the students.

Two male teachers, Jim and Ted, said that male teachers do physical stuff as well as emotional stuff.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) said to be a problem solver and teach problem solving.

Joe in agreement with a male teacher, Greg, said that male teachers see the end result needed and come to the point. Elizabeth said a male teacher impressed her by seeing a need and filling it without compensation or by request.

Sam, Cameron, and Kathy said to do whatever is necessary to teach, i.e., play, sing, be silly, and get down on the floor with the children.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) said to establish a family atmosphere in the classroom.

All administrators said to hug the children. Do not ignore their need for attention. Leave the classroom door open, but hug the children. An administrator and three teachers said that the teacher has to be willing to act silly sometimes, to play, and to work on the floor.

Roger, a teacher, and Lora and Sean, parents, said that teachers are not their students' parent, but are called upon, at times, to act like a parent. Matt, a staff member said the teacher should let the students know that they have a softer side. The trick, as parents come to realize, even with a newborn, is to know when to be firm. Finally, a teacher said to be people oriented not subject oriented.

Parents said to realize that teaching, like parenting, is a long commitment.

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) advocate a non-feminine approach to some activities.

All administrators said that male teachers do not do anything better than female teachers, but they do some things differently. That difference is a good experience for students.

Jim and Ted, two teachers, said that male teachers provide sports, do physical stuff, and sometimes emotional stuff. Ted expressed it by saying that you have to interact with students on the playground as well as inside the classroom. Roger said that there is no place for a male attitude, but that males should not be afraid to be males while showing that goodness is not limited to females.

A male parent, Sean said to replace the little old lady teacher stereotype. Finally, another parent, Anne, said, "Do not be fluffy." Two teacher/parents, Joan and Miranda, said that their fondest memories were of teacher/coaches who always had the students on task with high expectations that everyone could do it, no matter the task.

All respondents in this study said that male and female teachers had to be caring nurturing people with elementary students. While this is true, Joe, an administrator, and Jim, a teacher, said that a lot of parents think that male elementary school teachers are gay. Another administrator, Jean, said that she thought of elementary school teaching as unisex. An administrator and two teachers said that students need to learn not to fear males. Elizabeth said that you must inhabit a child's life to enhance a child's life. Another administrator and four teachers agreed by saying that you have to be willing to play, talk, sing, and be silly sometimes.

Anne said that you have to like the company of children. Greg said that he did like children, but parents said that they could not understand how he put up with students all day.

Eisler (1998) said that masculine identity develops in relationship to multiple reference groups: father, friend, sports hero. Teacher is not mentioned, but there is no reason to exclude teachers from the reference groups. He said, "We need to understand why men vary substantially in their identification with prescribed (traditional) definitions of masculinity and their commitment to culturally determined masculine roles" (p. 424). He followed with the notion that adhering to traditional masculine values can lead to unhealthy consequences for men and those most intimate with them. How the teacher is meant to display masculinity or role model attributes is not discussed explicitly, but the possibility of the need for male teachers as a part of the reference group for children is feasible. The notion that adhering to traditional masculine values can be unhealthy is more to the point and in line with getting both views, androgyny (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 43). He advocates to the reference groups a non-adherence to traditional masculine roles. Parents, teachers, and administrators agree.

The respondents agree and in summary voice the following six attributes as their expectations of a male teacher as a role model.

1. Use earned authority, not legal authority.
2. Like the company of children.
3. Listen to children and be sensitive to what they say.
4. Talk to the children, not at them or above them.
5. Discipline without harshness.

6. Be consistent. You have a private life, but do not display aberrant behavior outside of school.

The data obtained from the interview process provided a framework for the attributes of male elementary teachers as role models. The need for male elementary teachers, the expectations held by parents, teachers, and administrators for these teachers resulted in the framework of attributes. The interview data supports the literature and extends it.

Interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and administrators from three United States military community schools on three military bases in the Isles District. The data was expanded as members of one group often spoke as a member of another group due to past experience.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to examine administrator, parent, and teacher perspectives about the need for more male teachers in the elementary schools. The study compares the reasons for that need to the reasons male teachers in the elementary schools report for entering and staying in the profession. The study records the respondents' reactions to the notion suggesting that male elementary teachers are needed as male role models. The study reveals those character traits or behaviors recognized as attributes of an appropriate male role model and compares them to the literature.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The objectives of the study emphasize not only the parents', administrators', and teachers' expectations of male elementary teachers, but also the discovery of areas of agreement or conflict among the three groups. The search of the literature and the effort of discovering domains presented in the analysis of the data were influenced by the theories of gender as a social construct (Connell, 1989; Measor & Sikes, 1992; Bohn, 1997; Paechter, 1998) and hegemonic masculinity (Gherardi, 1994; McCreary, 1994; Pleck, Sonnenstein, & Ku, 1994; Montecinos & Nielsen, 1997; Nilan, 2000). There is a conflict inherent in the two lenses. Masculinity and the protection of the boundaries of masculinity form a bastion of behavior while the construct of gender encompasses opinion and personal choice. However, there is no conflict when viewed from the point that traditional masculinity is considered a social construct. The paradox of these elements relate to the nature/nurture paradox, which is fundamental to this study. The research questions addressed the actual or assumed need for male teachers, the reasons for that need, and the characteristics of role model.

Using the notions of gender construct and hegemonic masculinity as lenses, the analysis of the data resulted in the themes of existing male teacher behavior, expected male teacher behavior, and appropriate adult behavior. Respondent opinion concerning expected male teacher behavior conceived as appropriate resulted in suggestions for male teacher qualities, which are ascribed to be attributes of a role model.

These attributes identified in the interviews were compared to role model attributes from the literature, (Mancus, 1992; DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Eisler, 1998).

Mancus posited that children identify with same sex models. DeCorse and Vogtle commented more specifically on teacher behavior and pedagogical practice. Eisler painted a multiple reference group picture for developing masculinity. Mancus warned against over identification with one sex. Eisler mirrored Mancus with a warning against adherence to traditional masculine values as leading to unhealthy consequences. DeCorse and Vogtle advised comfort with androgyny.

### *Gender Construct*

In order to understand and discuss the complexity of the relationship between men and society and the effects of the search for and maintenance of masculinity, the literature has defined the various and alternative constructs of masculinity. The acceptance that masculinity or gender is a construct is assumptive to this discourse. The literature shows that gender construction, among other things, is a process of the acquisition of power and that the notion of power and empowerment is political (Mac an Ghail, 1994).

Measor and Sikes (1992) do not agree that the whole story is evident concerning the processes of gender construction and differentiation. However, they note the following:

There is no doubt that society does communicate patterns for us to identify with, and that these act as a frame and may constrain our choices. However, what we need to understand is how we come to make individual choices from within that frame, and to build up a “script” for ourselves. (p. 13)

Bem (1993) reports that:

the theoretical perspectives on the social construction of gender that have dominated the social science literature for the past fifty years have emphasized socialization, situational constraint by the social structure, psychodynamic conflict, or identity construction by the individual. The first and second emphasize something that the culture does to the individual, whereas the third and fourth emphasize something that goes on with the individual's psyche. (p. 133)

These emphases in Bem's report concerning gender construct support the domains of this study. The first and second emphases, socialization and the situational constraint by the social structure, resolve into the domains of the existing behavior and expected behavior of male elementary teachers for this study. The third perspective, psychodynamic conflict relates to early childhood development. The consequence of that development is a determinate of the personalities of both the students and the teachers on whom they depend. The fourth emphasis, identity construction by the individual, relates to the behavior seen as appropriate to the notion of role model.

### *Hegemonic Masculinity*

Hegemony is a concept applied to theoretical and practical contexts. Jaggar (1983) explains that it is the process by which a dominant force maintains control so successfully that the subordinate believes that the projected social order is acceptable and best for them.



The conflict causing the discomfort for male elementary teachers, the nature/nurture paradox, starts in early childhood as a part of the process of gender construction, but further research or a different research problem to this study is required to relate the conflict to the cause. The applications are: if circumstances in an individual's early childhood development result in an adult male teacher with an unbendable hegemonic masculinity as a gender construct, then that individual becoming a nurturing teacher is not likely. Another application lies in finding the proof that a nurturing male elementary teacher is significant or even appropriate to the construct of gender for developing children. The interview responses in this study show cause that the influence is real and valued.

### *Data Analysis*

The research data revealed the male teachers' reasons for becoming and remaining a teacher. The parents' and administrators' opinions resulted in data regarding the need for male elementary teachers and the reasons seen to justify that need. Although encouraging, the information from respondents did not always paint an inviting picture for new or pre-service teachers. All respondents offered words of warning and advice. The results of the data from the interviews coalesced into the following rationale.

The rationales for becoming a teacher were: influence of family and former teachers; the availability of jobs; abstract values such as creativity, excitement, the challenge and the reward; the preference for education on the broader

spectrum of elementary than a single discipline in the high schools; and the notion of role model.

The rationales to stay in teaching were: teaching is a profession that makes a difference; the positive reinforcement of constituents; it offers the opportunity to use unique skills; teaching is challenging, creative and exciting; teaching is worthwhile; teaching is rewarding.

The rationales to leave or not enter teaching were: gender stereotypes, trust, discomfort with the company of young children, pay, respect, and preparation.

The rationales were grouped into the following domains for the purpose of analysis. First the domains are listed with short explications, and then support material from the data for each domain follows.

1. Existing behavior is a result of the reasons males enter the teaching profession and what each male elementary teacher sees as important and appropriate to be a successful teacher. If these priorities have worked, then the teachers consider themselves successful and have remained in teaching. Part of the ability to remain in elementary teaching is a willingness to be comfortable with androgyny mentioned in interviews in DeCorse and Vogtle (1997, p. 42).
2. Expected behavior or interpersonal relationships as seen appropriate by administrators, peer teachers, and parents for male elementary teachers is stated or implied by the respondents. The parents and administrators said what they wanted from teachers and, in some cases, what they didn't want.

The teachers implied what they thought of as appropriate behavior in the stories of their relationships with parent, administrators, and students.

3. Reality for male teachers evolves as a result or combination of the above influences. That reality exists as a result of the thoughts, actions, and reactions of male elementary teachers. The teachers combine the expectations of parents, administrators, and their peer teachers (expected behavior) with their own thinking and personalities (existing behavior) to forge a paradoxical existence (reality) in a profession that, if done well, is seen by some as admirable and others as bordering on peculiar, at least for males.

Responses relating to the notion of hegemonic masculinity are less clear. The responses that touch on masculinity have more to do with advice. That advice includes establishing boundaries for masculine behavior especially as the behavior of males relates to the nature/nurture paradox while working in a feminized profession. The advice is not how to be properly masculine per se. The advice or warning is born of mistrust and the fear of males as predators aspect of masculinity. The image the respondents wish a male teacher to project in the classroom environment is a masculinity constructed alternatively to hegemonic masculinity.

#### *Existing Behavior and Gender Construct Encompassing Personal Ability and Attitude*

The male elementary teachers often base their actions as teachers on altruistic reasons for becoming a teacher.

- The positive recollections of a male teacher that they had in elementary school.

Jim said that he still remembered the teachers' names and the impact they had on him. "Mr. Farmer was the guy. I knew right then I wanted to become a teacher just from him."

Ed said that he had a very good teacher in fifth grade. "He may have influenced my desire to come into it."

- So long as they behave themselves and yet are seen as representative of maleness, jobs are available.

Jim said that he knew that he wanted to teach. "I knew if I got into elementary I had a job because I was a man."

Ed said that he received more job offers than his female classmates who were hunting at the same time. "A couple of places said [that] they wanted young males who will actually get out there and do stuff with the students."

John, a former teacher, said he found that as a pre-service teacher wherever he interviewed he would have a job whereas his female classmates did not.

- Even while staying within the limitations of syllabi, teaching still allows a range of creative planning which makes the job exciting and challenging. As a result, the job is seen as more than a job. It is worthwhile and rewarding.

Jim said that the rewards are unbelievable. "I mean it's never a dull day; it's always a different day."

Frazier asked, "What jobs are available that really make a difference in society, to mankind, or whatever?" He said that he compared the medical field to teaching and

considered teaching as just behind it. "I only went into the field because I thought it was a job that was worthwhile, much more worthwhile than a lot of the other jobs people have."

Cameron said that every year is different because it's a new group of students if you are in a self-contained classroom. "You can continue to challenge yourself by challenging the students in new and different ways and to me that's exciting."

John said that it was thrilling as well as revealing how kids reacted to a male teacher. "I became a better individual."

- Even though a common male teacher complaint is parent requests for a male teacher, there is also pride and assurance in being wanted. That pride was expressed as a positive aspect of role model rather than the negative aspect of authoritarian or disciplinarian.

Huck said that male company is something in their [the students'] life that they recognize as something that is needed. "You are a role model, a male role model in whatever you are doing."

Jim said that to be affective you don't have to be a high school teacher. "You can actually be an elementary teacher and be a role model too."

Ben said that he thought as an elementary male schoolteacher he could do a lot to shape the students.

*Expected Behavior or Interpersonal Relationships as Seen Appropriate by  
Administrators, Peer Teachers, and Parents*

The respondent groups' advice or expectations are grouped with reasons given to stay in teaching; themes brought forward from the previous section: making a difference, unique skills, challenge, worthwhile contributions, and the rewards of involvement.

In order to react to the awareness of children appropriately, as can be understood from the following data, the respondents advise teachers to be aware of the fact that children are observant and to exhibit teacher or role model traits accordingly.

*Administrators*

Elizabeth said male teachers are different than female teachers.

Joe said that you are a male and you are there. Girls and boys need to see that men are teachers. "Education is for everyone, by everyone."

Jean and John said that the demographics of the teacher population should reflect the demographics of the community as much as possible.

Karen said that children should witness both male and female teachers doing a variety of jobs.

Elizabeth said that male teachers have a greater connection to children than other reference groups such as Sunday school teachers or Boy Scout leaders. "You make a commitment of involvement, you stick to it, and the commitment is to children."

Jean said that you do not treat boys differently than girls. "You model what you want the children to become."

Les said that parents and students should come to understand that male teachers are not just authoritarian or that they are not the school disciplinarian.

All administrators said that children should see that men can be kind, caring, and nurturing.

### *Parent*

Anne said that teachers should provide an image based on realistic behavior in and out of the classroom in opposition to the media reports of bizarre behavior of professional athletes and other popular culture icons and to be consistent.

Jennifer said to deal with problems quickly and with less emotion than females. Three parents said to be forgiving, do not hold grudges, get over it

Miranda said male teachers expect the students to work hard and further, that the children like that.

Anne said to provide stability and academics during the school day and leave the parents to do the rest. She admired teachers who have a positive attitude, who love their job, who have a sense of fun, and who have a method of disciplining students without harshness.

Roger, a teacher/parent said to listen to children and be sensitive. Children need to talk.

Margie said the teachers, especially male elementary teachers, should be patient.

Sean said, 'Do not make the students cry.'

Ben said to be fair, honest, and open. “Keep your promises because children do not understand adults who make a promise that they cannot keep.”

### *Teachers*

Three teachers said that students should be taught not to fear males; however one teacher, Roger, said that males should not be afraid to be male.

Jim said, “Show that you are interested in the students outside the school as well as inside the classroom.”

### *Reality Evolving as a Result or Combination of the Above Influences*

The assumption for this analysis is that the male elementary teacher is in the classroom because he wants to be. This study has previously presented the varying reasons male teachers give for being in the classroom. Those personal reasons relate to the daily functioning of the teacher in the classroom. The study has presented parent, administrator, and peer teacher expectations for the male elementary teacher. Those influences combine to construct the daily reality for male elementary teachers. They talk about that reality of limitations and how they stretch those limitations in the following.

- In order to do the job, the male teachers feel they must be nurturing.

Frazier said, “I suppose I’m nurturing. Kids come up to me and call me mom all the time. I don’t get dad as much as I get mom.” Jeff said that kids can be all over you. “As a male, you do feel very apprehensive when kids want to lean on you.” He said that the kids feel



comfortable with that and you don't want to push them away, but you cannot encourage it either. "Someone's perception might read something into it that isn't there. Whereas a female schoolteacher might find the student's desire to be close acceptable."

Frazier said that having been a teacher has helped with parenting, and becoming a parent helped his teaching career.

- In order to do the job, the teachers said that they must be disciplinarians.

All male teacher respondents feel dumped upon because when administrators perceive a boy as a discipline problem they think that a strong male can handle the problem. Jeff said, "Well, not any better than anybody else can, you know."

Jim said, "There are times, being a man, I get more of the behavior problem kids than females do."

Frazier reported that a male colleague said that when a parent or an administrator comes to him and says that a student needs a male influence he refuses them because he doesn't believe in that.

Frazier said if he is very strict, the children behave better, but he said that he is usually comfortable with what the students do. His statement reflects the notion that males "get over it."

They [the students] learn what I do expect and what I don't expect, and we come to a happy medium somewhere in between. A lot of other teachers would not put up with some of the stuff that I do put up with and that's o.k. If they don't want to they don't have to. A lot of the stuff, it's not worth it to me to worry about. So it's better for me just to look the other way and expect something else from them.

There is a trade off there, and I recognize that.

- In order to do the job, the male teachers said that they have to feel comfortable with what they are doing or compensate for discomfort.

Frazier said that it takes a certain personality to do Kindergarten or first grade.

I think that there are some things that women do better than men. I think they notice things or can preempt a lot of things that would just blindside me with the little ones. I don't think that it would come naturally to me. I think it can be taught to men to handle those kinds of situations in the lower elementary grades.

I don't know about constructivism. I'm trying to learn a little bit more about that and holistic teaching, but I would think that a male, whatever it means to be male, lends itself more to that style of teaching. If in the education field, they could teach how that sort of style was done a little bit more, I think men can have a lot of success with a constructivist or a holistic approach to teaching, but I think a lot of that has to be learned through experience. You don't start off doing that.

Huck said that he enjoyed teaching mainly because he likes kids.

I like young children. I've been working with small children since I was about 16 years old. I enjoy it and I still enjoy it at my age. I think I enjoy it mainly because in my line of work, in physical education, kids enjoy it. The kids enjoy what I do. You know I still work out with these kids seven times a day mainly because it's a model. I'm hoping that one day they'll say, "I remember that ol' guy, hell, he was running around wild." when you are basically playing and enjoying and the kids are having fun, it's easy to work with elementary school kids. Now, if I was to be put into the classroom that might be a different story. I don't know if I could

handle sitting in the classroom with just one class day in and day out for 190 days throughout the school year. I like the variety.

Jim said that he had worked in a low-income area where there was usually one parent in the house, the mother.

I was the most requested teacher in the school because the parents wanted a male role model in their son's life or their daughter's life and they saw that through me. Not so much in DoDDS because most families over here have two parents in the house, but in the States when you have a discipline problem, a lot of it is because they don't have a role model. The administration thinks he needs a role model, a male role model so let's put him in that class because there is a man in that class.

Jim's friends asked why he wanted to spend all day with those "ankle biters?"

I'd say because I enjoy it. I really like working with those guys. And I'd say to those guys, why would you want to spend all day in a room with a bunch of high school kids that would rather be somewhere else? They have bad attitudes. We don't have bad attitudes in elementary at all.

I mean with elementary kids, I think that I might go a little bit beyond. They might have a baseball game and I'd show up because there would be three or four kids from my room on the team and I'd show up at the game, and they thought that was just the coolest thing. You have to do stuff like that because it shows them that you are more interested in them than just in the classroom.

Matt, one of the staff members, said that he cared about the kids. He said, "It's not so much I want to cuddle them and all that. I care about their safety; I care about their education. I care that they're doing ok emotionally."

Greg said that the little kids like to hug you.

I don't like that. I never want to be in a classroom alone with one child. I think that is something that male teachers need to be told about if they don't know that right from the beginning. We have to be more careful than females.

Greg said that the only thing that he does not like about elementary teaching is a faculty meeting that becomes a chatting meeting.

I don't know if it's maleness or femaleness, but the female teachers can go in there and sit there for hours and not complain. The guys are going, "Oh my God, let's get out of here. What is going on?"

Sam said that he likes getting on the floor with kids and working directly in a constructivist technique.

I would rather get down on the floor and play with the kids and work with manipulatives than grade papers. I like more of the play aspect of it. I think that the kids need to know that men can be in the lower grades and they can do the nurturing part. You know, I've wiped noses and back sides and stuff like that just like women have. Being a male in the elementary, in kindergarten, I was always, I still am, I am very careful. You know I'm a man in the lower grades. So I always have the door open. I don't think there's anything we can't do. You have to be careful with being alone in the classroom together, but as far as anything we can't do? I don't think there's anything we can't do.

Ralph said that he sees a tendency to blame female teachers also for child abuse.

Even our female counterparts are now leaving their doors open. I just get upset about it because how can people question my integrity as a human being?

However, don't come in with a macho attitude if you are going to come and teach. Listen and be sensitive to those children because they're listening and they're looking for an outlet somewhere.

I have done a lot of consoling in my years. They miss their fathers, and they are not going to find that in the female teachers. Those are attributes we have going for us.

### *Role Model*

Within the daily life of a male elementary teacher is their time to be a role model and is it necessary? In analyzing the respondents' comments, the answer lies in what you do not what you are. No respondent said that good teaching practices are limited or determined by gender. The male elementary teachers feel that they are doing a necessary and worthwhile job. Part of what makes it worthwhile is that they are male, they can do the job, they can enjoy the job, and they can fill a niche in some students' lives that others cannot. This study has shown in data presentation that the attributes of role model and good teaching in the literature are more than met by the reality of the male teachers' lives in the classroom and their relationship to the students. It has to be said that the attributes, even the possibility of role model is sketchy in the literature, the product of seemingly untested opinion and the responses derived from interview.

Mike said that he doesn't associate gender and role model. He said that a role model could be either parents or a teacher who respect all sexes, all gender preferences, and all ethnic backgrounds.

I think it is the person; it is what is inside the person. You could get a lot of women teachers who have had divorces and bad experiences with men and they hate men. That's really bad news for kids.

Frazier said that men are often not decision makers in the home.

Kids pick up on that. The kids know Dad will say "yes" because he doesn't know the answer should be "no." A male influence in the classroom has the students seeing a male in that kind of a role where they are the trusted figure. They are the Alpha Dog. They're the decision maker. The male teacher does not say, "Go ask your mother."

### *Summary*

The strands of information regarding the assumed need for male elementary teachers, the reasons for that need, the expectations for male elementary teachers held by parents, administrators and peer teachers and role model have been presented in this chapter for analysis. The analysis is influenced by the concepts of gender construction and the presence or lack of the boundary maintenance of hegemonic masculinity.

The search for meaning derived from these strands of information led to the development of rationales labeling the reasons male teachers enter and remain or leave elementary teaching, the expectation of parents, administrators, and peer teachers and the attributes of role model.

The rationales were grouped into three domains for analysis: existing behavior and attitudes of male elementary teachers, expected behavior from the three respondent

groups, and lastly the reality constructed by male elementary teachers enabling their working existence in a feminized profession.

The chapter included a section which compares aspects of the presented data: reasons to enter the teaching profession and reasons to stay, reasons for staying in education and the expectations for male elementary teachers expressed by teachers, parents and administrators.

A juxtaposition of a portion of interview results has been presented as a comparison in this chapter. The results of that comparison are basic to the analysis in this chapter. The analysis abductively overlays three areas of concern derived from the rationale in data presentation:

- Existing behavior or personal ability and attitude
- Expected behavior or interpersonal relationships
- Reality constructed by male elementary teachers in the classroom.

These areas are continuously assessed through the lenses of gender as a social construct and hegemonic masculinity.

The chapter concluded with role model attributes from the literature compared to respondent opinion. Mancus (1992) said that adults need to be aware that children are observant and imitate same sex more than opposite sex adults. Eisler (1998) said that masculine identity develops in relationship to multiple reference groups. Both Mancus and Eisler state that strictly adhering to traditional masculine values can be unhealthy. DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) encourage understanding children, develop a caring attitude, use cutting edge pedagogy, be a problem solver and teach problem solving, establish a family atmosphere in the classroom, and finally to be comfortable with androgyny.

The interview process provided a framework for the attributes of male elementary teachers as role models. The need for male elementary teachers, the expectations held by parents, teachers, and administrators for these teachers resulted in the framework of attributes. The interview data supports the literature.

Chapter VI offers a summary, conclusions, and implications for theory, research, and practice.



## Chapter VI

### Summary, Conclusions, and Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

Man is a creature who lives not upon bread alone, but principally by catchwords, and the little rift between the sexes is astonishingly widened by simply teaching one set of catchwords to the girls and another to the boys.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881

People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something one finds, it is something one creates.

Thomas Szasz, *The Second Sin*, 1974

In this study, the related issues of what parents, administrators and peer teachers expect of male elementary teachers were addressed and considered using gender construct and hegemonic masculinity as lenses. From the data I proposed to address a gender issue, the assumed need for male teachers in the elementary school and the reason(s) for that need. To establish the difference between a need and a want, there should be more reason than not having something.

I expected parents would show concern for male teacher behavior based on personal life style choices such as marital status, parenting children, or sexual preference. They did not voice this concern in the interviews. They were concerned that all teachers treat their children in a nurturing way. Given that, they did want, in their terminology, a

male influence or male role model for their children in the classrooms. They did not say and seemed reluctant to commit to how much influence is sufficient though many used the term gender balance without defining it.

The information presented in this chapter recalls the problem statement, the data needs, data sources, the data collection process, a summary of analysis, and finally, findings.

### *Summary*

Male elementary teachers find it difficult to combine the notions that they are considered predators because they are male, and yet that they are expected to nurture children. They do not speak of gender construct or alternative masculinities, but they face the reality of working with children in a different reality than high school teachers' face. Using gender construct and hegemonic masculinity as lenses, this study worked toward the result of discovering how and why male teachers remain in teaching. The expectations of parents, and administrators are compared to the ideas that male teachers construct a persona or gender to suit their occupational situation and to see how that happens within the parameters of traditional masculinity.

### *Problem*

More male teachers are needed in elementary schools as there is an imbalance to female teachers. Research in the area of home/school relationships must account for the

notion of teacher exemplars and how completely teaching behaviors fit the widely differing perceptions and needs of parents in diverse communities. This study sought to find other reasons than gender balance as a need for male elementary teachers and to discover the nature of that need. If, as the literature shows, one of these needs is for male role models, then this study should define that role for the benefit of the people who have to fill it. The impetus to conduct this study arose from discussions with male teachers concerning the nature/nurture dichotomy.

### *Data Needs, Sources and Collection*

To discover possible reasons for the need for more male elementary teachers a thorough search of the literature was conducted. The literature did not suggest that more male teachers are needed to improve education. The suggestion was often made that males are needed to serve as role models. However, the notion of role model is not made clear in the literature. This study was designed to fill that gap by ascertaining the expectations of parents, administrators, and other teachers for male elementary teachers.

The reading and subsequent recording of the literature in Chapter II was followed by in-depth interviews conducted with three groups of respondents from three communities. In order to examine the issues thoroughly, the study called for data supplied by male elementary teaches, their fellow teachers, parents of the students in their classrooms, and finally administrators. To that end, permission was granted by DoDDS to conduct interviews with adults associated with Department of Defense Dependents

Schools (DoDDS) on a complex of military bases in the Isles District. The research permission forms from DoDDS and each school are included (see Appendix C).

The interview protocol is included (see Appendix A). Potential respondents received an introductory letter (see Appendix D) asking for their participation and introducing the study. They received a copy of the protocol questions for an overview prior to the interview. Respondents included six administrators, 12 teachers, and three members of staff who sometimes responded as parents. There were six parents interviewed who were not staff, teacher, or administrator at the elementary schools. All male staff members at the three schools consented to an interview with one exception. Those who asked to read the interview transcripts asked that only grammatical changes be made. Three respondents asked to add new comments to the first interview for added information, but not to change the original otherwise. Anonymity of respondents is insured through care of recorded and transcribed interviews and by the use of pseudonyms.

Triangulation was achieved through the interviews with three groups associated with the function of school, people who are aware of the responsibilities of teachers and can bring pressures to bear on the daily lives of teachers. Information from the National Education Association and The National Census regarding the percentages of male to female elementary teachers add validity to the study. The reliability of the study has been maintained with thick, rich description as a hallmark of the qualitative paradigm of research. Replicability could be likely on any military base despite locale. Whether the study is transferable to the civilian population is the subject of further research. Ethical considerations and standards were maintained at all steps in the research with the

informants' rights in mind at all times. The standards are in accordance with the Department of Defense Education Activity and the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of Oklahoma State University. Institutional Review Board approval is included (see Appendix B).

### *Conclusions*

The following conclusions are derived from comparing data from interviews to the literature concerning the need for male elementary teachers. The conclusions regard data in relation to the literature, then need for male elementary teachers in the domains of gender balance, male influence on students, and male teacher reactions to students. Secondly, conclusions are drawn concerning the reasons males enter elementary teaching and finally the notion and attributes of role model.

### *Data that Supports the Literature*

The literature search offered the need for gender balance of the faculty and the influence of male teachers especially for boys. The literature does not define balance. Although aspiring to a balance in all things is an admirable effort, at the same time there is a pragmatic rationale for the need for male influence in the classroom. Based on responses to the Teacher Gender and Competency Instrument, Mancus (1992) predicted:

that boys will be more likely to see themselves as academically competent and thus be more inclined toward achievement when they have some male teachers.

Likewise, they will be more likely to share authority and express nurturing behavior when they see male teachers doing so (pp. 126-127).

The data from respondents extends the notion to include girls. The parents wanted their daughters to have male teachers who model nurturing behavior, as do their fathers. Lora and Sean, parents, wanted male teachers to model a behavior that proved to their children that men besides their father are caring, nurturing, and nice. They thought that it could affect their choice of a spouse later in life. John, an administrator, said that when he talked about the guys [students] benefiting from male teachers, he was talking about both girls and boys, as did the other administrators.

The literature offered a need for male teacher influence, especially for male students. This need for male influence can be labeled role model. The literature was ambivalent about the issue. What are the attributes of a male role model or of masculinity, especially a form of masculinity appropriate in the classroom? Mancus (1992), DeCorse and Vogtle (1997), and Eisler (1998) published information from interviews that can be construed to be role model attributes reported in Chapter V of this study. They are also good teaching practices for any teacher.

There remain more questions than answers. How often do the students need a male teacher? The literature suggests gender balance but does not define balance as equal numbers of male to female teachers. No respondent originally suggested equal gender representation other than saying gender balance. After follow-up questions, the replies can be generalized to these: Joan, a parent, said that more than one or two men in a school are needed. Anne, a parent, said that maybe one male teacher in the lower grades and one in the upper elementary. All female teacher respondents in this study were

positive toward striving for faculty gender balance and were positive toward male teachers. They said that we should have more, at least one male teacher per grade level. They were speaking of a grade level consisting of three to four teachers.

McKeown and McEwen (1999) report that male teacher trainees thought that if there were no male elementary teachers, then children would be disadvantaged. The trainees thought that all primary aged children should have a male teacher for at least one year. The female trainee teachers in their study placed a significantly less value on the contribution of male teachers (p. 60). Administrators in this study said they welcomed as many males as they could get.

The following conclusions address in greater detail the respondent data, which supports the literature, with a few points of departure.

### *The Need for Male Teachers in Elementary Schools*

The male teachers realized there was a demand for male elementary teachers that gave them an advantage over females in finding employment. Teaching is seen as a difficult but satisfying job more worthwhile than other jobs because it makes a difference in society. Moreover, they said that teaching elementary school is creative, challenging, and even thrilling because of the discovery or the realization that they had unique and useful skills to reach kids. The female teacher respondents did not mention the reasons they chose teaching as a career.

The respondents were encouraging about the need for male teachers. The parents and administrators stated positive views regarding the need for male elementary teachers.

The teachers, while talking about coping strategies and the reality of teaching, could give useful information to a college student considering a teaching career. If students make an informed decision to enter teaching it could alleviate the gender imbalance. None of the male teachers expected to make much money. They do not like their position on the salary scale, and they do not expect it to change.

Aside from the economic aspect, according to the literature, the feminization of teaching resulting in a male minority role drives many males out of the profession (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1999; Loadman & Klecker, 1993). The DoDDS teachers did not support the research. None of the male teachers expressed occupational feminization (Roos & McDaniel, 1996) as a concern. They spoke of their minority status allowing greater access to employment, but applied it only to their careers in the United States. The DoDDS system has recruited faculty for ethnicity reasons but not on a basis of gender.

The parent, administrator, and teacher respondents expressed the need for male elementary teachers using the following rationales: gender balance, male influence (the students' reactions to male teachers), role model, and the male teachers' reactions to students.

### *Gender Balance*

All respondents said that a gender balance would be good. Having said that, the administrators and teachers followed with gender balance as an unlikely event. Some parents hedged their first response a bit by saying that one or two male teachers in the



school would be good or at least one male teacher during a student's sojourn in elementary school. I did not expect that the parents would show that much caution after their initial positive reaction to having more male teachers. One parent summed it up by saying, "You just can not trust anyone." The unstated implication was that it is easier to trust female teachers. Male and female administrators said that they would actively seek male teachers, but they cannot recruit teachers in DoDDS on that basis. The government sticks to its Equal Employment Opportunity rules regarding sex and age.

Administrators said that male teachers offer something to the school that is important, but they could not label it. They said that most parental requests for a particular teacher are for a male teacher, and that request is for a male child's benefit. Hence, the males feel that they get an unfair share of problem children. Most male teachers made that claim, but followed it by saying that, once the child was in their room, they had little trouble with behavior problems or with parental complaint.

Administrators and one teacher said that a further benefit of a gender balance was that faculty and committee meetings were shorter and more to the point when male teachers were in attendance or directing the meeting. That attitude reflects Kohlberg's study on moral judgment and Gilligan's female voice.

### *Male Influence*

The two most common traits that parents associated with male teachers were that they made students work harder and stay on task, but that they were quicker to forgive and forget. As the parents put it, "Male teachers (and Dads) get over it." Male teachers

are less likely to hold a grudge. Secondly, the parents and administrators wanted male teachers to demonstrate to students that males can be nurturing. The literature speaks to the issue by saying that perhaps that attitude of nurturing by male teachers will encourage more male students to become teachers (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 45). Other researchers say that it has little effect (Mancus, 1992).

My preconceptions had it that parents would see the male teacher as protective of children. Instead, they spoke of male teachers having a high expectation, stay on task attitude, but a forgiving nature if the student failed to live up to expectations. The parents and teachers did not want the students to fear teachers. The male teachers should appear other than only authoritarian.

### *Role Model*

The initial parent reaction to the notion that teachers have a similar relation to students as parents have to their children was negative. However, administrators report that parents request male teachers to deal with children who are getting out of control at home. Anne said that she wanted teachers to teach her children to survive academically; she would do the rest including religion, sex education, and social skills. If a male were to include sex education as a part of a science, then she thought it would be a time to attend at least one class. Lora and Sean wanted the teachers to be nice to children, not make them cry. Lora said that parents can not trust anyone, in other words, teachers cannot be nice enough to be above suspicion. Parents wanted the children to see a male teacher as someone who is fair, who can treat children with respect by not talking down

to them. Male teachers are expected to bring something different to the classroom and to pay attention to students outside the classroom. The difference they bring to the classroom might be, as Joe, an administrator said, “I do not know what you call it. Manliness.”

### *Male Teachers' Reactions to Students*

Frazier, a classroom teacher, said that sometimes he and the children loosen up and run from one class to the other and settle down later. Apparently there is camaraderie, some daring to bend the rules, and then get down to it later and work hard. There is an expectation that male teachers can moderate their size, appearance, and strength to incorporate the nurturing qualities of caring for children. Greg said, “My sense of humor seems to suit third graders.” He said he does not tire of the company of children. Other adults, even parents, have asked him how he puts up with children day after day. He replies that he is happy with his job and would not trade it to be an administrator.

### *Reasons to Teach*

Some teacher respondents had other jobs and training, which they left in order to teach. The teachers said that their former male teachers and family had influenced them and volunteering in schools provided the impetus to try education as a career. The male teachers did not complain that teaching was a feminized occupation. The closest they

came to a gender complaint was that female teachers increase the length of committee and faculty meetings. A male administrator agreed. They did not complain about the pay. John said, "Do not even talk to me about the money." They talked about the rewards of teaching.

The demands of the school community concerning the classroom teacher are not unreasonable, but they are opinions based on emotion as well as on reality. The male elementary school teacher respondents stated varying reasons for entering and staying in the profession. These were the influence of family and their teachers from elementary school, the positive reinforcement from parents and students, job availability, abstract values such as creativity, excitement, challenge, reward, worthiness, aspects of role model, and a preference to teach more than a single discipline

Male teachers mentioned positive reinforcement from parents and students, job availability, the general notion of abstract values, that teaching is a worthwhile profession, preference of elementary over high school teaching, and role model as reasons to remain in the education profession. Further research is needed to determine the reasons so many males leave teaching and whether they are happy with the decision. The teacher respondents have stayed in teaching or have returned to teaching after trying other jobs. Their responses concerning the consideration to leave teaching involve pay, but they have not left. They do not mention problems working in a feminized profession as the literature suggests. On the contrary, they feel welcomed and are confident about the work and finding employment. Only one teacher mentioned an interest in becoming an administrator. That teacher was not an elementary teacher and was interviewed as a parent.

The reasons given to stay in teaching are that jobs are always available, teaching is worthwhile, and makes a difference in society, teaching is a challenge, creative, and exciting. Teaching allows a chance to use unique skills that males in other professions do not have or do not use, and it offers daily rewards for those involved.

### *Attributes of Role Model*

These qualities, or good practices, combine in my conclusion to the following attributes. The attributes are those of a male role model and they are hallmarks of a good teacher. I conclude that the parent respondents want the male teachers to construct a masculinity, a teacher persona that allows them to be there to teach as well as to care for children in a nurturing way. That male caring attitude has to coincide with masculine action that they can trust. King (1998) called it caring for, and caring about, children. Anne's talk of handing over the children to the school for the day is relative to the issue. She was clear about teachers' duties in contrast to parents' duties and that she would come to the school to visit classes if she felt uncomfortable with anything being taught.

As Sam, a teacher, and Joe, an administrator, said, "You are a man and you are there." If you feel that you have to be a different kind of man in order to be there, then you are aware of the scrutiny you feel because you are a man. Finding a comfort level is coping with the reality of that place composed of the male teacher's existing behavior and attitudes coinciding with the expectations of parents, administrators, and peer teachers. The administrators said to hug the kids when they need it, but leave the door open. The

parents did not say to hug the children. They used the terms care for, nurture, understand, listen to, respect, and be nice.

The review of literature explored issues relating to the need for male teachers in elementary schools. In coming to an understanding of that need, it was necessary to read, consider, and relate research which addressed the nature/nurture dichotomy, gender constructs, gender modeling, gender display, sex-role stereotyping, role rigidity, and other stereotypic behavior. Research finds male teachers are valued as role models for students, but some researchers restrict the benefit to boys. The nature/nurture dichotomy for the male teacher is a dilemma as nurturing behavior is less valued and seen by some as contrary to male role modeling.

The literature shows that females are rewarded for masculine behavior on the job while males can be punished for feminine behaviors although the pressure is there for male teachers to act as a nurturer. The conflicts result in coping behaviors. Too often that coping manifests itself in young male teachers leaving the profession or never entering teaching at the elementary level.

Perhaps they leave unnecessarily. If teachers are aware that the expectations of parents, administrators and peer teachers are simply good teaching practices and that if pressure is felt in living to a standard of role model, then they should know that a role model is seen by parents, administrators, and peer teachers as a person who incorporates the following attributes which synthesize the many specifics of personality and social activity in and out of the classroom.

1. Use earned authority, not legal authority.
2. Like the company of children.

3. Listen to children and be sensitive to what they say.
4. Talk to the children, not at them or above them.
5. Discipline without harshness.
6. Be consistent. You have a private life, but do not display aberrant behavior outside of school.

The male elementary teachers combine their personalities, their existing behaviors and attitudes with the parent, administrator, and peer teacher expected behaviors for them into a social and pedagogical construct that works in a feminized occupation. Part of that construct is seen as role model.

#### *Implications for Research, Practice and Theory*

Although a discipline or task might be taught or modeled well, although the mentor might do all that is necessary to facilitate learning, there are other aspects of personality and behavior that are important to the parent and the student. The parents' connection to the school is their child, the student. The relationship of members of the community to the school is rich in opportunity for study. This study has emphasized parent, teacher and administrator expectations for male elementary teachers. The following are the implications for research, then theory, and finally practice.

*Research*

Research in the area of home/school relationships must account for the notion of teacher exemplars and how completely teaching behaviors fit the widely differing perceptions and needs of parents in diverse communities. Maybe more male teachers are needed in the elementary schools, as there is an imbalance to female teachers. Research is needed to determine whether a white male elementary teacher is the answer to all imbalances in the system. Is a white male teacher a role model for an Afro-American or Amerasian male student? Is it true that the most appropriate teacher is the same gender, same ethnicity as the students? Research in a private single sex school with teachers who match the student population would add insight in comparison to public co-educational institutions. Are the expectations of DoDDS schools constituents similar or the same to civilian communities in the United States? Research is needed concerning best practice teaching and role model influence. That research should be conducted in relation to ethnicity and gender. Research attempting to determine optimal student age and frequency of exposure to male elementary teachers as factors in children's feelings of connectedness and comfort at school would be important to school personnel.

Shaw (1995) discussed transitional objects.

The idea of transitional objects is that they help an infant to survive the frustrations of infancy and the inevitable, temporary separations for its mother—they are literally a stopgap. As life proceeds we all have to learn to comfort ourselves, and get into reading, model building, playing computer games, etc, as a way of doing that. (p. 93)



Research might show that in school, the subject matter or the teacher might be the transactional object. The transactional object needed for some students might be a male teacher.

If there were a consensus of role model attributes, these attributes would be significant to teachers in training, to administrators, to consultants, and to parents. If Goffman (1963) is right, and "...there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports" (p.128), then we are in trouble.

### *Practice*

Parents soon realize that their children learn from parental example and realize, thereafter, that the student/teacher relationship is more than Socratic. The parents, teachers and administrators have suggested behaviors beyond pedagogy for male elementary teachers in regard to teacher/student relationship. Pre-service teachers can benefit from this information in preparation for teaching or as part of a decision not to teach. The teachers who have survived the beginning year(s) of teaching had inspiring reasons for teaching and staying in teaching that young beginning teachers should hear. The fear of losing masculinity, losing the aura of masculinity, or losing the respect for masculinity due to the feminization of the profession is dispelled in the data presented from the interviews.

## *Theory*

I found no mention in feminist literature of a need for a female role model or a male role model for female students. “I have also been told that I was the selected teacher for a certain child because *he* needs a male teacher. I have not yet been told that I have been selected because *she* needs a male teacher” (King, 1998, p. 43). However, the DoDDS respondents in this study said that the girls and boys benefit from male teachers. Lora and Sean said that their daughters should see that men other than their father could be caring as a formative experience.

As there is not a balanced population of men and women teachers and administrators in the school systems, the problem needs research and attention. The DoDDS community saw a need for more male elementary teachers. They used the words mentor and role model. They talked about the need for males to fill in momentarily for absent fathers. In what ways does the good role model interact with the school community that determines that the role model needs to be male?

The literature offers role model attributes by implication. Then what are the characteristics of role model? The literature offers little resolution to that question. Through the interview process, this study established a lengthy body of attributes for male elementary teachers put forward by parents, administrators, and peer teachers. Those suggestions have been analyzed, synthesized, and grouped into the six attributes listed above. This study adds to the theories of gender construction and hegemonic masculinity by clarifying the needs of parents for their children, and the opinions of

administrators and peer teachers in terms of the behavior they expect from male elementary teachers.

Whatever the expectations of parents, teachers, and administrators for male elementary teachers, the findings of this study reveal an attitude of caution regarding male elementary teacher behavior. No parent respondent suggested that teachers hug children. They do not want teachers to ignore or push children away. The male teachers are cautious and have a plan, a method for how they approach children. In the end, Joe's attitude permeates the opinion of administrators, and generally the community. But like Lora said, "As a parent, you just can't trust."

Finally, Joe said

They want you to nurture kids; they want you to feel for kids, show feeling and emotions for kids, and yet if you do you get burnt, or you can get burnt, especially in the States. I'll tell you what, the day I stop hugging kids is the day I quit. I guarantee you, that is the way I feel. The kids need to know that they are loved, and what better way to show kids you love them. Some of these kids when they come in this building, it's the first and only time they've been shown love. I mean I operate my school that way. You walk in here, you feel welcome. And dammit, that is the way it should be.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

1. Do you think that more male teachers are needed in elementary schools? If yes, what constitutes the need for more male teachers? If no, why aren't more needed?
2. Do you think men stay out of elementary education? Why?
3. Does the assumed need for male elementary teachers imply that women educators are not fulfilling a need that is vital to student development?
4. Are there gender specific tasks and roles for teachers in elementary schools? What are they? Why are these tasks gender specific?
5. Do male teachers serve as role models for students? Which students? How?
6. What are the attributes of a male role model in the elementary school?

### Additional questions for parents

7. Has your child had a balance of male to female teachers while in elementary school?
8. If male teachers are needed as role models, what are the attributes of a male role model in the elementary school? Is modeling maleness a part of the male teacher's role?
9. In what ways, if any, is the teacher/student relationship similar to the parent/child relationship?

## Appendix B

## Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/27/03

Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2002

IRB Application No: ED02109

Proposal Title: MODELING MALENESS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal  
Investigator(s):Adrienne Hyle  
314 Willard Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078Ira Lee White  
106 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078Reviewed and  
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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Dear PI :


Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

  
Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## Appendix C

## DoDDS Research Approval Form

**Mills, Harold**

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**From:** Hoag, Noni  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 11, 2002, 10:20 AM  
**To:** Mills, Harold; White, I. Lee  
**Subject:** FW: Notice of Approval for Research Requests by Lee White and Harold Mills  
**Importance:** High

Hey, Harold and Lee,  
This is what you have been waiting for! Congratulations

Noni

---Original Message---

**From:** Schrankel, Steve  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 09, 2002 9:30 PM  
**To:** Hoag, Noni  
**Subject:** Notice of Approval for Research Requests by Lee White and Harold Mills  
**Importance:** High

Noni, please inform Lee and Harold that the research committee reviewed their proposals. There were some concerns about the methodology and, in the case of the research on the Mathland implementation, concerns about the accuracy of subjects' recollections more than two years after the termination of Mathland. However, approval was granted. Letters of approval have been mailed by official mail. Lee and Harold may proceed with their dissertations, once they receive this e-mail notification from you.

Best wishes for success in their research endeavors.

Steve

Steve Schrankel, Ph. D.  
Chief, Research and Evaluation Branch  
DOD Education Activity  
4040 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Phone: 703.696.4471, extension 1968  
e-mail: [sschrankel@hq.odedodea.edu](mailto:sschrankel@hq.odedodea.edu)

## Appendix D

## Introductory Letter

Dear

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research project that I am working on as part of my dissertation leading to a doctorate in education leadership. The purpose of this study is to determine and clarify the role(s) played by male teachers in elementary education.

If you agree to participate, I will conduct an audio taped interview at your convenience lasting no longer than one hour. The data will be transcribed and analyzed for the purposes of the study.

There can be further opportunities to participate if you wish.

If you agree to participate, I will provide you with a consent form and further information. We can then establish a time and place to conduct the interview. I will include the consent form, which you can sign and return in the self-addressed envelope included. If you have further questions before agreeing to participate, please feel free to contact me at home, phone: 01480 385204 or e-mail at: [ilwhite@ntlworld.com](mailto:ilwhite@ntlworld.com).

Your time is appreciated and I hope that you will find this study of interest.

Sincerely,

Lee White

## Appendix E

## Consent Form

## Informed Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize Ira Lee White to interview me in conjunction with this research on modeling maleness in the elementary school. This research is being conducted through Oklahoma State University. The Principal Investigators are Ira Lee White, a doctoral student, and Adrienne E. Hyle, a professor, in the School of Educational Studies in the College of Education.

If you decide to participate, the interview will take approximately one hour. I will arrange for a time and place that is convenient for you outside of your workday. The interview will be audio taped to ensure that all responses are recorded. Once I have transcribed the tape, it will be returned to you along with a copy of the transcript. The number at which to call you to make arrangements to return the tape and provide you with a transcript review is: \_\_\_\_\_. Please call me to pick up your revised transcript.

Your name will not appear on the transcript or tape. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your confidentiality. Your approved copy will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my home until the research is completed at which time it will be shredded.

Your participation in this research is strictly on a voluntarily basis. At any time during or after the interview if you feel uncomfortable with an answer or with the interview process, the interview will terminate and the information obtained will be discarded.

This study does not provide compensation to the subjects.

There is also no direct benefit to the individual participants. This research will be added to the wider body of educational practices that will assist in the continued improvement of instruction in the Department of Defense Schools as well as the community of education in general.

There is no risk to the participants from this interview and no obligation on their part to participate.

For questions about the research, please contact:

Adrienne E. Hyle, Professor  
Oklahoma State University  
106 Willard Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078 Phone: 405-744-9893



Lee White  
 Feltwell Elementary School  
 Feltwell, UK Phone: 01842-828504

Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary,  
 Oklahoma State University  
 203 Whitehurst  
 Stillwater, OK 74078 Phone: 405-744-5700.

I understand that participation is voluntary and that I will not be penalized if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my participation in this project at any time without penalty after I notify the project director, Adrienne E. Hyle, at the address or phone noted above.

I have read the above statements and have been fully advised of the procedures followed in this project. I volunteer to participate. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

I have read and fully understand the consent form.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (a.m./p.m.)

---

Name (typed)

Signature

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Ira Lee White

## Appendix F

## Research Study Request, Endorsement and Agreement

DoDEA-R 2071.2  
Enclosure 1

## Research Study Request, Endorsement and Agreement

## Part 2

Research Requester: Ira Lee WhiteResearch Title: Modeling Maleness in the Elementary School

## Faculty or Staff Sponsor

Name: Adrienne E. HyleAddress: Professor and Director of Extension, Associate Dean of Administrative Affairs,College of Education, Oklahoma State University, 106 Willard Hall, Stillwater,Oklahoma, 74078Telephone: (405) 744-9893 FAX: (405) 744-7713University/Department/Organization: Oklahoma State University College of  
EducationFaculty/Staff Sponsor Signature: 

## Research Study Request, Endorsement and Agreement

### Part 3

#### Guidelines:

1. Research involving campus level personnel, especially that which involves principals, teachers and students, may only be conducted between October 1 and May 1.
2. Research involving pupils and personnel of the DoDEA must protect the dignity, well-being, and confidentiality of the individual(s), including the rights guaranteed legally and constitutionally and by DoDEA policies. All information obtained is held in the strictest of confidence, under the Privacy Act (5 USC 552a).
3. The research shall not unduly interfere with the classroom instructional process or the regular operations of the school or district.
4. Personal, social, and psychological research of any nature must NOT be in conflict with the rights of individuals or groups.
5. Approved research shall be conducted in accordance with the policy and regulations of DoDEA. The researcher shall cooperate with the staff member(s) designated by the district or school to coordinate the research. It is the researcher's responsibility to become familiar with DoDEA operating policies.
6. Approval of a request to conduct research is not an endorsement and does not compel any personnel of the DoDEA to participate in research studies.
7. An approved research study may be terminated at any time by the Principal; Superintendent; Chief, Research and Evaluation Branch; Associate Director for Research and Evaluation; or the Director, DoDEA.

I acknowledge receipt of the Guidelines for Research in DoDEA and agree to abide by the guidelines as stated.

I acknowledge that Privacy Act information will not be issued to me unless I have 1) been informed that I am receiving Privacy Act information, 2) collected Privacy Act waivers from each participant, and 3) executed an agreement acknowledging the strictures for the Privacy Act and my duties to adhere to that Act.

Ira Lee White  
Signature of Researcher

20 December, '01  
Date

Appendix G

Superintendent/Principal(s) Approval

DoDEA-R 2071.2  
Enclosure 2

Superintendent/Principal(s) Approval

I have reviewed the Research Study Request for Lee White  
entitled Modeling Maleness in Elementary Schools

I agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: Jan 7, 2001 School Name: Alconbury Elem.

Principal's Name: Glenn T. Giles

Principal's Signature: Glenn T. Giles

Please forward this request to your Superintendent after completion of this form.

The following should be completed by the Superintendent:

I  agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: 11/8/02

Scarlett R. Rehrig  
Superintendent, U.K.  
Unit 5185 Box 470  
Apo AE 09461-5470

Superintendent's Name: Scarlett R. Rehrig

Superintendent's Signature: Scarlett R. Rehrig

The following should be completed by the Principal and/or Superintendent.

If you disagreed above, please state your reasons below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Superintendents: Return to the DoDEA: Chief, Research and Evaluation Branch  
Fax: 703 696-8924

DoDEA-R 2071.2  
Enclosure 2

### Superintendent/Principal(s) Approval

I have reviewed the Research Study Request for Ira Lee White  
entitled Modeling Maleness in the Elementary School

I agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: 14 January 2002 School Name: Feltwell Elementary School

Principal's Name: Henry B. Benoit, III

Principal's Signature: Henry B. Benoit, III

Please forward this request to your Superintendent after completion of this form.

*The following should be completed by the Superintendent:*

I agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: 01/18/02

Superintendent's Name: Scarlett R. Rehrig

Scarlett R. Rehrig  
Superintendent, U.K.  
Unit 5185 Box 470  
APO AE 09481-5470

Superintendent's Signature: Scarlett R. Rehrig

*The following should be completed by the Principal and/or Superintendent.*

If you disagreed above, please state your reasons below.

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Superintendents: Return to the DoDEA: Chief, Research and Evaluation Branch  
Fax: 703 696-8924

DoDEA-R 2071.2

Enclosure 2

### Superintendent/Principal(s) Approval

I have reviewed the Research Study Request for IRA LEF WHITE  
entitled MODELING MALENESS IN THE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

I agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: 8 JANUARY, 2002 School Name: Lakeland ES

Principal's Name: Ed Dzikowski

Principal's Signature: [Signature]

Please forward this request to your Superintendent after completion of this form.

*The following should be completed by the Superintendent:*

I  agree /disagree (circle one) that my school will participate in this research study. I also understand that given my approval, this research will be conducted in accordance with DoDEA policy.

Date: 1/18/02

Superintendent's Name: Scarlett R. Rehrig

Scarlett R. Rehrig  
Superintendent, U.K.  
Unit 5185 Box 470  
APO AE 09461-5470

Superintendent's Signature: Scarlett R. Rehrig

*The following should be completed by the Principal and/or Superintendent.*

If you disagreed above, please state your reasons below.

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Superintendents: Return to the DoDEA: Chief, Research and Evaluation Branch  
Fax: 703 696-8924

## VITA<sup>2</sup>

Ira Lee White

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: MODELING MALENESS: THE ASSUMED NEED FOR MALE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Evansville, Indiana on August 22, 1940, the son of Lee and Alamito White, brother of Rex White, Harold White, and Janie Horton; married Joan Murlin in November 1969; two children Jennifer Odom and Johnmark White.

Education: Graduate from Meadowbrook High School near Marietta, Oklahoma in May 1958; received Bachelor of Arts in Art and English Education from Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma in July 1961; received Master of Teaching degree with a major in Art from Central State College in June 1964. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University in August 2003.

Experience: Resided in several areas of the United State, but lived mainly on a farm near Marietta, Oklahoma; employed as a sanitation engineer at the state capital while an undergraduate; taught at Sapulpa High School, Sapulpa, Oklahoma from August 1961-May 1963; served as a teaching fellow at Central State College from August 1963-June 1964; employed by the Department of Defense Overseas Education Activity from August 1964 to the present working in Labrador, Germany, Cuba and England.

Professional Memberships: Phi Delta Kappa