Teachers’ Perspectives on Relational Trust in Their School Communities

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Abstract

Trust is the foundation to a thriving learning community. The intent of this research was to investigate teachers’ perspectives on relational trust among the different members of their learning communities including teachers, students, colleagues and the community. The research design of the study was a mixed methods, paper-based survey. It was created to retrieve quantitative and qualitative data on the current teachers’ perspectives on relational trust and the strategies teachers are using to build relational trust with the members of their learning community. Relational trust is an important factor in academic achievement in learning communities and the data presented shows that the current perspective of teachers in School District #70 is that relational trust exists in strong levels between teachers and all members of their learning community.
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Chapter 1: The Problem Investigated

A. Purpose of the Study

Trust is the foundation to a thriving learning community. The trust relationship that exists between members of a learning community is an important factor in education that often gets under valued, “researchers, politicians, teachers, and parents all agree that parents and teachers must work together as partners in education of children”(Wescott Dodd & Konzal, 2002, p.140). It is the belief of this researcher that the lack of trust in learning communities has continued to erode the faith that teachers, administrators, parents, communities, and students have in the education system. It is the hope that this researcher can gain insights into teachers’ perspectives of trust to be able to establish whether or not there is a lack of trust present, and what strategies teachers are using to help rectify the situation. Tshannen-Moran (2007) argues that although building trust in schools takes “time, effort and leadership, the investment will bring lasting returns. Trust pays dividends in helping schools succeed in fulfilling their mission to be productive, professional learning communities” (p.110). In believing that there is significant dissatisfaction within the current educational model this researcher asks that we recognize that “trust is the most significant predictor of individuals’ satisfaction within their organizations” (Covey, 2008, p. 239). The purpose of this study is to establish what teachers’ perspectives are around relational trust between students and teachers, teachers and parents/guardians, teachers and their colleagues, and teachers and their communities. It was also this researcher’s hope that teachers would share some of their strategies to build relational trust between themselves and the members of their learning communities. It is this researcher’s belief that in School District #70 there is room for improvement with the relational trust between some of the members of the school communities. It is this researcher’s hope that by gaining insight into teachers’
perspectives on relational trust, that as an action plan may result from the data of this research and that steps will be taken by this researcher to help rectify the problems, and celebrate the successes.

**B. Justification of the Study**

Students are not able to achieve their full academic success working in untrusting learning communities. Bryk and Schneider (2002) reported, “schools with weak trust reports in both 1994 and 1997 had virtually no chance of showing improvement in either reading or mathematics” (p.111). Schools need to be exploring improvement of trust as a way to improve student achievement because trust is important as “it hits schools in their bottom line; it makes a difference in students achievement” (Tshannen-Moran, 2007, p.110). As schools continue to find ways to reform their practices and ways of doing business, it is made clear that “researchers who study schools as organizations have identified trust as a key characteristic of successful schools” (Wescott Dodd & Konzal, 2002, p.140). Bryk and Schneider (2002) also discuss how trust “is especially salient in the context of asymmetric power relations, such as those between poor parents and local school professionals” (p. 20).

The clientele of School District #70 has a large population of students who are struggling with economic poverty or who are of First nations ancestry. The lack of trust between schools and minority groups, and groups struggling with economic poverty are both important factors as to whether or not there is ease in building trust. School communities that have a clientele who are struggling with economic poverty or who are a minority group often see fewer parents involved with their school communities. When there is a lack of trust and respect it makes both parties question motives and the likelihood of miscommunication increases. Wescott Dodd and Konzal (2002), after analyzing many case studies from various schools, deduced that teachers:
Now look for evidence that parents are trustworthy; that they support their professional decisions, encourage children to do their homework, and make sure that children are well cared for and prepared to come to school each day with adequate nourishment and sleep (p.143).

When teachers do not see this evidence they can question the trustworthiness of parents. When parents think about teachers and their trustworthiness they want to know that “their children are safe and secure…they want to believe that their children are entrusted to competent and caring teachers. They want to be respected as co-equals in the education of their children” (Wescott Dodd & Konzal, p.143). Teachers and parents both have to communicate through actions and word their commitment to fulfilling their roles, and working together to support student learning. Knowing how power and perceived roles and trust effect relationships within our school communities, and being conscious of ways to help support these relationships will help schools take significant steps forward on their path to building trusting learning communities (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Often socio-economic status will play a role in how teachers and parents interact: “Parents from working-class backgrounds, may feel disempowered in their relationships with educators”(p.149). Ho Sui Chu (2007) stated “teachers are more likely to work harder to establish trust relationships with parents from working class students” (p.8). Teachers may appear to be working harder at making relationships with working class parents and students, because it is a necessity in trying to keep students safe and to help them learn. Following Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, one can discern that if a student’s basic needs are not being met and if a student does not feel safe they will not be able to learn. A teacher must build a relationship with parents and students in order to discern what that student requires to have their
basic needs and safety met. Parents of working class students and teachers must work together to build trusting relationships in order to ensure the greatest academic success of students.

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) presented in their findings that many “parents may avoid interfacing with school personnel due to their own feelings of insecurity or uncertainty about what the school promotes or believes… this is particularly likely for parents whose previous experiences with schools and other agencies have been adversarial, intimidating, or otherwise uncomfortable” (p.114). They argued that “trust between families and schools is vital to a healthy atmosphere and an essential feature of productive home-school relationships” (p.114). What is more important in Christenson and Sheridan’s findings is that “regardless of educational or income level, or ethnic background, parents want their children to be successful in school” (p.46). Clearly if parents and teachers are both striving for the same goal, then it only makes sense for them to build a partnership based on trust to help students achieve academic success.

A student is the core of a learning community. Raider-Roth (2005) argued that not only do people need to have trust in others but that they also must have trust in themselves. In her conclusions she explained how the students in her study helped her to understand that “trusting their knowledge meant that they could discuss, use, and depend on their understandings, in order to build new ideas as well as identify concepts that they did not understand” (p. 28-29). She explained that if a student is unable to trust their own knowledge that they will “feel worried that they are unable to depend on their ideas, build new understandings, or articulate what they do or do not know”(p. 29). School communities must work on trust between all parties and some time must also be devoted to helping students to trust in themselves, and the knowledge and worth that they bring to the learning community. Without this, schools will continue to see lags in
students’ academic progress.

C. Academic Achievement in School District #70

Several studies have demonstrated that without trust school communities are unable to reach their full potential and that the relationships that exist between members of the school community are integral to students’ academic success. According to the School District #70’s achievement contract, the district struggled with graduation rates in 2008 with only 68% of students graduating based on the six year dogwood completion rate. This percentage reflects one of the lowest rates in the province with the provincial average being 79% (School District #70, 2009). Student achievement is important to School District #70 and finding new methods to increase student achievement are being sought. The relationship between trust and student achievement has not been researched up to this point in this district. The data from this research could help inform teachers’ practice around building relationships with students, parents/guardians, their colleagues, and the community. It might also provide evidence to show how some teachers are successfully tackling the issue of relational trust in their schools and classrooms and perhaps increase trust and student achievement in the process. Tshannen-Moran (2007) claimed that:

The five facets of trust- benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence- relate directly to the five constituencies of schools (administrators, teachers, students, parents and the general public)... (and that) the absence of trust impedes effectiveness and progress...without trust, communication becomes constrained and distorted, thus making problems more difficult to resolve. (p.99)

The research on trust in education has shown up to this point that trust is an important element in students’ academic success. This researcher wants to determine what teachers’
perspectives are on relational trust in School District #70, and what some of their strategies are to increase relational trust amongst the members of the school communities.

**D. Research Question and Hypothesis**

When looking at our education organization as a whole we might be asking what could a true high–trust organization look like. Convey (2008) described the behaviours in a high-trust organization as follows:

- Information being shared openly.
- Mistakes being tolerated and encouraged as a way of learning.
- The culture is innovative and creative. People talk straight and confront real issues. There is real communication and real collaboration. Transparency is a practiced value.
- People are candid and authentic. There is a high degree of accountability. There is a palpable vitality and energy—people can feel the positive momentum. (p.237)

The principal investigator of this study asked: What were teachers’ perspectives on relational trust towards the different members of their school communities including teachers, students, colleagues, and the community. The factors in determining relational trust that were studied were leadership qualities that were deemed to have increased relational trust when they existed. These leadership qualities include interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence, and personal integrity. These leadership qualities were chosen after investigating Robinson’s (2007) study around school leadership and students outcomes. Robinson (2007) identified these four leadership qualities as being those that helped increase relational trust and her worked helped define relational trust and built on the work done by Bryk & Schneider.

**E. Definition of Terms**

There are key terms from the research question that need to be defined. For the purpose of this study, Relational Trust was defined as openness in interpersonal relationships that is
shown through communication, participation and positive interactions between parties. This mental construct which students had about trust may continue to develop over time based on their beliefs, feelings and disposition in the classroom setting.

The definition of the word ‘trust’ was adopted from the work of Robinson (2007) and Bryk and Schneider (2002) for clarification in the teacher survey. Trust was defined as “a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on one’s confidence that that person will fulfill important obligations and expectations relevant to the shared task of educating students” (Robinson, 2007, p.20).

The researcher also used Robinson (2007) work to define the terms interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence and personal integrity. These terms were the four qualities the researcher was focusing on as qualities needed to build relational trust. In each question of the survey the definition of the quality being measured was given to help familiarize and clarify the definition for the respondent.

Interpersonal respect was defined as “civility, deep listening to others’ concerns, inclusive processes” (Robinson, 2007, p.20).

Personal regard was defined as the “extent of caring” (Robinson, 2007, p.20).

Role competence was defined as “ability to do one’s job well, including the ability to reflect on and improve one’s practice” (Robinson, 2007, p.20).

Personal integrity was defined as the ability to “put another person’s interest above own personal and political interests, walk the talk; communicate accurately (Robinson, 2007, p.20).

A Learning Community or School Community was defined as a group that assembles together to engage in the learning process. Everyone is a member, and members all have influence over the learning that takes place. All members are responsible to aid in meeting the
needs of members, and they usually share time, space, events, and emotional connections. The members that take part in making up these Learning Communities are students, parents/guardians, colleagues, and the community in which the school is located.

F. Brief Overview of the Study

The intent of this research was to investigate teachers’ perspectives on relational trust between the different members of their school communities including teachers, students, colleagues and the community. The research design of the study was a mixed methods, paper-based survey (Appendix A) created to retrieve quantitative and qualitative data. The participants of this study were elementary, middle and secondary school teachers in School District 70 (Alberni) excluding those schools located in Ucluelet and Tofino. The participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous. The researcher’s colleague circulated the surveys to the schools in Port Alberni in mid October 2012 and collected the surveys two weeks later. Data analysis was performed on the responses to the survey and results were organized into quantitative and qualitative tables and Figure results and qualitative interpretations. Recommendations to the district were made based on the results obtained from the research.
Chapter 2: Background and Review of Related Literature

A. Relational Trust and School Communities

The deterioration of trusting relationships within school communities and the effect on academic performance has been the focus of the work by Bryk and Schneider (2002). They employed a sociological approach in which they looked at relational trust and role relationships and how “each party in a role relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role obligations and holds some expectations about the role obligations of the other” (p.20). They argue that relational trust diminishes when one party perceives that the other is not fulfilling their expected role obligations. They were able to determine that “the composite trust measure is highly predictive of school productivity trends” (p.111). After analyzing their research they were able to conclude by 1997 that “schools with strong positive trust reports had a one in two chance of being in the improving group” for academic success (p111). Their approach looks at how the “complex web of social exchanges conditions the basic operations of schools (p.20). They discuss the dependencies among the trusting parties in schools:

Embedded in the daily routines of schools is an interrelated set of mutual dependencies among all key actors: students, teachers, principals and administrators, and parents. These structural dependencies create feelings of vulnerability for the individuals involved (p. 20).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) also discuss how the “vulnerability is especially salient in the context of asymmetric power relations, such as those between poor parents and local school professionals” (p. 20). They suggest a way to help build trusting relationships is by having “recognition of this vulnerability by the superordinate party (in this instance, the local school
professionals) and a conscious commitment on their part to relieve the uncertainty and unease of the other (that is, poor parents)”(p. 20). Acknowledging power imbalances and seeking ways to encourage both parties to feel relevant, heard and important is a step that schools can take to help their families feel more comfortable within schools.

The lack of relational trust between schools and minority groups, and groups struggling with poverty are both important factors as to whether or not there is ease in building trust. School communities that have a clientele that are struggling with poverty or that are a minority group often see fewer parents involved with their school communities. Knowing how power and perceived roles and trust effect relationships within our school communities, and being conscious of ways to help support these relationships will help schools take giant steps forward on their path to building trusting learning communities (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

On the other end of the socio-economic spectrum Wescott Dodd and Konzal (2002) argue that professional parents often will put a bigger push on academic progress and in some cases will try to:

Bring their power to bear into their child’s classroom, where power doesn’t have a place.

Some parents think that threatening someone with a lawyer … will ensure better service for their child. But what happens is nobody wants that child in their classroom (p.150). With both parents and teachers bringing their opinions and evidence against each other it can be difficult for these two parties to build a relationship of trust. Great communication and a trusting relationship can ensure that both professional parents and teachers can expect great academic results from students.

Teachers are often charged with the responsibility of building relationships with parents and Wescott Dodd and Konzal (2002) offer this strategy to help teachers build relationships with
parents. They tell teachers to expect to “interact with parents, listen to their concerns, and to explain what they are doing in the classroom and why…Teachers who are able to communicate effectively have a much greater chance at building trust with parents” (p.153). If teachers are able to start building trusting relationships and are able to communicate effectively with parents, one can assume that teachers will be supported by parents, and that parents and teachers will be able to help students reach their full academic success.

One way learning communities might start to cultivate a relationship of trust within our schools is by welcoming their communities into the building. In the work by Frazier (1999) she states “community support does wonders for the learning environment” (p.59). One of her case studies suggests that:

An integration of home, school, place of worship, and community determines what takes place within a school, and when a school community has all of those forces connected, reaching out a hand, it makes everyone’s job easier (p.62).

Looking at Frazier’s (1999) research one can deduce that if learning communities include their surrounding communities, relationships will be strengthened and that trust will naturally occur helping to make school communities more successful.

All members of a learning community must be committed to building relationships that include strong relational trust if students are to achieve academic success. St. John, Griffith, and Allen-Haynes (1997) express that “it takes a whole community to raise a child, to paraphrase the African proverb. It also takes a spirit of community and trust among parents and educators to educate one” (p.87). Students are not able to achieve their full academic success working in untrusting learning communities. More research needs to be made into what strategies are currently being used and are successful and where more research needs to be done to be able to
pin point where relational trust is falling apart. Robinson (2007) articulates four leadership qualities in her study that she defines in clear terms. Robinson (2007) identified these four leadership qualities as being those that helped increase relational trust and her worked helped define relational trust for this study and built on the research of Bryk & Schneider (2002). These leadership qualities include interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence, and personal integrity. Understanding the importance of all the members of a Learning Community and the role that relational trust plays in making sure these members function well together led this researcher to look at what research had been done on leadership and relational trust.

**B. Relational Trust and Leadership**

Taking notice that trust is being strongly advocated for in schools yet there has been little in the way of research on the topic, Noonan et al., (2008) focused their research on trying to provide more information on how school principals understand and operationalize the effects of trust in their personal and professional relationships. The purposes of this study were to “describe and analyze principals' experiences of trust in contemporary schools; develop an understanding of how trust affects educational settings and the extent to which an understanding of trust can explain effectiveness of educational leadership. The researcher hypothesized that “there would be many understandings and expressions of trust but that these would revolve around thresholds of interdependence, motivations, and choices in relationships” (Noonan, 2008).

The results from this study make an important contribution to the study of the importance of trust in schools because they provide more data to a field that has often been mentioned as an area that needed more study. Its results concluded that principals who were actively seeking being successful leaders in contemporary schools would benefit from understanding the role that
trust plays in successful leadership. The data also highlighted that principals felt that in regards to trust and trust building predictability and openness were key. This information would be very helpful to a principal who was looking at what they might start to work on in order to help build trust in their school.

A possible limitation to this research would be that they do not give concrete ideas on how to build or maintain predictability or openness as a leader so it would be difficult for a principal to use this data to implement a plan of action. This research also does not define some of its key terms in very specific ways, such as transparency, integrity or trust broken or even trust itself.

Furthering the research that had been done in recent years around relational trust in schools and students academic success. Redburn, (2009) focused his research on exploring the relationship between specific consensus strategies and the development of relational trust. The purpose of this study was to “identify strategies that, when used, fostered the development of strong, positive relationships in schools” (2009). The researchers hypothesized, based on the work that previous researchers had done on trust, that the “consensus processes would contribute to the development of relational trust in schools (2009).

The analysis of the transcribed interviews brought out some emerging themes such as The importance of trust and the facets of trust as defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) resulting from the use of the consensus strategies. “The value in the development of relationships of listening to and being heard by others. The emergence of collaboration and empowerment resulting from the use of consensus strategies, frequently described as consequences of hearing and being heard” (2009). This research spoke to the importance of all members of learning communities and the value that having high relational
trust could have for a school community.

The results from this study make a contribution to the study of the importance of trust in schools because it provides principals a list of important factors to consider when trying to build a school community that trusts. The data also backs up many presumed important ideas with data that proves that it is important such as “the importance and value of providing teachers, parents and others in the school community the opportunities to listen and be heard” (2009). The research also highlights the ways in which a principal can use the consensus processes and how it can contribute to building relational trust in schools. Another interesting piece of data to come out of this study are observations that participants made around assumptions that people have the necessary communication skills, and knowledge to build and maintain trusting relationships that result in greater students achievement. This study and the “consensus practices described in this study offer promising and accessible tools for those intricately involved in schools” (2009).

Building upon the study of trust in sociology, economics, and organizational science, Hoy et al., (1999) focus their research on the building of trust in schools. The purpose of this study was to “conceptualize the faces and referents of trust, to develop valid and reliable measures of faculty trust in schools, and to test the utility of the measure in predicting school collaboration with parents” (p.186). The empirical phase of the investigation was built around four main ideas: “to measure the faces of trust in school facilities. To examine the factor structure of faculty trust. To explore the interrelationships between faculty trust in students, teachers, principal, and parents. To test the relationship between faculty trust and parental collaboration” (p.189). The researchers hypothesized that there were common conditions of trust. Firstly a willingness to risk vulnerability was needed and then you would see “the five faces of trust benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness” (p.184). The researchers also
hypothesized that “faculty trust was positively related to a school’s collaboration with parents in school decision making” (p.197).

The analysis of Hoy & Tschannen-Moran’s data demonstrated that trust had many faces and that the ability to risk and be vulnerable was related to all the facets of trust. The study also revealed that “all aspects of faculty trust were correlated with parental collaboration and explained about two thirds of the variance in collaboration” (p.203). One interesting bit of data to emerge that the researchers made mention to was that the clients (parents and students) were indistinguishable to teachers. If teachers trusted parents than their trust extended to the students and vice versa.

The results from this study make an important contribution to the field of relational trust because they help to conceptualize trust in an educational setting and they help to define it and its facets. They also prove empirically that faculty trust and parent teacher collaboration are correlated. This research developed research instruments that were reliable and valid so that other researchers could take these instruments and build upon their research.

A possible limitation that the researchers mention is that they had applied a quantitative analysis to this research and that trust being so complex would benefit from having a qualitative analysis as well. Another possible limitation to this study might be that they leave out community as part of the learning community. Having members of the community involved in this study might have made the data even stronger as it could show the perspective of those looking into the school, and those who support the school.

The study provides a strong platform of empirical data that other researchers can build studies on trust from. It gives researchers a jumping off point as they define trust and have a questionnaire for an area that had not previously had very much research on it. This data
provides this researcher a strong foundation from which to build their own thesis, and gives a hard to define word like trust a definition that this researcher believes works well in educational research.

Teachers and administration are often left responsible for cultivating the culture of a school community. Teachers and administration set the trust tone of a school by how they interact with one another. Macmillan, Meyer and Northfield’s (2005) work states that their research “on trust has led us to believe that trust is critical, yet an under-investigated area in schools” (p.101). They found that:

Without mutual trust between staff and administration, teachers are unsure of the support they need to teach well from day-to-day, and principals feel that every decision they make will be dissected and challenged (p.101).

Alternatively they found that “with mutual trust, teachers and principals work collaboratively for the improvement of instruction and students achievement” (p.101). Teachers and Administration must work at fostering trusting relationships with each other, in order to help maintain the foundation for a trusting learning community.

Administration plays a large role in whether a trusting learning community is possible for a school. Macmillan, Meyer and Northfield (2005) argue that trust can be influenced by a multitude of factors some of which they agree are beyond a principals control. They also state that it is important for a principal to recognize the importance of trust and that “with time, principals and teachers can build the requisite trust to establish positive and productive working relationships” (p.101). Their research looks into how trust is impacted in schools where there is a high principal turnover rate, and examines how a trusting relationship between administration and teachers impacts schools. They argue that trust “ought to be considered as a continuum,
along which the relationship of trust between teachers and principals changes as each becomes more and more familiar with the others’ practice” (p.87). Their findings showed that with a high turn over rate of principals in a school it was more difficult to cultivate a trusting learning community. In Donaldson Jr’s (2001) work he reports, “those who aspire to purposeful leadership seek to feed, channel, or perhaps even divert the streams of relationships, purposes, and actions toward mobilization for improvement” (p. 45). He suggests that leaders can accomplish this by working toward “relationships of mutual openness, trust, and affirmation sufficient for the players to influence and be influenced willingly by each other” (p. 45). If administration can lead their learning communities into the task of building trust worthy relationships, they will see their schools succeed in achieving greater academic success.

If educational institutions are able to build a solid foundation of trust within school communities, strengthening relationships and encouraging cooperation they will see greater academic results. “In the context of education, trust was seen as a goal and a tool for school improvement’ (Meier, 2002; Brown, 1998; Schneider & Bryk, 2002)” (Ho Sui Chu, 2007, p.1). Tshannen-Moran (2007) states that “[t]rust matters because it hits schools in their bottom line; it makes a difference in students achievement” (p.110). As schools continue to find ways to reform their practices and ways of doing business, it is made clear that “researchers who study schools as organizations have identified trust as a key characteristic of successful schools” (Wescott Dodd & Konzal, 2002, p.140). This researcher is hoping that by gaining insight into Teachers’ perspectives on trust, data will be obtained that will help to see what strategies are working for teachers in building relational trust and whether or not they are able to identify a key area in one of the relational trust leadership qualities that if enhanced might improve trust.
B. Research Focus

Covey (2008) suggests that in an organization where trust is nonexistent one can expect to find: a dysfunctional environment and toxic culture, intense micromanagement, sabotage, grievances, and a redundant hierarchy. In organizations where trust is a visible asset: the focus was always on the work at hand, collaboration was effective, positive partnering relationships occurred with employees and stakeholders, helpful systems and structures were in place and their was a high degree of creativity and innovation. All of the effects seen in organizations where trust was an asset could also be said to be true of positive learning communities. In the current system there is a lack of trust and this is leading to teachers and administrators becoming complacent and unenthused. Parents have continued to withdraw support for teachers and school communities. Students are not able to achieve their full academic success working in untrusting learning communities. Bryk and Schneider (2002) reported, “schools with weak trust reports in both 1994 and 1997 had virtually no chance of showing improvement in either reading or mathematics” (p.111). If a school is to be successful it needs trust and “schools that enjoy a culture of trust are likely to benefit from members of the school community willingly working together and going beyond the minimum requirements of their positions” (Tshannen-Moran, 2007, p.110). This researcher will gather data to help discern what teachers’ perspectives are about relational trust between themselves and the other members of their learning communities. By using the four leadership qualities outlined in Robinsons’ (2007) research this researcher hopes to start to gain a clearer picture in where trust might be breaking down between teachers and the members of their community and where trust is currently being successfully built. By asking teachers’ perspectives this researcher will be able to determine if the teachers in School District #70 believe that trust is present or not between the members of their learning
communities. By asking teachers to fill in strategies that they use to help build relational trust between these members it is the hope of this researcher that some emergent themes will arise and that teachers might help identify a strategy which could then be tested through action research in the future. If more research is obtained on trust and education, better academic results are attainable as many researchers have found that there are strong relationships between high trust levels and success in academics.
Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

A. Description of the Research Design

The intent of this research was to investigate teachers’ perspectives on relational trust towards the different members of their learning communities including teachers, students, colleagues and the community. The research design of the study was a mixed methods, paper-based survey (Appendix A) designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers in School District 70 (Alberni) excluding those schools located in Ucluelet and Tofino. The participation was voluntary and anonymous. The researcher’s colleague circulated the surveys to the schools in Port Alberni and two weeks later collected the surveys. Data analysis was performed on the responses to the survey and results were organized into quantitative and qualitative results and qualitative interpretations. Recommendations to the district were made based on the results obtained from the research.

B. Description of the Sample

The available population for this study was 79 elementary, 41 middle and 61 secondary school teachers located in the city of Port Alberni, which makes up the majority of teachers teaching in School District 70 in British Columbia. Teachers in Tofino and Ucluelet although a part of School District 70 were not asked to participate in this study due to the sample being a sample of convenience and the principal investigator of this study working in Port Alberni. Tofino and Ucluelet were too far away for the principal investigator to include them in this study. Surveys were circulated to the majority of teachers in the district, and overall 32 out of 181 teachers participated in the study. The participants were from one high school that taught grades nine-12, two middle schools that taught grades six-eight, and six elementary schools that taught kindergarten to grade five. The teachers were asked to participate and choose to volunteer.
to answer a paper-based survey (Appendix A). The years of their teaching experience varied from newly qualified to almost retired. I retrieved demographic information in the survey regarding age, gender, years of teaching experience and grade level the teacher was currently teaching. The amount of time the teachers had been teaching in Port Alberni and their connections to this community also varied from having been born in Port Alberni to having recently moved to this community. The researcher’s sample is not random and because of that it had limited generalizability, as well the researcher has connections with School District 70 and as a result the researcher used convenience sampling. Tofino and Ucluelet, although a part of School District 70 were not asked to participate in this study due to the sample being that of convenience. The researcher chose this sample because there was a range of socio-economic environments for the different schools, there was a large span of the amount of time teachers would have lived in the community, a distribution of rural and urban school settings, a variety in the connections teachers had to the community of Port Alberni and a range of academic levels. This sample was also chosen because the researcher had grown up in this community and was currently teaching in this community. The researcher was aware that a disadvantage of this sample was that it could be biased; however, care was taken to ensure that the researcher was removed from the participants taking the survey. The researcher was also aware that the previous year’s job action may also have impacted the responses as relational trust may have been severely severed and damaged within the school communities being surveyed.

B. Description of the Instruments

A survey (Appendix A) with an attached consent form (Appendix B) was used to gather information about teachers’ perspectives on relational trust between the different members of their learning communities; including teachers, students, colleagues and the community. A
mixed-methods research design was used so that the researcher could gather quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher chose a survey because it could be used to gather data from a large group of teachers spanning many different schools. The researcher felt this was the most effective way to get teachers to participate in sharing their perspectives on relational trust in their school communities and to provide some of the strategies they used to build relational trust amongst their school community members. The survey included 16 statements that were in the form of questions on a five point Likert scale, and four open-ended questions. Questions were based on the work of Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Robinson (2007) and their findings around the leadership qualities that build trust. Bryk and Schneider’s research (2002), indicated the importance of four leadership qualities in building relational trust including interpersonal respect, personal regard for others, role competence, and personal integrity. Robinson (2007) built on this research and helped define these terms more in depth and provided stronger concrete examples. The results of Bryk and Schneider’s and Robinson’s work guided the development of the researcher’s current survey statements. These researchers found that there were links between academic achievement and leadership qualities that helped build trust. When these leadership qualities were present trust was present in higher amounts and students’ academic achievement also increased. Before the surveys were given to the participants, the researcher of the present study tested the questions with 14 colleagues for the purpose of identifying and removing any ambiguous aspects of the survey and to ensure that the data being collected was what the researcher was trying to obtain. The quantitative questions were asking teachers to rate on a Likert scale how true the following four statements were to them: I demonstrate interpersonal respect. I demonstrate personal regard. I demonstrate role competence. I demonstrate personal integrity. These four statements were asked of each of the following groups students,
parents/guardians, colleagues and the community. The qualitative questions were as follows:

What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself you’re your students?

What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students? What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your colleagues? What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your community? Using these questions the researcher hoped to have a clearer picture about what teachers’ perspectives were on relational trust in their school communities, and find out what strategies teachers were currently using to aid in building trust with the members of their learning communities.

D. Explanation of the Procedures Followed

The researcher called each principal and inquired as to when an appropriate time in October would be. Most principals indicated that the middle of October would be the best time for the surveys to be circulated. The researcher’s colleague circulated the surveys to the schools in October 2012. The researcher’s colleague put the surveys in the teachers’ mailboxes with an envelope attached with instructions on where to put the completed survey. The completion of the survey was the consent form, so no consent form needed to be collected. Participants were asked to return their completed survey by October 28th 2012 (two weeks after receiving the survey) in the provided envelope to the principal’s office where he/she kept a large envelope labeled Trust Surveys. The surveys were kept in a locked filing cabinet to ensure the safety and privacy of the information and the confidentiality of the participants. The principal’s office was the most secure and convenient location to collect the completed surveys. It was likely that respondents filled out the survey at school during a break before or after school. Surveys were not circulated on Mondays as this is always a busy day for teachers and they were not circulated on Friday.
afternoons due to the fact that some participants may have forgotten about it over the weekend and neglected to fill it in. Efforts were also made to ensure that during the time of circulating the surveys it was not a busy week at school with school events, report cards, parent meetings, or long term planning taking place. The researcher also felt this was the ideal time to circulate the surveys because the middle of October would be a time when students and teachers were feeling more settled, relationships between teachers and students, parents/guardians, colleagues and the community were more established, school programs were under way, and thus it was likely to be a time when teachers were likely to be more willing to complete a survey.

In the middle of October 2011, 32 school teachers in School District 70 completed a written survey (Appendix A). Surveys and consent forms had been circulated to all teachers in the district excluding those in the geographic region of Tofino and Ucluelet. The goal was to draw accurate conclusions about the responses from the teachers being surveyed by administering the survey correctly and at the best possible time. This survey was only administered once. Teachers were giving their perspectives on relational trust, and while their opinions had a possibility to change if the survey was administered a second time, time and resources limited this researcher to administering the survey only once. The data were then collected by the researcher and organised into quantitative and qualitative results and qualitative interpretations in the same way. The data from the Likert scale were sorted into tables. The qualitative open-ended questions were also sorted into tables and then a Figure was also created to display the results. The graphic displays of the data helped with interpretations by providing a clear visual of the data. Results were obtained to share which strategies were being used most frequently by teachers in the building of relational trust with the members of their learning community this was presented in the form of a Wordle. The surveys and a flash drive with
electronic data were stored in the researcher’s sponsor’s filing cabinet and will be shredded after five years. All electronic data on the flash drive was destroyed by deletion. Vancouver Island University and School District 70 granted ethics approval for this research. This survey was based on the leadership qualities that Bryk and Schneider (2002) felt were paramount in the building of relational trust. This survey was intended to share what current strategies teachers were using to aid in building relational trust with the members of their learning communities. The survey was used to collect data and to aid in drawing warranted conclusions from the teachers responding to the survey.

E. Discussion of Validity

The survey design was appropriate because as mentioned above, questions were based on research and personal experience of the researcher as a teacher. A wide sample provided data from which the researcher was able to draw some observations and conclusions on the current perspective of teachers in school district 70, and the strategies they were currently using to aid in building relational trust with the members of their learning community. There were a wide variety of threats to the validity of this study including the previous years’ job action, the attitude of subjects, and the location of writing the survey. This researcher needs to note that the attitude of the researcher’s colleague who collected the data may also have created a threat to internal validity by their approach to the survey. An effort was made to choose a colleague who could work well with other teachers. The attitude of respondents toward a study, despite careful preparation and consideration, could have created a threat to internal validity. For example, it was possible that respondents may have wanted their learning community to be perceived as having a high amount of relational trust to be noticeable and gave more extreme or positive responses than normal. Participants may also have not felt inclined to give more positive or
negative responses due to the job action of the previous year. The number of respondents in the survey would have helped to alleviate any individual biases; as well the surveys received from schools were put randomly into a pile so each school’s results were kept anonymous.

The location may also have been a threat to the validity of the survey because the surveys were not completed at the same time and in the same location. It may have been completed in a noisy environment or during a busy time, answers could also have been recorded without care. The timing in which the survey was circulated may also have threatened the internal validity of the survey although care was taken to discuss and choose an appropriate time for the surveys to be circulated, and busy times were averted as much as possible. However, as discussed above the timing of distributing the surveys was important and having teachers complete the survey in a quiet setting at school, rather than in a noisy staffroom or distracting home environment would make the survey more reliable. By ensuring that clear instructions were given as to the intentions of the survey, and by taking necessary precautions to avoid busy times, some of these threats were reduced.

F. Description and Justification of the Statistical Techniques

The researcher’s study intended to collect data on and share the current perspectives on teacher’s relational trust within their learning communities and what some of their strategies were to build relational trust with the members of their school community. The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed by using frequency distributions, which were then displayed in tables. The qualitative statements were analyzed by using frequency distributions of the strategies used by teachers to build relational trust, which were displayed in tables and a Wordle. A Wordle is a visual representation that shows the frequency in which a word was seen in the data. The more frequent the word was seen in the data the bigger the word would be represented
in the Figure. The data were primarily collected to aid the researcher in drawing conclusions that could lead to a clearer analysis of the study and aid in developing some strategies to address the challenges and successes teachers were having in building relational trust in learning communities.
Chapter 4: Findings/Results

The purpose of the present study was to investigate teachers’ perspectives on relational trust towards the different members of their learning communities including students, parents/guardians, colleagues and the community. The researcher conducted the current study to examine teachers’ perspectives on relational trust with the members of their learning community. The data from the research has a possibility of informing teachers’ practice around building relationships with the members of their learning communities (students, parents/guardians, their colleagues, and the community). It might also provide evidence to show what strategies are being utilized by teachers, and how some teachers in School District #70 are successfully tackling the issue of relational trust in their learning community, and perhaps increase trust and student achievement in the process.

The current researcher gathered information from teacher participants in School District #70 through survey (Appendix A) distribution and collection in October of 2012. There were 32 out of 181 teachers who consented and completed the survey, which indicates a return rate of 18%. Of the 32 respondents 25 were female and three male, four respondents did not disclose their gender. Of the respondents seven were between the ages of 20-29 years old, seven were between the ages of 30-39 years old, eight were between the ages of 40-49 years old, seven were between the ages of 50-59 years old, two were between the ages 60-69 years old, and one did not disclose their age. The numbers for respondents teaching experience were: eight were teaching less than five years, seven had taught between five-ten years, seven had been teaching between 11-20 years and nine respondents had been teaching for 20 years or more. One respondent did not disclose how long they had been teaching for. The respondents varied in grade level that they were teaching: 20 of the respondents taught at the elementary school level kindergarten through
grade five, four taught at the middle school level grades six-eight, and seven taught at the secondary school level grades nine-twelve. The collected surveys were then used to inform the researcher on teachers’ perspectives of relational trust in their learning communities.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the survey this included 16 statements that were rated on a five point Likert scale, and four open-ended questions (Appendix A).

Tables 4.1-4.4 reflect a summary of the data received from the Likert scale portion of the study. The overall mean scores are reflected in Table 4.1 and 4.3 with potential means from 0-4.0. Actual means range from 3.16-3.63. The combined means of scores are reflected in Tables 4.2 and 4.4 with potential means from 0-16. Actual means range from 13.11-13.37. The results were examined and illustrate the mean of each of the 4 qualities that build relational trust (interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence and personal integrity) and each of the 4 members of a learning community (students, parents/guardians, colleagues and community).

The Likert scale portion of the survey focused on the specific quality of relational trust demonstrated by teachers towards each of the members of the learning community and were based on the 4 following qualities, interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence and personal integrity. A Likert score of 0 indicated strongly disagree, 1 indicated disagree, 2 indicated neutral, 3 indicated agree and 4 indicated strongly agree. A mean score of >2 would indicate that the person did not demonstrate this quality a mean score of <2 would indicate that the person did demonstrate the quality.

The second portion of the study requested an open-ended response. The respondents were asked to identify what strategies they were currently using to build relational trust with each of the members of their learning community. The strategies for each member of the learning
community were recorded and represented as a Wordle (Figure 1-4). The responses were entered into the Figure as many times as they appeared and the words that were repeated will appear larger than those that were mentioned less frequently. A tally of qualitative themes was recorded as well from the responses. Direct quotes from the open-ended reflection portion were used as well. Due to space limitations, only brief excerpts are presented in this chapter. The research in this section looked at collecting data that would explicitly name the strategies teachers were using to build relational trust with the four members of the school community.

The researcher first examined the overall mean scores for the 4 qualities needed to build relational trust (Table 4.1). Table 4.1 Shows the mean scores attained from each of the 4 categories of relational trust. The statistical data found in Table 4.1 is based on a score from 0-4 as the Likert scale used five descriptors (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree or Strongly Agree), with a 0 indicating a very negative response, a 2 representing a neutral response and a 4 representing a very positive response.

**Table 4.1 Overall mean of each of the 4 qualities needed to build relational trust**
As seen in the means of Table 4.1 the overall range for each of the 4 qualities needed to build relational trust were between 3.28 - 3.34 indicating a strong agreement response to the statements posed. Interpersonal respect had the highest mean of 3.34, personal regard had a mean of 3.33, role competence had a mean of 3.29 and personal integrity had the lowest mean of these four categories with a mean of 3.28. The data indicated that teachers’ perspectives on their demonstration of the four qualities of relational trust were relatively similar and that they were all in agreement to the statements posed.

Further analysis investigated the mean scores of the 4 qualities of relational trust combined for each of the members of the learning community. This led to a possible score being 16 with the combination of each of the 4 qualities (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

*Combined mean of each of the 4 qualities needed to build relational trust*

As seen in the means of Table 4.2 the combined mean for each of the four qualities needed to build relational trust had a range between 13.11 – 13.37 indicating a strong agreement response by the respondents to the statements posed. Interpersonal respect had the highest combined mean
of 13.37, personal regard had a combined mean of 13.31, role competence had a combined mean of 13.22 and personal integrity had the lowest combined mean of these four categories with a mean of 13.11. The data indicated that teachers’ perspectives on their demonstration of the four qualities of relational trust when all four members of the learning communities scores were combined were still relatively similar and that they were all in agreement to the statements posed, and felt that they felt that they agreed that they demonstrated the four qualities that build relational trust similarly.

After examining the mean and combined mean for the qualities needed to build relational trust, the researcher then examined the mean for each of the members of the learning community to see if trust was perceived to be more present with one member of the learning community over another (Table 4.3). These members included students, parents/guardians, colleagues, and the community.

Table 4.3

*Overall mean of each of the 4 members of a learning community*
As seen in the means of Table 4.3 the mean for each of the four members of the learning community had a range between 3.2 - 3.48. Students had the highest scoring mean with a score of 3.48, parents followed with a score of 3.3, community had a score of 3.2, and colleagues had the lowest ranking mean score with 3.2. Again the data indicated that teachers’ perspectives on their demonstration of relational trust to the four members of the learning communities were still relatively similar and that they were all in agreement to the statements posed, and felt that they felt that they agreed that they demonstrated relational trust to the four members of their learning community similarly.

Further analysis investigated the combined mean scores of the four members of the learning community. This led to a possible score being 16 with the combination of each of the four members of the learning community (Table 4.4)

Table 4.4

**Combined mean of each of the 4 members of a learning community**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

The combined means of the four members of the learning community show a range in the data between 13.94- 12.79. Students again showed the highest level of perceived demonstrated
relational trust with a combined mean score of 13.94. Parents also showed a high level of perceived demonstrated relational trust with a combined mean score of 13.21. Community showed a combined mean score of 13.03, and colleagues showed the lowest combined mean of the four members of the learning community with a score of 12.79. These combined mean scores were consistent with the mean scores presented in Table 4.3, and again indicated that teachers perceived that they demonstrated relational trust similarly to each of the members of their learning communities.

The researcher examined the qualities needed to build relational trust and the members of the learning community to see which had received the highest and lowest mean. This is shown in Table 4.5. The researcher did not analyse the mean scores of the different demographic groupings as the means would not have been valid due to the numbers represented. Due to space constrictions a decision was made by the researcher to instead share more of the strategies given by teachers on what they felt helped build relational trust with the members of their learning communities represented in Figure 1-4 and in Table 1.
As seen in Table 4.5 the mean of each of the 16 statements were relatively similar and all showed that teachers were in agreement to the statements with means that ranged between 3.56 - 3.16. The highest mean score was given when teachers were asked about their perceived demonstration of relational trust with the quality of personal regard and students, this mean score was 3.56. The lowest mean score was given when teachers were asked about their perceived demonstration of relational trust with the quality of personal regard with their colleagues; this resulted in a mean score of 3.16. While all the mean scores were in agreement to the statements, it is seen clearly in Table 4.5 that teachers perceive their to be higher levels of relational trust with students and somewhat lower mean scores for relational trust with colleagues.
The final method of data collection on the teachers’ perspectives on relational trust in their school community surveys was by use of four open ended questions. The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions pertained to the strategies teachers were using to build relational trust with each member of the learning community. Of the 32 respondents to the survey 31 respondents offered at least 1 strategy for building trust with each of the members of their learning community and in most cases respondents offered many strategies. Only 1 respondent did not respond to this section of the survey. These strategies were collected and recorded and represented Table 1 and in a pictoral word art form known as a Wordle and shown here as Figures 1-4. The responses were gathered for each member of the learning community and were imputed exactly as they were given and as many times as they were given. The more frequently a word was mentioned the larger it appears in the Figure. The researcher chose to take out the common English words such as (and, the and I) so that the strategies would be more pervasive and those words would not take away from the strategies being highlighted. Figure 1 shows the strategies teachers are using with students. Figure 2 shows the strategies teachers are using with parents/guardians. Figure 3 shows strategies that teachers are using with colleagues, and Figure 4 shows strategies teachers are using with the community.

Figure 1 indicates the qualitative data collected from open-ended questions that asked teachers to list the strategies they use to build relational trust with students.
When viewing the data of Figure 1, strategies used by teachers to build relational trust with students the words time, respect and personal and stories are shown as the largest in the data. Words like tutorials, and experimental show up much smaller in Figure 1. This data is interpreted much more thoroughly in Table 1 and can also be seen in its entirety in Appendix C.

Figure 2 indicates the qualitative data collected from open-ended questions that asked teachers to list the strategies they use to build relational trust with parents and guardian
When viewing the data of Figure 2, strategies used by teachers to build relational trust with parents and guardians the words open door policy, contact, email, phone are shown as the largest in the data. Words like relate and consistent show up much smaller in Figure 2. Again this data is interpreted much more thoroughly in Table 1 and can also be seen in its entirety in Appendix C.

Figure 3 indicates the qualitative data collected from open-ended questions that asked teachers to list the strategies they use to build relational trust with colleagues.
Figure 3

*Strategies being used by teachers to build trust with colleagues*

When viewing the data of Figure 3, strategies used by teachers to build relational trust with colleagues the words personal, communication, talk, and encourage are shown as the largest in the data. Words like help/advise, try, and open show up much smaller in Figure 2. Again this data is interpreted much more thoroughly in Table 1 and can also be seen in its entirety in Appendix C.

Figure 4 indicates the qualitative data collected from open-ended questions that asked teachers to list the strategies they use to build relational trust with the community.
When viewing the data of Figure 4, strategies used by teachers to build relational trust with the community the words community, volunteer, public, and outside are shown as the largest in the data. Words like swearing, maintaining and honourable show up much smaller in Figure 2. Again this data is interpreted much more thoroughly in Table 1 and can also be seen in its entirety in Appendix C.

The strategies were then tallied to report the common themes that emerged from the responses. Responses were often lengthy and reported multiple strategies at building relational trust. Therefore, one respondents’ response frequently touched upon several themes. The three most common themes that emerged were shared and examples of what the researcher considered...
to be part of each of the themes were given. Table 1 outlines the group being surveyed, the strategy that was being used, the theme that emerged, the number of times it emerged, and some direct quotes as examples of this theme. Quote selections are subject to researcher bias.

Table 1

*Top 3 strategies being used by teachers to build trust in their learning communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Community Member and top 3 emergent themes</th>
<th>Number of times the theme emerged</th>
<th>Examples of the Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes with Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Theme #1 Getting Personal</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>“Being relatable, being seen as a person, not as just a teacher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Asking after personal welfare”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Take an interest in what students do outside of school”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Share personal stories/info with them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #2 Respect</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“Democratic decisions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Treat them respectfully”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Reciprocal respect building”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Simple rules- respect yourself, others and the environment”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teachers’ Perspectives on Relational Trust

| Theme #3 Making Time | 19 | “Be available”  
|                     |    | “Taking time to listen to their stories”  
|                     |    | “Taking time to “get to know” each student individually”  
|                     |    | “Listening to concerns, more time when needed”  

| **Themes with Parent/Guardians** |  
| Top Theme #1 Communication | 42 | “Asking questions and trying to get to know the family”  
|                             |    | “Communicate both the good & bad on a weekly basis i.e. agenda, newsletters, emails”  
|                             |    | “Frequent communication”  
|                             |    | “Listen to their stories/concerns”  

| Theme #2 Various forms of Contact | 24 | “Availability (email, phone, website)”  
|                                  |    | “Encourage parent volunteers”  
|                                  |    | “Providing ways to contact me whenever they need”  
|                                  |    | “Providing multiple methods of getting in touch (email, phone, web/blog, Facebook)”  

| Theme #3 Open Door Policy | 10 | “Having an open door policy”  
|                          |    | “Letting them visit the class to watch whenever they want”  
|                          |    | “Classroom door open”  
|                          |    | “Being open to parents at all times during school” |
### Themes with Colleagues

| Top Theme #1 Sharing | 23 | “Ask and Share personal information”  
| | | “Offer resources for particular topics that work”  
| | | “Share stories (especially positive ones ex. Students activities / behaviours in class)”  
| | | “Collaboration” |
| Theme #2 Communication | 21 | “Dialogue”  
| | | “Respond quickly to communication”  
| | | “Communicate face to face on important/sensitive issues”  
| | | “Talk about concerns in school” |
| Theme #3 Encouragement | 9 | “Thanking”  
| | | “Encourage; listen one to one”  
| | | “Support each other”  
| | | “Acknowledge jobs well done by other staff members” |

### Themes with the Community

| Top Theme #1 Community Involvement outside of school | 18 | “Prepare student work/performance for community events”  
| | | “Invite/include community members to class when appropriate”  
| | | “Participating in activities”  
| | | “Attending community events” |
The quotes in this table demonstrate the kind of strategies that teachers in School District 70 are using and the common themes amongst these strategies. The numbers indicate how many times the strategy was brought up by the respondents. A more thorough discussion of these common themes will be presented in Chapter 5. Quote selection is subject to researcher bias.

When observing the data in regards to strategies being used to build relational trust with students the top three themes that emerged were getting personal, respect and making time. These three themes emerged when interpreting the data reported by teachers in the qualitative data portion of the survey. Getting personal was recorded the most as a strategy used by teachers.

| Theme #2 Role Modeling | 16 | “Lead a clean, honest, respectable life”
| | | “Be an honorable person/ role model no drugs, no over drinking, no swearing”
| | | “Be a good example”
| | | “Be a role model in public places knowing that my students, my colleagues, my students’ parents and fellow professionals are always watching”

| Theme #3 Volunteering | 8 | “Volunteer in the community (i.e. Bread of life, Fall fair, coach”
| | | “Volunteer on a community team”
| | | “Volunteer outside of school”
| | | “Work for community organizations that support literacy, nutrition”

to build trust with students being reported 33 times, respect was reported 21 times and making time was reported 19 times.

When observing the data in regards to strategies being used to build relational trust with parents and guardians the top three themes that emerged were communication, various forms of contact and open door policy. These three themes emerged when interpreting the strategies that were reported by teachers in the qualitative data portion of the survey. Communication was recorded the most as a strategy used by teachers to build trust with parents and guardians being reported 42 times, various forms of contact was reported 24 times and open door policy was reported 10 times.

When reporting on the strategies teachers use in regards to building relational trust with their colleagues the top three themes that emerged were sharing, communication and encouragement. These three themes emerged when interpreting the strategies shared by teachers in the qualitative data portion of the survey. Sharing was recorded the most as a strategy used by teachers to build trust with their colleagues being reported 23 times, communication was reported 21 times and encouragement was reported 9 times.

When reporting on the strategies teachers use in regards to building relational trust with their community the top three themes that emerged were involvement outside of school, role modeling, and volunteering. These three themes emerged when interpreting the strategies shared by teachers in the qualitative data portion of the survey. Involvement outside of school was recorded the most as a strategy used by teachers to build trust with the community being reported 18 times, role modeling was reported 16 times and volunteering was reported 8 times.

Teachers reported most similarly on the strategies used to build relational trust with parents and guardians sharing at least 42 strategies that had to do with the theme of
communication. The second highest theme to emerge was in regards to building trust with students; this theme was around getting personal and had teachers share at least 33 strategies.

The fact that 31 of the 32 respondents offered multiple strategies to build trust with all of the members of their learning community in the open ended portion of the survey, leads the researcher to believe that teachers enjoy sharing the strategies they use to build relational trust with the various members of their learning community.
Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion

A. Research Summary

This study investigated teachers’ perspectives on relational trust in their learning communities. The research question was prompted by the current political landscape and climate of educational change in British Columbia and specifically in School District #70. This researcher wanted to gain insights into teachers’ perspectives of trust to be able to establish whether or not there is relational trust present, and what strategies teachers are using to build relational trust. Information about what teachers’ think the current levels of trust are within their learning community, and what qualities of relational trust they feel they are doing well at and not using are important for the district to know as they continue to seek out ways to build trust between the learning community members. The strategies collected from what teachers are currently doing to build trust with the different members of their learning community is invaluable as we start to identify the themes that teachers feel are already working well in their district. Using the data gathered the researcher can now make an action plan informed by the data of this research and take steps to help rectify the problems, and celebrate the successes.

The principal investigator of this study asked: What were teachers’ perspectives on relational trust towards the different members of their school communities including teachers, students, colleagues, and the community. The factors in determining relational trust that were studied were leadership qualities that were deemed to have increased relational trust when they existed. These leadership qualities include interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence, and personal integrity. To understand this at a deeper level the researcher undertook a literature review examining relevant and current research around relational trust and the ways the different members of a learning community interact with and without trust. A survey was
then generated and distributed to examine more specifically the perspectives’ of teachers in School District #70.

The survey consisted of Likert style statements around the qualities that help build relational trust. Respondents were first asked to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements that asked whether or not the respondent demonstrated the four qualities that help build relational trust in relation to the 4 members that made up the learning community. Four open-ended qualitative questions followed the Likert score segment. The four questions correlated to each of the four members of the learning community and what strategies teachers were currently using to build trust. Data were then analyzed to discover the most significant levels of trust as perceived by teachers, and what qualities and strategies they felt they demonstrated the most, and which members of the learning community they were with. This was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data were then disaggregated to examine the differences and similarities within the members of the learning community, and the relational trust building strategies. The qualitative data were tallied for reoccurring themes in strategies teachers’ were using to build trust with the members of the learning community.

B. Implications

Research has shown that having high levels of trust can help students reach higher levels of academic success. It also suggests that in an organization where trust is nonexistent one can expect to find: a dysfunctional environment and toxic culture, intense micromanagement, sabotage, grievances, and a redundant hierarchy. In organizations where trust is a visible asset: the focus was always on the work at hand, collaboration was effective, positive partnering relationships occurred with employees and stakeholders, helpful systems and structures were in place and their was a high degree of creativity and innovation. All of the effects seen in
organizations where trust was an asset could also be said to be true of positive learning communities. The data collected in this study supports the claims that teachers in School District #70 believe that there are high levels of relational trust at work in their district, and that they have a multitude of strategies that they can use to help build and sustain relational trust with all members of their learning community.

C. Limitations

The goal of this study was to find out what teachers’ perspectives were on relational trust in School district #70 and to identify what strategies teachers were using to build trust with the members of their learning communities. A survey was sent out to 181 teachers in School District #70 who were teaching in the town of Port Alberni. This study had a response rate of 18%, which left 82% of the teaching population having not communicated their perspectives’ on trust, nor the strategies that they are currently using to build trust with the members of their learning community. Therefore, even though a number of participants responded, the results cannot be generalized to a larger context or a different school district.

However, a 18% response rate was a weak return rate. It may be that the weak response rate was due to the relationship of the researcher with many teachers in the district. It could also reflect that the researcher was investigating a sensitive subject for teachers. Having just come out of a difficult strike year with trust being tested throughout bargaining and negotiations it might have been too sensitive a subject for teachers to feel they could talk about. Although great lengths were taken by the researcher to assure confidentiality the teachers may not have felt safe exposing their perspectives. The teachers were invited to participate by the administrators in the district at a staff meeting being that this was only the second meeting of the year and some
teachers may still have felt a strain in the relationship between themselves and their administrator as a result of the strike actions taken the year before.

Data from the quantitative sections of the survey gave similar findings to those recorded in the qualitative sections. The quantitative and qualitative data therefore support each other.

The current climate of provincial contract negotiations and job action may have influenced respondents’ responses to their perspective on the current levels of trust between the different members of their learning communities. It was the intent of the researcher to give teachers a voice and let their perspectives’ be known to be able to highlight future areas for the district to work on and to share strategies that teachers were currently using and finding success with. One respondent said “the survey was hard to think about and identify as trust even with the definition was so subjective” Another respondent added that “having administration invite you to participate after having had such a straining year on relationships made it difficult for my staff to want to participate”

While the results are not generalizable to other districts, the response rate was not as poor as may have been expected given the climate after a year of job action. The survey results have the potential to form the basis of some action research that could help School District #70 continue to build trust between the different members of their learning community in the future.

D. Recommendations

Some of the most significant noted strategies that were indicated as ways to build trust with students, parents/guardians, colleagues and the community were communicating, sharing, getting personal, respect, and various forms of contact. Though the researcher suspects a similar feeling throughout British Columbia based on current literature reviews, further studies are needed to confirm this.
Based on the teachers’ strategies that were collected in this study some recommendations for practice for teachers wishing to build relational trust with students would be to “Take an interest in what students do outside of school” and to “Share personal stories/info with them”. For teachers wishing to build relational trust with parents and guardians they might try “Providing multiple methods of getting in touch (email, phone, web/blog, Facebook)” or “Having an open door policy”. For those teachers wishing to build relational trust with their colleagues they could start to “Share stories (especially positive ones ex. Students activities / behaviours in class).” And work on “Collaboration” with their colleagues. Finally for teachers wishing to build relational trust with their community they might “Prepare student work/performance for community events” or “Volunteer outside of school”. For a full list of strategies shared by teachers to help build relational trust see Appendix C.

Many strategies are currently being used by teachers in School District #70 to help build relational trust with the members of their learning communities, but teachers are not the only members responsible for building trust. What administrators/colleagues, parents/guardians, students, and the community do will also make a difference to the level of relational trust that is felt by the different members of a learning community. It is the belief of this researcher that to move forward more research will have to be done to gather the perspectives of students, parents/guardians, colleagues and the community. Once all members of the learning community have been given a voice then a clearer picture will be seen. Once the picture is made clear more work could begin to see what strategies are currently being utilized by the other members of the learning community, and where there are similarities and differences are indicated.

E. Conclusion

It seems clear from the evidence and discussion in this article that relational trust is an important factor in academic achievement in learning communities and that the perspectives’ of
teachers in School District #70 is that relational trust exists in strong levels between teachers and all members of the learning community. Teachers have also indicated that they have many strategies that they utilize to build these levels of relational trust. While the relational trust between teachers and students has been argued in the literature to be one of the most significant factors in student achievement, one cannot ignore the importance of relational trust between teachers and the other members of a learning community. It is important to recognize that all the members of a learning community must have the ability to demonstrate relational trust with one another. With relational trust present interpersonal respect, personal regard, role competence, and personal integrity will flourish as will our students in their academic success.
References


Teachers’ Perspectives on Relational Trust Within Their School Communities

For the purpose of this study trust will be defined as: a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on one’s confidence that that person will fulfill important obligations and expectations relevant to the shared task of educating students.

Trust between yourself and your students - This portion of the study is meant to determine the degree to which you feel trust exists under the following categories: 1. Interpersonal respect 2. Personal regard for others 3. Role competence 4. Personal Integrity between yourself and your students. Please choose the answer you find to be most representative of the statement.

1. Interpersonal respect i.e. civility, deep listening to others’ concerns, inclusive processes
I demonstrate interpersonal respect towards my students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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2. Personal regard for others i.e. Extent of caring
I demonstrate personal regard towards my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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3. Role Competence i.e. ability to do one’s job well, including addressing incompetence
I demonstrate role competence to my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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4. **Personal Integrity** i.e. put a person’s interest above own personal and political interests, walks the talk; communicate accurately

I demonstrate personal integrity to my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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**Trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students** - This portion of the study is meant to determine the degree to which you feel trust exists under the following categories: 1. Interpersonal respect 2. Personal regard for others 3. Role competence 4. Personal Integrity between yourself and your students. Please choose the answer you find to be most representative of the statement.

1. **Interpersonal respect** i.e. civility, deep listening to others’ concerns, inclusive processes

I demonstrate interpersonal respect towards the parents/guardians of my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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2. **Personal regard for others** i.e. Extent of caring

I demonstrate personal regard towards the parents/guardians of my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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3. **Role Competence** i.e. ability to do one’s job well, including addressing incompetence

I demonstrate role competence to the parents/guardians of my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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4. **Personal Integrity** i.e. put a person’s interest above own personal and political interests, walks the talk; communicate accurately

I demonstrate personal integrity to the parents/guardians of my students.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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**Trust between yourself and your colleagues** - This portion of the study is meant to determine the degree to which you feel trust exists under the following categories: 1. Interpersonal respect 2. Personal regard for others 3. Role competence 4. Personal Integrity. Please choose the answer you find to be most representative of the statement.

1. **Interpersonal respect** i.e. civility, deep listening to others’ concerns, inclusive processes

I demonstrate interpersonal respect towards my colleagues.

2. **Personal regard for others** i.e. Extent of caring

I demonstrate personal regard towards my colleagues.

3. **Role Competence** i.e. ability to do one’s job well, including addressing incompetence

I demonstrate role competence to my colleagues.

4. **Personal Integrity** i.e. put a person’s interest above own personal and political interests, walks the talk; communicate accurately

I demonstrate personal integrity to my colleagues.

**Trust between yourself and your community** - This portion of the study is meant to determine the degree to which you feel trust exists under the following categories: 1. Interpersonal respect 2. Personal regard for others 3. Role competence 4. Personal Integrity. Please choose the answer you find to be most representative of the statement.
1. **Interpersonal respect** i.e. civility, deep listening to others’ concerns, inclusive processes

I demonstrate interpersonal respect towards members of my community.

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2. **Personal regard for others** i.e. Extent of caring

I demonstrate personal regard towards members of my community.

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3. **Role Competence** i.e. ability to do one’s job well, including addressing incompetence

I demonstrate role competence to members of my community.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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4. **Personal Integrity** i.e. put a person’s interest above own personal and political interests, walks the talk; communicate accurately

I demonstrate personal integrity to members of my community.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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Please provide a brief list/written answer to the following questions.

1. What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your students?

2. What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students?

3. What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your colleagues?

4. What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your community?

Thank you for your time and effort in filling out this form.

*The return of your completed survey indicates your consent to participate in this research and for the information you provide to be included in study results.*
Appendix B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

“Teachers’ Perspectives on Relational Trust in their School Communities”

October, 2012

Dani McLane
Masters of Education Student
Vancouver Island University
dmclane@sd70.bc.ca

Rachel Moll, PhD, Supervisor
Faculty of Education
Vancouver Island University
Rachel.Moll@viu.ca

I am a student in a university-level research methods course. This course requires us to gain applied experience in designing and conducting research. As such, I have designed a research project to study teachers’ perspectives on relational trust amongst the members of their school communities. You are being invited to participate because you teach in School District 70 and work in the Port Alberni community.

During this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey. The survey will contain some demographic information as well as 16 questions regarding your perspectives on relational trust amongst the members of your school community. Your participation will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. Once you have completed the survey, please return it to the envelope provided in your principal’s office. Please do not provide any identifying information about yourself or your school on the survey.

There are no known harms associated with your participation in this research.
All records of participation will be kept strictly confidential, such that only I, and my supervisor, will have access to the information. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet within the supervisor’s office. Data will be shredded at the end of the project, approximately September 2015. Electronic files will also be deleted at that time. The results from this study will be reported in a written research report.
Information about the project will not be made public in any way that identifies individual participants.
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time for any reason without explanation and without penalty. Please note, however, that once you submit your completed survey, your information cannot be removed from the research results as it will not be possible to distinguish your responses from others that will have been submitted. You may choose to not answer any question for any reason.

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Officer, by telephone at 250-753-3245 (ext. 2665) or by e-mail at reb@viu.ca.
If you have any questions about the research project, or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address below:

Dani McLane
Masters of Education Student
Vancouver Island University
dmclane@sd70.bc.ca

The return of your completed survey indicates your consent to participate in this research and for information you provide to be included in study results.
### Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study #</th>
<th>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself, you and your students?</th>
<th>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students?</th>
<th>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your colleagues?</th>
<th>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and your community?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Following through on your word (do what you say). Aiming to “get to know” each student individually. Putting in extra effort to get to know them (attending extracurricular events etc.) Always making time when “when too busy”. Using humour/fun to make yourself engaging. Being relatable, being seen as a person, not as a teacher.</td>
<td>Having an open door policy. Listening even when you just want to share or advise. Involving them in many activities within the school. Providing multiple methods of getting in touch (email, phone, web/blog, Facebook). Asking questions and trying to get to know the “family”.</td>
<td>Making time to chat. Asking for help/advice. Using/asking for expertise of “older/seasoned” teachers. Attempting to spend time out of school together. Talking about personal life. Encourage collaboration.</td>
<td>Branching out to elders. Being involved in many community events &amp; volunteering. Seeking out help from others when needed, even if it is to strangers. Getting to know your neighbours, neighbourhood BBQ’s etc.,</td>
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<td>Study #</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself, you and your students?</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Saying good morning and goodbye everyday – this helps create a bond which is the basis of trust. Taking the time to listen to their stories.</td>
<td>Saying hello. Letting them visit the class to watch whenever they want. Asking how they are at parent/teacher interviews, as well as their thoughts and concerns about their children. Providing ways to contact me whenever they need.</td>
<td>Listening to problems. Collaborating. Sharing ideas that work. NOT sharing information done in confidence.</td>
<td>Speaking with local businesses about how they can help the school, and then show evidence of their help.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Smile. Ask of their interests. What do they enjoy doing? What is important in your life?</td>
<td>Have parenting ideas for any situation available. Solutions to attempt. Talk as a parent, share your story.</td>
<td>24 hr rules. Will respond to teacher requests within 24 hours. Open and honest</td>
<td>Consistency from one grad class to the next.</td>
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<td>Study #</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself, you and your students?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be available.</td>
<td></td>
<td>even when it is out of your hands.....</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The student is your client, not the parent or the system!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Simple rules – respect yourself, others and the environment.</td>
<td>Call/email when a student has done something well, not only when they are being bad.</td>
<td>Sit in staff room.</td>
<td>Attend parent nights.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experimental games based on trust.</td>
<td>Ensuring parents have contact information and don’t feel like they can’t call.</td>
<td>Do favours, e.g. cover classes.</td>
<td>Constant discussion with community members and leaders.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have fun with them!</td>
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<td>Talk to them!</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Be truthful, admit ignorance when appropriate.</td>
<td>Respond quickly to communication i.e., emails.</td>
<td>Respond quickly to communication.</td>
<td>Respond quickly to communications.</td>
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<td>Communicate face-to-face on</td>
<td>Communicate</td>
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<td>Study #</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself, you and your students?</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself and the parents/guardians of your students?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Respect them as a person. Be fair. Admit when you have made a mistake. Be as honest (straightforward) as you can. Maintain boundaries, but adjust them to maintain fairness.</td>
<td>Respect them as a person. Be as honest/straightforward as possible.</td>
<td>Respect them as a person. Be as honest/straightforward as possible.</td>
<td>Respect them as a person. Be as honest/straightforward as possible.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Show an interest in them, respect them, and respond with sensitivity. Lots of acceptable humour. My students are puzzles in terms of finding the best</td>
<td>Encourage immediately letting me know of concerns. Recognizing students’ strengths. Focus on the student</td>
<td>Keep to the business of what’s in the interest of students. Stay away from being negative or “nit-picky”.</td>
<td>Always sharing how I love my job and my successes with students. My passion is “catchy” and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study #</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to enhance trust between yourself, you and your students?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Clarity.</td>
<td>Respectful demeanour.</td>
<td>Requesting opinions.</td>
<td>Being clear and caring.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Truthfulness.</td>
<td>Sympathy.</td>
<td>Thanking.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Offering tutorials – advance notice of tests.</td>
<td>Try to phone and email those struggling.</td>
<td>“Give a little, Get a little”</td>
<td>Be as honest as possible.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listening to concerns, more time when needed.</td>
<td>Answer/reply to emails and calls.</td>
<td>Share with colleagues.</td>
<td>Demonstrate integrity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Let them know how they are being marked – do updates quite frequently.</td>
<td>Let them know how their children are being marked.</td>
<td>Try to go to most meetings that involve colleagues.</td>
<td>“Be true to yourself”.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Consistency.</td>
<td>Open door policy.</td>
<td>Confidentiality (don’t)</td>
<td>Involvement in</td>
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<td>Study #</td>
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<td>Following through on boundaries, consequences, rewards. Conversation – showing personal interest. Honest about my own mistakes; willing to be corrected by students/adults. Making sure everyone has a chance to be heard. Assigning jobs/responsibilities to all members of the class (community).</td>
<td>Newsletters, daily notes. Encourage parent volunteers. Provide my overviews to parents – clear learning goals and updates. Conversation after school. Availability (email, phone, website).</td>
<td>share others struggles). Avoid gossip at all costs. Fulfill my duties well (be reliable, dependable). Encourage; listen one-to-one Include others in group activities. Acknowledge jobs well done by other staff members.</td>
<td>community school activities. Volunteerism. Maintaining my professionalism outside the classroom. Connecting with families outside of school.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Fair rules and expectations. Consistency.</td>
<td>Keep them well informed – letters home and daily agendas.</td>
<td>Always be reliable and there to share and help.</td>
<td>Lead a clean, honest, respectable life.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fairness in responses.</td>
<td>Open door policy.</td>
<td>Keep a positive attitude (don’t grumble and complain).</td>
<td>Be an honourable person/role model – no drugs, no over drinking, no swearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Open &amp; honest with students.</td>
<td>Open communication.</td>
<td>Team player.</td>
<td>Giving back to the community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Open door policy.</td>
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<td>Help them out however I can.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Show them respect and that you are about them – as simple as saying hi/smiling at them.</td>
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<td>Establish positive working relationships.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>I am honest with them.</td>
<td>Communicate both good &amp; bad on a weekly basis i.e., agenda, newsletters, emails.</td>
<td>Socialize outside of school.</td>
<td>Volunteer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equality.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make extra effort to include all staff members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Treat them respectfully.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Being visible.</td>
<td>Being available</td>
<td>Code of ethics.</td>
<td>All of the above.</td>
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|        | Taking time to listen.  
Sense of humour  
Asking after personal welfare.  
Following through on what I say I am going to do. | (email/conferences/chat in the hall, etc.)  
(plus answers in 1st column) | Voicing both sides of an issue.  
Taking on leadership roles. | Volunteer outside of school.  
Work hard.  
Link SD70 to the community.  
Be a good example.  
Be proud to be part of public education.  
Use teaching skills to benefit others. |
| 16     | Ask questions/talk/learn about each student.  
Smile.  
Take an interest in what students do outside of school. | Listen.  
Relate.  
Follow through. | Support each other.  
Laugh.  
Offer to help  
Learn from each other | |
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<td>17</td>
<td>Treat them like responsible, capable individuals.</td>
<td>Act like the fallible human that I am.</td>
<td>Never tell people that I don’t trust what I really think.</td>
<td>Work for community organizations that support literacy, nutrition.</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Team building. Talking circles.</td>
<td>Phone calls. Emails. Classroom door open</td>
<td>Being polite Open minded Sharing ideas</td>
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</tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Phone calls home to build relationships (your child express concerns).</td>
<td>Phone calls home communication.</td>
<td>Open communication.</td>
<td>Volunteer in the community (i.e.,)</td>
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| 22     | Talking to them outside of “lessons” about life.  
Sharing my own stories & info. | Communicate with them via email, phone or in person regularly. | Be open & honest.  
Talk about concerns in school.  
Talk about good | bread of life, Fall Fair, coach).  
Sports enthusiast – support and play on community team.  
Volunteer on a community team.  
Donate.  
Invoice community events/activities in the classroom. |
|        | has been trying very hard in class and I just wanted to let you know).  
Speak to them individually (i.e., I really appreciate how you….. how can I help you with your homework/working quietly).  
Share personal stories | Newsletters  
Email; phone calls.  
Let them know that they can call or email me too.  
Provide supplementary work for students at home. | Ask for help  
Communicate what I am teaching on a weekly basis with teachers who work one-on-one with students.  
Share student concerns (if they teach the class). |
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<td>Making time to listen to their interests and concerns when possible. Outside of class time (recess duty, DPA, between classes; connect/chat with students).</td>
<td>This is difficult since I teach so many children &amp; I don’t have personal contact with them.</td>
<td>Try to eat lunch with them when I can. Share stories (esp. positive ones) re: student activities/behaviours in class. Ask &amp; share personal info.</td>
<td>Prepare student work/performances for community events. Invite/include community members to class when appropriate.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Model Confidentiality</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Share personal stories/info with them. Listen to their personal stories. Aim always for</td>
<td>Share personal stories/info with them. Listen to their stories/concerns.</td>
<td>Share personal stories.</td>
<td>Attending community events. Making connections</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Sharing personal info; modeling respect; sharing stories</td>
<td>Ongoing communication; open door policy</td>
<td>Encouraging others; listening to others ideas and responding/helping</td>
<td>Participating in activities</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Consistency between what I say and what I do.</td>
<td>Be open to parents at all times during school. Open door policy for my classroom.</td>
<td>Encourage questions from new staff. Maintain professional relationship (no gossip, face to face communication, etc.)</td>
<td>Identify myself proudly as a teacher outside of school.</td>
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<td>Respect their needs. Show that you care with special activities. Always take one person per week and make them</td>
<td>Communicate/phone when good things happen as well as not so good.</td>
<td>Be on time for events. Help when needed. Talk about problems.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Using daily routines that the student relies on. Asking about them and showing empathy. Help handle their problems with other students with consistency. Follow through with the things I say I will do.</td>
<td>Remembering and writing down important info that I can refer to later in our conversations. Keeping confidential info confidential.</td>
<td>Lend an ear to their classroom/personal problems and try to help if possible. Offer resources for particular topics they are doing. Keep confidential info confidential. Follow through with the things I say I will do.</td>
<td>Be a role model in public places, knowing that my students, my colleagues, my students/parents and fellow professionals are always watching! Speak articulately, be diplomatic, be understanding and act appropriately, all with a sense of</td>
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<td>Smiling.</td>
<td>Open communication – talking in hall; phoning.</td>
<td>Listening when one has a concern.</td>
<td>Always being a role model in public.</td>
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