THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS: A STUDY OF THE PHYSICAL

ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL AESTHETICS

FRAMEWORK

by

KENNETH CLIFFORD GOODWIN

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS: A STUDY OF THE PHYSICAL

ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL AESTHETICS

FRAMEWORK

Kenneth Clifford Goodwin, PhD

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2013

Supervising Professor: Colleen Casey

Related in part to the study of organizational culture, organizational aesthetics is concerned more with that level of culture that is represented through the elements that comprise the physical environment of an organization. The current study used a qualitative approach in applying the organizational aesthetics framework to explore teachers' perceptions of the aesthetics of the physical environment of public middle schools in the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD). These experiences inform the ways that teachers interpret their schools' cultures, thus the research used a model of organizational culture that takes the view that the systems of assumptions, beliefs, and values that members have about their organizations' cultures both create and are created by their aesthetic experiences of the physical environment. No previously identified studies of schools have used the organizational aesthetics framework, thus this study focused specifically on an examination of teachers in public middle schools.

A total of 21 teachers participated from 11 FWISD middle schools. Teachers took photographs of their schools and were subsequently interviewed to discuss their photos and talk about their experiences, opinions, and perceptions of their schools' physical environments.

Through an interpretive analysis, the major findings showed that teachers' aesthetic interpretations of the physical environment inform their opinions about the effectiveness of a school culture, and that overall school conditions are associated with teachers' perceptions of organizational satisfaction. Additionally, teachers perceive that the physical environment conveys levels of empowerment and voice for them and for their students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As the principal of a public middle school in a large, urban North Texas district, I have had the opportunity to observe the effects that the physical conditions of a school can have on its teaching faculty. Specifically, I have come to believe that there is an aesthetic component of a school that impacts teachers' experiences with their work environments and ultimately with school culture. Though future research might entail an examination of possible relationships between an organization's aesthetics and other variables such as employee satisfaction and commitment, the intent of the current research is to lay more of the foundational work by examining teachers' aesthetic experiences with the physical environment using public schools as a research platform.

Organizational aesthetics is a relatively new branch of organizational studies, having effectively begun with the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS) in 1981 (Gagliardi, 1990). The aesthetics perspective offers us a means to view the organizational landscape from an alternative perspective. The hegemonic conversations about improving public schools and public education in the United States have centered almost exclusively around the need to reform teachers' practices and has resulted in increased amounts of professional development for faculty and staff (Booher-Jennings, 2005). Using an aesthetics perspective, the intent of the current research is to broaden our understanding of teachers' experiences with their school organizations. A wider knowledge base that includes theoretical and practical perspectives on how teachers experience and interpret schools' cultures adds potency to the efforts to reform schools through alternate means. This study also aims to strengthen the theoretical and practical applications of the aesthetics perspective in general by applying its use in a school setting. To that end, the current study asks how teachers interpret the physical environment of their schools and which characteristics emerge as important to teachers about the physical environment of schools.

In the sections that follow, I address the origins of the aesthetic study of organizations and how this kind of study provides beneficial information not just for public schools, but for public organizations in general.

1

An aesthetic reaction is the first and most profound experience that people have with any environment, and it is one upon which all other forms of organizational knowledge are built (Dewey, 1934; Gagliardi, 1999). Aesthetics are comprised of the physical space and individual artifacts found within an organization (Gagliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Artifacts can be defined as any physical manifestation of the organization that is either some type of product or simply a part of the physical landscape itself (Warren, 2008). As opposed to being a purely "intellectual effort" (Hatch & Cunliff, 2006), organizational aesthetics derives knowledge through the examination and analysis of both the researcher's and the participant's sensorial experiences and memories, informing and helping to understand "how it feels to be in an organization" (Taylor, 2002, p.838). An aesthetic discourse about an organization is "ineluctably subjective", and has ties to postmodern and symbolic-interpretive paradigms that seek to respond to modernistic studies of organizational life (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Strati, 1999). The organizational aesthetic study is not confined to simply examining a superficial and cursory connection between the physical environment and those within it (e.g., air quality; noise levels; lighting), but instead probes deeper by asking organizational members what they find beautiful or perhaps ugly, and how these visceral reactions impact their understanding of their particular and individual place within the organization (Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Antonio Strati (2010), a leading researcher and theorist in the field of organizational aesthetics, offers the following: "The aesthetic understanding of work and organizational life studies how individuals and groups act in organizations by heeding their feelings, desires, tastes, talents, and passions" (p.880).

As an element of its culture, the physical space that an organization occupies is created, manipulated, and controlled, ultimately shaping individual experiences (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Gagliardi, 1996; Guillén, 1997; Samier, 2007). As Winston Churchill once eloquently acknowledged, "We shape our buildings, and then our buildings shape us." The symbols and artifacts of an organization are part of its culture, and the physical space that an organization occupies, which is not only its design, but the embellishments and decorations of that space, are one aspect of artifacts (Hatch, 1993; Gagliardi,

1996; Schein, 1993; Strati, 1999; Wasserman & Frankel, 2011). Strati (1999) writes that "the physical setting of an organization…is the most faithful portrayal of its cultural identity" (p.159). Organizational aesthetics is a framework for studying the ways in which aesthetics both create and contribute to culture (Gagliardi; 1996; Strati, 1999; Samier, 2007; Wasserman & Frankel, 2011), and provides a deeper understanding of the actions and beliefs of organizational members. In this regard, this study contributes by building an understanding of the aesthetic experiences of teachers in their physical environments and how these experiences shape and impact their beliefs about their schools and school culture.

1.2 The Aesthetics of Public Schools and Teachers' Experiences

We have learned from studies of private organizations that the aesthetics of the physical environment are relevant to the way that workers experience organizational culture (Gagliardi, 1996; Martin, 2002;Strati, 1999), and that this affects productivity and overall organizational health (Ostroff, 1992; Mathieu, 1991). In an age replete with the popular accounts of the "fun", casual, and innovative approaches that corporations take when considering the physical landscape of their offices and workspace to enhance workers' experiences and company productivity, researchers often do not think to ask the same of public spaces, specifically public schools. Public schools in the United States continue with their long-standing tradition of institutionalized environments and deteriorating physical conditions (Ornstein, 1994; Stuebing, et al, 1994).

Alterations to the physical environment through either intentional efforts to improve the architectural design, office layout, office décor, etc., or through the neglect and subsequent deterioration of the physical environment affect individual attitudes and experiences and, consequently, the culture of an organization (Hatch, 1996; Siler, 2009; Warren, 2008). Through something as relatively simple and inexpensive as altering the aesthetic content of the physical environment, public schools can improve school culture and teacher morale (Bonnes & Seccgiarolli, 1995; Steele, 1973; Stuebing, et al., 1994; Tessmer & Richey, 1997), which has been shown to positively impact student achievement and school performance (Booher-Jennings, 2005; Guarino et al, 2012).

As opposed to an aesthetic viewpoint of the experiences of teachers with the physical environment, studies in education tend to continue to be dominated by more modernist approaches,

continuing to look for data about schools via the constant review of quantitative analysis of test scores, grades, attendance data, etc. (Rumburger & Palardy, 2005; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). More can be written about teachers' experiences with the school's physical environment (Grant & Murray, 1999; Ingersoll, 1997; Ostroff, 1992). Johnson (1980), writing about the physical environments of schools, notes that "the more material and symbolic aspects of educational settings, processes, and systems have received scant attention. Relevant research exhibits little concern with the nature and character of educational settings themselves – their physical features, textures, or aesthetic aspects" (p.177). When the issue of culture is addressed in school research, the physical aspects are neglected in favor of the intangible (Siler, 2009). Within a school context, Daniel (1990) and Owens and Valesky (2007) discussed Schein's (1985) understanding of culture as it exists within the levels of organizational values, assumptions, and artifacts, but attention to that level of culture which is represented by the tangible, physical environment was not discussed.

Raffel's (2007) survey of public administration, which included major journals, university curricula, major texts within the field, and public administration professional societies, found that the study of public schools by public administration in general has been limited. Additionally, though studies of organizational aesthetics have become more prevalent in recent years, an intensive literature search (e.g., searches of three major electronic databases, reviewing the work of at least ten major journals; searches of journals dedicated to aesthetics topics), in addition to communication with scholars in the field, revealed a gap in the literature of studies of schools using an organizational aesthetics analytical framework.[1] Aesthetics research has tended towards the investigation of corporate, private cultures, thus leaving largely unexplored a public context (Warren, 2008).

These gaps can be significantly addressed by examining a school's aesthetics as an artifact of its culture (Gagliardi, 1990; Hatch, 1993; Schein, 1992), and by subsequently examining how these factors impact teachers' perceptions of and experiences with their school environments and with school culture. The aesthetics examination, however, differs from what are considered to be formalized studies of culture

---

[1] I communicated via email with Dr. Antonio Strati and Dr. Stephen Taylor, two leading researchers, theorists, and prolific authors in the field of organizational aesthetics, and both advised that though they were not aware of any research using the aesthetic approach with public schools, both encouraged such a study.

by way of seeking meaning behind the individual experiences of organizational members with their physical environments. In this sense, an aesthetics perspective is not concerned with probing the organization's underlying beliefs, assumptions, and values in an effort to describe a specific culture; the aesthetics perspective addresses the ways that individuals perceive an organization's culture as manifested through its physical structures and how individuals attach significance to these physical elements. It is the story that is told through these individual experiences that ultimately informs and helps to conceptualize how the environment shapes, impacts, and ultimately can manipulate an organization's culture. Semantically, this can be distinguished by the difference between a formal organizational culture study's focus on what a culture *is*, as opposed to the aesthetics view *about* a culture through the lenses of an organization's many members.

1.3 A Conceptual Model for Organizational Aesthetics Research of Public Schools

Inasmuch as organizational aesthetics is an integral facet of an organization's culture, this research is developed and conducted using a conceptual model of organizational culture with which to examine the interaction between the aesthetics of an organization and its members. As mentioned, this study is not a formalized effort to discover a particular school culture and environment. On the contrary, the emotionally-laden experiences of teachers with the physical environment collectively inform their perceptions of school culture. This might be understood through the familiar phrase "We take pride in our school", which while signifying a variety of understandings, also describes a specific attitude and perception of the physical appearance of a school. Consequently, I use an analytic framework that examines teachers' emotional expressions regarding the physical environments of their schools, and in turn I interpret these emotional responses as expressions of their fundamental attitudes and opinions regarding their schools.

For this research, I utilize a combination of the models developed by Hatch (1993) and by Gagliardi (1990; 1996) of the organizational dynamics of culture. Additionally, I incorporate a two-by-two analytical framework described by Taylor and Hasen (2005).

Hatch's cultural dynamics model "[focuses] on the elements of assumptions, values, and artifacts, [and] on the processes connecting them" (Hatch, 1993, p.210). The model is represented by a circle in

which the elements of values, artifacts, symbols, and assumptions exist in a continuous loop, each one neither being the sole cause nor product of the other. Artifacts do not occupy a position of superiority over assumptions and values, but play a role that is "equally important" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

Gagliardi (1996) argues against the claims of the superficial and inaccessible nature of artifacts (Schein, 1992), saying that these are the components of the most fundamental and "basic human experience", the "aesthetic experience". He further notes that physical space and other artifacts are "primary cultural phenomena" which

> (a) make materially possible, help, hinder, or even *prescribe* organizational action (italics original by author); (b) more generally, artifacts influence our *perception* (italics original by author) of reality, to the point of subtly shaping beliefs, norms, and cultural values (Gagliardi in Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, eds., 1996, p.354).

Gagliardi's (1990) conceptual model for organizational culture informs the model described above, by way of describing cultures as informed primarily by that level of experience he described as "pathos", or "the way we perceive and feel reality" (p.13). The systems of beliefs and values occupy those elements of the cultural model respectively as their "logos" and their "ethos", and "[correspond] to cognitive…and moral experience", whereas the "pathos" is that component of the model that represents experiences as interpretations of the felt and sensed environment (Gagliardi, 1990, p.13). From an aesthetics perspective, organizational culture includes, but is not defined as, beliefs, norms, values, and assumptions. Our interpretations of the physical environment (i.e., artifacts) create and inform organizational culture. In essence, culture is created in part by the collective perceptions of organizational members based on their sensory experiences.

I utilize these models of culture as a conceptual model to study teachers' experiences in public schools in Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) in an effort to uncover the possible impact that the physical setting has on their experiences with school culture and to decipher what bearing artifacts have on the creation of cultural values and assumptions. Specifically, this study is concerned with the level of culture that is represented by artifacts and to ask teachers about their experiences and perceptions in regards to the environment.

<u>1.4 Focus and Methodology</u>

Because of the inherent subjective nature of individual aesthetic experiences, these cannot be forced into predetermined categories that a quantitative approach might take. Consequently, a qualitative approach was used to answer the research question. The usefulness of qualitative data lies in its ability to yield a rich supply of relevant information. As Miller and Glassner (2004) write, "Research cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that positivists strive for, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds" (p.126). This study of a small sample of participant interviews regarding aesthetics allowed those participating in the research an opportunity to reveal those subtleties of deliberative consideration which other quantitative instruments may not have been capable of securing and expressing through statistical analysis. Describing previous qualitative efforts to understand the "space and place" of organizations as somewhat two-dimensional, Emmison (2004) suggested that qualitative research should look to incorporating a discussion of the entire physical environment as a more thorough and realistic observational and analytic method. The setting conveys just as much information and articulates very clear messages to organizational members and observers (Emmison, 2004; Stimson, 1986).

Prior to beginning data collection, I hypothesized that by attending to the aesthetic details of a school's physical environment, schools improve their ability to positively impact teachers' experiences and consequently positively impact school culture and overall organizational health. Though analysis of the data revealed that there are other intervening variables that impact individual experiences and that can impact overall organizational health, teachers' interpretations of the physical environment do in fact contribute to their perceptions of the culture and climate of their schools.

The current research was concerned with teachers at the middle school level. The characteristics distinguishing public elementary schools (K-5) from secondary schools (6-12) are of sufficient consideration to warrant a specific study on only one level (Rochkind et al, 2007). FWISD has a total of 29 middle schools. Of these, seven are considered special interest programs, or schools of choice, four are sixth-grade centers, and the remaining 14 are regular program schools, or neighborhood schools, with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. Though students must apply to special interest schools of choice

and be accepted based on a variety of criteria, these urban middle schools were included in this research if they met the criteria of having students in sixth though eighth grade (e.g. sixth grade centers will not be included, thereby leaving a possible sample size of 25 schools). Some of the somewhat anticipated differences in cultures within special interest schools were linked to a variety of elements such as low numbers of disciplinary referrals, students who tend to be more motivated and who are academically gifted and talented, and an active parent and community support basis. Nonetheless, I specifically wanted to examine the possibilities and test the hypothesis that the physical environment can inform teachers' experiences in a variety of school culture settings.

After contacting the principals of the 25 eligible schools, 11 schools' principals agreed to allow teachers to voluntarily participate in this study. From these 11 campuses, all classroom teachers were contacted (n= 393). A total of 21 teachers responded and participated in the study. The number of participants varied from each campus, and several campuses had only one participating teacher. Teachers' viewpoints were not meant to represent the culture of a campus, as culture cannot nor should not be described and defined through the experiences of one person (Schein, 1992; Owens, 2001). Rather, as I have discussed, I was concerned with that level of culture that is artifacts, which in this case was the entire physical environment of the school, and how teachers' interpretations of that environment informed their understanding of and opinions towards the school and towards education in general.

Teachers were asked to participate in a group interview with other teachers from a participating campus. Afterward, teachers were asked to take pictures of their schools using a personal electronics device and then participate in an individual interview to talk about their pictures and other topics concerning the physical environments of their schools. Of the 21 teachers who participated, 18 supplied photographic data, and all 21 participated in the individual interviews.

As the researcher's point of view and aesthetic reactions are important in an aesthetic analysis of organizational life (Gagliardi, 1999; Strati, 1999; Taylor & Hansen, 2005; Warren, 2008), I, too, took pictures of the schools and made field notes, through these pictures and notes were effectively used to facilitate conversations with teachers during our interviews. This approach helps provide transparency as

8

to where the researcher's perspectives lie, as these perspectives are considered a legitimate and necessary source of data in addition to that collected from participants.

Issues of trustworthiness of the study were addressed through triangulation through photographic data collection and through member-checking. As teachers were asked to supply their own sources of data through pictures, they were effectively choosing to show and tell me about their interpretations of the environment and which elements of the environment were important to them. Additionally, during interviews I confirmed teachers' responses by asking clarifying questions and repeating my understanding of their responses. Finally, I asked teachers to respond to the findings as a means of member-checking.

1.5 Findings, Theoretical Implications and Applications, and Limitations

Several major themes emerged regarding teachers' interpretations of schools' physical environments. General findings revealed that teachers often found schools to be unclean, unsafe, and restricting environments for themselves and for their students. The findings from a higher level analysis using teachers' explicit and implicit emotional expressions when discussing the physical environment suggested that teachers attach significance to the conditions in which they perceive their surroundings. The physical environment conveys messages as to the effectiveness of a school's culture, and informs their perceptions of the overall conditions of their school culture, which is linked to levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Harris, 2002). Additionally, teachers felt either a sense of empowerment or restriction based on their ability to manipulate and adapt their surroundings.

Part of the intent of the current research was to illuminate the need to expand the amount and variety of research within public administration that is conducted in public schools. Other sources of information, such as an aesthetic analysis, can provide rich sources of alternative data about the single largest public workforce in the United States, yet that which is least studied and understood (Raffel, 2007). By asking teachers to contemplate, describe, and qualify their likes and dislikes about a school's physical environment, this study's intention was to develop a dialogue that revolves around teachers' feelings and perceptions, as opposed to seeing teachers merely through an analytical lens which ignores their corporeality (Gagliardi, 1996). Ultimately, a future goal of this new source of knowledge is to help

develop an awareness of the physical environment's ability to inform culture, thus encouraging school administrators to view the landscape of organizational health across a much larger spectrum than that provided by the exclusive use of numerical data.

The current study examined public schools, as opposed to comparisons of public and private, or a study designed around private schools only. However, though education in general is often the source of much public discussion, public schools in particular in the United States are the subject of much contentious scrutiny and political debate. The massive efforts to reform and improve public schools in the United States leads to a specific interest in their study, particularly in seeking alternative sources of data to help expand and vary such efforts at improvement from repeating and restating some of the same discussions about teacher and student performance.

The small sample of teachers may not be representative of all teachers in middle schools, and may not be representative of the experiences of teachers in other grade levels. Nonetheless, through a variety of school locations and types, and given the range of years of experience and ages of the participants, this study provided information regarding the perspectives of a broad spectrum of teachers.

A majority of school improvement models are based on a consideration of hard data and the subsequent professional development that is meant to improve teacher practices (Smylie, 1988; Booher-Jennings, 2005), as opposed to the consideration of some of the other "benefits and rewards…derived from teaching that can be encompassed under the heading of 'working conditions'", which includes the physical conditions of schools (Darling-Hammon, 2003; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Harris, 2002). In a 2011 report released by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Scott (2011) reported that the U.S. Department of Education spent over $4 billion in professional development. The report also describes much of the teacher-training as fragmented, overlapping, and duplicating (Scott, 2011). Of previous studies of schools and education, Tyack and Cuban (1995) write that many of the more recent reforms have come from "outsiders who tried to reinvent schooling". Teacher retention, as opposed to the constant need for recruitment and retention, is paramount to improving public education. Studies indicate that experienced teachers have the greatest impact on improving student achievement (Grant & Murray, 1999; The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and NCTAF State Partners, 2002).

Given the emphasis on expenditures of federal, state, and local funding on professional development, other future applications of the current work include the exploration of decisions about these allocations and whether there are alternative ways to approach enhancing and improving teachers' experiences and effectiveness. Ornstein (1994) and Harris (2002) have noted that school facilities consistently rank amongst the highest in terms of needed repairs for all public facilities, and that approximately 25% of public schools are classified as being in "inadequate condition". This is not to say that bringing school buildings to current local and state codes, as well as complying with federal mandates, sufficiently addresses the need to make schools more pleasing environments in which to both work and to learn.

Attention to the physical environment can positively impact an organization's culture, and consequently positively impact worker performance. Why shouldn't the same be true for education? Instead of focusing only on factors such as training, experience, etc., as the cause for poor student achievement and school performance, perhaps more attention to what have been considered "minor" details such as aesthetic experiences may provide additional insight. This study sought to provide a foundation for future research that can further test these relationships. Some examples of potential future research include a comparison of public and private school aesthetic experiences; an examination of the relationship between the aesthetic experience and levels of satisfaction; and a study of students' perceptions of the aesthetics of schools (both public and private).

In the next chapter I present the research questions that informed this study, and then review the literature concerning organizational aesthetics and its connections to organizational culture and public administration.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH QUESTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter and introduction, I discussed an overview of the study and a rationale for the use of the aesthetics framework and its applicability for public schools. In this chapter, I discuss the research questions that informed the study and review the literature on the topics of organizational aesthetics, organizational culture, and the connections to public administration.

2.1 Research Question

Specifically, the research question that informed this study was: How do public middle school teachers interpret the physical environment of their schools? In order to build an understanding of how teachers experience the school physically, it was also important to discern certain other information. What characteristics emerge as important to teachers about the physical environment of their schools? Because school culture is influenced by other factors such as school administration and leadership, it was additionally important to ask what other factors emerged that influence teachers' interpretations of the physical environment.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Organizational Constructs

Organizations are "social and collective constructs", wrote Antonio Strati (1999). The elusive search for a single definition or unifying paradigmatic expression of organizations within organization theory is difficult because "organizations and their environments change so rapidly that it is unrealistic to show what they are like now, because that's not the way they're going to be later" (Weick, 1969). James Kuhn (1982) described organizations as the "reified abstractions of the real but intangible network of the relationships, mutual obligations, contingent ties, ambiguous fealties, and ambivalent loyalties of persons cooperating with each other in varying ways and in different degrees". Herbert Simon (1976) wrote of the impact of an organization on a person and the "profound effects upon what he knows, believes, attends to, hopes, wishes, emphasizes, fears, and proposes". Dean, Ottensmeyer, and Ramirez (1997) argued that modern organizations tend to devalue and dehumanize individuals to the point that they exhibit withdrawal behavior patterns (i.e., physical absence from work).

Modernist attempts to study organizations as natural sciences might study an organism have proved somewhat elusive (Strati, 1999; Gagliardi, 1996). Taylor and Hansen (2005) wrote that "instrumental approaches *made* (italics original by authors) these the topics we explored because they are the topics instrumentalism could 'see'" (p.1221). Of rational and idealized constructs in general, Denhardt (2008) wrote of the Weberian notions of bureaucratic organizations as "an abstraction [and] a description of a set of events [that] may have never existed" except as a means of providing a backdrop to performance measurements.

2.2.2 Organizational Aesthetics on Organizational Constructs

Organizational aesthetics responds to some of these conceptual difficulties by insisting that we incorporate a view of the organization as one which includes a description of the sensory experiences of individuals (Taylor, 2002; Pelzer, 2002; Martin, 2002; Strati, 1999). Strati (1999) wrote that previous organization theory has failed to acknowledge the "eroticism, beautiful or ugly sensations, perfumes and offensive odors, attraction and repulsion" (p.4). He also notes that "the prevalent image conveyed by the organizational literature until the mid-1970s…was that organizations are made up of ideas which meet and merge on the rational level" (Strati, 1999). Gagliardi (1996) wrote that the "elementary truth" is that "the physical setting is not a naked container for organizational action…but a context that *selectively* (italics original by author) solicits - and hence, so to speak, 'cultivates' - all our senses" (p.565). Noting the importance of including a concept of space when discussing organizations, Gagliardi (1990) wrote that aesthetic discourse about an organization "organically examines the connection between the distinctive culture of the organization and properties of the work environment".

Of the evolution of organization theory in general, Taylor and Hansen (2005) wrote that

> Organizational research has long focused on the instrumental sphere with its questions of efficiency and effectiveness and in recent decades there has been interest in the moral sphere with its questions of ethics. Within the last decade there has also emerged a field that draws on the aesthetic sphere of our existence in organizations (p.1211).

2.2.3 Aesthetics and Organizational Aesthetics

A derivative of the Greek word aesthetikos, "sensitivity", aesthetics was a term first used by Alexander Baumgarten, a mid-18th century German philosopher, to "describe the relationship between our concepts and senses" (Acer & Ömeroğlu, 2007). As opposed to the logico-rational, aesthetics is a separate source of knowledge and distinctive point of enquiry (Nissley, et al., 2003) and is, therefore, "sensory knowledge" (Gagliardi, 1996). White (1996) described aesthetics as "any kind of sensory experience, regardless of whether or not this experience is felt to be 'beautiful' and also whether the cause of this experience is natural or artistic" (p.195). Equating beauty with aesthetics is misleading, for the "grotesque" can be an agent of change and provide just as much organizational knowledge (Pelzer, 2002; Taylor, 2002).

Organizational aesthetics effectively began with the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism in 1985 in France (Gagliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999; Samier, 2007), and has gained significant momentum since that time. The journals *Organization* (1996), *Consumption*, *Markets & Culture* (2002; 2006) and *Human Relations* (2002), have each devoted entire issues to the topic of organizational aesthetics. In recent years a number of international conferences have dealt specifically with the topic of the aesthetics of organization and management, and two new journals, *Aesthesis*, launched in 2006, and now *Organizational Aesthetics*, launched in 2012, are dedicated to further exploration and research of the topic (Samier, 2007).

Epistemologically, organizational aesthetics suggests that all forms of knowledge are based on experiences apprehended through the five senses. The assumption that instrumental studies which show organizational effectiveness and efficiency are superior to other concerns, is "presumptive and self-evident" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). To that end, organizational aesthetics argues that the social sciences can learn valuable lessons from the recognition that art for art's sake, and a concern for beauty (or ugliness) is just as valuable in the constant struggle to derive new forms and foundations of organizational knowledge. Strati (1999) has noted that organization theory and management studies in general tend to accept the "bizarre phenomenon" in which a person is "purged of corporeality" and is "stripped of both clothing and body and consists of pure thought, which the organization equips with work

instruments and thus reclothes" (p.3). Organizational aesthetics pays specific attention to the physical side of an organization and how the artifacts and symbols as either products of the organization or as a part of the physical landscape itself create meaning for individuals (Gagliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999; Taylor & Hansen, 2005; Taylor, 2002).

Notable contributors to the field of organizational aesthetics such as Antonio Strati, Pasquale Gagliardi, and Steven Taylor, have made efforts to organize the field and describe its evolution in terms of research and methodology, as well as its place within the literature of organizational studies. Some, like Strati and Guillet deMontoux (2002), have divided the field of organizational aesthetic research and literature into categories, or approaches: 1) the archaeological approach- the researcher is on an archeological expedition to uncover and describe the aesthetic nature of the organization; 2) the empathic-logical approach- dealing with the "pathos of organizational life"; and 3) the empathic-aesthetic approach- the researcher dialogues with organizational members about their own aesthetic experiences.

Despite the efforts of theorists in the field to describe and categorize the aesthetics framework and literature, there is more need to put theory into practice (Warren, 2008). In the next section, I review some previous organizational aesthetics research, and I discuss how these studies have overlapped and communicated with public administration and organizational culture, though these conversations have all ultimately been dominated by public administration's tendency towards a modernistic focus.

2.2.4 Aesthetics, Culture, and Public Organizations

In order to understand how culture is formed and operates within an organization, Schein (1992) wrote that there are three distinct levels or processes dynamically operating upon each other. Operating in a hierarchical system, these levels are artifacts, values, and assumptions, with artifacts representing the most basic level of culture, followed by values, and supported by assumptions (Figure 2.1). Schein (1992) posited that artifacts are essentially indecipherable products of an organization's culture, and that they do not in and of themselves warrant specific study beyond an understanding that they are informed by the other two more substantial levels. Additionally, Schein (1992) said that the experiences of organizational members with the physical environment (i.e., all of the artifacts of an organization) are ambiguous and difficult to apprehend to the extent that they simply cannot be understood.
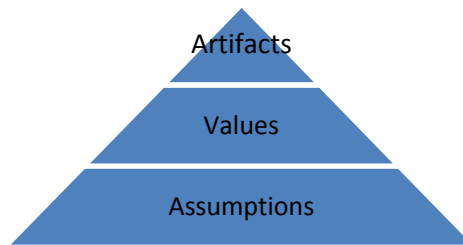
Figure 2.1 Schein's Model of Organizational Culture

Hatch (1993) and Gagliardi (1990; 1996), on the other hand, argued against relegating artifacts to a level of inferiority and against the modernistic bent that Schein's (1992) model necessitated. Gagliardi (1996) wrote that artifacts are the basis of all other organizational experience and do not "constitute secondary and superficial manifestations of deeper cultural phenomena" (p.568). Criticizing Schein's model, he also noted that the elements of the model are quite literally structured in a hierarchical fashion that in and of itself suppresses the importance of the physical reality of an organization's culture. As he wrote, "What is higher up (i.e., artifacts) is superficial or apparent, whereas what is lower down (i.e., values and assumptions) is profound, fundamental, thus more worthy of attention" (Gagliardi, 1990, p.11). Hatch's (1993) cultural dynamics model does "not focus on the elements of assumptions, values, and artifacts, but on the processes connecting them", differing from Schein's original model by "turning it on its side" (p.210). To that end, Hatch's cultural dynamics model is represented as a circle in which the constitutive elements of values, artifacts, symbols, and assumptions exist in a continuous loop, each one neither being the sole cause of nor merely the bi-product of the other (Figure 2.2). Artifacts do not occupy a position of inferiority to assumptions and values, but play a role that is "equally important" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).
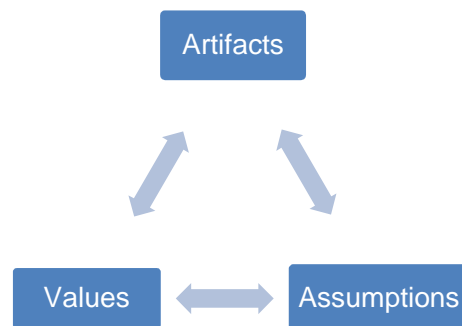
Figure 2.2 Hatch's Cultural Dynamics Model

Gagliardi's (1996) notion of an organization's culture as a set of "sensory maps" contributes to this model and helps in the understanding that culture is comprised of a set of experiences on a variety of levels. These maps are "built from aesthetic responses employees have to their physical-cultural setting" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p.339). Cognitive maps are built on "mental schemata which may be conscious or unconscious…[but they are] 'knowable", where sensory maps "come into operation in the interaction between the senses and a culturally and/or physically characterized setting" (Gagliardi, 1990, p.19). Gagliardi (1996) contended that the primacy of "logos" and "ethos", or the cognitive and moral experiences, as the two constitutive elements of an organization's culture, fail to take into account the level that is "pathos", or that level that is the aesthetic experience of how an organization is both perceived and felt. The collection of individual experiences, which are fundamentally informed by sensory intake of the surroundings of the physical environment, is an interpretive expression of an organization's culture. As Gagliardi stated, "Material reality, which performs such an important role in the construction and development of the individual self, is equally decisive, perhaps more so, for the collective identity of an organization" (Gagliardi, 1996). Strati (2010) confirmed this by averring that there exists an "intellectual controversy [that] privileges the mental, cognitive, and rational dimension of social action whilst neglecting the material, sensible, and emotional dimensions of culture" (p.880).

Culture does not develop in a vacuum, and the pressures and politics of the debates surrounding public schools makes their study particularly relevant. The life of public organizations in general renders them significantly different from their private counterparts (Allison, 1979; Gortner, et al, 1997). School employees represent over 50% of the entire public workforce, thus a study of how the physical environment can shape and impact school cultures helps illuminate a broader understanding of these relationships within public sector organizations in a more general sense (Raffel, 2007). Educators are "street level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 1980) who have more influence over policy and its implementation than any other public sector (Samier, 2008).

To understand the culture of organizations theorists employ a variety of techniques using an aesthetics perspective. Some of these include an analysis of organizational life as metaphors for

17

performing arts such as jazz (DePree, 1992; Hatch, 1998; Taylor & Hansen, 2005); theatre (Mirvis, 2003; Taylor, 2002; Vaill, 1989); and storytelling (Boje, 1991). In these studies, decisions and actions are viewed and understood as metaphorical expressions of organizational culture and discourse (Nissley, et al., 2003), paying particular attention to the role of the manager as an artist, a composer, a storyteller, etc. These themes were expressed early within public administration by scholars such as Chester Barnard (1938/1968), who wrote that in public administration, executive functions are a "matter of art rather than science, and is aesthetic rather than logical", though his appeals went largely unheeded in favor of the positivism of scientific management (Samier, 2007). Charles Goodsell's (1992) essay "The Public Administrator as Artisan" presented this argument again, and asked public administration to pay more attention to the microcosmic, as opposed to the macrocosmic level.

Studies in organizational aesthetics have viewed the field of public administration largely from a managerial perspective (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). This limitation is further compounded in that the majority of aesthetics research is dominated by a methodology which relies on narrative data from the researcher's point of view. As Taylor (2002) notes, "aesthetics is inherently subjective", and the archaeological approach (Strati, 1999) privileges a detached third party observer, with a tendency towards disenfranchising the larger body of organizational actors (Warren, 2008). Taylor and Hansen (2005) recommended that the area that is most ripe for advancing the use of an aesthetic analysis of organizational life is realized through using "artistic form to look at aesthetic issues" (p.1223). To that end, the current research advances the field by exploring the aesthetic experiences of teachers using visual and ethnographic methodologies, while making use of limited personal commentary.

These limitations notwithstanding, some important work has been done with regard to the physical aspects of culture in organizations, and in a more inclusive fashion. Studies have been used to derive an understanding of workers' behavior, attitudes, and beliefs in office environments which were deliberately "aestheticized" to make them either more attractive or "fun" places to work (Siler, 2009; Warren, 2008).

One aspect of the aesthetics research done within public, state-run organizations has recognized that the issue of "homeyness" is an important consideration for specific types of organizations and their

cultures. Martin (2002), and Hujala and Rissanen (2011), have studied elderly care facilities, or Old People's Homes (OPHs), respectively in England and Finland. Their efforts help to understand how the virtual assault on the senses caused by "the bodily decay of the elderly" affects the culture of the organization. Martin (2002) categorized these public facilities as either "homey" or "institutional", and Hujala and Rissanen (2011) noted that the issue of materiality affected the way the employees and residents were treated by management.

These issues are critical in a consideration of public schools in the United States. In order to understand the place of a public school in everyday life in the United States, it is important to recognize its function as a nurturing environment and a home where teachers must educate students about navigating societal cultures and mores (Johnson, 1980). This publicly funded housing bears little resemblance to any life experience outside school walls. Public schools in the United States still primarily adhere to an institutional "eggcrate" design that is conducive to an emphasis on control (Stuebing, et al., 1994), and which lacks an aesthetic sensitivity that many corporations strive to ensure is in place to be attractive not only to consumers, but somewhat more importantly, to workers (Berg & Kreiner,1996; Hatch, 1996). Public schools are also popularly represented as unsafe battle grounds, often depicted in the media by graffiti ridden hallways in which the teachers are prison guards and the principal is the warden.

2.2.5 Public Administration on Public Schools

In the context of public schools, public administration literature has treated discussions of organizational culture from instrumental perspectives (Hujala & Rissanen, 2011). Schools in the United States were conceived and formed upon the "one best system" (Tyack, 1974), which is the "corporate-bureaucratic model" (Raffel, 2007). After the United States was deemed a "nation at risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) because of its "failing schools", a flurry of reform efforts were put in place to improve and fix the problem and thus the nation's health. Since that time, high-stakes testing and, by extension, teachers' practices, have become the most discussed aspects of public schools. As such, schools are easy targets for public debate, with highly visible data sets by which to judge either their failure or success. Other public institutions avoid this kind of scrutiny by virtue of the fact

19

that they simply do not have similarly visible measurable data (Goodsell, 1992). Despite the zeitgeist of increasingly humanistic approaches in public administration, schools are forced to continue to placate an easily alarmed electorate and to prove that they are becoming more efficient and effective production machines. With policies influenced by popular movements such as Reinventing Government (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) and the New Public Management (Hood, 1991), the trend continues (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Due to the focus of these reform efforts the health of schools as it is informed by teachers' experiences with the physical environments of schools has been de-emphasized.

2.2.6 Connections to the Study

The literature shows that organizational aesthetics provides an alternative framework for analyzing how individual experiences with the physical contributes to organizational participants' interpretations of an organization's culture. Past conversations about culture have alluded to the secondary nature of the tangible side of an organization. Increasingly, these conversations have begun to include a focus on the tangible itself as an informative element in the creation of culture.

Public administration is poised to gain further ground in deepening the understanding of the experience between the physical environment and workers' beliefs and attitudes about the public workspace. By refocusing some of its discussions to view public schools as representative of public organizational life in general, public administration is further strengthened by including a theoretical stance that is removed from its more characteristically modernistic instrumental approaches. This is not to say that an aesthetic analysis of the more psycho-emotional experiences of organizational life is superior to instrumental studies. On the contrary, the inclusion of this new organizational studies analytical tool helps broaden the scope of the content and structure of not only theoretical, but practical conversations as well.

Studying teachers' experiences of school life as they are linked to the physical environment addresses the need to understand and, hopefully, improve the overall organizational health of public schools. This study has attempted to provide a means of shifting the discussion from the continuing proof of the failure of public schools and to develop an understanding of the tangible reality of life in public

schools in the United States, thus providing a knowledge base from which to make alternatively informed changes.

In the next chapter I present a discussion of the methodological and analytical frameworks that were used in this research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I discussed the research questions that informed this study and reviewed the literature concerning organizational aesthetics, organizational culture, and the connections to public administration. In this chapter, I discuss the methodological and analytical frameworks used to approach and conduct the current research.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' interpretations of the physical environment and to explore factors that emerged as important to teachers about the physical environment. The physical environment included any aspect of a school that teachers perceived as important to them or that generated an aesthetic reactions (i.e., conditions of the school and grounds; design of the school; decorations, colors, smells, sounds, etc.). An aesthetic experience is both emotional and intimate (Gagliardi, 1996). Axiologically, this study was fundamentally concerned with discerning the aesthetic values that are embedded within these interpretations of experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

A qualitative exploratory methodological approach that allowed research participants to develop a meaningful connection with the study was appropriate. Teachers who chose to participate were given the opportunity to describe and offer their opinions of their school buildings, as well as express their feelings, cares, and concerns regarding the physical environment.

Responses to questions and topics, as well as the photographic evidence that teachers provided through the lenses of their cameras were not only subject to their individual interpretations of the environment, but also required an interpretive and subjective analytical strategy aimed at drawing out some of the more fundamental emotions and values that lie beneath the surface. According to Gagliardi, (1996) the physical environment of an organization cannot be taken at face-value, as an organization's culture can be "truly represented" and more meaningfully interpreted through a study of its artifacts (i.e., the physical environment).

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological framework that was applied, as well as the research design's procedures and methods. This chapter also includes a discussion on the topics of bias and

subjectivity, and addresses the issues of trustworthiness of the research, (i.e., validity and reliability), and the limitations of the study.

<u>3.1 Methodological Framework</u>

Within organizational aesthetics research, a range of "analytic distinctions" and methodological approaches exists (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Table 3.1 shows this range in a 2x2 framework that was described by Taylor and Hansen (2005) and includes both content and method continua.

Table 3.1 Two by Two Organizational Aesthetics Analytical Framework

		Content	
		Instrumental	Aesthetic
Method	Intellectual	- Artistic forms as metaphors for organizations - Lessons for management from the arts - Arguments for the importance of organizational aesthetics - Using aesthetics to deepen our understanding of traditional organizational topics	- Industries & products fundamentally aesthetic - Aesthetic forms within organizations - The direct sensory experience of day-to-day reality in organizations
Method	Artistic	- Artistic forms used to work with individual issues - Artistic forms used to work with organizational issues - Aesthetic forms used to illustrate/present intellectual arguments	- Artistic forms used to present the direct sensory day-to-day experience in organizations

This chart is a representational image developed to "make sense of aesthetic approaches in organizational studies" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005, p.1218). Some studies of organizational aesthetics "consider mainstream organizational research questions [such as] efficiency and effectiveness", and lie within the instrumental content quadrant, whereas other aesthetics studies (i.e., in the aesthetic quadrant) are concerned more with the "aesthetic issues…[that] address the day-to-day feel of the organizations, questions of beauty and ugliness" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). They wrote that this last piece represents the

attempts at developing innovative means of discussing content "that has not been part of much of mainstream organizational research" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005).

Using the table as a guide to explain the methodologies used in the current study, this research was concerned with the "day-to-day reality" of teachers and their perceptions of the physical environments of their school. Combining the use of the visual technique of participants' photographic data collection with the use of interviews and conversations with teachers to discuss their experiences of the aesthetics of their schools, the current study used "artistic form to look at aesthetic issues" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). As Taylor and Hansen (2005) described, "the use of artistic forms to look at aesthetic issues offers a medium that can capture and communicate the felt experience…something of the tacit knowledge of the day-to-day…reality of organizations" (p.1224). The selection of an aesthetic methodology which allowed teachers to express themselves through photographs and the subsequent "conversationally" (Foley & Valenzuela, 2008) toned interviews was appropriate for the emotional and intimate nature of aesthetic experiences (Gagliardi, 1996). That there were no previously identified studies of schools using an organizational aesthetics framework further supported the use of a somewhat more exploratory methodological approach.

3.2 Methods

I used a combination of two primary sources of data from participants: interviews and photographs. In addition, I also used field notes and took photographs as a technique to constantly inform my own understanding and experiences, and as a source against which to compare teachers' responses.[2]

The participant and group interviews were semi-structured and informal in nature. The interviews themselves were an iterative process during which I used information from preceding interviews to inform possible topics and questions in the following sessions. This type of evolutionary interview process is known as dialogic, or conversational, and is useful in the attempt to make the setting as comfortable as

---

[2] I collected field notes when I made group visits and individual interviews. These did not occur during the same time of the day, so levels of student noise and activity varied. This is addressed in a section on limitations at the end of this chapter.

possible towards the end of "[humanizing] the interviewer and [diminishing]...power and control of the interview process" (Foley & Valenzuela, 2008).

The questions and discussion topics that were used (Appendices C and D) served as guidelines during the group and individual interviews. Nonetheless, certain questions and topics were used consistently throughout the interview processes. Spradley (1979) outlined a typology of three types of "ethnographic questions" (p.60) as descriptive, structural, and contrast. These were helpful in categorizing the types of questions and topics that were used to gather interview data. The first of these, descriptive, categorized questions that asked participants to talk about the schools' physical environments. This category also included the discussion of the photographs that teachers chose to take. Structural questions were those that helped participants categorize and evaluate their particular school environments. Contrast questions and topics were used to explore teachers' opinions about how different physical environments compare, effectively aiding teachers in expressing opinions about the overall physical environments of their own schools (Hatch, 2006).

Because aesthetic experiences can lose meaning through discursive attempts to describe them, the use of capturing photographic images is helpful not only to serve as points for conversational dialogue, but also as a means for the participant to show what it is "like" to be in a given situation (Strati, 2000). I asked teachers to provide me with a description of their schools through photographs of the physical environment. When referring to the aesthetics of the school site's physical environment, this included all aspects and conditions of the school's layout and any other aspect which affects sensory input, including its physical structure, interior design, decorations, embellishments, colors, sounds, etc.

3.3 Sample Population

3.3.1 Research Sites and Recruitment

The choice to use FWISD schools and teachers was based on the conveniences of proximity and familiarity with the school system. For the purposes of the current research, the important considerations were that there should be a sufficient number of schools from which to draw a sample. Fort Worth had a large number of middle school campuses to provide a robust sample population. Table 3.2 provides some basic statistics for several other large districts in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth metropolis. The table

shows that though Dallas ISD has a larger number of classroom teachers, Fort Worth ISD is still comparatively larger than other districts in the metroplex.

Table 3.2 Comparison of Sample District to Urban North Texas School Districts

District	N^o of Middle Schools	Total N^o of District Classroom Teachers	Percentage of Teachers by Gender
Fort Worth ISD *	25	5,125	73% female 27% male
Dallas ISD	41	10,276	70.8% female 29.2% male
Arlington ISD	13	3,900	79.5% female 20.5% male
Garland ISD	12	3,651	76% female 24% male
Mesquite ISD	8	2400	78% female 22% male

(*sample district)

As mentioned, FWISD schools were purposefully chosen for reasons of convenience including proximity and familiarity. Because there were no identified previous studies using the organizational aesthetics framework in schools, I chose to focus the research on public middle schools, as opposed to including either other school levels (i.e., elementary and high school) or other comparisons, such as with private schools. These comparisons are included in a discussion of suggested further research, but for the purposes of this study, I considered that widening the focus would have reduced the depth of the data that the examination of fewer schools provided.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I did not include as potential sites any of the four sixth-grade centers in FWISD. Though the focus was on middle schools, I considered that a range of grades in the same building had not only a larger potential participant base, but also offered a potentially broader range of opinions and experiences. There are noticeable distinctions between elementary (pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade) and secondary schools' (sixth through twelfth grades) cultures and climates (i.e., the ages and maturity of students; amounts and types of discipline; curricular issues; administrative

differences; etc.). Sixth grade centers occupy a somewhat unique position as neither entirely elementary in their focus, nor secondary.[3]

Potential participating sites included all middle schools. The categories of potential sites included: new school construction (i.e., constructed since the district's 1999 bond package); older, or previously built, with no improvements (i.e., constructed prior to the 1999 bond election); older schools with improvements. The addition of another category became apparent to me after research had begun: that of schools in a repurposed facility. The distinction of the various categories was considered important as aesthetic experiences are potentially informed by an environment's relative age and whether there have been projects that are completed which alter the physical structure of the environment. In this regard, the category of "improvements" was meant to distinguish schools that had renovations or annexes, and was not meant to provide any sort of critical opinion or analysis of the aesthetics of the physical environment.

After receiving approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to contact the principals of potential participating schools, I sent an email communication to the principals of all 25 potential middle school research sites. In this initial email, I asked principals for permission to use their schools as research sites involving their teachers as potential voluntary participants. I also informed principals that if they responded favorably, they would receive a follow-up email asking them some questions about their schools.

Eleven principals responded favorably and were sent the follow-up email questionnaire, asking them for the number of years they had been in their current schools, the numbers of instructional staff in their schools, and information regarding any physical alterations to the school building. As only two principals provided the requested information, I gathered information about school buildings' ages and renovations (i.e., additions, annexes, etc.), in addition to demographic data about principals (i.e., number of years experience in the position and in the current school) through the FWISD website as well as individual school websites. Additionally, I contacted the district's Accountability and Data Quality Department (ADQ) to supply other data related to the total number of teachers in the district (discussed

---

[3] For example, in Texas, there are no sports or organized athletics in sixth grade. Some districts in Texas combine sixth grade with elementary operations, though this is not the organizational structure used in FWISD.

further in this chapter) and for a breakdown of teachers by gender. Table 3.3 shows the breakdown of participating school sites.[4]

Table 3.3 Participating School Sites and Categories

School Site	New (N) Previous (P) Repurposed Facility (RF)	Additions or Annexes (Yes/No)
S1	P	No
S2	P	No
S3	P	Yes
S4	P	Yes
S5	RF	-
S6	RF	-
S7	P	No
S8	N	-
S9	P	Yes
S10	P	Yes
S11	P	No

3.3.2 Study Participants

The approach taken for soliciting teacher participants was a convenience sample. As described by Patton (1990), a convenience sample is one characterized by ease of access (i.e., teachers at each campus can be easily contacted as an email group).

Only classroom teachers from participating schools were asked for their voluntary inclusion in the study. I did not include any teaching assistants, counselors, or other school personnel who did not have a regularly scheduled group of students for whom they were responsible as teachers. This was done in an effort to maintain a tighter focus on a more specific group within the school building. The sampling, however, did include the possible inclusion of teachers who "float" among different classrooms (i.e., teachers who meet with regularly scheduled groups of students, but who do not have their own classrooms assigned to them). These teachers have a unique perspective on seeing a variety of rooms and places in a school building, and of having to establish a learning environment and climate using the resources that they typically push around the school on an audio-visual cart into other teachers' rooms.

---

[4] Participating schools and teachers were labeled S1, S2, and T1, T2, and so on, only in the order that they responded. There was no analytical meaning attached to either numbering scheme.

As part of this research design, I was interested in exploring teachers' perceptions about the entire physical environment in addition to individual classrooms.[5]

After receiving IRB permission for contacting schools and teachers, and after receiving favorable responses from potential research sites, I sent out a group email to all teachers at each of the eleven participating schools. In this initial email, I asked teachers to supply some basic biographical information, including total years of teaching experience, age, and gender. As part of the analytical scheme explained in more detail later in this chapter, I sought to do inter- and intra-school comparisons based not only on the conditions of the schools, but also to see what possible bearing teachers' levels of experience, age, and gender might have on their individual experiences with and interpretations of the physical environment. Teachers were also informed in this initial communication of the confidentiality and anonymity of the study, and that they would be asked to sign an informed consent letter (Appendix B) acknowledging this.

A total of 30 teachers responded to the initial email, from a potential total of 393 teachers at all eleven sites. A follow-up email was sent informing teachers about setting up initial interviews to explain the study procedures and go over the informed consent. Ultimately I was able to meet with 29 of the 30 original respondents.[6] Of the 29 teachers with whom I met and who signed informed consent letters, a total of 21 participated in and completed the research process. A majority of these 21 teachers supplied the requested biographical information. Table 3.4 shows the teachers who participated in the study and the biographical information supplied.

---

[5] As mentioned, the physical environment included all areas of the school, and as I describe in the results in the following chapter, teachers often spoke about larger communal spaces such as courtyards, parking lots, playgrounds, etc., in addition to their own classrooms.
[6] One teacher asked to meet with me before she agreed to sign the consent form, but then did not respond to any follow-up requests for this meeting.

Table 3.4 Participants by Age, Gender, & Years of Experience

Teacher	Gender	Years	Age
T1	female	8	32
T2	female	5	57
T3	female	6	56
T4	female	17	59
T5	female	8	37
T6	female	6	32
T7	female	30	57
T8	male	12	38
T9	female	3	36
T10	female	9	34
T11	female	-*	-
T12	female	24	44
T13	female	14	40
T14	male	21	51
T15	female	1	27
T16	female	26	53
T17	female	5	34
T18	male	21	44
T19	female	27	58
T20	female	26	60
T21	female	9	37
N= 21		$M = 15$	$M = 45$

(*no data available)

To give some indication of the sample as compared to the total number of middle school teachers in FWISD, the ADQ department supplied information regarding average years of experience and average ages of all middle school teachers in the district. From a total of 1264 middle school teachers in FWISD, including all four sixth grade centers and all schools of choice, the average age is 45 and the average years experience is 12. Breaking this information down further, however, reveals a pattern that is somewhat anticipated, according to research regarding teachers in high-needs, low-income schools, as compared to more affluent schools and other types of "specialty schools" (i.e., schools of choice): controlling for specialty schools of choice and sixth grade centers, the regular neighborhood middle schools in the district are represented by an average age of 42 and average years of experience of 9

years. Specialty schools are represented by an average age of 48, with 14 years of experience. Figure 3.1 displays this displays a comparison of these averages with the sample population.
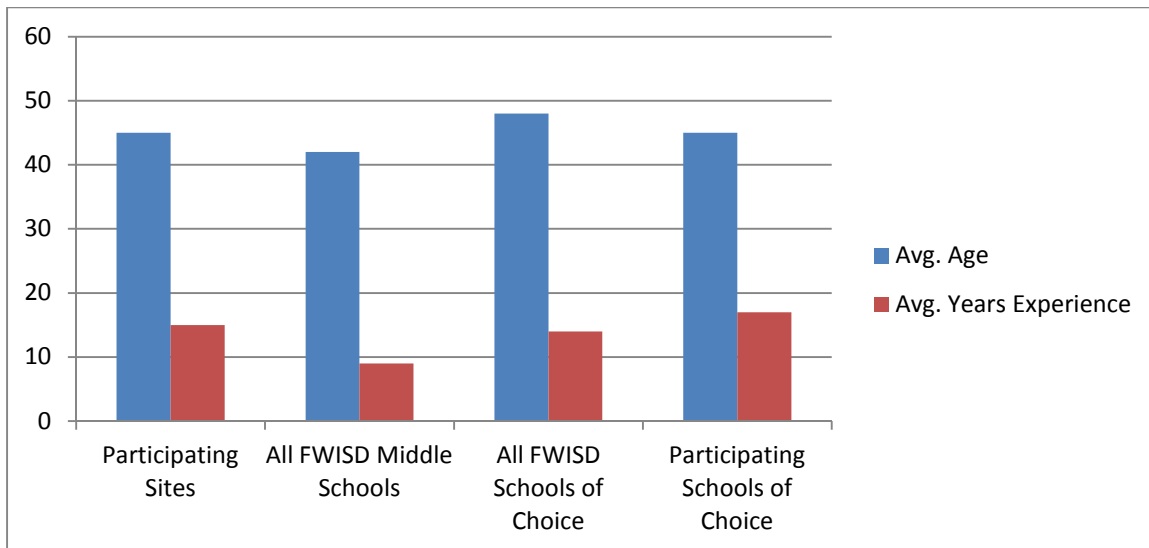
Figure 3.1 Sample & District Comparison of Average Age and Years of Experience

The average age and years of experience of the sample population were higher than district averages. This can be partially explained, however, in that six of the participants in the study had in excess of 20 years experience. Of the other 15 participants, there was an average age of 40, with eight years average teaching experience, which is similar to the district averages of an average age of 42 and nine years of experience.

<div align="center">3.4 Data Collection and Procedures</div>

In this section I discuss the procedures used for collecting information and data in group interviews, photographic data collection, and individual interviews.

3.4.1 General Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Table 3.5 shows the method of data collected from each participating school site, as well as the total number of participants from each school. Though photographs were not received from each participant, I did receive photos from at least one participant at each school site. Further discussion and details of this follows in the next section.

Table 3.5 Number of Participants and Data Collection Methods by Site

School Site	N° of Participating Teachers	N° Individual Interviews Conducted	N° Of Photographic Data Sets Collected	Group Interview Conducted
S1	1*	1	1	X
S2	1	1	1	
S3	1	1	1	
S4	3	3	2	X
S5	2	2	1	
S6	3	3	2	
S7	1	1	1	
S8	1	1	1	
S9	2	2	2	
S10	3	3	3	X
S11	3	3	3	X
N= 11	**N= 21**	**N= 21**	**N= 18**	**N= 4**

(*Two other teachers from S1 participated in a group interview, but did not respond to follow-up requests for individual interviews)

3.4.2 Photographic Data Collection

Teachers in the study were asked to use a personal electronics device to take pictures over the course of several days and to send these images to me via email. Of the 21 teachers who participated in the study, 18 provided photographs.[7] Of the 18 data sets of photographs, the number of pictures ranged from five to 48, for a total of 360 pictures taken by all participants. For each school site, there was an average of 24 pictures taken of each participating site.

Teachers were asked to *tell* me about their schools by *showing* me what aspects of the environment they found pretty or ugly, disgusting or pleasant, comfortable or uncomfortable, and so on. This technique is called photo-elicitation and served the purpose of providing points of reference to dialogue with teachers about their schools (Hurworth, 2003; Warren, 2008). Allowing participants to record aesthetic experiences with cameras helped shed light on teachers' understanding and opinions regarding their personal cultural backgrounds and experiences, in addition to the information provided about the culture and environment being photographed (Buchanan, 2001; Warren, 2008).

---

[7] When we talked about the pictures, participants T11, T12, and T19 alluded to and discussed the pictures they had taken and those they had "intended" to take, though they did not send them to me or bring them to the interview sessions.

3.4.3 Interviews

Group and individual interviews occurred during non-instructional hours, primarily before or after school, though some principals and teachers requested that I use available time during instructional planning periods to conduct some interviews. This did not seem to have any impact on the ability to collect data, as we were able to have an uninterrupted discussion in the teacher's room or in another quiet and private area.

3.4.3.1 Group Interviews

The original study protocol involved the use of an initial group interview, during which I planned to meet with all teachers from one participating school site to review the IRB approved informed consent letter and explain the procedures of the research process. These procedures were for each teacher to use a personal electronics device take as many pictures as they wanted over the course of a week, and then send them to me electronically to my university email account; or, if they preferred, to save them to an electronic storage device, which I would come collect before each interview to print.

Attempts to schedule the group interviews with teachers from each site were primarily unsuccessful. Teachers' schedules did not permit them to be able to coordinate a common time during which we could meet and review the informed consent and research procedures. In total, I met with only four groups of teachers from the 11 school sites to conduct a group interview. During these four interviews, teachers at two of the campuses expressed some hesitation about having the session recorded, thus only two of the group interviews were actually recorded towards the end of using them as sets of data. Consequently, the somewhat minimal data that was collected through the group sessions was not used as a part of the analyses. Nonetheless, this data was informative for becoming more familiar with the schools, and these sessions helped in fostering communication between teachers and me. When I was not able to conduct an actual group interview, I simply met with all teachers from each school site either in a group (i.e., not an actual group interview setting), or individually to review the informed consent and explain the study's procedures. As school sites S2, S3, S7, and S8 had only one participating teacher, I met with them individually to go over the study and discuss the informed consent.

3.4.3.2 Individual Interviews

Teacher participants and I met for an individual interview at either their school or at a location convenient for them. Teachers were notified initially and then reminded during the explanation of the informed consent form that these interviews would be held during non-instructional time and would last approximately 45 minutes to 1½ hours. During the interview and discussion we talked about the photographs they had taken (i.e., I took a printed set of color photographs that each teacher had taken, and compiled them in a binder) and, as discussed, I used both a series of questions and discussion topics (Appendix D). As mentioned, the typology of questions that Spradley (1979) outlined served as a guide in the formation of these questions. Table 3.6 shows an example of the questions that were used and where they fit within this typology.

The majority of interviews occurred before school hours on the actual campus. By teachers' requests and for their convenience, I met with four teachers at other locations. Additionally, two teachers asked to be able to complete an interview by answering questions and emailing their responses to me. Both teachers also supplied photographs with captions.

These individually conducted interview sessions were held in a semi-structured and "conversational" fashion meant to allow teachers to respond in an unbroken fashion (Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). To that end, the questions were open-ended and discussion topics were exploratory in nature, frequently taking cues from the content of the interviews. Table 3.6 shows some examples of the questions and topics used in the interviews as informed by Spradley's (1979) ethnographic typology described previously.

Table 3.6 Typology of Questions and Examples of Interview Questions

Types of Questions	Example Questions and Topics from the Study
Descriptive	• Describe your school to me. • Tell me about the pictures that you took.
Structural	• In what ways is it important to you how your school looks? • In what ways do you see the physical environment affecting students? • How does the physical environment impact your job or your ability to teach?
Contrast	• Tell me about other schools where you have taught or visited. • How does this school compare to other schools where you have taught? • How does the physical environment of schools differ from other places where you have either worked or visited?

To assist in generating discussion with teachers, beyond a discussion of their photographs, I talked to teachers about my impressions of the school environments, also sharing with them some of the responses given by other participants (i.e., without identifying specific schools and in general terms), taking caution to only refer to buildings in very general terms to avoid leading participants' responses.[8] Warren (2008) has noted the importance of sharing personal experiences as a means to facilitate discussion, and as a source of valid data.

The interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking speech-recognition software program. I included information about the recording in my initial email communication with potential teacher participants, and teachers were advised of this again in the informed consent. I also reminded teachers when we met for our interview and discussion meeting that I

---

[8] I was aware of the possibility of leading teachers' responses, and exercised caution in avoiding the use of emotionally tinged descriptions and personal opinions which might be considered as critical of their schools' physical environments.

would be recording the interview and then transcribing it. I re-emphasized the fact that all information, including school names, individual names, and any other kind of identifying information would be strictly confidential and that results and findings would be reported anonymously.

<div align="center">3.5 Data Analysis</div>

As mentioned, I used an interpretive and subjective approach to analyze the data. Interpretive analysis is a transformative and iterative process (Wolcott, 1994; Hatch, 2002). Denzin (1994) wrote that interpretive analysis is a "productive process that sets forth the multiple meanings of an event, object, experience, or text" (p.504). Data sets that were analyzed were defined as: a) individual interviews and b) an individual set of photographs.

To conduct the analysis, I adapted the coding cycles and categories outlined by Saldaña (2009) and the interpretive analytical steps described by Hatch (2002). As described by Saldaña (2009), and as shown in Figure 3.2, there were two separate cycles through which the research was read and coded.

FIRST CYCLE
Elemental Methods

- **Initial Codes-** discreet parts to describe chunks of data
- **Holistic**- grasping basic themes or issues by absorbing them as a whole
- **In vivo**- verbatim words and phrases

SECOND CYCLE
Affective Methods

- **Emotions**- labels as recalled experiences or as inferred by the researcher

Figure 3.2 Application of Coding Methods & Categories
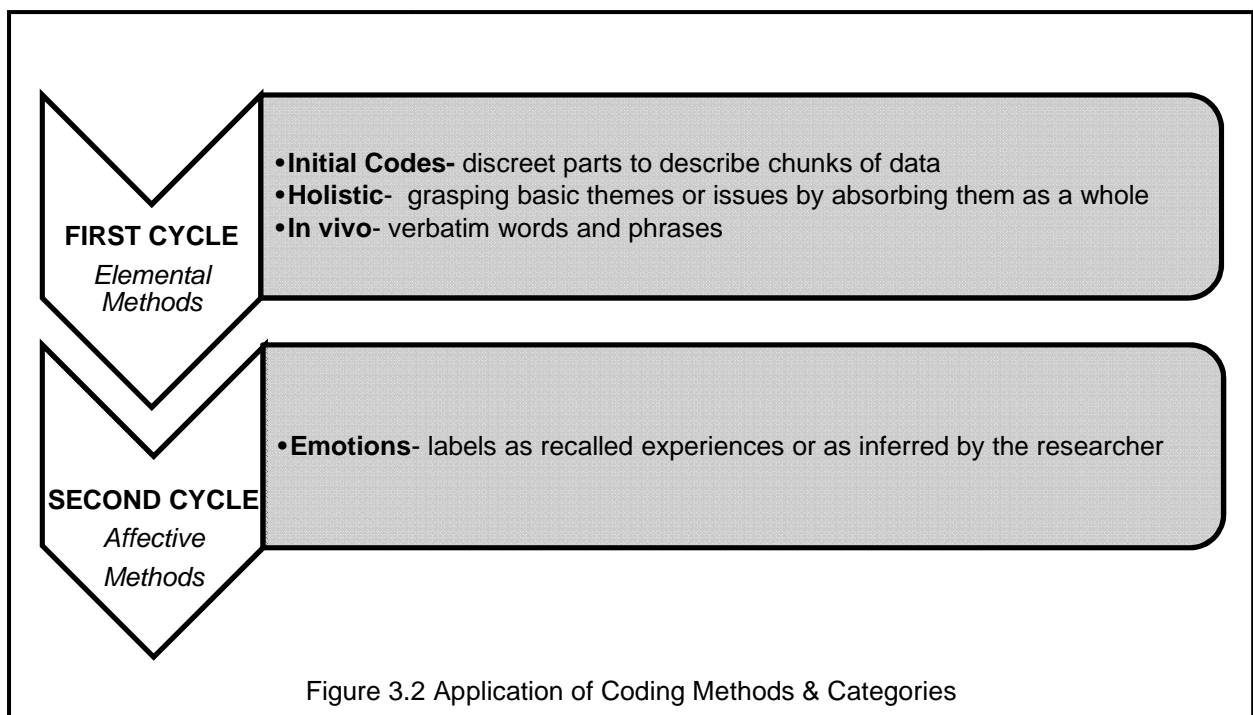
3.5.1 First Cycle Coding and Analysis

During the first cycle, I read through all the data once without interruption (i.e., I did not stop to high-light words or phrases, write notes, etc.) to get a "sense of the whole" (Hatch, 2002). During this phase I was also mindful of possible holistic and initial codes as represented by the participants' own words. Additionally, I looked through each set of photographs provided by the participant to accompany and complement the interview data, again looking for a sense of the whole.

After an initial reading and having captured what seemed to be some of the more essential elements, I read through all the data sets again and wrote a series of analytic memos (Saldaña, 2009; Hatch, 2002) and high-lighted words or phrases that seemed to characterize larger chunks of data. Likewise, I also read over field and observational notes, looking for any possible emerging patterns that could be compare to the analytic memos I wrote during this next reading. Figure 3.3 shows an example of this process using one of the interview data sets. In this dialogue excerpt, I had asked this teacher (T8) what he would change about the physical environment of his school.

Figure 3.4 is an excerpt from the analytic memo written in conjunction with this particular interview. The analytic memos were an opportunity to record some of my reactions from initial readings. As Saldaña (2009) described them, they were an opportunity to try to make personal connections and to "brain dump".

T8: I like open spaces, places where the kids, you know, they don't feel like rats in an experiment, being moved around through the mazes. Wider hallways. Bigger classrooms. A friend of mine who was teaching down a district in _____, she showed me a picture of her room and it's twice this size. And I know it's not feasible, but man, I would love to have another 6 feet that way. Space where the kids get to move around, where they don't have to be lined up and desks. Tables are great. I love my tables. Carpet, as much as possible…I think it needs to be inviting, it invites, I mean people want to go to school there. The aesthetics of it, artwork. I think it needs to have, like the lobby, you know, that's what they do with these big companies. They make their lobbies as inviting as possible. I think when you create that kind of atmosphere, I think the physical atmosphere can affect a student's performance. If they feel safe, if they feel comfortable, and it's warm and inviting, I think that does miracles for kids. Interviewer: What does that do to the teachers? T8: I think it makes them happier! Makes them better teachers. They want to come to work. They're not looking at their sterile, you know, I love the fact that I have carpet in here.	- "OPEN SPACES" - "EXPERIMENTAL RATS" - TEACHERS MAKE EXCUSES TO EXPLAIN WHY THINGS LOOK THE WAY THEY DO - LINING UP IS NOT NECESSARY - "INVITING" - "PHYSICAL CAN AFFECT STUDENTS' [PERFORMANCE]" - "MIRACLES FOR KIDS" - "MAKES THEM BETTER TEACHERS" - "STERILE"

Figure 3.3 Dialogue Excerpt With First Cycle Codes

Teachers seem to say a lot of things like "I know it can't be done, but…". These are frustrating to read, because I know that some of the things that "can't be done", really could be done. As another teacher said, it's "priority".

I think there are some deeper level frustrations here that aren't being said, but are being expressed. Teachers want to be creative and to have some control over the environment (not just their classrooms). Does this control represent the desire to be *in* control, or simply to help students by creating a comfortable space to work and teach in?

I have known that kind of frustration. The kind of frustration where I *know* some stuff could be changed, but I didn't know whom to talk to about it.

What would happen if we let teachers design a building? Design a classroom? What would happen if students got to choose? What if I had an opportunity to design? I've given input, but what about the entire process?

Figure 3.4 Sample of Analytic Memo

The photographs were analyzed in conjunction with the interviews and as part of the analytic memo process. An obvious step in this process was to simply look at the pictures and read the comments that participants made as they described their photos to me. As an example, Figure 3.5 shows a photograph that a teacher took of a missing electrical outlet wall plate. The teacher explained that she was grateful for the added outlet, as she "didn't have enough before". "Now, in this one," she explained, "this is kind of a funny, but scary story. This kid took a paper clip, stuck it in the socket, and after a small explosion, all the lights and power went out. Kind of dangerous, wouldn't you say?"

Figure 3.5 Electrical Outlet Without Wall Plate
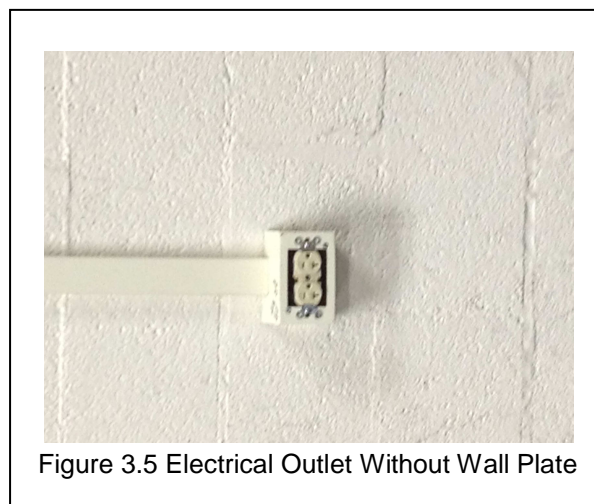
As a next step in this iterative and self-informing process, I again read through the data and began by applying first cycle codes, which is shown in Figure 3.3 as well. The high-lighted words or phrases were used as In Vivo application of codes to represent larger sections of the data. An important part of this iterative process throughout was not only looking for words or phrases that represented teachers' experiences, but also paying attention to the way in which they were said. This is not to say that I performed a contextual analysis, but the act of listening to the recordings while I was transcribing the data was a means to re-live the experience and to become more attuned to the way that teachers were expressing themselves (i.e., reading between the lines).

3.5.2 Second Cycle Coding and Analysis

During the second cycle analysis I read the data looking for ways in which teachers expressed emotions about their experiences. Goleman (1995) wrote that an emotion is "a feeling and its distinctive

thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act" (p.289). Some examples of emotional statements or words from teachers in this study were: "gross"; "yucky"; "I hate that feeling"; "this just makes me sad"; "it's so depressing"; "wouldn't it be nice if"; and so forth.

This part of the analysis required deepening levels of interpretation during which I began looking for underlying emotional expressions. In this regard, I was aware that participants would be potentially "aesthetically mute" (Taylor, 2002) and possibly effectively unable to "accurately label" (Saldaña, 2009) what they were feeling. As this was the most fundamental level of interpretation, the analysis bore more of the subjective nature that is part of qualitative analysis (Saldaña, 2009; Hatch, 2006; Denzin, 1994). As teachers talked about the physical environment, they did so via subtle, and at times more visceral, emotional responses. In turn, these emotional responses were interpreted to reveal common thematic patterns of teachers' feelings and beliefs about the physical environments of their schools, and ultimately show how these aesthetic experiences are connected in the formation of the cultural loop. To further clarify this connection, it is useful to consider that the physical body does not remember the sensation of pain in any meaningful sense, and we are only able to recall the idea of pain through the emotions that were connected to the experience. For example, a burnt finger does not continue to literally cause pain associated with a burning sensation. Nonetheless, our memory of such pain connects the incident to feelings of shock, anger, and fear. In like fashion, teachers were able to recall and describe the details of an aesthetic experience in a fashion that was made more realistic and immediate through the use of visceral, emotive expressions.

Teachers expressed a variety of emotions regarding the physical environments of their schools. In some cases, where an emotional word or phrase was not explicitly stated, I used an emotion code that was applicable. In other words, the codes that were applied were not always literally an emotion *word* per se, but were sometimes words associated with emotional states (i.e., "skeptic" or "cynic" are not necessarily emotions in the linguistic sense, but these words can be appropriately applied as codes; Saldaña, 2009). Figure 3.6 is an excerpt from one of the interviews, and shows the application of emotion codes.

I mean, it is important to me. To me, it does send a message, you know, just because a school may be in a certain location doesn't mean that it shouldn't be kept up looking…I'm just, okay, that picture, why can't we just put some landscaping! I know people get comfortable saying, "Well, if we did that, kids are just going to trash it." Okay, well build some self-respect in the kids or something about some pride in the school or your campus or whatever, so that doesn't happen if you try to fix up the campus. Or build a committee of kids who are actually responsible for planting some flowers or something. And then they would take more ownership!	- frustration/exasperation - cynic/skeptic (bitter) - indifference - abusive - hostility - respect

Figure 3.6 Dialogue Excerpt With Emotions Codes

In this example, teacher T10 was describing her desire to improve the appearance of the outside of her school. The codes that were applied show not only T10's *exasperation* at the appearance of the physical environment, but also her *frustration* at the inability to change the environment herself. I interpreted the strength of her desire and conviction to improve the physical appearance of the school as triumphant over the level of her frustration over the indifference of other teachers. There was, however, also a note of frustration at her own lack of power to change the attitudes of others. The *hostility* code that was applied was an interpretation of students' tacit frustration with and rebellion against the organization of not just the school, but also against larger social mechanisms.

When considering the potential range and types of emotions and emotional experiences, an inclusive list of all these expressions is neither possible nor practical. The use of Parrott's (2001) emotional categorization offered a practical solution by which to describe and list the variety and type of emotions found in the data. Parrott described three tiers of emotions as primary, secondary, and tertiary. This research was not concerned with a study of teachers' emotions, but how emotions were interpreted as expressions of teachers' interpretations of the physical environments of schools and what factors they deemed to be more important to them in that environment. Consequently, I used a modified version of

these categories that included two levels consisting of primary emotions followed by the more specific list of secondary emotions.

One of the primary emotions included love, and while the treatment of love as an emotion describing attraction between people was not relevant to the current research, it was still included as one of the categories to describe some of the *passionate* responses that teachers gave when discussing the physical environments (e.g., similar to a "love of country"). As the antithesis to "hatred", "love" was a legitimate description, and indeed, a word that several teachers used explicitly in our discussions (e.g., "I love that!"; "I hate that!"). Additionally, as secondary emotions of the category "love", words like "affection", "caring", and "attractiveness" were prevalent expressions, further making this a useful and indispensable aesthetic descriptor.

Table 3.7 displays a modified version of these categories and examples of the emotions that were expressed either explicitly or implicitly by teachers in the study. As a reminder, Saldaña (2009) says that the researcher can "read [into] the data, and infer underlying affects…to sympathize and empathize" to be able to legitimately describe emotions and the emotional states of participants, and consequently ascribe Emotions codes.

Table 3.7 Two Tiers of Emotions & Examples of Codes Applied to Data

Primary	Secondary
Love	• Affection, Fondness, Liking, Attractiveness, Caring, Compassion, Nostalgia
Joy	• Joy, Delight, Enjoyment, Gladness, Happiness • Pride, Optimism, Hope • Eagerness, Excitement • Relief
Surprise	• Amazement, Astonishment
Anger	• Anger, Hostility, Bitter, Hatred, Scorn, Dislike, Resentment • Aggravation, Agitation, Annoyance, Irritability • Frustration, Exasperation • Revulsion, Contempt, Disgust
Sadness	• Sadness, Anguish, Hurt, Depression, Despair, Unhappy, Dejection • Disappointment, Dismay, Displeasure • Guilt • Neglect • Alienation, Defeatism, Ambivalence, Indifference, Isolation, Rejection, Disrespect, • Sympathy, Pity
Fear	• Fear, Shock, Alarm • Nervousness, Anxiety, Apprehension, Worry

In regards to photographic data, this part of the analysis also required an interpretation of participants' feelings and emotions. Referring again to Figure 3.4, this was a representational image of something that was bothersome to the teacher on different levels and for different reasons. In recounting the story about the outlet, the teacher told me that her class was "left without power for two weeks". Not only did this incident represent her *concern* and *anxiety* over student safety, a deeper analysis of her emotions surrounding the event was interpreted to mean that she was *frustrated* at being powerless in regards to the physical environment. She further described that she "knew full well that they could have done something about this a whole lot sooner". This was interpreted as the source of a sense of *helplessness* and *anger* at the organizational control and power structure that took from her and from her students some of the essential, basic physiological needs (Maslow, 1943).

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Study and Researcher Bias

In qualitative research, "terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.14). Collectively, these terms are referred to as the trustworthiness of the study (Hatch, 2002; Bowen, 2005). As the "researcher is the instrument [of credibility]" (Patton, 2001, p.14), the issue more specifically becomes, has the researcher conducted a study and reported its findings in ways that can be trusted?

Bias is an element of any research design, given that the subject of study is chosen by the researcher. Akin to the "observer effect" discussed originally by Miller and Norman (1975), the object of interest and inquiry is affected by the act of being observed and scrutinized. My own experiences as an aesthetics researcher were intended to have meaning in the application of the chosen methodology and the analysis of the results. This researcher positionality is suggested as a necessary element of the design within organizational aesthetics research (Gagliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999; Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Hansen, 2002). Additionally, the subjective and interpretive nature of the analysis used in this study are a form of bias that are recognized as an elemental part of a qualitative design as the researcher "gives meaning to the data [through interpretation]" (Hatch, 2002).

As discussed in the introduction, I began this research because of a personal interest in the subject. My own years of teaching in different school districts (including a very informative, albeit brief, experience in Brooklyn, New York) caused me originally to take an interest in the subject. As a school administrator, I have heard many stories that teachers tell about their visits to other campuses, and I am particularly struck by the consistency of comparisons of the differing levels of cleanliness and order (to name only a couple of the factors) that they see among schools. After almost two decades of experience, I have become knowledgeable and intimately familiar with the politics and values that are embedded in the rules and processes within public education. What gets accomplished or taken care of at the school building level is often the result of individual interpretations of these rules and processes, and is also more simply and quite literally a manifestation of individual whims and interests.

My position as a principal in Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) was the source of another issue concerning bias and subjectivity. Several teachers knew me from my current position. Some of the comments that these teachers made led me to understand that they were tempering in part their responses, and may not have entirely and freely shared their opinions. For example, one teacher who knew me as a principal asked, "Now, who exactly is going to hear this?". None of the teachers who were not aware of my position made any comments in that regard. I am confident, however, that I did a thorough job in reassuring everyone who participated that all of the results would be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Additionally, the ability to "speak" through their photographs enabled all teachers the opportunity to say as much as they truly felt.

I discussed earlier in this chapter that my position in the school district possibly biased some of the findings because some teachers might have been hesitant to share as much as others. However, the expertise and ability of the researcher are counted as viable answers to concerns about the trustworthiness of the study (Golafshani, 2003). My experience enabled me to understand the research setting and environment with a familiarity that helped legitimize the conversations I had with teachers. In this regard, I talked to teachers about some of the details that I noticed when I surveyed the physical environment, showing them photographs and incorporating information that I had written in my field notes. I avoided the use of emotionally charged terms such as "ugly" or "beautiful", as mentioned previously, talking to teachers in general terms about structures that I noticed and so forth. For example, in one interview, I asked a teacher to tell me about the added wing that I had noticed, while in another interview, I showed a teacher a picture I had taken of the front of the school and asked him to describe what he felt when he saw this particular view of the school.

The informal structure of the interviews and the question and topic guide that was used helped to create an atmosphere that was comfortable for teachers. During the interviews, I did not read from a script or attempt to take copious notes, giving the interview a more conversational feel (Foley & Valenzuela, 2008). This created an authentic setting in which participants were not just research subjects, but were teachers talking about issues and concerns that were meaningful to them. Teachers were asked about the physical environment, but I did not discourage them from talking about other topics as they

pertained to their overall experiences with the school and its broader environment. For example, as mentioned, when I asked teachers to tell me about their schools, they would ask clarifying questions, and the subsequent answers they gave provided more insight as to what was on their minds and of concern to them. During the interviews, too, when teachers began talking "off" the topic, I allowed that conversation to flow naturally, and these moments often turned into segues that provided a deeper and more fundamental knowledge about teachers' life experiences, which in turn are inextricably and inevitably intertwined with their school and work lives. In essence, the research unfolded in a natural way and the authentic stories that emerged were personal and emotional accounts.

Triangulation in qualitative research is an acceptable method by which to counter possible threats to the credibility and dependability of the study. This was achieved through several ways in the current study. As participants were able to photographically express themselves in a free and uninhibited way and to explore the physical environment and touch on those things that mattered to them most, they were asking and responding to their own sets of questions. When we talked about their photos, I simply asked teachers to "tell me" about their experiences with that activity. A comparison of the sets of photographs with the accompanying interviews confirmed that the questions and topics that were discussed with participants helped corroborate my interpretations and findings.

Another means of triangulating and confirming the data was through "member checking". This was done throughout the interviews by means of asking clarifying questions of participants. In addition to clarifying questions, I also frequently repeated and paraphrased teachers' responses back to them, which also helped to confirm that their responses were understood correctly. Additionally, member checking was performed by asking participants to respond to the findings of the research. Having told teachers that I would communicate the results and findings, I asked them to respond in kind to see if they rang true to them.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

To begin with, a limitation of this study was the focus on public middle schools. As mentioned in previous sections, the relative significance of broadening the scope of the study to include other grade levels was considered as a source of possibly compromising the robustness and depth of the data.

Nonetheless, this was recognized as a limitation. The limited number of participants from schools was also considered as a limiting factor. Added to this was the further issue that four of the eleven participating sites had only one teacher participant. Finally, the field notes that I took did not occur at consistent times during the day, thus I did not always have an opportunity for multi-sensory experiences at each campus. In this section I discuss how I overcame these concerns and any remaining impacts on the interpretations of the results.

The richness of the data provided a means by which to address these concerns. Because qualitative research is concerned with "[understanding] a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991, p.58), a means of combating possible threats and limitations was through the construction of a "compelling narrative" that included "'thick' descriptions of the phenomena" (Bowen, 2005, pp.215-216). While the narrow focus is recognized as a limitation of the study, in this regard it was also beneficial towards the end of gaining an in depth understanding of a smaller and more focused number of participants.

Though the sample size of the study was small, with a limited number of participants, there was a variety of school types, and the interviewees represented a wide range of years of experience, age, and diverse backgrounds in teaching and in other areas. The purpose of a qualitative study in general is to "generate understanding" (Stenbacka, 2001). I felt confident that the issue of the size of the sample was not a substantially limiting factor due to the identification of data saturation as evidenced by the recurrence of the major factors and themes that are described in the next chapter.

Finally, the study was limited by the inability to take field notes and capture a school's aesthetic environment at similar times of the day. Though these notes were not used as data for the results and analysis, they served to help establish points of reference for my discussions with teachers. Aesthetic experiences are informed by all the senses, and in this regard I was unable to experience the sensations of sounds, smells, and sights as impacted by the presence of students, faculty, and staff during the regular school day. While I was fortunate to experience these at some schools, at most sites I had to conduct this part of the investigation either before school, but more typically after school hours. The campuses seemed lifeless sans the presence of human traffic. Nonetheless, this was not considered to

be a significantly limiting factor in the overall collection of researcher field note data and the resulting analysis. I was able to walk around each school building and its grounds, taking in the sights and indeed even the smells that lingered. To that end, I considered that my reactions and experiences were sufficiently informed and were an authentic representation of how the campus appeared and felt to me, thus helping me to visualize teachers' discussions of different aspects of their schools' physical environments. This limitation was further addressed as teachers' stories were rich in their descriptions and helped give me a sense of what it was like to be present during those times. Though Strati (2000) noted that an experience can lose some of its potency through being presented second-hand, he nonetheless stated that through "evocative processes…one [is able to] place oneself in the imaginary". He clarified this by saying that "evocation is nothing but participant observation conducted in the imagination, so that the organizational phenomenon studied is reconstructed by the imagination on the basis of the prompts provided by the [participant]" (Strati, 2000, p.13).

In the next chapter, I discuss the results of the study and the analysis of the results using the analytical framework outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I review the research sites and sample population. I then turn to a discussion of the general categories that emerged through first cycle analysis and coding. Finally, I describe the larger themes that were discovered through a second cycle coding with the application of Emotions codes.

4.1 Research Sites

The eleven participating school sites in this study varied in both age and condition. Table 4.1 displays the category into which the school sites fit. Following the table, I have included a brief description of the schools in each category. My perceptions that I recorded through field notes and observations were a part of this analysis, and I included some details about my experiences of the school environment. Because I was not able to visit each site at the same time of the day, I could not offer comparatively equitable insights about the entire sensory experience (i.e., levels of student noise, traffic in the hallways, etc.).[9] As a reminder, these perceptions were based on my own aesthetic experiences, and served to inform my understanding and conceptualization of teachers' comments about their schools. The information provided in the descriptions that follow, in this sense, provide some personal insight as to initial aesthetic perceptions. As an example, when a school site appeared to me to be "sterile", this was a subjective description of the way schools seemed to appear devoid of color and somewhat more institutional (Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). The activation of the researcher's own aesthetic sensibilities in organizational aesthetics research, even though these may not be the actual content of the data used for analytical purposes, is useful in developing an understanding of the organizational life and "spirit" of an environment (Dean, Ottensmeyer, & Ramirez, 1997; Martin, 2002; Strati, 2000).

Overall, I found these schools to be places that are marked by the passage of years, and while in some there have been obvious attempts to freshen and lighten the general appearance, in most there is a sense of slow disintegration and decay. Though it is to be expected that with the passage of hundreds of middle school-aged children each year throughout these schools, what seemed to be the case is a lack of

---

[9] In addition to some of my own descriptions of the sites, other information was either taken from FWISD's website "histories" of each school or the school's individual websites.

consistent, artful decoration and coloring to keep pace with the wear and use that accompanies so much human traffic.

All schools in FWISD were the recipients of updates and renovations through the 2008 bond program. Some of the updates that all school buildings received were new acoustical ceiling tiles and lighting, as well as updated security cameras (i.e., digital). Middle school campuses with sixth through eighth grade also received updated outdoor jogging and running tracks. Beyond these updates, all other work conducted in Fort Worth schools in conjunction with the 2008 bond was done on the basis of school building-specific needs' assessments. Several schools were given fresh coats of paint, whereas in others, though the paint was in obvious need of repair and refresh, this was not done because other issues and repairs took precedence. One teacher described the frustration over being told initially that the school would receive fresh paint and have auditorium seats replaced and repaired, when in the end the roof had to be fixed. "We had a tree growing out of the roof! Did you not see the tree growing out of the roof [the first time]?", she lamented.

Because the intent of the current research was not to critically assess the physical conditions of participating schools, I did not include more of my own reflections and aesthetic assessments regarding specific buildings in these descriptions. In sections that follow in this chapter, I will speak in more general terms of the participating schools' aesthetics, relating also general comments about themes, categories, and topics that emerged throughout the analysis of the interview and photographic data. As the current research was concerned with teachers' individual experiences, more detailed descriptions of the physical environments were unnecessary and were beyond the scope of this investigation.

Through my experiences in the district I have learned of and experienced first-hand some of the reputations that schools have developed as far as the general climate of orderliness and discipline (e.g., reputations of levels of orderliness, chaos, discipline, etc.) is concerned. The different geographic areas in Fort Worth, as mentioned in previous chapters, and known simply as "Northside", "Southside", "Eastside", and "Westside", are connected to these reputations. Each of these areas is characterized in distinct ways and to varying degrees based on rates of crime (with a strong link to gang activity, proliferation of drug crimes, etc.), proximity to government subsidized housing, demographics, and so forth. Likewise, some

areas are characterized more by proximity to more affluent neighborhoods, and the schools in these locations have developed the reputation of having stronger parent bases, better student performance (i.e., testing, grades, etc.), fewer discipline issues, etc. Consequently, some areas have become known as historically "hard-to-staff" (i.e., higher teacher turnover results in more inexperienced teachers), where others have much lower rates of turnover (i.e., teachers tend to be more experienced). These characteristics and reputations are formed in part by both empirical evidence and anecdotal information. A discussion of schools' reputations is an important consideration in considering teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding the physical environment. For example, perhaps determining the existence of a link between these aesthetic experiences and levels of positive and negative school reputations might uncover information useful for future research into the ways that school culture might be addressed through the physical environment. However, though a discussion of location was originally intended to be a part of a description of the sites, these reputations and characteristics could potentially have biased the findings. Additionally, this study did not use a methodological approach to systematically discover and describe schools' reputations. Consequently, I did not include this discussion as part of my descriptions. Nonetheless, teachers in the study did mention their perceptions of schools' reputations, and in the results that follow I did include discussions of teachers' comments about schools and their locations, as these are linked to teachers' perceptions of the overall school climates and environments.

Table 4.1 Participating School Sites and Categories

Site Categories	School Sites
Previously Built - Additions or Annexes	S3, S4, S9, S10
Previously Built - No Additions or Annexes	S1, S2, S7, S11
Re-purposed Facility	S5, S6
New Construction	S8

4.1.1 Previously Built With Additions or Annexes

The four schools in this category ranged in years built from the early 1900s to the mid-1950s, and have had an addition or annex built to accommodate growing student populations. One site was constructed as part of the Works Progress Administration and bears the architectural hallmarks of a 1930s era building. One school's lettering on the side of the building was cracked, and its marquee was broken as well. This "drive-up" appearance was a topic mentioned by several teachers across research sites as something that was important to them (i.e., the outer appearance of a school is important in setting a "tone" for the rest of the building). At another site, I was impressed by the dark red brick and colorful frescos and mosaics that marked the building's façade. In most, the hallways were generally well-lit and bright, though one school's main hallway was dark in color and had a somewhat colder, more austere feel to me than did other schools. I noticed missing tiles in several schools, and found that two of the sites had a dank, musty smell in the hallways. Generally, I found none of the sites to be extraordinarily dirty or unkempt in their appearance.

4.1.2 Previously Built With No Additions or Annexes

The four schools in this category ranged in periods that dated from 1922 to the early 1950s. As with the previous category, one of the schools in this group was constructed through the school building program of the Works Progress Administration. This particular building's historic landmark status precludes the addition of not only annexes, but also the installation of outside, portable classroom buildings. Another site in this group has been recently converted to be a new special-interest school. Whereas before it was a neighborhood campus (i.e., students attended the school based on specified street addresses within district boundaries), it is now a school to which students must apply for acceptance. This school seemed exceptionally pristine and up-to-date, with recent and colorful student work and other hallway décor. The outside appearances differed substantially among the four. One campus has a well-manicured front lawn and a marquee with bright colors, surrounded by shrubs and flowers. At another, I was struck by the cratered and cracked condition of the parking lot and of the sidewalks and pavement in front of the school.

4.1.3 Re-purposed Facility

The two schools in this category were a former department store and a former adoption agency. Both schools were purchased by FWISD just after 2000 and were reconditioned to house students soon thereafter. They are each special-interest schools, and their students come from a variety of locations around the city. The layouts were somewhat confusing, with maze-like hallways in one, and the other separated by different buildings on the same campus (this latter point was referenced by one teacher as giving it a "college campus-feel"): one building is actually reputed to be haunted, and several teachers alluded to personal experiences or being aware of stories of hauntings; another building on the same campus is abandoned, and teachers said that "homeless people often break into it for a place to stay". All of the teachers from these two school sites had taught at other campuses, and shared unique insights and comparisons of their experiences. I found that both schools had a somewhat institutional, sterile feel, though they were both quite clean.

4.1.4 New Construction

The one school in this category is a large, somewhat sprawling campus, with high ceilings in the hallways and other common areas. The school was designed as a "green-building" and has features such as solar panels and other energy-saving design elements. As part of this design, the tall windows are a noticeable feature, and the school is consequently filled with a natural light that was markedly different from the other research sites. Driving up to the school, I noticed the comparatively larger driveways, and somewhat hilly aspects of the school grounds.

<u>4.2 Participants</u>

The teachers who participated in this study did so for a variety of reasons. Two teachers told me they wanted to help a fellow "Maverick". Many of those who responded included comments such as, "I'd be glad to help"; "count me in"; and so on. The responses and comments that teachers gave during our face-to-face discussions were thoughtful, and the photographs that teachers took showed a deliberate effort to capture what they considered to be the essence of the physical environments of their schools.

As described in Chapter 3, there was a range of ages from 27 to 60 years old, and of experience from one year to 27 years. Combined, there was more than two centuries worth of knowledge and

experience amongst the participants (and this statistic does not include the missing information from seven of the 21 participants). Of the stories and descriptions that teachers had to tell, some were funny and uplifting, while others were sad and frustrating. All of them were informative in one way or another. While I had been cautioned before beginning data collection that not every interview would be helpful to analyze, I was pleased to learn that every study participant had something to teach me.

4.3 General Findings

With the recurrence of the themes that are described in the sections that follow, and with the variety of schools and of teachers (i.e., age and years of experience), I felt confident that a point of data saturation was reached to support the findings described in this section.

The general findings from this research were that teachers were more critical of and more dissatisfied with the physical environments of schools. Teachers' perceptions were that unaesthetically appealing schools were connected to negative aspects of a school culture. Conversely, teachers perceived that improvements or the efforts to improve the physical environment would result in more positive school cultures and improved student experiences. Culturally, most teachers described experiences that were more neutral (i.e., "I guess it's ok"; "It's not horrible"; "Things could be worse"; etc.), than strictly negative or positive experiences. Teachers who talked about a positive school culture associated images and descriptions of an improvement in the aesthetics of the physical environment, but these teachers also spoke of previous negative school cultures and associated these with more negative and deteriorating aspects of the physical aspects. While research suggests that overall school conditions are a primary cause for levels of teachers' satisfaction and teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Harris, 2002), the current research did not observe any findings to suggest that teachers in this study were dissatisfied with the aesthetics of their schools to the extent that their "affective commitment" would lead them to leave their current schools (Hulpia & Devos, 2009). Only one teacher indicated that she is looking for another school, but she also described her perceptions of a negative and "toxic" school culture, which, as she pointed out, was "evident in the way things look at the school". This research did not discern the existence of a threshold for teachers' willingness to accept unpleasant aesthetic conditions. However, several teachers in the study described experiences at other school campuses

where they said they would "never return" or would "never want to teach in". This finding may be somewhat explained by a reluctance to search for other teaching positions. The current economic climate in Texas has led to a severe budget shortage, and many districts, including Fort Worth, in the past several years have instituted plans of financial exigency, which has also been the cause of reductions in the numbers of instructional personnel. Additionally, these reductions have led to increased class sizes for "elective" (i.e., non-core content) as well as reduced allotments of these particular teachers' subject areas. Teachers in the study mentioned this shortage of resources, though none mentioned specifically a current desire to find another school or to leave the profession. In this regard, the findings suggest a level of reluctant acceptance of conditions that teachers generally described in more critical terms.

Negative or critical aesthetic perceptions seemed to have been mitigated by different factors. At seven of the eleven participating schools, the school's principal has been in their current assignment for less than five years. Of these seven principals, all were also new to the position entirely. Teachers at these campuses tended to describe their experiences and perceptions of the physical environment as generally moving in a positive trend, though they were still primarily critical of previous and existing conditions. Some alluded to the visible efforts that they felt their principals were making to change the culture through attention to details such as the physical environment. The teacher at the one campus whose principal was new to the school, but had been a principal before, spoke positively of the efforts that she had perceived of her new principal to change the culture of the school through trying to make it a more "aesthetically appealing environment" (e.g., "she's put up bright colored banners to cover up the nasty brown stripes"; "she has really made an effort to make sure the place stays cleaner than it has in the past"). These findings coincided with previous aesthetics research that has shown that managerial attention to the physical environment can alter organizational members' perceptions of the overall culture (Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Samier, 2007; Siler, 2003). Additionally, prior research has shown the efficacy of a school's leader to alter the organizational culture (Owens & Valseky, 2007; Tsai, 2011).

Teachers at the three schools of choice that participated also described their experiences as generally more positive, though they were more critical when speaking about the physical environment,

and they associated these negative conditions with compromised learning. Of these schools of choice and the six teachers from these campuses, only one teacher was new, with less than five years experience. I will discuss in greater detail in sections that follow how the type of school was observed as a mediating factor in teachers' perceptions of their school's physical environment as it informed their opinions about their experiences with school cultures in general. Nonetheless, I mention this here as an important point when discussing the result of the analysis that answered the research questions. These particular teachers tended to perceive and describe public schools' aesthetic environments as somewhat unappealing, though the photographs they took tended to show more positive cultural images and the comments they made generally showed support for their schools as positive environments for them and for their students.

Of the 360 total pictures that were taken by participants, approximately 61% were positive images, while 39% represented negative aspects. Positive images were those pictures that teachers described as things they liked, or found beautiful or pleasing about the aesthetics of their schools. Negative images were described in terms such as "disgusting", and were pictures that teachers had taken to show areas they wished to see changed or to describe negative feelings that they connected with the school. Additionally, teachers connected a positive learning climate with a more aesthetically pleasing and comfortable physical environment. For example, the picture in Figure 4.1 showed the "beauty" that participant T3, a 56 year old teacher with six years of teaching experience, saw in her school's culture of cleanliness and order. Discussing this particular image, she said, "Everything is so clean and polished." We had been discussing her views of a high school that she found particularly "gross and dirty", and she connected this condition of the physical environment with a negative school culture. As she said, "I think it does impact the way you feel about your job, yourself, your attitude in working. If we have a better attitude, we are probably better teachers, and the students benefit as well." Her aesthetic views of the cleanliness of the school's physical environment were associated with a positive view of the organizational structure as effective and efficient (Martin, 2002; Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011).

Figure 4.1 Polished School Hallways

However, when accounting for the total number of positive and negative images, an important part of this analysis was recognizing that 136 of the positive images were taken by three teachers. Teacher T7, a 57 year old teacher with 30 years of experience, teaches at a school of choice. She took a total of 48 pictures, the most of any of the data sets from any one participating teacher. While she titled the photo montage she provided for this research "Attractive School Photos of ____", during the interview her responses about the cultures of other schools where she has taught, and indeed some of the experiences that she had had at her current school, were more critical of the lack of care and concern that she perceived in regards to the physical environment. For example, the image in Figure 4.2 showed some "pretty lantana that students have been involved in planting themselves". In describing this and
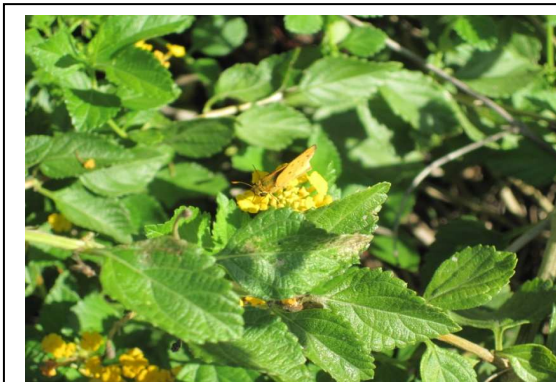
Figure 4.2 Lantana

Figure 4.3 Mowing "Around" Trees

other images that "showcase" some of the gardens and other projects that are student-oriented at her school, she told me several stories about the "careless destruction" of some of these areas. For example, someone connected with the district "just drove by the campus and saw what she thought were a bunch

of weeds, and the next thing we knew there was a lawn crew out there mowing down all these beautiful plants, all this hard work created by students." "The kids literally were sitting in class watching through the window as these guys came and mowed down the whole area," she went on. "They were actually crying." In this regard, she took the photo in Figure 4.3, the caption for which said, "Watching janitor avoiding newly planted trees (which many have been not so lucky)". She was showing through her photos the impact that the district-level bureaucratic power structure leverages on the culture of schools through its treatment of the physical environment (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011).

Teacher T18, a 44 year old teacher with 21 years of experience, has taught in the same building for 18 years, and took 43 pictures to show his "renewed school pride". The current participating school site where he teaches is another school of choice. In describing his experiences across "almost two decades", he said he has seen many changes in the "ways administrators and other staff treat the school" (i.e., its physical environment). In this sense, he felt that "treatment" of the physical environment, represented the way that different cultures are created as manifested in the aesthetics of the physical environment. Describing the changes to school culture that administrators have created through either attention to or a lack thereof in regards to the physical environment, he said, "So, one year you have someone who cares about really fixing things up, then the next principal who comes in could have cared less." He continued by saying, "It was like you just go from here to here, and everything comes to a screeching halt. When they leave him (i.e., the next school principal) here for a couple of years and things are just, you know, deteriorating."

Teacher T14, is a 51 year old with 21 years of experience. He came to teaching after having had another career. The 45 pictures he provided were a positive display of his perceptions of a clean, well-ordered and maintained environment in his school. His previous military experience, in his opinion, led him to acknowledge that this kind of environment is conducive to good student discipline and a culture of efficiency and effectiveness for teaching students.

Controlling for the 136 photos that these three teachers took, further analysis revealed that among the remaining 224 photos taken by the other 15 participants who provided photos, 37% were positive, while the remaining 63% depicted negative imagery critical of schools' conditions. These findings

coincide with previous research in urban school settings regarding teachers' perceptions of the conditions of schools (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Harris, 2002), though this research focused on attributes of the "conditions" of schools other than the aesthetic perceptions of teachers regarding the physical environment (Johnson, 1980).

<u>4.4 Findings of Important Factors for Teachers About the Physical Environment</u>

To answer the research questions that informed this study, I used an interpretive analysis of the data that was collected. Data sets were the 21 individual interviews with participants and 18 sets of photographs taken by participants. The first research question asked how teachers interpreted the physical environments of their schools. The second question asked what factors emerged as important to teachers about the physical environment.

The findings from the data analysis regarding the second research question suggested that the important factors regarding the aesthetics of the physical environment were: general school conditions; communal spaces for teachers; communal spaces for students; color and ambiance; nostalgia for older school buildings and their features (e.g., hardwood floors; architectural features; etc.); and safety and security. As mentioned in Chapter 3, when discussing the aesthetics of the physical environments of schools, teachers were asked to consider all aspects of their physical surroundings, which included the conditions and state of repair of the school, a school's design, or any other factor they discerned as important to them. Gagliardi (1996) and Strati (2000) have noted that when considering the physical environment of an organization, all aspects of that environment are relevant as "artefacts" in understanding how participants ascribe meaning and significance to their experiences with the organization's culture. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data in this study showed that teachers' perceptions of the importance of the elements mentioned above regarding the physical space of the school inform their beliefs and opinions about the way they experience the school and about their perceptions of students' experiences.

In this section, I answer the second research question in regards to the factors that were important to teachers about the physical environments of their schools using the findings from the analyses of the codes that were applied through both the first cycle data coding methods that were

described in Chapter 3. As a reminder, the first coding cycle involved reading through the data and applying a series of codes that were meant to capture a general sense of what was occurring throughout the data sets (i.e., Holistic, Initial, and In Vivo). Then, in the section that follows this, I discuss the larger themes that emerged from the second cycle coding to answer the first research question regarding teachers' interpretations of the physical environment. These themes were the relationship of teachers' perceptions of the aesthetics of the physical environment with: effectiveness and efficiency of schools; overall school conditions; and empowerment and voice. The Emotions codes that were applied during second cycle coding were used to discern these themes and patterns as characterized by the expression of emotions, both explicitly and implicitly, that teachers expressed.

4.4.1 General School Conditions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, teachers were asked to respond to questions and take photos of their schools' physical surroundings to provide their aesthetic interpretations of the physical environment. When asked to describe their schools, this included all aspects of that environment. The first of the descriptive questions that teachers were asked had to do with a description of the physical environment of their schools.

The first of these factors was general school conditions. These conditions were described by teachers in terms of their perceptions of how well the building was maintained, and teachers attached significance to their perceptions of a school's overall state of repair and the adequacy of its facilities. Of the twenty one participants, eleven described somewhat more critically the overall cleanliness of their schools. Of the remaining ten, seven mentioned the importance of cleanliness as making a school an aesthetically pleasing environment in which to work and its subsequent connection to an improved working experience. These seven teachers saw their schools as attractive and pleasing through the careful maintenance that the school and its staff took to create this kind of an environment. Figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 show some of the contrasts in how teachers perceived the general conditions of their schools. The stairwells in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 were taken by different teachers at two different schools. Teachers T1, a 32 year old teacher with 8 years experience, and T18, mentioned previously, showed the levels of cleanliness in which they found their schools through these photographs. T1's school is a lower

income school that has been historically hard to staff. Two other teachers, T10, who has nine years of experience and is 34 years old, and T17, a 34 year old teacher with five years experiences, teach at the same campus as T1. In all three teachers' perceptions of the conditions of the physical environment at their particular school, these conditions are somewhat related to a dominant negative school culture that has historically persisted. "Just because it's _____ School, people think, 'Oh well, it doesn't really matter how it looks'", as T10 described her perceptions of this cultural attitude as manifested through the way other staff treated the environment. These teachers mentioned the efforts of their current administration to combat these negative stereotypes, but also felt that as a part of this effort, more could be done to "show students that we care [by] keeping things nice and clean". Of the eleven participating school sites, seven schools have administrators who have been at their current school for less than five years. A more

Figure 4.4 Dirty Stairwell

Figure 4.5 Clean Stairwell

detailed discussion of the intervening factor of school administration will be addressed in sections that follow, but this is important to note in the ways that many teachers at these schools with newer administration perceived the efforts of their school administrators to address concerns regarding the physical environments of their schools. Several of these teachers made generally more positive comments in regards to the attention that they perceived has been recently given to the physical environment, but many of these teachers spoke of past experiences in a more critical manner when discussing how things "were before".

In contrast to the experiences of participants T1, T10, and T17 described above, the image in Figure 4.5 taken by teacher T18, showed his sense of "renewed pride" in his school. While his particular

61

school is also in a low-income area and the school has been historically hard to staff, the current incarnation of his school is a special program of choice school. Consequently, the school has received extra resources and funding, in addition to a new administration and newly hired staff. Studies have shown that lower income schools tend to lack adequate resources and have facilities that are described as being in "poor condition", in addition to having more inexperienced and ineffective teachers (Harris, 2002; *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-1994*, 1997). As Hoy and Hannum (1997) noted, however, the allocation of resources can profoundly affect a school's health and its culture, despite its location in a lower-income area. They wrote, "It seems easier to improve the health of middle schools than it is to change the socioeconomic character of a community" (Hoy & Hannum, 1997, pp. 307-308).

Figure 4.6 and 4.7 are representative images of the strong emotional responses that teachers used to describe the conditions of student bathrooms. Of the twenty one participants, 15 mentioned specifically the conditions of student restrooms as indicative of the way that the school is either treated by students, or the way that the school treats the students. Eight teachers (i.e., 38%) described their perceptions that an organized school culture is one in which students are taught to respect the school through their treatment of the physical environment. This, these teachers described, could be seen in the conditions of student restrooms. Another seven teachers (i.e., 33%) each described their perceptions that the school has a culture of caring for the students by maintaining clean restroom facilities. In their studies of Old People's Homes in the United Kingdom and Finland, Martin (2002) and Hujalla and Rissanen (2011) found that clean facilities were a positive manifestation for residents that signaled greater care by the organization's management and helped establish a more

Figure 4.6 Dirty Student Restrooms

Figure 4.7 Clean Student Restrooms

positive environment. In addition to the appearance of clean restrooms, teachers also associated negative feelings of the school's physical environment with the smells connected with student restrooms. These smells signified to teachers that the organization was not sufficiently caring for some of the more basic physiological needs of students (Martin, 2002; Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Maslow, 1946). Teachers T8, T9, and T21 each described a broken boys' urinal that caused a "nasty smell for a couple of weeks". When I asked what kind of impact they felt this had on the school, teacher T9 said, "Well, it's kind of hard to concentrate when you're gagging from this smell. Yeah, it's pretty bad when we're trying to teach." These three teachers teach at a school of choice, and each described more positive experiences with their overall school culture. "We're a culture of excellence," T21 said. "But, I think it would go a long way with kids in any school, if they have nice conditions where a problem like a clogged toilet gets taken care of right away." She added, "We have these great, really smart kids, but I've been at other schools where they didn't have the same kinds of students, just regular students, and you could tell that the way the school looked and smelled just what kind of environment you were in."

Several teachers also spoke about the conditions of faculty restrooms. Their perceptions of the cleanliness and adequacy of facilities for faculty symbolized how the school's culture imparted messages of concern for teachers' well being and showed how teachers create meaning through the artifacts of the physical environment (Strati, 2000). As teacher T1 stated, "I always look at the bathrooms; honestly, that's all you really have to do to see how well the school is maintained to see how much they care, is look at their bathrooms". Nine teachers visualized a level of care for them as professionals in providing functioning and clean faculty restrooms. The images in Figures 4.8 and 4.9 represent the contrast between the positive and negative imagery that teachers used to show either their satisfaction or "disgust" with the way the school's culture affords them some of these professional amenities (Pelzer, 2002).

Figure 4.8 Clean Faculty Restroom

Figure 4.9 Broken Faculty Toilet

Previous organizational aesthetics research has observed the phenomenon that organizational members' beliefs about the culture are formed in part by their perceptions of how others are helping to care and maintain the physical environment (Siler, 2008). In this regard, in reference to the general conditions of schools, several teachers in the study discussed their opinions that custodial staff were either working to help improve conditions or were apathetic about the ways in which schools were left either clean or dirty. Several teachers (i.e., five of 21, or 24%) spoke of the efforts of custodial staff to promote a clean and positive environment, while six others (i.e., 29%) each mentioned their frustrations that the custodial staff were contributing to a negative school culture through either their reluctance or their neglect of the physical environment, in turn "hindering or prescribing organizational action" (Gagliardi, in Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, eds., 1996, p.354). Teacher T10 expressed her perceptions of how this affects school culture by describing the attitude of a custodian at a newly constructed campus where she had worked previously. As she described it, "He said, 'I'd rather be at one of the old schools, because we don't have to work this hard to make it, keep it looking up to standard.'" Figures 4.10 and 4.11 show contrasting images of teachers' perceptions of the efforts or lack thereof of custodial staff.

Figure 4.10 Clean Hallways

Figure 4.11 Dirty Classrooms

Additionally, teachers also noticed the efforts of other teachers to create and maintain attractive and comfortable spaces for their students in their own classrooms. Eleven teachers (i.e., 52%) mentioned that they observed how other teachers in their schools either showed a consideration for the needs of students or a disregard through how they crafted a space for student learning. They felt that this either contributed or detracted from a school's culture in the way that students perceived the levels of concern shown to them by teachers. Teachers T11 and T13 both praised the efforts of a "neighbor teacher" on the same hallway, who had worked to create an environment that was inviting and welcoming for his students. "Oh yeah," teacher T11 said in describing his room, "he's got tons of photos from the 18 years he's been in this same building. There's always piano playing, and music, and the kids really love being in his class." In this sense, teachers also described their own efforts to create and maintain their own classrooms, but felt somewhat disheartened at their inability to impact the resistance they felt from other teachers who "don't care as much". Teacher T17 described this by saying, "Some teachers have made their rooms very inviting with changing the lighting and decorations, but those rooms are few and far between and the overall feeling of the school is dismal."

The general state of repair of other aspects of the school and its various classroom and other resources, were also described by teachers as a way to visualize the school's manifestation of its culture through artifacts and symbols (Gagliardi, 1996). Figures 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, and 4.15 show contrasting images taken by several teachers as they described either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their

Figure 4.12 Cracked Trash Can

Figure 4.13 Polished Hallways

Figure 4.14 Broken Wallplate

Figure 4.15 Inviting Foyer

organizational culture (Ostroff, 1992) as symbolized by their views of the physical environment. Teachers T4, a 59 year old teacher with 17 years of experience, and T3, a 56 year old teacher with 6 years of experience, took the photos in Figures 4.12 and 4.13 respectively. Both teachers had worked in corporate environments before coming to teaching, and both had somewhat critical views of the way that the organizational structure treated the physical environment and its members as opposed to their prior experiences. Teacher T4 described the image of the broken, cracked trashcan, saying that she "just turns it to face the wall, so [they] don't all have to look at it." Teacher T3 said that she held a negative view of the school in prior years, because "things were just dirtier, and it seemed more chaotic". "Now,", she went

on, "there is so much more order, and so many more people are working to keep things cleaner and nicer." This notion of the association of the cleanliness of the physical environment with a perception of the overall orderliness of the school was critical in the perceptions of several teachers (Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Plank et al, 2009). As teacher T10 expressed, "If you have broken windows around, you have to fix it, make it look nice, even if someone trashes it, in order to change that way of thinking." Both she and teacher T17 took pictures (Figures 4.16 & 4.17) of the same pile of discarded pallets that have been outside for "some time" to display their perceptions that the culture of the school still contributes to this mindset of "broken windows". As T17 explained, "I don't know whose responsibility it is, but that has to send the kids and the neighborhood some kind of bad message about our school." When I asked what this meant to her, she responded, "If I was a kid and I saw that, I would be like, 'Well, you know, we're in the hood, oh well, they don't care'. Especially I say that because kids aren't blind. They see their campus, they see other campuses."

Figure 4.16 Discarded Pallets

Figure 4.17 Discarded Pallets N° 2

4.4.2 Communal Spaces for Teachers

Prior organizational aesthetics research has observed the existence of communal spaces and their decorations, conditions, etc., as important in the creation of the psychological connection that organizational members make between their lived and perceived space (Hujala & Rissanen, 2011; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). As Hujala & Rissanen (2011) wrote, "Inadequate staff space arrangements construct and maintain the dichotomy between 'intellectual' work…and corporeal work" (p.6). While schools occupy a unique form of organizational space, teachers are still degreed professionals, and

teachers in this study mentioned having adequate and pleasant communal spaces as an important factor in their perceptions and interpretations of the physical environment. Thirteen teachers (i.e., 62%) either took pictures of or discussed the teachers' lounge as an important space. The images in Figures 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, and 4.21 were pictures taken by teachers of their various teachers' lounges. The descriptions that teachers gave of their schools' lounges ranged from "nice, comfortable places to relax and visit" to "ugly and uncomfortable". While a number of teachers in the study took pictures of the teachers' lounge as a part of their visual description of their schools, the emotional responses evoked by these places were not particularly strong or visceral in any distinguishable sense. Psychologically, teachers perhaps perceived these as potentially comfortable spaces, but more often than not, teachers in the study described their lounges as places they tended to "ignore" or "avoid". They did so either because of negative associations with "too much gossip" or as "too depressing because they're kind of bland" or "just gross" (i.e. the "leftover food and mold in the refrigerator" in Figure 4.21). Several teachers also mentioned that their school's lounge had been a project that volunteers at the school had decided to undertake. In some cases this was a redecorating effort by the PTA, and in others the work was done by Adopt-a-School partners (i.e., businesses or organizations that partner with schools as volunteers to offer support in the way of tutoring, supplies, etc.). These volunteers come to the schools and ask what they can do to help. As participant T4 observed, "One of the more obvious and effective things to do is to spruce up the teachers' lounge, because it can make such a huge difference." As a part of the "pathos" of the way that it "feels to be in an organization" (Gagliardi, 1996), these efforts to make visible improvements to the physical environment are a means to enhancing positive organizational cultural experiences. In this same sense, Sandelands and Buckner (1989) discussed the aesthetics of the physical environment as an important component of the structuring of a "psychology of work feelings". Teachers' descriptions of the somewhat "bland and boring" nature of some of their lounges, when considering that a majority of them chose this as a topic of

Figure 4.18 Teachers Lounge

Figure 4.19 "Bland" Teachers Lounge

Figure 4.20 "Spruced Up" Teachers Lounge

Figure 4.21 "Disgusting" Teachers Lounge

relevance in either their photos or their discussions, led me to interpret their "muted" desire for a collegial and communal space (Taylor, 2002). Teachers' perceptions of a more collegial environment has been observed as an important factor in the overall organizational health and efficacy of schools (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004). In some cases (Figure 4.22), a lounge served as a teacher workroom as well. Teacher T3 took this particular image and described the room as "rather frustrating" when she compared it to her experiences in a corporate culture. Teacher T19 described how they had been "asked to dream"

Figure 4.22 Teachers Lounge & Workroom

about which design elements that teachers wanted when the district was in the process of redesigning the re-purposed facility where their school was being relocated. "They asked us to dream," she said, "and we told them what we wanted, like meeting space and storage space." "What we got," she added, "was obviously the cheapest or most convenient. They designed this school with one student bathroom, and not a single faculty restroom. And, pretty much no teachers' lounge."

Teacher T18 took the image in Figure 4.23 to describe the "professionalism" and more "business-like" image that his school was trying to project through the attention to the décor of spaces such as the conference room shown here. As mentioned, his particular school had undergone a significant transformation by becoming a new school of choice (i.e., the previous school was dissolved, and its neighborhood students now attend another close-by middle school campus), and one that was not wholly accepted by the community. He described the efforts of the school to show the neighborhood, which had seen some "renewed interest and community activism" in its former neighborhood school, that the new school of choice was not trying to supplant the work that had been done by the former school. "There was a lot of opposition to this place becoming ____ School," he said. "They just thought that we were taking the school away from the community."

Figure 4.23 Conference Room

By attending to details such as the conference room, the updated classrooms, and so forth, he felt that his school was trying to address any negative connotations that a school of choice might have for the larger community; for, as he expressed it, "We want to make sure they know that we are not just ignoring the neighborhood kids in favor of hand-picked ones. We really are being inclusive, and a lot of those

70

same kids have applied and are actually coming to school here now." By displaying this image of professionalism and high standards in educating all students, the physical environment became a vehicle for addressing public perceptions about the school's culture.

4.4.3 Communal Spaces for Students

The factor of a need for aesthetically pleasing communal spaces for students was also important to teachers in a discussion of the impact of the physical environment on a school's culture. Schools must orchestrate the balance between the socioemotional needs of students with the more practical "end results" of the requirements of instructional mandates (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004; Earthman, 2002). As Sandelands and Buckner (1989) wrote, "the jungle law is efficiency…[but] history suggests a certain unity between aesthetic and practical concerns" (p.116). Of the 21 participants in this study, 18 (i.e., 86%) mentioned specifically the importance of designing, decorating, or creating a space specifically for students. Figures 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, and 4.27 are pictures of areas that teachers described as communal spots for students. Teacher T9 discussed the photos in Figures 4.24 and 4.25 as "great spaces for students to get together and just be themselves for a while, even though they're still here at school." "They get these really pretty garden areas, places that they get to help decorate themselves. It just makes the school feel more like a family than just an institution." Teacher T14 described the image in Figure 4.26 as a place for students to gather for "some of the younger kids, because the '8th Grade Courtyard' is just for the 8th graders." He also took the photo in Figure 4.27 of the cafeteria. When I asked him about this particular photo, he referred to this place as "the kids' downtown". "I notice that the cafeteria is just one of those places that they can take care of their business, you know, visit, talk about their day, just their 'offices'; 'cause we've got our own downtown, so they should have theirs, too." Teacher T18 described the renovated library in

71

Figure 4.24 Outdoor Pavilion

Figure 4.25 Student Created Garden

Figure 4.26 Outside Stairwell

Figure 4.27 School Cafeteria

his school (Figure 4.28), saying that "it's great to have an updated library; I think it makes such a huge difference for our kids to know they've got this updated library, and it really looks like a library should."

Figure 4.28 Updated Library

Teachers also felt that students should be taught a sense of "pride and ownership" in these spaces through helping both creating and caring for them. Teacher T7 described the efforts of her school to instill in students a sense of pride in the school's culture and of ownership of the "natural beauty that should be protected". Figures 4.29 and 4.30 were part of her montage in which she showed students' efforts to build a greenhouse (Figure 4.29) and then tend a small garden patch (Figure 4.30).

Figure 4.29 Creating Outdoor Spaces

Figure 4.30 Learning to Plant a Garden

Given the disparity that exists between wealthier schools and lower income schools in the general conditions of the school building, adequate resources, and so forth (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Harris, 2002), this issue seemed for teachers to characterize one of the more prominent ways that a school can convey a particular cultural message. This seemed to be even somewhat more prevalent for teachers given the current culture that is created in schools through high-stakes testing and the instructional "triage" that is performed (Booher-Jennings, 2005), with ever-increasing resources being devoted to ensure a level of student performance on state mandated exams. In this kind of culture of anxiety and fear, it is easy to forget the more common and basic human needs to achieve these goals of self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Teachers in the study also recognized the "aesthetic transaction" (Rosenblat, 1986) that occurs between how students perceive the physical environment and the cultural cues they take from the conditions and appearance of their surroundings (Earthman, 2002). Teacher T16 took the photo in Figure 4.31 showing an area that "used to be really drab". The school, through the encouragement of several teachers and with the support of the school's administration, added the picnic tables to this particular area

and have asked students to help maintain the area. "There used to be a lot of graffiti," she said, "but now that little area is a nice place for the kids to go. They take more care of it, because some teachers showed that they cared; I guess the kids care more because of that." A teacher at the same school took the image in Figure 4.32, displaying an area that is a "pretty barren courtyard, but a place that we have talked about dressing up to make a spot where kids can go and have class or just hang out." Describing the efforts of teachers to involve students in decorating the space in the courtyard, teacher T3 said that it

Figure 4.31 "Dressed Up" Student Space

Figure 4.32 "Barren" Courtyard

was important to create pleasing spaces where students can find comfort. "Do kids really think about that stuff?", she mused. "I don't think on a cognitive level, no. It's probably subliminal, but I think it impacts their attitude overall about school. Why would you want to go to some place where you're uncomfortable all day?" Other teachers, too, described a variety of areas at their schools where they felt "some concern could be shown for the students" by creating spaces for their specific use. Teachers T1 and T17 took the pictures in Figures 4.33 and 4.34, showing spaces at their school where they felt a "nice courtyard area" could be created for students. Teacher T8 took the photo in Figure 4.35, comparing the impact that a

Figure 4.33 Potential Courtyard

Figure 4.34 Potential Courtyard With Tagging

space that had the "potential to really be made to look nice" could have with the "cold" and austere feeling that is projected by the school's outside appearance. Describing his opinions about the connection between the physical and the psychological, T8 said, "I think when you create that kind of atmosphere, I think the physical atmosphere can affect a student's performance. If they feel safe, they feel comfortable, and it's inviting and warm, I think that does miracles for kids." When I asked him what the impact could be for teachers, he responded by saying, "It makes them happier. Makes them better teachers. They want to come to work, and it's not all so sterile."

Figure 4.35 "Cold" Courtyard

In this same regard, teachers T18 and T10 took the pictures of the auditoriums of their respective schools (Figures 4.36 & 4.37). T18 said that resources were allocated to ensure that the cultural image

that the school displayed were reflected in all aspects of its physical environment. "I've seen them try to do things really cheap," he said, "but when this became this new school, you can tell they really cared how students and parents would see us." Conversely, in describing her school's auditorium, teacher T10 described the "broken and missing chairs" as symbolic to the students that the school "just doesn't give a crap".

Figure 4.36 Renovated Auditorium

Figure 4.37 Cracked & Missing Auditorium Seats
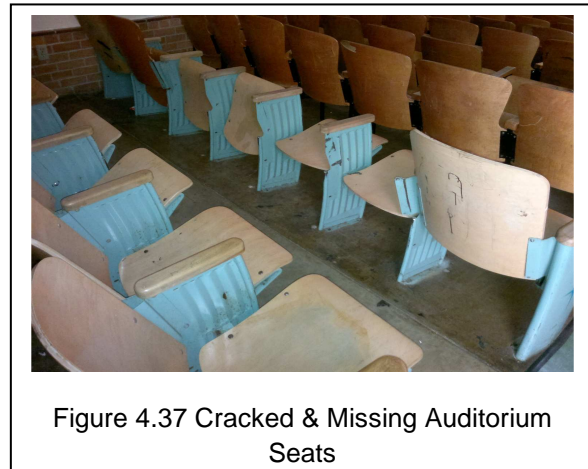
In the sense that teachers felt that an important part of a school's culture is displayed through communal spaces and a sense of community through the physical environment, several teachers also alluded to their perceptions of schools as being restrictive and "uninviting" in their general appearances. A majority of the participants (14 of 21, or 67%) made comments about the appearance that a school projects to students and how they perceived that these images affected students emotionally and psychologically (Earthman, 2002; Stuebing et al, 1994; Woolner et al, 2007). Describing the outside appearances and some of the interior layouts of schools, teachers used phrases such as "prisons", "jails", and "can factories". Teacher T20 described a school she had visited in another district, and the "obvious attempts they made to dress up the inside to combat the feeling of its being and looking like a can factory". She said, "It was in an old downtown building that they had dressed up like an office building. It had live plants, and pictures on the walls, and the restrooms looked more like what you'd see in a nice office building. Not like an old can factory, which is what most schools tend to look like." She went on to explain that, "Because of all the care they had put into that building, these kids respected that building so

much, that they appreciated the aesthetics so much, that no one ever vandalized anything. They never had a problem." Teachers T1, T10, and T17 each spoke of a high school they had visited for a professional development training, saying that it "actually looks like a jail". "Just add some razor wire to the top of the enormous chain link fence that already surrounds the entire place," one of them laughed, "and you've got an actual prison." Teacher T21 compared another high school at which she had taught to a jail, saying that "they've even got the truancy court right there on campus." Teacher T8 described one vista of his school as "Shawshank" because of its "turrets" (Figure 4.38). "Like they're going to rain arrows down on your head," he said. "If I were a kid, I'd be pretty scared by the looks of that, too."

Figure 4.38 "Imposing Turrets"
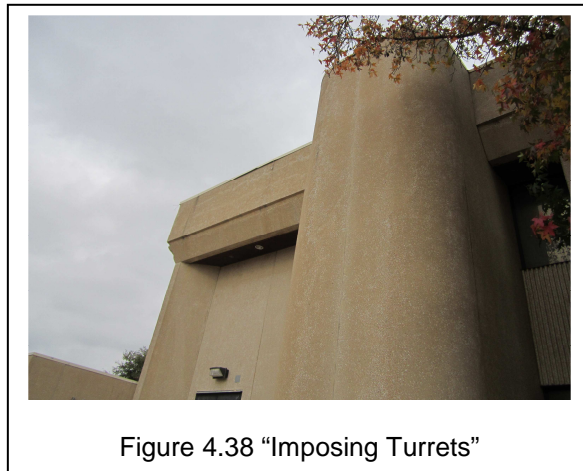
4.4.4 Colors and Ambiance

Another factor that emerged as important to teachers about the physical environment was the colors and ambiance that is created through décor, paint colors, and so forth. Teachers described the "power that some really nice, soothing colors" can have on improving a school's aesthetic appearance. Consequently, as it was described by participants, the environment for students is a "better place for learning and working". Previous studies have shown that color and other "design elements" are crucial in a consideration of effective learning environments (Higgins et al, 2005; Woolner et al, 2007). Except for three teachers, every participant in the study (i.e., 86%) mentioned specifically how they had either noted an improved environment through the use of color, or that they felt that this could potentially have a positive impact on student learning and overall school culture. Teachers T1 and T6 alluded to research they were familiar with that supported the notion that "certain colors were counter-productive to creating

an environment that is conducive to student learning". Teacher T16 described the portable classrooms at her school (one of which is her classroom) as "plain, drab, and boring" (Figures 4.39), "especially comparing it to the view of the brand new elementary school they built right next door" (Figure 4.40). When I asked her what impact the use of different colors could have, she replied, "Well, I think it kind of makes you feel good." Describing her visits to a doctor's office where she takes her mother for appointments, she said, "They have such pretty colors in there, and it's not as scary for you to know you're in a doctor's office. I think it really does something to your psyche when how you look at the office."

Figure 4.39 "Boring" Portable Colors

Figure 4.40 New Neighboring Elementary School

Teachers T5 and T10 commented about newly constructed schools and the "sterility" of the white walls (Figure 4.41), as well as the "institutional feel" that older schools maintain without adding "some kind of color in the hallways (Figure 4.42). T13 spoke about her experience visiting a new high school campus in another district. "They built a new school and the walls were colors!", she exclaimed. "Yes! They were soothing colors, blues and greens. And at least it was something other than white walls, beige walls."

Figure 4.41 "Institutional" White

Figure 4.42 "Sterile" Hallways

T21 ardently expressed her desire to change the "horrible way the school looks on the outside". Describing her school and its absence of "color and life", she said, "If I could envision cold, that's it. Paint it red, paint it blue. Just paint it something school related!" Teacher T20 described an experience that "really inspired" her to think that changes in color and décor could "really have an impact on students". Teacher T7's montage of "Attractive School Photos of ____" included several images of the "use of color to brighten up the former department store look" (Figures 4.43 & 4.44). She said several of these efforts were completed by students who were guided by teachers, and added, "They are such a great reminder of how color impacts students' emotional well being and can add so much to how a school feels for everyone. If we didn't, it would probably still just feel like a department store. This shows kids we care."
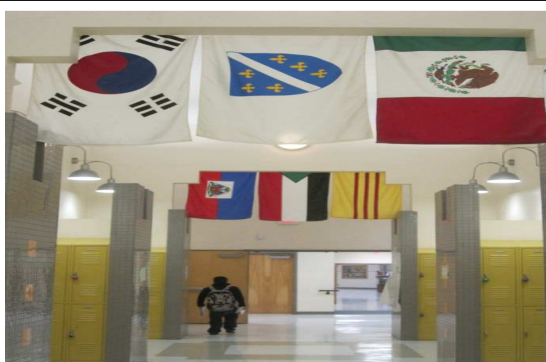
Figure 4.43 Brightly Painted Hallways

Figure 4.44 Former Department Store "Transformed" With Color

Other teachers described the efforts of school administration and other staff to "lighten and brighten" the hallways and other areas through the use of banners, painted slogans, etc. Referring to these as "inspiring" and "nice touches", teachers noted that they perceived these as communal efforts to address some of the "plain" or "damaged walls". Teacher T6 described the photo in Figure 4.45 as the "effort of one of their teachers". She said, "He went out and bought the supplies and did this himself to make the hallways a little more attractive", comparing it to the image from Figure 4.42 she had taken of another "typical hallway" in their school. Figures 4.46, 4.47, and 4.48 show some of these banners and painted murals.

Figure 4.45 Teacher's Effort to "Brighten" the Hallway

Figure 4.46 "Inspiring & Attractive" Mural

Figure 4.47 Student Created Mural

Figure 4.48 "Inspiring" Mural

Teachers described these also as "subliminal" or "overt" ways that schools attempt to improve school culture through manipulation of the physical environment. Teacher T20 was pleased with the "obvious efforts the principal is trying to make to cover up some of the previous, rather ugly brown stripes" (Figure

4.49). "What does this do?", she asked. "It sends a powerful signal to the students and to the staff that everything is important. Not just test scores." "It makes it feel so much nicer," she added.
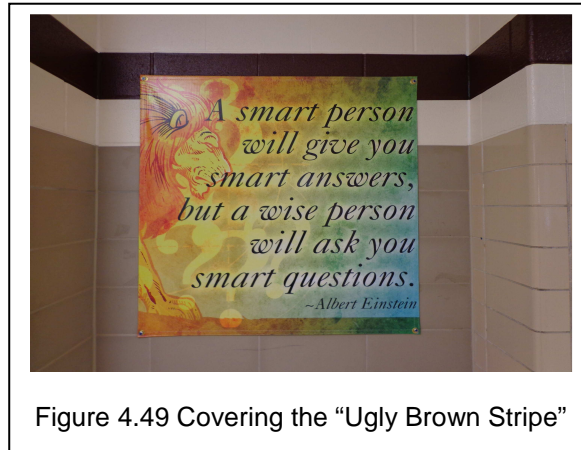
Figure 4.49 Covering the "Ugly Brown Stripe"

Teachers also displayed pride in their work as they discussed their efforts to create comfortable and "welcoming" spaces through color and décor. As a means of self-expression through an aesthetic connection with their work (Follett, 1926; Maslowe, 1943), teachers used these opportunities to invest a set of aesthetic qualities based on their own sensibilities, as well as a consideration of the needs of their students. Teacher T1 said she had "hand-picked" a group of the "biggest thugs in the school" for a reading group. Saying that she created an environment (Figure 4.50) she "felt would be quiet, peaceful, and nice" for her group, she added that their reading scores "came up dramatically". She said, "Here were this rough bunch of kids who everyone said were such problems," and then continued, "but there they were reading quietly every day. It's amazing what a little bit of effort can do. It goes a long way." Teacher T21 talked about her creation of a classroom "reading garden" and how this environment helped one of her students "build up her self-esteem because she felt safe to read there".

Figure 4.50 "Peaceful" Classroom

Teacher T14 spoke of the "order and precision" of a "nice, clean classroom" and how this order gives students "not just discipline, but a sense of security as well" (Figure 4.51).

Figure 4.51 "Orderly" Classroom

Teachers T10, T15, T17, and T18 took pictures of their own classrooms as well as those of other teachers who "were trying to make a difference in the school's culture by decorating their classrooms to give students a homier and more pleasant atmosphere" (Figures 4.52, 4.53, 4.54, & 4.55), an aesthetic effect that has been observed as a positive emotional influence on organizational cultures (Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Siler, 2003; Warren, 2008). Participant T17 summarized this eloquently, as

Figure 4.52 Other Teachers' Efforts
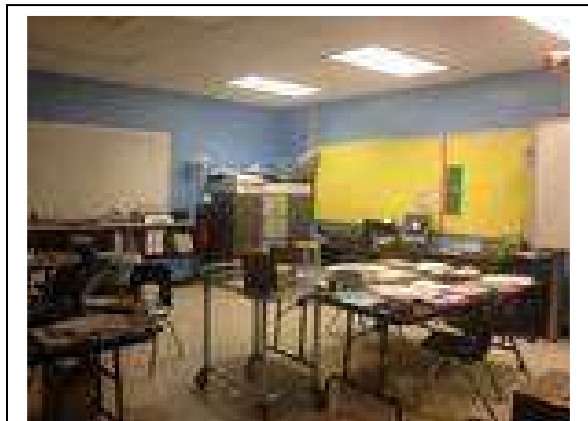
Figure 4.53 "Colorful" Classroom

she stated, "I think of the weather when I think about decorating a room. It (i.e., the weather) affects your mood so much, but there's nothing we can do about it." She added, "But, we can change the way our classroom environment looks, so why wouldn't we want to when it has such a big impact on the way it makes our students feel and learn, not to mention how it makes you feel, too."

Figure 4.54 "Bright" Classroom

Figure 4.55 "Homey" Classroom

4.4.5 Nostalgia for Older School Buildings and Their Features

A factor that several teachers mentioned in connection with how aesthetics can inform school culture was a nostalgia for "older" schools and their characteristics and features. While I did not define "old" for the purposes of this analysis, this was an important topic as teachers' descriptions and discussions made use of the word themselves. For example, participant T7 described her "ideal school"

as "one of those older schools, maybe circa 1800, with all those wonderful old features like fireplaces." She described an elementary school in the district that "actually still has those really cool little fireplaces in some of the classrooms", adding that "they do such a great job of taking care of those features, of showing some respect for the past." The connection that existed for teachers between a respect for the historic or older features of their schools and of other schools in the district with which they were familiar existed as a psychological "comfort" for them. Teacher T20 described the impact that she perceives that older structures have for her and for students. Showing me the picture of the "beautiful old wrought iron scroll in the cafeteria" (Figure 4.56), and calling it "a tiny touch that means so much", she said, "There's a comfort I feel from the wonderful old hardwoods and the 'architexture'…this has a really positive effect on me, so I'm sure it has a positive effect on the children." She further clarified this connection by saying, "There's a solid sense of continuity that goes with a well kept older structure…it's something that the children may not sense on a conscious level, but they sense it on an unconscious level…and it touches their lives in ways we may never know about."

Figure 4.56 "Tiny Touch" of Scrolling Lattice

Gagliardi (1996) and Strati (2000) wrote of the cultural significance that older buildings and their features take when perceived for their "beauty" by organizational members. Given that the conditions of many schools in the United States have been described as being "in deplorable condition" (Earthman, 2002), this particular finding from the research shows the importance to teachers in not merely maintaining a clean and pleasant physical environment, but also one that "makes the old shine like new",

as one participant described. This finding takes on even more relevance given that several teachers spoke in terms of comparisons to other older schools that had "done such a nice job of preserving the beauty". In this sense, teachers were comparing their current schools, judging them somewhat based on how other "older" schools are "treated with such care" and in effect describing their own frustrations that their schools have not done the same to simply maintain a basic level of clean and pleasant conditions.

In addition to T17 and T20, thirteen other participants (i.e., a total of 15 teachers, or 62%) mentioned these older schools and their features. Several of these teachers also took photos to capture the "beauty" that they found manifested in schools. Figures 4.57 and 4.58 were taken by participant T14 to show the "beautiful old architecture" of his school (which is a Historic Landmark). He said, "Now, these archways, when we did a 9/11 service, and the color guard walked out with their uniforms on, and the flags, and this set the backdrop. It has a nice cathedral feel." Teachers T12 and T16 also took pictures of the "wonderful mosaic tiles that really add so much to the outer beauty of this school" (Figures 4.59 & 4.60). Teacher T1 took a picture of the outside of her building (Figure 4.61) , which she described as having a "cool vintage look", adding in the photo's caption that she included that "they repainted it two years ago from a burnt orange to a cream…MUCH BETTER!"

Figure 4.57 "Cathedral" Feel

Figure 4.58 "Beautiful" Architecture
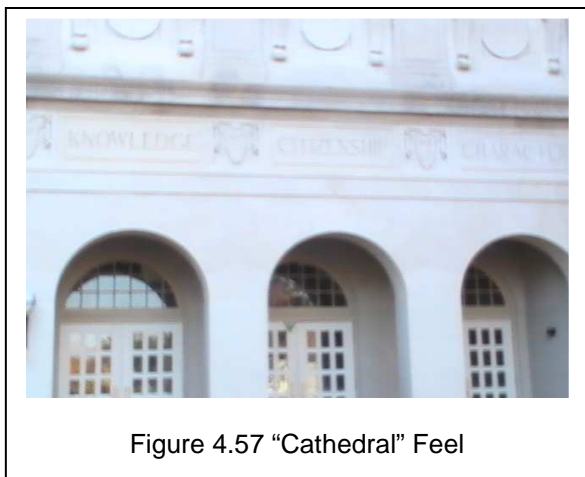
Figure 4.59 "Beautiful" Façade
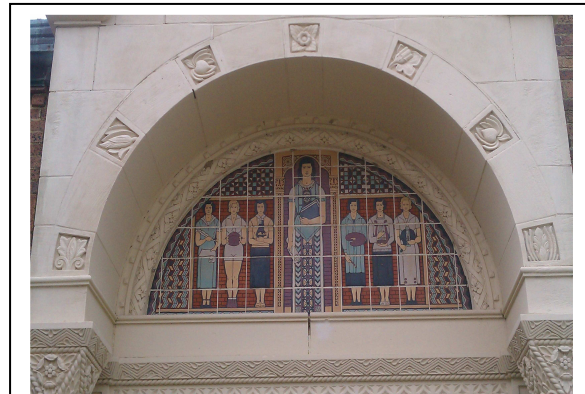
Figure 4.60 "Wonderful Old Mosaic Tile"

Figure 4.61 "Cool Vintage Look"

Teachers also praised the "features" that are found in older buildings. The classroom fireplaces mentioned by teacher T7 were also a "great, old feature" that T19 described. "They've done an excellent job of taking care of that building," she explained. "It's so well-maintained, it's just beautiful!" Comparing it to her current school, she added, "This place? Well, they built it from scratch basically, and they haven't taken care of it the same way." Teacher T20 described her perceptions by saying, "This is an old building, and old buildings by their very nature tend to have character, but this one seems to have slipped in between the time when buildings really had character and when the more modern aesthetic took place". Sadly, she added that her school was "kind of locked in limbo". Teacher T8 described "how cool" the "old stuff like the crown molding" is in other schools that he has seen. Referring to the tendency of many schools to be "bland" and "sterile", he also laughed as he told me, "I know it sounds kind of weird, but I

even love the look of those old urinals that go all the way to the floor." Describing the "multi-kind of puke color" of the carpet that was laid over the "beautiful, old hardwood floors", participant T12 said that she was "afraid of some of the ideas about modernizing schools". Teacher T16, took a picture of the same library, which has now had its carpet removed and "old hardwood floors refurbished" (Figure 4.62). "And it's great," she said. "It just makes you feel warm and comfortable. The carpet before was gross and drab. It really changes the whole atmosphere of the library, and it adds beauty and pride to our school."

Figure 4.62 "Beautiful Old Hardwoods"

4.4.6 Safety and Health

The factor of safety and health was a topic that many teachers discussed in connection with not only the physical conditions of their schools, but also in some of the design features they saw as important for "keeping everyone safe". This topic also had to do with safety in terms of protection for the health of students and staff. Organizational members' perceptions of an environment that is conducive to health and well-being have been observed in previous aesthetics research (Dean, Ottensmeyer, & Ramirez, 1997; Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Warren, 2008; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). In research regarding the conditions of schools, a common topic that is examined and discussed is safety and health (Earthman, 2002; Higgins et al, 2005; Woolner et al, 2007), and this figures in the discussion of overall teacher satisfaction with their schools' environments (Harris, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003).

In connection with this topic and analysis, it was important to recall the events of the massacre that occurred on Friday, December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, in which 26 children and six adults were shot and killed. These events weighed on the minds of several teachers as they spoke of the need to be more vigilant in ensuring that schools are a safe place. I interviewed eight teachers after this date, though most teachers with whom I had spoken previously had mentioned the safety of the school's environment.

Teachers in this study took cues from different aspects of the physical environment and interpreted these to signal varying degrees of safety and health. In the previous sections on color and ambiance, several teachers mentioned their perceptions that a "warm, cozy classroom also means a safer environment for students". The layout of one school was noted as a factor that could affect safety either negatively or positively. "I just don't understand, it doesn't make sense why they would have taken down those doors", Teacher 7 told me in reference to areas which had become more "vulnerable" in her opinions. The same layout was mentioned by participant T19. "It's like, they asked us what we thought would be a good way to design this place, to lay it out, and a number one priority was that kids have to be kept safe," she explained. "In the end, they ignored our suggestions, and now this place has these sort of maze-like hallways (Figure 4.63) that aren't just bland...it's dangerous, because anyone can come strolling through here and we'd never know it." These teachers also noted that the "maze-like" design physically separates them, and they perceived this as the cause of the resulting "loss of a sense of a close-knit community feel".

Figure 4.63 Maze-like Hallways

As mentioned, incidents in which "vagrants break into the abandoned building" on one school's campus was "frightening" for teachers (Figure 4.64). Participants T8, T9, and T21 each regarded the ease of access to many points on their campus as disconcerting not only to students, but to them as well, saying that it "freaked them out". Teacher T21 said that the school's physical appearance resembled a medical building and made the school more susceptible because "people don't know it's a school". "The kids are scared to death of the hobos that come and knock on the doors trying to get in", she explained. "I think that part of the security of the school needs to change to make this more like a school, you know, with smaller windows where you can't see in" (Figure 4.65).

Figure 4.65 Susceptible Windows

Participant T14 saw that the order and precision that a campus manifests through its physical environment is "a message to the kids and the community that [they] are taking care to serve and to protect" (Figure 4.66). Teachers also referred to "updated security" in their middle schools (Figure 4.67). Teacher T1, T10, and T17 each referred to these updates as "helpful to change the image (i.e., reputation) that our school has always had." "Hopefully," as T1 expressed it, "some of these kinds of updates will make the students feel safer and will send a message to the community that we're trying to make this a safer environment."
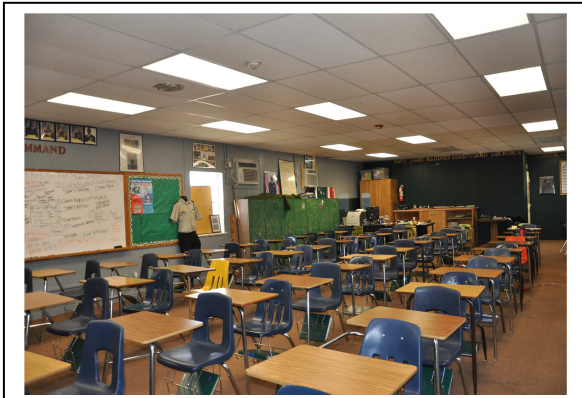
Figure 4.66 "Safe & Orderly" Classroom

Figure 4.67 Updated Security

Safety for students and adults did not just mean protection against violence. Teachers expressed their perceptions of the health of the physical environments of their schools. The persistence of some of these "offensive" issues that are "left that way for a while" contribute to the creation of a negative culture of uncaring, unfeeling, and disrespect (Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). Teacher T18 told me that a hole in the roof of the school's gym had led to a bat infestation in the ceiling. When the hole was ultimately repaired, the remaining bats began to die and their "reeking carcasses were left in there until they finally came to clean it up". As mentioned in previous sections, teachers T8 and T21 both alluded to the same problem with one of the urinals in the boys' restroom at their school that led to an "odor problem that started to actually make teachers and kids gag in their rooms." Teachers T13 and T19 both mentioned the danger of exposed heating units (Figure 4.68), and T2 included a picture of an exposed electrical outlet to show her concern for students' safety (Figure 4.69). Several teachers included pictures of or discussed "stained" or missing ceiling tiles (Figures 4.70 & 71). As participant T4 described, "Not only is it an eyesore, but you can darn well bet that it means that there's some water damage". In this regard, teachers interpreted an aesthetic view of being "disgusted" (Pelzer, 2002) with the "grotesque" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005) as a cue for the need for a change in the organization's cultural acceptance of sub-standard physiological aspects of the school environment (Maslow, 1943). As Taylor & Hansen (2005) suggested, "The idea of having more beauty in organizations is appealing, but the aesthetic category of the grotesque may be the key to…organizational transformation" (p.1216). As

90

mentioned, these elements were not only aesthetically unappealing and offensive to teachers' sensibilities, they represented cultural apathy for students' and teachers' health (Martin, 2002; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011), and these kinds of "conditions" contribute to the perception of a deteriorating environment that affects teachers' organizational commitment, satisfaction, and, consequently, performance (Hulpia & Devos, 2009; Ostroff, 2002).

Figure 4.69 Exposed Electrical Outlet

Figure 4.70 Stained Ceiling Tiles

Figure 4.71 Missing Ceiling Tiles
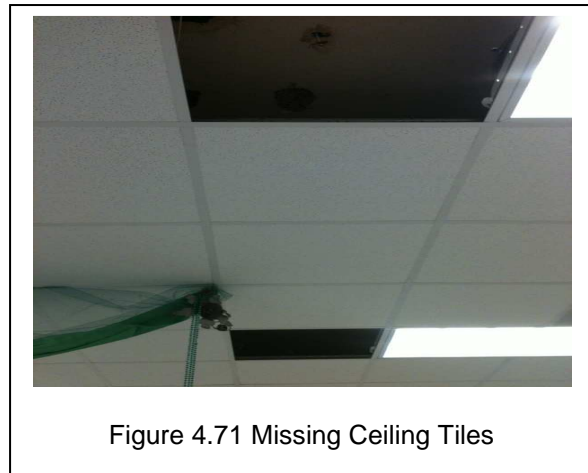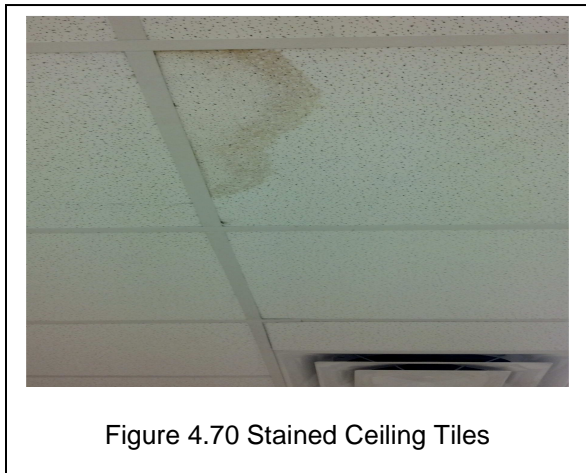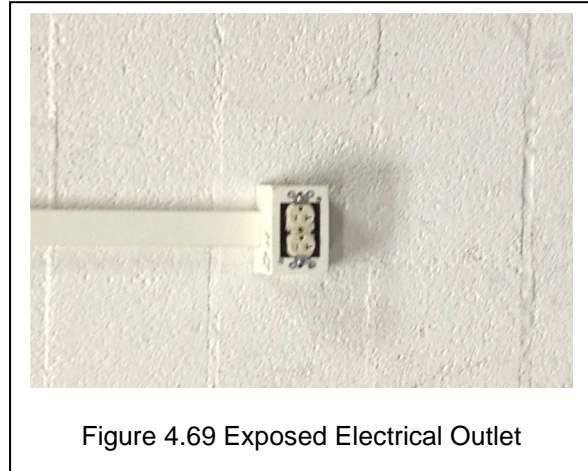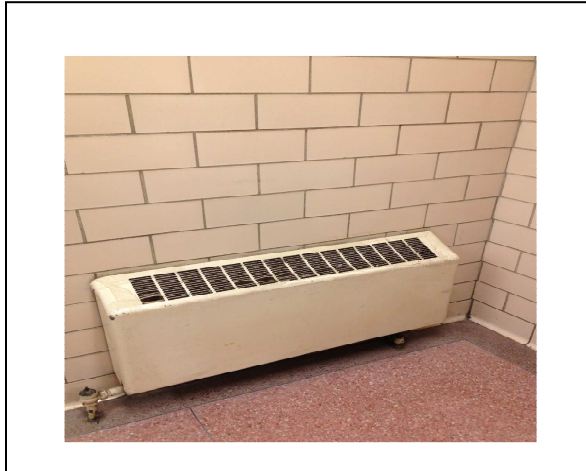
One of the more telling, albeit funnier, stories regarding health concerns for students was that of a "small forest of mushrooms and spores" that had developed in one teacher's classroom over the summer as the result of a leak in the fire sprinkler system. According to the teacher, T19, from the moment they had moved into the new facility, the system "kept spitting" on her. After many phone calls to try to have the problem fixed, she said she came in after one summer vacation to find "ropey fungus and toadstools

on the carpet". Telling me that she had been advised not to touch any of them, she told me with an amused look, "I wasn't planning on it! They looked like they were happy." Eventually, the classroom wall was taken down and the source of the leak was located. "It was full of ropey black stuff", she told me. "I can't tell you how gross it was! I got a test kit to see what kind of mold it was, because we do, you know, have to protect the kids a little bit."

Safety and security for teachers was an important factor in regards to student discipline and the perception of social order or disorder. Sixteen of the 21 participants (i.e., 76%) provided pictures and discussed the physical environment and its conditions as a manifestation of how orderly a school's culture is. Teacher T17, describing the graffiti in student restrooms, said, "It's a constant battle. But if we give up, they'll think we don't care, or that they won."

Figure 4.72 "Tagged" Lockers

Figure 4.73 "Tagged" Girls' Bathroom

Figure 4.74 "Tagged" Bathroom Ceiling

Figure 4.75 "Tagged" Boys' Bathroom

The other photos show images of "tagging" by students on lockers (Figure 4.72) and in bathrooms (Figures 4.73 & 4.75). Teacher T13 mentioned that students "had even managed to tag the ceiling in the bathroom (Figure 4.74)." "I'm not getting on a ladder to clean that up", she continued. "But I hope someone does; it's been there for a while." Plan et al (2008) have observed that in public schools a "direct association between physical disorder and social disorder exists" (p.227). Teachers regarded efforts to help students by creating more welcoming and pleasing environments would help to create school cultures that were more understanding of their needs. Teacher T10 was explaining why she thought that students would be destructive of the physical environment, saying, "People just don't prioritize stuff like that (i.e., the aesthetics of a school). I mean look at that!", she exclaimed regarding the photo in Figure 4.76. "Some kids truly ride their bikes to school…but look at that rack. It's all broken and rusted. It's just a way that we show them we don't care, so why should they?" To combat the negative socialized experiences that students bring with them to school (Brown et al, 2004), teachers felt that it was the province of "everyone on the campus" to sustain an orderly environment, in which students are held accountable, in which teachers feel safe, and in which students are made to feel "known, valued, and inspired". By way of a more positive aesthetic, the negative is mitigated, and a positive culture ensues (Warren, 2008).
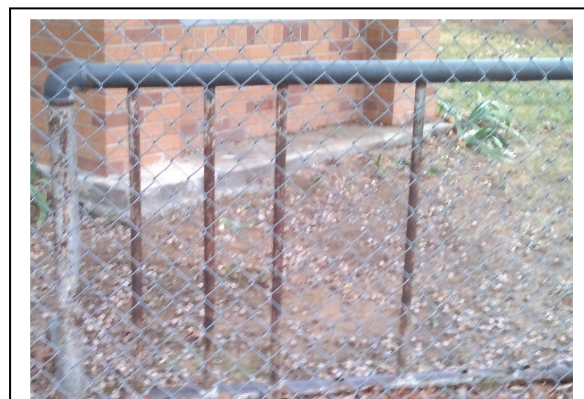
Figure 4.76 Broken & Rusted Bike Rack

4.5 Exogenous Factors Related to Teachers' Interpretations of the Physical Environment

Several factors emerged that were related to the experiences that teachers had with the physical environments of schools. These factors were: other careers and work experience; age and years of experience; student demographics, school level and type of school; content area taught; ability to personalize the environment; and administration. The contrast questions that were described in Chapter 3 were helpful in uncovering some of this information. Those questions were related to how teachers compared the physical environment of their school to other schools where they had taught or visited, or to other places where they may have worked. I had not anticipated some of these additional factors that emerged that were related to teachers' experiences, though I did anticipate some differences in teachers' responses. In this section, I outline what those factors were and how they related to the ways that teachers interpreted the physical environment and what was important to them about it.

4.5.1 Other Careers and Work Experience

Several teachers (i.e., five) had worked in areas such as non-profit, corporate, and military organizations before coming to the field of education.

One teacher remarked that when she first came to teaching, she was "shocked" by the differences between the corporate environment she had left and the school's environment. "I've never seen a place where they actually lock the toilet paper up," she commented. "It's bizarre." When I asked her what other contrasts she saw and how she felt that these mattered to her, she explained that "they (i.e., the corporation) seemed to pay more attention to small details like lighting". "They just thought about those things like softer lighting," she said. "We went through a phase where we used blue light bulbs, because they're supposed to be better for the brain to think and they're supposed to be softer on your eyes in terms of not having eye strain." She also mentioned that "everyone in the office had an ergonomic chair", and continued by saying, "Here, you have to fight to get a half-way decent chair. Here it's just whatever you can get from surplus or just scrounge up." As a response to my question about how she felt this affected her ability to perform her job as a teacher in contrast to her job as a corporate executive, she said, "I think it brings you down. You're surrounded by this nastiness and grossness. It does impact the way you feel about your job, yourself, your attitude in working." Her distress could be interpreted as

understandable given that the things that she described about her corporate experiences revealed that factors that were important to her were directly related to facilitating and optimizing a learning environment.

Another teacher who had worked in a corporate environment said that although she "didn't have a luxury suite", it was "at least clean and neat, and it was secure". When I asked her how her previous work had influenced her experiences as a teacher, she said that she "stood up more" for things that she needed. She described herself to me as a "person who's is not afraid to speak [her] mind" about issues she sees that "don't have to stay that way". "So, this is to me," she went on, "another attitude I bring towards teaching. It's that I find I'm a little more willing to speak up than career teachers because perhaps they don't know."

A teacher whose background had been in non-profit management remarked that she would "never return to that kind of work environment". She said that the difficulty in trying to continually raise enough money was "too stressful". She spoke with pride, however, about the work she had "accomplished to ensure that the environment was always warm, and friendly, and inviting". As she described her efforts, "That was one of the things I really tried to make sure of, was that we had good curb appeal. If you want butts in seats, that's what they always told me, you have to have good curb appeal." She mentioned the urgency of the need to replace light bulbs "as soon as they went out, because it just starts to look dingy", and to make sure that the environment was kept "clutter-free and clean". In her assessment of the physical environment of the school, she said that she found it to be inadequate as far as both resources and maintenance were concerned. She said that she would ideally wish to see a new facility constructed as a suggested change to the environment. However, she said that she knew "this was impossible", and conceded that she would simply "require everyone to keep things up".

Two teachers had had military experience before becoming teachers. When I asked one of them to explain how he felt this impacted his work as a teacher, he said that the military had "made him appreciate order and cleanliness". "No doubt!", he exclaimed. "No doubt at all. I walk into a classroom and the first thing I notice is the desks. Order, or not in order. Everything neat." He added that he thought that

women tended to "accumulate more stuff than men", so their rooms tended to look more "cluttered". He alluded frequently during our discussion to the school "community". I interpreted these references to be a reflection of the importance and value that he placed on the community environment that is characteristic of military organizations. A military organization thrives on not only its hierarchical order, but also on its sense of community as a manifestation of camaraderie and mutual support and protection. Soldiers are taught to protect each other and defend the organization. The level of military precision and efficiency, too, is an important consideration as to what factors were revealed as important to him in a school setting.

The other teacher who had a military background was female. In discussing the physical environment of schools, she also spoke about the importance of order and precision, but these factors were not as prevalent in her discussion as the other teacher with military experience. She described as more significant those aspects of the physical environment that were important to her as far as the condition of the environment was concerned. She talked about the "boring beige" and wished for cleaner, brighter colors. This contrasted with the male military teacher, who did not mention colors or decoration. The subdued colors that are characteristic of the military were not bothersome to the male teacher, as they were to the female teacher in the school environment. I interpreted this to mean that he did not connect the subdued military beige and other muted colors as related to a boring or dull learning environment. Continuing this interpretation, he saw these colors as part of the uniformity of control and order, whereas the female teacher saw these colors as "lifeless", "drab", and "dismal".

4.5.2 Age and Years of Experience

Younger and less experienced teachers had a more optimistic and "forgiving" outlook in regards to the physical environment. The youngest, least experienced teacher, T15, did say that she would "tear the school down and make a replica of an 1890 school", and described in some detail her "ideal school" with its "separate departments for teachers, tall lockers, and [in which] all teachers would be required to keep their rooms clean and free of clutter". However, after this visual description, she hastily conceded that this was "not a possibility" and that she thought that her school "does a fantastic job at keeping the grounds clean". "We do the best with what we have," she said, "and what we have is really nice." This more idealistic point of view was countered by the somewhat marked harder edge realism that

characterized the more seasoned teachers. Teachers with more experience generally tended to display more frustrated feelings about having to "keep up" and "make due", whereas the older teachers with outside experiences described above, were still in more of a "state of shock" when they compared other organizations to schools.

Sometimes described as "career teachers", those teachers who had the most years of experience and had not had other careers tended to describe their experiences in terms of having capitulated and accepted that "things just aren't going to change". While this was not recognized as an exogenous factor similar to having other career experiences, it nonetheless warranted scrutiny to see if teachers in this category had similar experiences. Teachers T7, T12, T16, T18, T19, and T20 each had more than twenty years of experience in education. These teachers consistently responded in a somewhat reserved fashion, and generally spoke of their teaching careers as positive experiences.

4.5.3 Student Demographics, School Level, and Type of School

Student demographics, school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and type of school (i.e., neighborhood or school of choices) were other factors that influenced teachers' experiences and interpretations. While no teachers in this study mentioned any experiences teaching at the elementary level, several discussed their experiences with high schools. Teacher T21 had taught at a high school. During her interview for that particular job, she said that she was "pretty distracted by the bullet hole in the office window". After having a knife pulled on her, she said that she had decided to look for a different school and a different grade level. Teacher T2 had taught as a substitute at a high school and had a knife pulled on her by a student as well. Her memory of the experience was disturbing as she described how an "adult actually just kept on walking by when [she] was in the hallway calling for anyone to come help". She, too, described the physical environment of her high school as "awful and depressing". Teachers T1, T2, T12, T 19, T21, had also taught at high schools. Describing high schools in somewhat stygian conditions, these teachers expressed an anxiety about the conditions of high schools that they saw as an impediment to student learning and overall school efficiency. Teacher T19 said, "One school I subbed in had such a depressing feeling, because things were dirty. The teachers seemed kind of depressed, too." Asked if she considered the physical environment as contributing to this, she replied, "It seems like it did.

Yes, ____ has a bad reputation already, but if they could just do some things to at least make it look like they care, maybe." Teacher T19 also mentioned another high school where she had subbed, and referred to this as "one of [her] best teaching experiences." "They kept that building so clean, and the kids were nice, and the teachers were supportive," she said. Continuing, she also said, "I am pretty sure the principal had a lot to do with that, because I heard teachers talking about how he wanted to come in and clean it up, to make it look nice, so the kids would feel like they were appreciated."

In response to questions about comparing their schools to other schools, several other teachers talked about their visits to high schools during such times as professional development. Teacher T3 described one high school in the district as "disgusting" and talked about the "deplorable conditions" that she saw. Referring to it as "the really dirty school" (i.e., she did not want to name the school), she added, "I was just thinking, thank God I don't work here and wondering how you could teach in this kind of environment!" Other teachers described high schools as "more dungeon-like" and used words such as "dark", "dirty", and "sad" to express their opinions about these schools' physical appearances. As mentioned in previous sections, teachers T1, T10, and T17 had the same opinions of one district high school, referring to it as a "prison, with its huge chain link fence." They each had had occasion to be inside the building, and as T17 described it, "The inside is no better than the outside. I don't see how the students there can learn anything. If I had to go to school there, I'd be pretty depressed, too."

Teacher T10 described the differences between two schools in different geographic locations where she had taught. She noted a difference in the "amount of respect kids had for teachers and for their school", and suggested that this was a function of the school's location. In one area, she described the families as "more kind of grandparents and older guardians", whereas in the other there were "lots of single, younger parents". In the former school the students "just seemed to have more respect for things, for teachers, for the environment". In the latter school the students were "rude and disrespectful, and didn't care about how things looked".

As mentioned, several teachers in the study taught at special schools of choice. At these schools, students have to apply for acceptance, and that acceptance is either based on test scores, or in some cases, on a "lottery" system of random selection. Teachers in these schools had heard their schools'

reputations described as "elitist" or "snobby", because "we get to 'hand-pick' our kids", as T8 somewhat sarcastically described. He went on, however, to say that he had taught in other types of schools and noted that his students "were just as needy as any others". In these schools, there are typically fewer disciplinary issues, and student achievement as measured by state testing and grades tend to outpace their regular, neighborhood counterparts. These phenomena are the result of not only more actively involved parents, but also of the fact (i.e., incentive) that students with discipline or academic issues can be asked to return to their "home" school (i.e., neighborhood school). Teachers T7, T8, T9, T18, T19, and T21 had generally positive and supportive things to say about their schools' overall environments, but they also described feeling like they were "left out of things a lot", or as being the "stepchildren". These teachers also expressed general frustration over the conditions they perceived schools to be in and the lack of adequate resources. However, they also described their experiences at other schools where they had taught as generally "more frustrating" with the overall school environment and culture. Only teacher T9 had never taught in another school previously, though she splits her time between the participating site and another high school in the district. When I asked her to compare the experiences, she said, "The high school's nice. They keep it pretty clean. But, when I come here every other day, I can see the world of difference." She added, "Not just because it's a middle school versus a high school; it's just how different my kids are here, compared to the high school." Comparing the physical environments of both schools, she said, "Well, this place is pretty bland and boring. The high school's actually pretty nice and clean." I asked if she considered that this had an impact on the high school's culture, she replied, "Definitely! I've had to go to trainings at other high schools, and talk to their teachers. They kind of describe gross conditions and bad discipline. Yeah, that probably has something to do with it."

4.5.4 Content Areas Taught

Of the 21 participants, eight teachers taught non-core subjects. The responses that several of these teachers gave indicated a difference between their aesthetic perceptions and their overall experiences with their schools, and that of core-content area teachers. These teachers felt like they were often "slighted" because they are not teaching a "tested subject area". Teacher T6 said, "I get the feeling that they care less about us, like we don't matter because our kids aren't tested." When asked to describe

99

the ways that they would change their schools, these teachers frequently mentioned either the addition or the refurbishment of a space specifically designed for their content areas. Teacher T2 said, "My dream? Well, it would be to have a brand new theatre. What's really possible? I would make sure that the little things get done. Like finishing what they started, keeping it clean." She described her frustration over what she perceived as a lack of administrative support, saying, "I don't think they (i.e., school administration) have been to one of my programs. They always go to the sporting events, but never to my programs." She, like several other teachers who taught non-content subjects, felt that they were "sort of the low-man on the totem pole". Teacher T9, who teaches a non-core content subject at one of the schools of choice, was more forgiving in her assessment of her needs. She was critical of the "kind of crappy room that [she has] to be in", saying that it was not a conducive environment for her particular subject. She primarily dismissed this, however, saying that she felt it was because of inadequate resources and "no money". Teacher T4 said that she considered herself to be somewhat more "fortunate" than other district teachers whom she knows in her content area. "The principal likes me, so I can generally get at least what I need. Other _____ teachers I know are not so lucky," she explained.

4.5.5 Ability to Personalize the Environment

Several teachers mentioned their frustration at having to move rooms year after year. Teacher T12 said that this was the first year in more than 20 years that she had been in the same room "two years in a row". During the past two years, because of its state of "financial exigency", FWISD has made a practice of "leveling" schools, a process in which schools across the district have lost teaching personnel allotments, while other schools have been given more. As a result, teachers, as indicated by the data in this study, have been moved to other classrooms because of the addition (or in some cases, the loss) of teachers to their schools. This is connected to teachers' ability to be able to create and personalize their classrooms to suit their own needs, and in turn, the needs of their students. Teachers said that they "got to know the personalities" of their students, and they were able to accommodate their needs based on that knowledge. Some teachers talked about "being allowed" to paint their own rooms or to hang up posters and art work to cover cracks in walls, and others mentioned putting up "fake windows", because the absence of natural light and "just the ability to be able to see out" were concerns. Often, when

teachers talked about decorating, painting, etc., they expressed pride in their efforts, saying that they "really liked being able to get that classroom feel". As teacher T21 described her efforts in one of her classrooms, "A bunch of us got together and helped each other paint and decorate. And some of us put some personal touches on it, so when the kids came in they felt like they were part of *a* group."

Teacher T5 told me how "angry" she got at her former school when she was given very little notice that her room assignment had changed over the summer. She had already decorated her room and "gotten everything ready to where all that had to be done was to come in and arrange desks and sharpen pencils", when she received a phone call telling her of the change. The new room, as she said, was "dirty, nasty, and the walls looked horrible", so she received permission to go in herself and paint the walls of the new classroom. When I asked her if she had been given an explanation as to the change, she replied, "No. I was just an afterthought. It was irresponsible, and they took a week of my life that I will never get back!"

Teacher T21 talked about having to "float" one year when she taught at a high school. She described it as a "really tough experience". She told me that one administrator "didn't even know that [she] was a floater" when she was told not to release her students so early. "Well, I have to pack up all my stuff to get to my next class, and she just laughed and said, 'Well, I guess that's why your lesson plans aren't posted.'" When I asked her if she knew whether she would have to move again, she said, "Nope! And it's a great feeling to know that at the end of the year, I can take everything I need to get ready for the coming year in a box."

4.5.6 Administration

This last category was a topic that several teachers either discussed or one to which they alluded. Prior research has observed the connection between a school's leadership and its culture and climate (Owens & Valesky, 2007). The extent to which administrators (i.e., principals, assistant principals, and district management) have control over the physical environment was beyond the scope of this investigation. Nonetheless, what was of interest for this study were the statements of feelings and emotions that teachers expressed when they felt either supported or unsupported by their school administration's level of concern regarding the physical environment.

As mentioned in previous sections, six of the principals from the eleven campuses have less than five years experience in their current positions. A seventh principal was new to her school as of last year. Teachers at these schools generally regarded the efforts of their school's administration as supportive of their efforts. Several teachers described specific instances in which their principal or assistant principals have done things to alter the physical landscape themselves. Through the placement of plants and shrubs, repainting walls, hanging banners, and so forth, school administrators' efforts were perceived as positive indicators that they are "trying to change the culture of the school". Teachers at these schools also described the efforts or non-efforts of previous administrators, and used their current circumstances as a basis for comparison. As teacher T16 said, "We have had ones (i.e., principals) come through here and waste money, I think, on programs. Others have come in and tried to make a difference in the way things look, and the way things feel. That makes me happier. That stuff matters more, I think."

Several teachers mentioned that different administrators "just have different priorities". Teacher T12 told me that her request to have an electrical outlet repaired was denied. She then "had to run an extension cord all the way around the room and tape it down". "I was told by the administrator that it came out the school's own budget", she said. "Well, I know it's not that expensive, but that person didn't want to pay for that, and I was told to make due, which is what I did." Participant T2 was frustrated when she went without power for two weeks after a student had "stuck a paper clip in an exposed socket" and the fuse blew. She said that she felt sure that the breaker could be "easily gotten to", but that it "just wasn't important enough for them to bother with". As mentioned previously, teacher T18, has seen a number of principals throughout the 18 years he has taught in the same building. He told me of an instance in which a teacher's room was being painted, and "they spilled paint all over the carpet". The school's administration's attitude about cleaning it up was "don't worry about it, just cover it up with a desk". "That is what is so frustrating here," he continued, "that you have some principals who are like, 'Why are you even asking? Go and buy it! (i.e., requested supplies). Then we would have others who were the exact polar opposite. It just doesn't make any sense to me. It's an easy fix!"

Teachers T16 and T14 both mentioned a high school principal whose efforts they were familiar with. "He was real big into, 'We are going to change this school!'", as it was described. "He was like, 'We

are going to make this school look like a school.' And he was real big into artwork, and put up student artwork. put something up! Just make it look like a school."

In contrast to a lack of administrative support, teacher T21 recounted her experiences at a previous school and its administrator who "totally supported that stuff, like being creative and decorating". She said that, "He (i.e., the principal) was one of those people who was like, 'You know what, I celebrated Halloween at school, and I didn't turn out to be an axe murderer! So you guys decorate.'" Mentioning that the school was a charter school and that "you didn't have to answer to a lot of people", she went on to say, "That was really nice. They allowed us to use our creativity and make a really nice and comfortable space for our kids. It was great!"

<u>4.6 Findings of Teachers' Interpretations of the Physical Environment</u>

In the previous sections, through the first cycle analysis, the factors of the physical environment that emerged as important to teachers were: general school conditions; communal spaces for teachers; communal spaces for students; colors and ambiance; nostalgia for older school buildings and features; and safety and health. Exogenous factors related to teachers' experiences were: other careers and work experience; age and years of experience; student demographics and type of school; content areas taught; ability to personalize the environment; and administration.

In this section, I discuss the answers to the first research question regarding teachers' interpretations of the physical environments of their schools. The themes that emerged through a second-cycle coding using Emotions codes to answer the research question were: the effectiveness and efficiency of schools; overall school conditions; and empowerment and voice. The reactions that teachers had during discussion of the physical environment and the pictures they took illuminated strong displays of raw emotions, that were in turn interpreted as expressions of fundamental values, attitudes, and beliefs about those environments and school culture (Gagliardi, 1990). As described in Chapter 3, emotions were defined as "a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and the range of propensities to act" (Goleman, 1995, p.289).

4.6.1 Effectiveness and Efficiency vs. Fragmented and Broken

Based on teachers' responses in regards to their aesthetic perceptions of a school's physical environment, through the interpretive analysis I observed that teachers interpret the physical environment to be an indication of school cultures that are effective, efficient, and, therefore, integrated, or ones that were inefficient and consequently fragmented (Martin, 1992). Teachers' emotional expressions in connection with their aesthetic perceptions of their surroundings revealed varying degrees of frustration, ambivalence, and so forth, when describing their perceptions of their school's culture. Conversely, when discussing this topic, teachers in the study also alluded to their perceptions that their schools' cultures could be improved through more communal efforts to improve the physical environment, a finding which is aligned with the "human need for order and consistency" (Schein, 1984). White (1996) described the "harmonious" nature of organizational cultures, saying that "to the extent that some elements did not adhere with one another, to that extent the organization would lack harmony" (p.197). The findings from this research suggested that "distinctive" elements that were described by teachers as important factors regarding the physical environment fuelled their perceptions of a culture that was either "working together as a community", or one characterized by role-divisionalization in which "everybody is just doing their own thing". The latter was primarily the case as indicated by the findings that 18 of the 21 participants described this as something they thought would positively affect their schools' cultures. Teachers expressed their anger over the indifference and ambivalence that is manifested by others in their failure to maintain a healthy, safe, and comfortable environment. Not only is this a failure to keep their own spaces and the larger school environment clean and orderly, this is a failure to instruct students in ways to express themselves in these appropriate and acceptable fashions. As the proverbial chain is only as strong as its weakest length, these failures compromise the organizational structure and its ability to create a safe and sustainable physical environment and culture (Ostroff, 1992).

These emotional responses were sometimes more visceral than others. Regarding her frustration that other teachers were not "pitching in to help make this school better" by "keeping their own rooms nice, clean decorated, whatever," Teacher T1 stated, "Yeah, they accept that it's _____ Middle School, and that just ticks me off! Why are you such a bitch? Are you trying to be a lazy asshole!" Accepting that their

school has this reputation, she and the other two teachers from their campus see that it is a necessity to continue working towards "improving the school's reputation". Teacher T10, at the same campus, described her desire to "create some student-led groups, like a campus beautification group". "They can be taught that we also care, as we are trying to show them how to take care of things." she said. Other emotional responses that signaled the presence of levels of deep frustration were expressed by teachers not as vehemently, but were often times more subtle in their exhortation for others to "jump on the bandwagon". Teacher T20 said, "I'm sorry, but I think most of what happens to dress up and improve this building only happens in classrooms. Teachers are afraid, though, that as soon as they put something up, they'll just get moved right away." Teacher T11 described her preference for working in the "more ghetto schools, the ones that look like they need more help", saying that she felt that this produced more solidarity among teachers who were striving to make a difference in the face of adversity that is made manifest in conditions that "are just falling apart". This relates to what Martin (1992) wrote about fragmented cultures in which there exists a "web of individuals, sporadically and loosely connected" (p.153).

Teachers at schools of choice, while describing current experiences that were more positive, also discussed their perceptions of a fractured sense of community that was manifested through the physical environment. With the exception of one teacher (i.e., T9, with three years of experience), all six of the participants in this category regarded a positive school culture as one in which everyone is supporting the efforts towards cohesiveness through maintaining the physical environment and making the school a "more pleasant place to be". These teachers felt that though they are not challenged with "the normal challenges that most schools face", they still perceived that a school's culture was inhibited in part by "neglectful" practices on the parts of other staff and by a "separateness that keeps [them] from working together" in a more collegial fashion, a finding which has been observed in research regarding teacher satisfaction with schools (Horng, 2009; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). "We're not supposed to be like every school," teacher T7 explained. "We're supposed to work with each other. It's the whole idea of the 'three Cs': classroom, community, cooperation. To those that don't, I would give them their walking papers."

A further interpretation of the neglect of other staff would also suggest that this failure by others to assist in these endeavors is not a sign of indifference, but symbolic of their own exasperated capitulation in a struggle against environmental and organizational forces. This finding was also observed as an example of "culture jamming" in the aesthetics research of Wasserman and Frenkel (2011). They wrote that "culture jamming is a social action that deploys aesthetic means to resist the hegemonic power" structure and that "negative feelings toward the organization [can] even inspire acts of resistance that sometimes take aesthetic forms themselves" (p.503-504). Follett (1926) advised that "resentment smolders and breaks out in other issues", saying that frustrated workers would eventually "stop work". Consequently, I interpreted that the failure of other teachers and staff to help not as exclusively lazy, but as another form of tacit rebellion.

A school's administration can be cultural leaders, manifesting that leadership towards the end of creating schools that are effectively and efficiently run through their attendance to the physical environment. For, as Samier (2007) described, "Educational leaders and administrators upon whom others are dependent…have a large share of influence over policy and its implementation" (p.9). Managerial power that is used to manipulate organizational culture through either enhancement of or inattention to has been a prominent topic in organizational aesthetics research (Warren,2008; Dean, Ottensmeyer, & Ramirez, 1997). Teachers took cues from their administration's attempts to improve or from their perceptions of the apathetic neglect of their needs and desires as manifested through the physical environment. For teachers, missing and broken ceiling tiles, or ones that are "replaced right away", were either an offense to or a comfort for their aesthetic sensibilities. The rapidity or seriousness with which they felt that issues such as ceiling tiles, "stinky bathrooms", procured resources, and the general cleanliness of their surroundings were dealt, were an indication regarding the level of efficiency within not only an individual school culture, but also in the larger organizational structures and processes at the district-level. Older buildings and their "beautiful" features were not merely psychologically comforting for teachers, they also symbolized that things were being taken care of, thus things were getting taken care of. Consequently, organizational structures were "working beautifully" to create positive school cultures (White, 1996). These findings support the observed effects of managers' intentional

actions in prior aesthetics research (Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002). Through the intentional action of the school's or district's actors, the physical reality as lived through the aesthetic interpretations of the organizational members is either improved or dejected (Samier, 2007). Teachers attached significance to these "artefacts" as an indication that the school is "doing more by showing more" (Strati, 2000).

Teachers also interpreted the state of the physical environment as connected to student discipline and learning. The level of the effectiveness of a school's culture was viewed by teachers through their perceptions of how their physical surroundings contributed to either improved or worsened student discipline and academic achievement. In the sense that "broken windows" are either fixed or allowed to remain broken, teachers expressed emotions of fear and anxiety, as well as frustration when they perceived that "nothing was being done to take care of things". On the other hand, teachers also expressed emotions of support and encouragement through the visible efforts of the school to counter the tendency of "broken windows" to deteriorate overall school conditions and student discipline (Wilson & Kelling, Plan et al, 2009). This connects to the physical environment as teachers felt that that environment can be conducive or can be detrimental to a safe and orderly learning environment. When physical conditions deteriorated within the building, teachers saw this as a precursor to deteriorating student discipline. There is a maxim in education that goes, "Kids don't care what you know, if they know you don't care." As some teachers testified, "If kids see that we don't care, they aren't going to give a crap either." If students see that there is an absence of care for the environment in which they are compelled to spend the majority of their time, they see this as a lack of care and concern for their well being. When this is the case, teachers believe students may turn to a familiar means of expressing their frustration, which is one marked by violence. As one teacher remarked, "It's no wonder they act the way they do sometimes. God, if I had to be in some of these schools, I'd probably feel like a prisoner myself and would act out, too." Students sense this vulnerability as well, and their reactions are understandable as they attempt to make their fears and frustrations known and valued through "culture jamming" practices (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). If they perceive themselves as vulnerable to threats of violence and disorder, they will in turn try to express their own fears and aggravations in ways that are familiar to

107

them. These notions are informed by what Freire (2000) refers to as the "incessant struggle to regain their humanity" as students will eventually assert their own needs in their attempt to "[transform] a limiting situation" (p.49).

While teachers expressed feelings of being repressed by organizational control and their inability to manipulate their surroundings, they also paradoxically struggled internally because they appreciated that an effective environment is a safe environment, and they wanted reassurance that the safety of all within the school walls would be protected. The walls and fences that surround and confine schools were physical manifestations of effectively protective elements of the environment. Teachers used phrases such as "it just freaks me out" or "the kids are scared to death" when they talked about the physical environment in terms of the security that they felt was required in current societal conditions. This discussion of safety and security points to one of the most basic human needs (Maslow, 1943). In addition to a need for order and organization (Schein, 1984), schools are meant to be a haven against the intrusion of outside forces. Students are compelled to attend school, and while teachers expressed anxiety over the need to protect their students from harm, they also recognized their fear of students and displays of violence. Without the feelings of security within a school's surroundings, teachers' efforts to teach and help students thrive are compromised. The emotional responses that centered around the themes of a school environment's safety and security suggested that teachers felt vulnerable and that they feared for their own safety and that of their students.

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, that safety and security did not only have to do with violence, but also contained discussions that centered around issues of the health of the physical environment. A further interpretation of this theme can be extended to include the mental health and well-being that is connected with the physical environment (Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). Teachers felt that poor conditions were "visible signs" that health is compromised. Largely laying the blame for these conditions at the doorstep of the district, teachers regarded that "a lot of infighting", "finger pointing", and "blaming" causes processes to break down. Some teachers, however, spoke about these kinds of conditions as the direct result of their school's administrative inaction, leading them to perceive an even

more fragmented organizational structure. These perceptions were compounded by other teachers' neglect to "even report issues".

4.6.2 Overall School "Conditions"

Teachers interpreted the physical environments of their schools in regards to a school's overall conditions. These conditions in turn are interpreted as characteristics of a school's culture. While the general findings of this research indicated that participating teachers had positive experiences of their overall school environment, a majority of teachers expressed concern over the general conditions of the physical aspects of schools. This had not only to do with their current schools, but also included their prior experiences at other schools. A study by Harris (2002) showed that more affluent schools with low minority populations tend to be regarded as schools with better "conditions" (i.e., better resources, better facilities). White (1996) wrote that "satisfaction in one's work includes an essential aesthetic element" (p.203). In a discussion of school conditions that precipitate teachers' satisfaction, Darling-Hammond (2003) and Earthman (2002) noted studies by the U.S Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (1997, *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-1994*) and Harris (2002) that regarded the "deplorable conditions" of schools in the United States as one of the causes of teacher attrition. These conditions are referred to as overall school physical conditions, access to adequate resources, class size, administrative support, and teacher voice (2002, *Unraveling the "Teacher Shortage" Problem: Teacher Retention is the Key*).

Anger and frustration over the poorly maintained physical conditions of school buildings and the inadequacy of resources were a consistent concern of the respondents. These conditions, they believed, symbolized the level of respect being shown to those who must use the facilities. Consistent with these emotions, teachers' most frequent comments in this regard had to do with the "disgusting" or "deplorable" conditions of the school, and the "despair" and "helplessness" they felt "over the whole situation". The emotions that teachers expressed when discussing the conditions of schools showed that they are willing to accept conditions, but the extent to which they are willing to accept poor conditions was not noted. Two descriptions by teachers in the study help to clarify the paradox that apparent satisfaction can be coupled with dissatisfaction with the physical environment. Teacher T10 described the "pipes that got crossed" at

a brand new school where she had taught prior to her current assignment. "It smelled like shit forever," she said, "but I guess you just get used to it." She added, "Some people may not think they're affected by their surroundings, but that's because they get used to it. They accept it. It's no big deal, until you see the change and then you really realize it!" She continued, saying, "Like when you're a kid, and you really don't know you're poor, until you grow up, and you're like, man, we were poor back in the day! You don't know the difference until you grow up and see." Teacher T12 used an analogy to describe how she felt that conditions "just become acceptable, until they become unacceptable". She said, "You might not realize it, as it's slowly going down hill. Kind of like the pot, the frog, and the boiling water. If it's boiling and you stick him in, he jumps right out. But if you put him in a cold pot and slowly turn on the heat, he doesn't notice it." To this she added, "If you're in a situation that's slowly going down hill, you just don't notice it as much. But after a while, I think it just wears you down. I don't see how it couldn't." The aesthetics research of Gagliardi (1993; 1996) and Strati (2000) discuss the numbing and "an-aesthetic" affects that an environment can have on organizational members, and Taylor's (2002) work also supports these phenomena by describing organizational members' "aesthetic muteness" as a cause for the inability to adequately express frustration and dissatisfaction.

Environmental factors that negatively affected the health of both students and teachers presented itself as an issue in regards to overall school conditions that elicited strong emotions from respondents. According to Maslow (1943), a secure and healthy environment is a primary tenet of securing basic physiological needs. Teachers talked about their frustrations and, indeed, ill health as the direct result of the presence of mold, wall tiles that "came crashing down on people's heads", and other assorted problems and issues. The disrepair and absence of simple features such as grip tape on stairwells was a source of chronic consternation and strife.

While teachers have some level of choice and power over where they work, they struggled with the idea that students are legally required by compulsory school laws to attend a school assigned to them on the basis of their residence. Having no choice in the matter, therefore, students are expected to sit quietly and acquiesce to conditions that are characterized as dirty, unkempt, poorly lit, and inconsistently acclimatized. Teachers T3 and T19 both referred to the conditions and adequacy of student desks as a

110

source of irritation for them, because they saw that "the kids are big, yet we still give them these little desks to sit it that they're too big for…that's just disrespectful". Aesthetics research conducted in a variety of office spaces has observed that space that is inadequate through its design and furnished resources is a source of strife for organizational members (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Being forced to take a seat in a desk that is too small only serves to increase a student's feeling that they are not respected. An environment that ignores the needs of those within it becomes a "situation of violence and oppression…[that] engenders an entire way of life and behavior for those caught up in it" (Freire, 2000, p.85). It is not surprising, then, that students who are compelled to remain in these situations eventually and somewhat inevitably respond in increasingly drastic ways, which in turn affects teachers' perceptions of the conditions of a school (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Earthman, 2002; Harris, 2002).

Teachers mentioned having to "scrounge" furniture to replace broken chairs, desks, etc., for themselves. What furniture they do have was often visibly marked with the wear and tear of years of use and abuse. Teachers also described having students sit on the floor as the result of insufficient space and numbers of desks or chairs. Though teachers said that this was "just a money thing", this was interpreted as a belief that there are still certain minimum standards which should be met. Down to cabinet pulls and hardware that are falling off, teachers described their continual efforts and care to take care of the "crap" that they do have, frustrated by their feelings of apprehension that these would not soon be replaced. They took pains to cover their windows so students could read the board, because they were not provided with window blinds. When allowed to alter the physical environment, teachers expressed their frustration and dismay at having to provide their own supplies. "I look around and I think, well, I'd better be careful with the stuff that I am lucky enough to have," as one teacher explained, "because I am pretty sure that I'll have it for a long time. I have to remind myself, when was the last time I got a pay raise." Though they may be allowed to make these improvements, they were often not given the resources and spent their own money. As one teacher stated, "There's just no respect for who we are or what we do."

Place-making has been observed as an important factor in aesthetics research (Ramirez, 1996; Pelzer, 2002). Teachers described being moved from room to room unilaterally without explanation. Just as they have come to understand and know the nuances of their current rooms, they are asked to pack

111

their things and move to another. They talked about having spent time and personal resources on fixing things up "just so", taping down rips in the carpet or loose electrical cords, and creating an environment that is not only conducive to learning, but one that is physically safe. Their attempts at space-making were thwarted, and they were not given ample time to adjust to new surroundings when they were "suddenly moved to another room". Follett (1926) referred to the "attitudes among employees which [the organization] would like to change", noting in addition the desire to "create an attitude of respect for expert opinion" (p.57, in Shaffritz & Hyde, 2008). More importantly for this discussion, however, she also exhorted that "you cannot get people to do things most satisfactorily by ordering them" (Follett, 1926, p.57, in Shaffritz & Hyde, 2008). In this regard, the notions of respect and "pride in one's work", take on increasing significance in school environments, where, as teachers described, "you have got to do more and more, with less and less". Maslow's (1943) description of the need for respect and acknowledgement informs the interpretation that the physical environment can be the vehicle for showing respect or a lack thereof. Without this acknowledgment in kind, teachers cannot realize their self-actualizing potential and consequently fail in their responsibilities to help their students achieve the goal of being free thinkers as well.

Despite feeling discouraged by the disrespect that is manifested through environmental conditions, teachers were just as eager to discuss the pride they felt over their accomplishments to create a comfortable and pleasing environment. As a "condition" of their work, teachers' creativity is an inherent element in their professions, not only in the delivery of instruction, but in the "aesthetic transaction" that they create. The application of color and décor is more than aesthetically pleasing; this signified to teachers that an environment that was more conducive to learning and more comfortable and pleasant was being created. This is not to imply that "beautiful is better" (Pelzer, 2002; Taylor & Hansen, 2005), but also entails a recognition that as part of a good working environment, teachers' efforts are valued and recognized. Teachers were also just as eager to praise and admire the efforts of other teachers and staff who they considered were helping improve the climate through the physical environment. Teachers felt respected by school administration who supported these efforts, and at times who were ready and willing to provide the resources that teachers asked for to improve and decorate. They recognized and praised

these communal efforts to improve the conditions of the school. In turn, they were asking for that recognition as well. A teacher described her efforts and talked about her room as an environment where "even the custodian came to relax". "I was scared because I kept finding coffee cups and my magazines had been moved," she added with apparent pride. "One of the female custodians told me that this was the only room where she felt like she could learn something if she was a student. That made me really feel good." As Dewey (1934) wrote, "Space thus becomes something more than a void in which to roam about" (p.23).

4.6.3 Empowerment and Voice

Teachers interpreted the physical environment of their schools in terms of levels of organizational empowerment and voice. Teachers felt empowered through their ability to manipulate their physical surroundings and to invest not just their own classrooms, but other areas as well, with an "aesthetic" that they felt would make a more pleasant experience. This connection is important when considering that the "physical and aesthetical space in which social actors operate is often intentionally designed to shape users' thoughts and behavior" (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011, p.503). Hulpia and Devos (2010) observed the effects that "distributed leadership" among school teachers has when the principal or other school leaders allow others to assume "leadership roles". As an integral component of overall school conditions, teacher voice is associated with levels of satisfaction, commitment, and ultimately, levels of efficacy (2002, *Unraveling the "Teacher Shortage" Problem: Teacher Retention is the Key*; Harris, 2002).Teachers in this study expressed satisfaction over either the ability to manipulate their environment or their perception that such manipulation would be met with approval or would "not even require" permission. In this sense, even the perception of leadership as the ability to provide input regarding the physical environment can be seen as a positive reinforcer for teacher satisfaction and commitment (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). By improving the physical environment, teachers felt that a more integrated, communal culture would emerge. As Brown, Anfara, and Roney (2004) noted, a school's culture is the "relatively stable property of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions" (p.434). The physical environment is a manifestation of the

school's culture, for as teacher T7 eloquently stated, "I just think it's the soul of a school. The building, how it looks, and feels, all that."

Teachers' unique roles as professionally educated and certified members of society still does not afford them the same "perks" that they might otherwise enjoy in office environments. Rosen, Orlikowski, and Schmahmann (in Gagliardi ed., 1990) noted that in corporate organizations the office space is "commodified" and bears with it not just symbols of respect and power, but also are places in which individuals are allowed to invest themselves with a personal aesthetic dimension. As a classroom is effectively a teacher's office, this is an important aspect in teachers' perceptions of being empowered to commodify this space for themselves and for their students. The classroom takes on not only meaning in this sense, but a level of value and worth. Teachers in the study who described frustration over not being allowed to control their classroom environments, whether by being moved, or by simply being told that they could not decorate, felt devalued and underappreciated. With the ability to add "personal touches" such as those aspects of color and decoration to make a "homey" environment, teachers felt that they belonged to a culture that valued that input and regarded them in a more professional sense. Several teachers observed that they had not received pay raises in "a while", so this aspect of the ability or the lack thereof becomes specifically relevant in promoting a collegial, supportive, and professional atmosphere. As in previous aesthetic research, these elements are integral in securing a connection with the organization's existing culture and a positive means by which to improve culture (Gagliardi, 1990, 1996; Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). Teachers also expressed levels of frustration about the "dehumanizing" effects of windowless rooms, in which they are not "allowed to even control [their] own air and light". As teacher T12 described these aspects to which other teachers alluded, "To me that's a horrible environment of the school to think that we're too stupid to know when we should turn off our lights." She added, "Like I'm a rodent who just comes into my little area and I should do my little things and leave." The cultural perceptions that teachers interpreted through these elements of the physical environment signified to them that they are not trusted as competent and responsible professionals. These comments were a condemnation of the district-level bureaucratic structure, which, teachers angrily expressed, "is always just trying to save a buck". The ability to control such basic elements as air and light

threatens the integrity of basic human physiological needs (Maslow, 1943), and is a vehicle for some cultural destruction by extinguishing more of the "spirit of a place" (Martin, 2002).

Teachers also regarded the general conditions of the school and adequacy and availability of its resources as cultural signals about how they were valued, respected, and empowered as not only professionals, but as people. Describing conditions that were cracked and broken, or the absence of adequate space and even restrooms, teachers perceived that their power was diminished through substandard conditions. Through a lack of adequate basic physiological needs and resources, the school's culture invariably suffers. As Follett (1926) averred, "Resentment smolders and breaks out in other issues". The ability to secure resources was seen as the symbolic presence of having power and voice in the organizational structure. Teachers considered themselves fortunate when they were "given" new blinds, a "nice new desk", as opposed to having to "scrounge around" for "odds and ends". This is particularly relevant given the dominant poor conditions of most schools in the U.S., and that these conditions are related to perceptions of satisfaction and commitment. As Hujalla and Rissanen (2011) observed, the functionality and availability of adequate resources play an important role in the aesthetic perceptions of organizational members and the culture that results.

The element of empowerment and voice was particularly relevant for teachers in regards to their students, to whom they described as having emotional and personal, in addition to professional commitments. As teacher T11 said, "These kids are my babies, and I feel like we should be doing as much as possible to take care of them." Teachers mentioned their perceptions of spaces that can be created for students that would provide opportunities for creativity and free-expression. They took photographs in which they "took pride in their work" (Follett, 1926) as they displayed their accomplishments to make a "homey" environment. This is not to diminish the importance of the single function that schools serve, which is to provide sound instruction. However, especially in the climate of today's society, schools are now meant to serve in a variety of other capacities as well, to the end of providing learning on many different levels. While local businesses, colleges, corporations, and so forth are primarily interested in a bottom-line production of learned citizens, "the present educational system does not develop in an individual the capacities of cooperation, struggle, autonomy, and judgment"

(Bowles & Gintis in Ballantine & Spade, 2004). Teachers perceived that an effective means of achieving a viable organizational structure for students that provides them with these necessary tools is to ensure an environment that is non-threatening, comfortable, and encouraging of creative thinking and ideas. Schools are challenged with shortages of resources and a lack of space, but what is done with that space, as teachers described it, "can make all the difference for students in how they feel about school". In this same regard, teachers were frustrated also by how they perceived that students were treated through inadequate and "outdated" resources. A desk that was "too small for these bigger middle school kids", or a "broken, rusted bike rack" were for teachers, "just disrespectful", and consequently disempowering. When students become disempowered, they react in ways that are accessible, and not altogether unanticipated, as they "struggle [incessantly] to regain their humanity" (Freire, 2000). By tagging areas of the school, students are speaking about their frustrations in ways that are familiar to them. It is one creative outlet that is accessible, though they are involved in the symbolic destruction of the very elements that have repressed them (Freire, 2000). As "you cannot get people to do things most satisfactorily by ordering them", in turn students must be shown that they do have a voice and are respected (Follett, 1926, p.57, in Shaffritz & Hyde eds., 2008).

Teachers felt that restrictive school environments are present in not only the design and layout of some schools, but also in the way that the aesthetics of some environments conveys a sense of repression and confinement. Though teachers laughed as they described the "prison-like" look and feel of a school, there was a deeper seated anxiety, tension, anger, and disbelief as to how these conditions persist. Teachers talked about the sad and depressing exteriors of buildings and described them as "dirty and lifeless". They felt disheartened by these perpetual conditions and were frustrated that their attempts to bring those conditions to the notice of others sometimes went unnoticed or ignored. The white walls that were described by teachers as "drab" and "dull" were not merely aesthetically interpreted as "lifeless" learning environments, but also represented a "dulling" of the senses. Sassoon (in Gagliardi ed., 1990) noted that "the power of colors in social life is considerable" (p.169). Teachers observed the dominance of these aspects as being the "cheapest" and "easiest" solutions for the "district to have to deal with", in a way that contributes to the persistence of the one-size-fits-all approach, described by Freire (2000) as

"inoculation [through] manipulation". Effectively, these white walls also cost teachers a great deal more than simply an unpleasant aesthetic experience; teachers perceived that the "dulling" of the mind would result in lower student achievement, and, in the end, possibly also be the cause of more institutionalized shows of violence.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter I discuss the major findings of the study and how they communicate with existing research in the field of organizational aesthetics and contribute to its theoretical development. I then discuss the implications that these findings have for organization theory and for public administration. I conclude with a discussion of suggestions for future research.

5.1 Major Findings and Themes

This study dealt with the "day-to-day realities" of teachers' aesthetic experiences of schools and how these experiences ultimately impact and inform their perceptions of school cultures (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Based on the cultural models of Schein (1985), Gagliardi (1990), and Hatch (1993), the level of culture that was discussed and examined was artifacts. The physical environment itself is an "artefact" (Gagliardi, 1990; Strati, 2000), and teachers in the study were asked to describe their experiences and opinions about the physical environment in all of its aspects (i.e., the conditions of the building and areas of the campus; design of the school; and so forth). The research questions asked what factors of the environment were important to teachers, and how they interpreted the environment.

The findings from the research show that teachers consider as important the conditions of the school; communal spaces for them and for students; the colors and ambiance of the environment; the preservation and condition of older school buildings and their features; and the safety and security of a school. Teachers interpret the physical environments of their schools as cultural indicators of the level of effectiveness and efficiency, as contrasted with a fragmented sense of separateness and isolation. Other interpretations that were revealed through the analysis showed that teachers view the "conditions" of a school through the lens of the physical environment, in turn making meaning about the overall school environment and culture as manifested through the physical surroundings. Teachers' perceptions of the aesthetics of their schools also leads them to interpret cultural messages regarding levels of empowerment and voice. In previous organizational aesthetics research, similar findings have been observed (Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011; Warren, 2008). Factors that emerged that mediate teachers' experiences of the physical realm of culture are other careers and

118

work experience; age and years of experience; the type of school and the age level of students; the inability to personalize their environments as the results of frequent classroom changes; the content areas that are taught; and a school's administrative support or the lack thereof.

The aesthetics of a school's physical surroundings are viewed by teachers in both positive and negative lights. Culture can be manipulated and controlled through the physical environment (Gagliardi, 1990; Owens & Valesky, 2007). As previous aesthetics research has described, findings from this research indicate the presence of a strong psycho-emotional connection between teachers' perceptions of their surroundings and their views of the efficacy of a school's culture to sufficiently address their own needs, and they perceive, the needs of their students, a phenomenon that has been observed in previous aesthetics research (Hujalla and Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Warren, 2008). Sandelands and Buckner (1989) have written that work is by its very nature a creative endeavor, and that an aesthetic element is inherent. Education is an aesthetic transaction (Rosenblatt, 1986), and teachers feel a need to create not only pleasant environments for their students physically, but also to help in the creation of the beauty of the process (Dewey, 1938). The findings from this research suggest that teachers feel that their endeavors are either supported or thwarted given the conditions of their surroundings. Teachers have a desire to create warm and inviting spaces for students. Rafaeli and Vilnai-Yavetz (2004) found that organizational cultures that provide visible support through an attractive space yield more effective worker attachment and stronger emotional organizational ties. The findings from this research indicate that teachers who feel supported by their school administration describe that support at least in part in the way they perceive the conditions of the environment and the resources that are available to them. Siler (2003) found that workers can "be better with better facilities". Studies of schools have observed that teachers' satisfaction is closely associated with their perceptions of a school's conditions, and that these perceptions form the basis on which organizational commitment is strengthened (Harris, 2002; Ostroff, 1992). While the current research did not attempt to determine levels of teacher efficacy, the relevance of this finding is that teachers perceive that their performance is enhanced when they feel that conditions are more aesthetically pleasing. This is culturally significant for schools, knowing that "artifacts influence our perceptions of reality" (Gagliardi, 1990, p.16), and that the collective perceptions and opinions of

119

organizational members influence and inform culture. The current research did not find evidence to suggest that the physical environment forms a culture in a complete sense, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it informs these perceptions in an inextricable way.

Another important aspect in this cultural puzzle is the extent to which a "strong culture" holds sway and is manifested through the physical environment (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Teachers feel that negative school cultures and their reputations are visually represented through the physical environment. Thus, the physical environment becomes a representation of an organization's culture, perpetuating beliefs, values, and assumptions of either integrated, effective, and healthy organizations, or ones that are marked by pessimism, division, and ill health. Studies have shown that the visible perception of deteriorating conditions leads to the perceptions of social disorder and represent a threat to the integrity of the culture of the organization (Plank, Bradshaw, & Young, 2009). Teachers feel that the disregard that other staff show through their physical treatment of the school effectively teaches and "shows" students that "since we don't care, you don't need to either". These are fragmented cultures, and result in a weakened organizational culture. The findings from this research confirm previous studies that have observed the presence of fragmented cultures as caused by negative perceptions of external realities in schools (Hulpia & Devos, 2009).

Dean, Ottensmeyer, and Ramirez (1997) described findings to indicate that "modern organizations tend to dehumanize" their members. Teachers in the study described feeling like "rats in an experiment" and that they "weren't smart enough" to know when to turn lights on or off. As Strati (2000) stated, organizations accept the "bizarre" notion that "organizational members are purged of their corporeality", and, consequently their ability to reason as rational, creative, and psychologically minded organizational members. Schools, teachers feel, treat them in ways that are "dehumanizing" and "degrading" when they take for granted that their needs are unimportant, which is supported in previous findings (Martin, 2002; Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Teachers are anxious about being moved to another classroom and angry at the amount of time they spend manipulating another space to an aesthetically balanced point. Though there may be some cultural ambivalence, there is a tipping point when their self-sustaining efforts to take care of business by themselves (i.e., spending

their own money, more of their time, etc.) become too frustrating. This creates the potential for another teacher who will not go the extra mile, and who survives in a bland, boring, and lifeless classroom environment. In and of itself, this does not mean that learning will not occur, but research suggests that a non-stimulating environment results in poor student attention and performance (Higgins et al, 2005; Woolner et al, 2007).

As a part of the needs that teachers describe as important to them, they desire communal spaces for themselves and for their students. Warren (2008) studied the intentional "aestheticization" of corporations who were trying to make their offices more "fun, funky workspaces". Her findings showed a strong connection between not only the actual manifestation of change, but in the understanding that change is occurring, and increased worker self-esteem and "happiness" (Warren, 2008). When considering schools, an apparent aspect that teachers perceived that should be incorporated into daily life is the creation of a space that is a vehicle for creative expression and thinking. If we consider that adolescence conjures images of a time that should be "fun" and "funky" then we are pressed with the notion that schools should be such places to accommodate these needs. The persistent role model for schools, however, is based on the business model, and the physical environments of schools stay firmly rooted in these traditions. Teachers in the study felt that the "maze-like" designs make them and their students feel trapped in conditions that are generally regarded as unsuitable. Embellishing these "eggcrates" (Stuebing et al, 1994) with a variety of colors and other decorations is a means to address the way that the bottom-line philosophy of corporate culture has resulted in "stultifying" creativity and free thinking through the physical environment. White is not a color of purity for teachers (Sassoon, 1990), but one of sterile institutionalization that is stifling and disempowering.

Teachers feel a sense of comfort and calm through features of older schools. An effective organization that is taking care of business and "working beautifully" has been observed in aesthetics research in terms of the preservation and respect for the past (Gagliardi, 1990, 1996; Strati, 2000). Teachers feel that their students would benefit from the comfort afforded by the historical beauty of these structures not on a conscious level, but at a level that is felt and perceived. The physical environment, therefore, informs the "pathos" through the way a school makes its occupants feel and consequently

121

behave (Gagliardi, 1996). As Sandelands and Buckner (1989) noted in their research, the "psychology of work feelings" is mediated through the structures that surround us and in which we spend a significant portion of our working and living day. Teachers have respect for the organizational structures and processes that enable the preservation of these sites, in turn creating a sense of respect for the school and district culture. A culture that cares about its past, is a culture of caring for those in its present.

Teachers' sense of security for themselves and for their students is predicated on the notion that a clean and orderly environment yields a safe environment. In the research findings of Martin (2002) and Hujalla and Rissanen (2011) a link has been observed between the nurture that is provided by elderly care givers and the overall sense of safety that patients have. The current research supports these conclusions. In this regard, Hujalla and Rissanen (2011) and Martin (2002) discerned that the characteristic of "homeyness" in an important consideration in establishing cultural norms of safety, nurture, and protection. A comfortable, "homey" environment is indispensable for teachers in their consideration of what makes positive school cultures. In this regard, sterile and institutionalizing environments are a source of concern for teachers, who feel that the organizational power structure is preoccupied with cutting costs and bare minimum spending on the "cheapest" and "easiest" solutions.

The experiences that teachers have of the physical environment are informed in part by factors that include other careers and work experience, the age and level of students, the type of school, the content area that is taught, and a school's administration.

The non-core content area teachers describe experiences that leave them feeling as though they are "on the outside looking in". The cultural messages they receive that are manifested through their experiences of the physical environment are that they do not matter, because they are teaching "subjects that don't matter". They describe getting "table scraps" and feel frustrated in the knowledge that the majority of the resources in a school are going to the efforts of "educationally triaging" the gap students who need assistance in passing tests (Booher-Jennings, 2005). Previous studies of school conditions indicate that a significant amount of resources of both money and time are allocated for these reasons (Booher-Jennings, 2005).

Teachers who have prior experience in other careers describe feelings of a skewed sense of reality, as they invariably compare the conditions of their schools to the cultures they left behind. Teachers who had prior experiences teaching in high schools describe feelings of either a "dark atmosphere" that is dangerous and alienating, or ones that are "pleasant" because of the physical conditions they feel that provide a vehicle for greater comfort and improved learning. As prior aesthetics research has shown, the feeling of discomfort or of comfort is largely a function of how the physical environment is perceived (Dean, Ottensmeyer, & Ramirez, 1997; Hujalla & Rissanen, 2011; Martin, 2002; Sandelands & Buckner, 1989; Taylor, 2002).

As the "step-children" of education, teachers at schools of choice paradoxically feel defensive about the preconceived notions that they are "better" and have "better kids", and consequently do not have to "work as hard as everyone else". This creates a fragmented culture at the district level. Teachers describe that, going to district-level events, organizers "don't even know who [they] are" (Hulpia & Devos, 2009). They describe feeling that they are "put aside" in buildings that "aren't even supposed to be schools", and their students suffer for it through having "dirty, landfill dirt" for their playgrounds. However, the cultural experiences that these teachers describe confirm prior aesthetics research that has found that in the face of environmental adversity, organizational members find a sense of solidarity and unification (Rafaeli and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004).

<p style="text-align:center">5.2 Implications</p>

5.2.1 Implications For Organizational Researchers and a Response to the Literature

The current study responded to the call that organizational aesthetics theorists have made in regards to expanding the use of the field. Warren (2008) has called for simply putting more theory into practice. Taylor and Hansen (2005) wrote that "approaches that use artistic methods to explore sensory experiences is where we find our unrealized hope for what the field of organizational aesthetics can offer the world" (p.1223). In this regard, the current study addressed the concern over the preoccupations with "the managerial perspective" and the "excessive reliance on the researcher's own aesthetic sensibility [of previous] numerous studies on the aesthetic dimension of organizational life" (Strati & de Montoux, 2002, p.791). The organizational members of note in this study were teachers, and though I made use of field

notes and photographs to inform my understanding and facilitate discussion, it was their particular and individual points of view that were the focus of the research. While the study sheds light on a variety of potential implications which includes a managerial perspective (i.e., school and district leadership), nonetheless, the current study was interested in examining the opinions of other levels of organizational life; levels with which most previous organizational aesthetics studies have not dealt.

The current research also helps to inform Gagliardi's (1990) and Hatch's (2006) notions of the nature of an organization's culture and the physical environment. As mentioned in previous chapters, this study did not engage in the issue of organizational culture in its traditional sense and was not, therefore intent on measuring or discerning a particular school's culture or even the larger culture of the participating schools in toto. This research contributed to the alternative approach that the aesthetics framework suggests in regards to culture, namely that the physical aspects of an organization provide a unique means to view and understand the organizational landscape as other elements and pieces of the cultural puzzle. If we suspend the belief that that level of culture which is represented by artifacts is indistinguishable and indiscernible from the other somewhat more amorphous levels identified as assumptions, beliefs, and values (Schein, 1985), then we can view the landscape of organizational culture from the standpoint of the importance (i.e., not the superiority) of the physical environment. While the model of culture that Hatch (2006) described includes a continuous loop of assumptions, values, and artifacts, at some point the impact of the physical environment (i.e., artifacts) potentially begins to dominate and fundamentally alter these other levels. Gagliardi (1990) averred the notion that the physical setting "influences the behavior of [organizational] actors" and shapes fundamental cultural beliefs and attitudes (p.16). At a point, the struggle that teachers described in regards to securing resources, frustration over the conditions of their buildings, etc., becomes overwhelming for them and they begin to stop their work (Follett, 1926). Teachers in this study expressed their dismay over this, for, as one teacher put it, "I guess they just gave up at some point. Just because it's this particular school, I just get the sense that people have sort of given up." This begs the question as to whether the physical environment becomes a reflection of a school's culture, or does the environment actually begin to inform a school's climate and culture. While there is no easy or straightforward answer to this question, the findings from

this study show that at a fundamental level, teachers' experiences and perceptions of the school's physical appearance potentially shape those experiences as either positive or negative ones.

The current research also informs the connections between workers' satisfaction and levels of performance as described by Ostroff (1992). While this study was not explicitly concerned with gauging levels of satisfaction, there are implications to that effect. In Chapter 1 I hypothesized that by attending to the aesthetics of schools and by making concerted efforts to improve the physical appearance of schools, these efforts might ultimately result in improved perceptions of schools' overall organizational health. If teachers are satisfied by way of being in a more pleasant and comfortable environment, this can reduce their levels of anxiety and frustration. Teaching is referred to as a "revolving door profession" (Education Statistics Quarterly, 2005), as "one-third of teachers leave the profession during the first three years" (American School Board Journal, 2004). Added to this is the fact that teachers represent the majority of the public workforce in the United State. Hirschman (1970) cautioned that workers will begin to experience decreased levels of satisfaction and loyalty towards the organization and will "exit" their positions as a response to perceived mistreatment and neglect. In like fashion, young educated professionals choose to "exit" teaching for careers that, as one teacher stated, "at least show [them] a little bit of respect". Another teacher summed up this sentiment by saying, "I wish I'd gotten out sooner. If I'd known that teaching was going to be like this, in these conditions and all that, I would have gone somewhere where I could be appreciated." As previous studies have linked levels of satisfaction with teacher turnover rates, this is even more relevant. These studies refer to "school conditions", but those conditions take into account factors such as "administrative support, poor student discipline policies and practices, and limited authority" (Berry & Hirsch, 2005). The current research did discern that similar factors such as the perceived support of administration and student discipline impacted teachers' experiences. However, the research showed a connection between those elements as they were manifested through the physical environment. As Dean, Ottensmeyer, and Ramirez (1997) speculated, an organization's aesthetics may be inextricably linked with members' satisfaction. Perhaps if teachers can see changes, they will more readily perceive them as optimistic signs of positive trends. Consequently, as

Ostroff (1992) noted, the "collectivization" of these individual attitudes as perceptions of either the care or disregard of the environment can positively or negatively impact overall organizational health.

5.2.2 Implications For School Management and Leadership

An obvious implication for school administration is not simply the need to be aware of the conditions of the physical environment and the nuances of the aesthetics of these environments, but also the need to understand that these issues impact individual experiences and overall school culture and climate. The findings from this research suggest the existence of a strong link between teachers' perceptions of the physical environment's state of repair or disrepair and their levels of frustration and sense of hopelessness. Teachers attach significance and meaning to the ability, *viz.* permission, to be able to alter their surroundings. This idea of place-making and nesting are not only a representation of basic human needs for control over the environment and ability to adapt their surroundings (Maslow, 1943), it is also a representation of teachers' strengthening commitment to survival and health of the organization.

Ordinary and routine annual facilities checks sufficiently account for general building conditions. However, beyond this, a more deliberate survey of the physical landscape should include a variety of stakeholders. Increased leverage for administrators at the school level to deploy not only local, but other state and federal funds directed to a school's physical appearance are paramount in accounting for the more specific needs that students and teachers have. School districts ought to relinquish some control over the actual decoration that a school environment manifests through choices of color and other embellishments that are so frequently held in tight control at more centralized levels. These elements also convey a more meaningful and deliberate effort to include teachers by way of establishing some accounting of their individual aesthetic tastes and desires. They are the "street level bureaucrats" who are at the intersection of where policy and practice meet (Lipsky, 1970).

5.2.3 Implications For Teachers

A classroom's environment sets a tone for learning that students experience just as much as they do the actual curriculum. The opinions, attitudes, and beliefs expressed in this research supported the notion that a drive and commitment to excellence and mastery as a professional educator entails an

understanding of the importance of the appearance of the atmosphere in which lessons are presented. Teacher turnover rates are among the highest of any profession in the United States, and as teachers in this study expressed, "there is little respect for what [they] do". While teachers have little to no control over the larger physical environment, at a minimum they are compelled to recognize that the chain is made stronger by forging links towards a common understanding of the message that this conveys to students, to other staff, and to the community.

I would encourage teachers to self-advocate, asking for more control and support. As teachers in this study exhorted, too often it is not a question of whether help and support are available, simply that teachers need to ask for what they need. Though resources may be in short supply and perhaps out-of-date, those resources are available. Involving students in these endeavors to establish and maintain a pleasing, clean, and comfortable environment requires establishing these as non-negotiable expectations. Students who are taught to respect and care for the resources they have, as noted by teachers who participated in this research, eventually take that learning and those expectations into other learning and living environments. Empowering teachers is a means of empowering students.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

As suggestions for future research, there are a variety of comparisons that would be useful in extending this work. Based on the particular conditions of this study, there was a low response rate and a small sample, meaning that there is a potential lack of generalizability. Thus, a replication of this study is recommended in other settings, such as other districts. Additionally, this could include comparisons of: schools in different districts in one geographic location, or across different geographic areas; or, a comparison of teachers' aesthetic perceptions and cultural interpretations of schools in districts characterized as wealthier and those as lower income.

As an obvious extension or next step in this current work, suggested research might include an exploration of students' experiences of school climate and culture as they relate to the physical environment. A study involving a variety of levels of students, or perhaps a longitudinal approach to gauge students' perceptions across the years (i.e., a group of students through their elementary, to middle school, to high school) might prove potentially useful in the constant quest to understand their

needs. Byrne, Hattie, and Fraser (1986) discerned the importance of the learning environment in regards to students' perceptions. However, beyond a superficial inspection of environmental factors such as lighting and air conditioning, this and previous studies have not considered the physical environment's ability to impact students' perceptions of their learning experiences, focusing instead on the effects of school administration, teacher instructional practices, and so forth.

A study of the experiences of school administrators and their aesthetic perceptions is a useful piece in the puzzle to understand the development of school culture. While aesthetics research is rich with managerial accounts, these tend to involve corporate or other non-profit environments (Taylor, 2002; Warren, 2008). As another means of putting theory into practice, a study involving principals and other district administrators could help illuminate the ways that decisions regarding the allocation of district-level and campus-level funds are made. As there is some leverage in the deployment of funds, perhaps a suggestion would be to ask a school to experiment with the "intentional aestheticization" of a school or of particular classrooms (Warren, 2008).

A final suggestion is to conduct an ethnographic case study of a single campus. Previous aesthetics research has been dominated by this approach, but perhaps a study involving a school would yield fruitful data about the largest public sector employer in the United States (Lipsky, 1970). Teachers are "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 1970) and a more in-depth and cultural methodological approach could be taken to "discern" the culture of a school, while developing an understanding of how that culture is perceived by teachers through the physical environment. While there are some practical limitations to be considered, other ethnographic case studies of schools have been conducted and have yielded rich amounts of data. Such a study would also provide deeper insight into what are termed the "conditions" of a school, that have been described as the strongest link of teachers' organizational commitment and the cause of the majority of teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Harris, 2002).

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS REGARDING SCHOOL SITES

1) How long have you been the principal of your school?

2) Please list any annexes or additions from previous bond packages to your school.

3) Please list any major renovations about which you're aware.

4) Please describe any efforts or resources aimed at improving the physical appearance of any areas of the school.

5) How many instructional full-time and part-time teachers do you have in your building?

6) Would you be willing to permit a research study involving teachers in your building about the aesthetics of your school? (All information supplied will be confidential, and no school or teacher's names will be used in the dissertation.)

7) Would you allow research groups and interviews to take place in your school during non-instructional hours? (* See note below)

8) Would you allow me to spend an afternoon at your school during instructional hours to take digital photographs and make notes about the school's physical environment for a study regarding the aesthetics of public middle schools? (** See note below)

9) Would you allow teachers participating in this study to take digital photographs of any areas of the school regarding the aesthetics of the school building? (** See note below)

* There will not be any disruption to the learning environment. There will be one discussion group held for one afternoon after instructional hours. With your permission, we will hold this discussion group in a common area of the school (i.e., teachers' lounge, outdoor garden area, cafeteria, etc.). Individual interviews with teachers will be held approximately one week after the initial group discussion. These individual interviews will be conducted in the same common area used for the group discussion or another area of the school that is conducive to a quiet, private environment.

** No pictures will be taken of any individuals or of anything that could be used to identify any individuals. No pictures will be taken of student work that could compromise student identity. Pictures will be taken only during non-instructional hours. Any digital photographs are for the exclusive use of the research protocols for this study and may be included in the final doctoral dissertation.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Thank you for taking part in my research for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas-Arlington (UTA). The purpose of my research is to explore the impact of building appearance on public middle school cultures. Your input and your experiences will provide me valuable input in understanding this topic. Some of the future benefits of this research include discovering different ways of understanding the varying cultures of public schools, and discovering if the physical environment has any impact on school culture and achievement. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you or to any other individuals as the result of this research and your participation in this study.

This study is in three parts. During the first part, you will be asked to participate in an initial group interview with other teachers from your school. The group interview, which will be held on a mutually agreed upon date during non-instructional time, should last approximately one hour. We will be holding this discussion on your campus with your principal's permission. At that time, I will also be showing you some photographs I have taken of your school and will be asking the group some questions. I will be making a digital audio recording of this group interview, but will not be including any teacher's or school's names in the dissertation.

For the second part of the study you will be asked to take pictures of any area of the school using a personal electronic device. If you do not have an electronic device with which to take pictures, a camera will be provided for you. For one week after the group meeting, I would like for you to take as many pictures as you'd like to "tell" me about your school. This can be any area of the school campus, and should be pictures of places or things that you find to be beautiful, ugly, interesting, etc. It is very important for you to remember that you not take pictures of people (e.g., students, parents, teachers, staff, etc.). You may email these digital pictures to me as jpeg files to: kenneth.goodwin@mavs.uta.edu. Feel free to email them intermittently or all at once.

The third and final part of the study is an individual interview between you and me where we will discuss the pictures you took during the week. This individual interview should last approximately 1 hour, and will also be held at your school during non-instructional hours. There will be no other research or school staff present. I will again be making a digital audio recording of this interview, but no personally identifying information will be used in the dissertation.

Though I am requesting your participation in the group and follow-up individual interview, you may participate in either or both parts. Additionally, you do not have to participate in the picture taking portion of the study. Your participation is voluntary, and should you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no consequences or loss of benefits to you or to anyone else.

The group and individual interviews will be recorded digitally. Along with the photographic images and "aesthetic journals", these recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet in the office of Dr. Colleen Casey at UTA in the School of Urban and Public Affairs, UH # 526. All data and research will be held in the strictest confidence, and findings from the data will not reference any individual names or include means of identification. Specific school names will not be used in the findings. Some digital photographs

will be used, but I will ask for your permission prior to their inclusion in the final reporting if one of your pictures is chosen for inclusion.

There are neither any costs, nor any compensation associated with participation in this study. Should any significant new findings or modifications occur that might affect your willingness to participate, you will be notified and will have the right to withdraw your consent for participation and the right to request that any data you have supplied be withheld from inclusion in the research with no subsequent consequences to you or to anyone else.

You may request a copy of the results of the study. My contact information is below. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form for your records.

Sincerely,

Kenneth C. Goodwin, PhD Candidate, Public and Urban Administration

School of Urban and Public Affairs

University of Texas- Arlington, 511 University Hall

601 S. Nedderman Drive

Arlington, Texas 76019

APPENDIX C

GROUP QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

(The following questions may not all be used in the group discussion, and are used as conversational and exploratory discussion topics. Some of these questions may be repeated during the individual interviews.)

RESEARCHER'S SCRIPT/INTRODUCTION:

We will be talking about the aesthetics and physical environment of your school. When I mention the word "aesthetics", I'd like you to think of the different experiences you have had with each of your five senses in the school.

I want you to think of the "physical environment" as any physical part of the entire school (your classrooms, the lounge, the office, the gym, etc.).

I will be taking some notes along the way. Also, I have taken some pictures of areas of the school which attracted my attention. (At this point, I will show the pictures of their school to the group and ask them if they have any reactions to the images).

GROUP INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS and TOPICS:

1) Describe how your school looks.

2) Tell me about any areas that you think are nice and pretty, ugly or disgusting, and safe or unsafe.

3) Describe parts of the physical environment you think of as comfortable or conducive to learning (for example, is there a courtyard area, a particular classroom arrangement, etc.?).

4) Tell me about any particular issues that concern you about the physical environment and why.

5) In what ways is it important to you the way your school looks?

6) Do students seem to care about the physical environment?

7) How does the physical environment of the school impact your job here (i.e., your ability to teach, student learning, student discipline, etc.)?

8) What kinds of things do you hear other staff saying about the way the school looks?

9) Tell me about changes you think could be made to the school and why.

10) How do you feel about your school?

11) How does this school compare to other places (schools or offices) where you have worked or visited in the past?

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW DISCUSSION TOPICS AND QUESTIONS

1) How long have you been teaching?

       a) How long at this particular school?

2) How does this school compare to other schools where you've taught?

3) When you go to other kinds of office or work spaces, what are some of the things you notice? For example, maybe the doctor's office, or the library, or your favorite store.

       Let's take a look at the pictures you took of your school. Talk to me about your experience in taking pictures.

4) What is it that you can share with me about the pictures you took?

5) Is there a picture of an area where you find yourself spending the most time?

       5a) Tell me about that space.

6) Are there pictures that show other places where you wish you could spend more time?

       6a) Tell me about that space.

7) Tell me about pictures of areas that you would like to see changed in some way.

       7a) In what way?

REFERENCES

Acer, Dilek, and Ömeroðlu, Esra. 2008. A Study of the Effect of Aesthetic Education on the Development of Aesthetic Judgment of Six-year-old Children. *Early Childhood Education* 35: 335-342.

Albert, David, and Levine, Daniel U. 1988. Teacher Satisfaction. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *65*(3): 47-58.

Allison, Graham. 1979. Public and Private Management: Are They Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects? *Proceedings of the Public Management Research Conference, November 19-20, 1979.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Personnel Management, OPM Document 127-53-1: 27-38.

Alonso, Pablo, and Lewis, Gregory B. 2001. Public Service Motivation and Job Performance: Evidence From the Federal Sector. *American Review of Public Administration*, *31*(4): 363-380.

Andrade, Antonio Díaz. 2009. Interpretive Research Aiming at Theory Building: Adopting and Adapting the Case Study Design. *The Qualitative Report*, *14*(1): 42-60.

Andrews, R.L., and Morefield, J. (1991). Effective Leadership for Effective Urban Schools. *Education and Urban Society*, *23*(3): 270-278.

Angers, Julie, and Machtmes, Krisanna. 2005. An Ethnographic-Case Study of Beliefs, Context Factors, and Practices of Teachers Integrating Technology. *The Qualitative Report*, *10*(4): 771-794.

Argyris, Chris. 1957. *Personality and Organization*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Argyris, Chris, and Schon, Donald. 1978. *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Astley, W. Graham, and Van de Ven, Andrew H. Central Perspectives and Debates in Organization Theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(2): 245-273.

Babbie, E.B. 2005. *The Basics of Social Science Research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Baldry, Chris, Bain, Peter, and Taylor, Phil. 1998. 'Bright Satanic Offices': Intensification, Control, and Team Taylorism. In *Workplaces of the Future*, eds. P. Thompson and C. Warhurst, 163-183. Basingstoke: Macmillan Business.

Ballantine, Jeanne H., and Spade, Joan Z., eds. 2004. *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*. Belmont, Ca.: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Barnard, Chester. 1938/1968. *The Functions of the Executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bateson, Gregory. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Chandler.

Berg, Per Olof, and Kreiner, Kristian. 1996. Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources. In *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*, ed. Pasquale Gagliardi, 41-67. Hawthorne, NY: Adline De Gruyter.

Behn, Robert D. 1998. The New Public Management Paradigm and the Search for Democratic
Accountability. *International Public Management Journal*, *1*(2): 131-164.

Berry, Barnett, and Hirsch, Eric. 2005. Issue Brief: Recruiting and Retaining Teachers for Hard-to-Staff
Schools. NGA Center for Best Practices.

Blumberg, Stephen K. 1981. Seven Decades of Public Administration: A Tribute to Luther Gulick. *Public
Administration Review*, *41*, March/April, 245-248.

Bonnes, Miliria, and Sechiarrolli, Gianfranco. 1995. *Environment Psychology*. London: Sage
Publications.

Booher-Jennings, Jennifer. 2005. Below the Bubble: "Educational Triage" and the Texas Accountability
System. *American Educational Research Journal*, *42*(2): 231-268.

Bozeman, Barry. 2007. *Public Values and Public Interest: Counterbalancing Economic Individualism*.
Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Brown, Kathleen M., Anfara, Vincent A., Jr., and Roney, Kathleen. 2004. Student Achievement in High
Performing, Suburban Middle Schools and Low Performing, Urban Middle Schools:
Plausible Explanations for the Differences. *Education and Urban Society*, *36*(4): 428-456.

Brulatour, Meg. *Background for the State of Education in New England: Post-Revolutionary War to Mid-
19th Century*. Retrieved March 14, 2011from:
http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/ideas/edhistory.html.

Buchanan, David A. 2001. The Role of Photography in Organization Research: A Reengineering Case
Illustration. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *10*(2): 151-164.

Chan, Wai-Yen, Lau, Shun, Nie, Youyan, Lim, Sandy, and Hogan, David. 2008. Organizational and
Personal Predictors of Teacher Commitment: The Mediating Role of Teacher Efficacy and
Identification With School. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*(3): 597-630.

Chandler, Ralph Clark, ed. 1987. *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State*. New
York, N.Y.: The Free Press.

Chubb, J.E., and Moe, T. 1990. *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*. Washington, D.C.:
Brookings Institute.

Cigler, Beverly A. 2000. A Sampling of Introductory Public Administration Texts. *Journal of Public Affairs
Education*, *6*(1): 45-53.

Crewson, Phillip. 1997. Public Service Motivation: Building Empirical Evidence of Incidence and Effect.
Journal of Public Administration, *7*(4): 499-518.

Daniel, Larry. 1990. *Operationalization of a Frame of Reference For Studying Organizational Culture in
Middle Schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Educational Research
Association, Austin, Texas, January 25-27, 1990.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. 2003. Keeping Good Teachers: Why It Matters, What Leaders Can Do.
Educational Leadership, *60*(8): 6-13.

Dean, James W., Ottensmeyer, Edward, and Ramirez, Rafael. 1997. An Aesthetic Perspective on Organizations. In *Creating Tomorrow's Organizations: A Handbook for Future Research in Organizational Behavior*, eds. C. L. Cooper and S.E. Jackson, 419-437. New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Denhardt, Robert. 2008. *Theories of Public Organization*, 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Denzin, Norman K., and Lincoln, Yvonna S., eds. 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, Norman K., and Lincoln, Yvonna S. 2008. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dewey, John. 1934. *Art As Experience*. New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group.

Dewey, John. 1938. *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

Dimock, Marshall E. 1936. The Meaning and Scope of Public Administration and Criteria and Objectives of Public Administration. In *The Frontiers of Public Administration*, eds. M. Gaus, Leonard D. White, and Marshall E. Dimock. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Earthman, Glen I. 2002. School Facility Conditions and Student Academic Achievement. *Williams Watch Series: Investigating the Claims of Williams v. State of California*. UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, UC Los Angeles.

Education Statistics Quarterly, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 2005. The Condition of Education 2005. *Crosscutting Statistics*, *7*(1): 1-9.

Eliot, Thomas H. 1959. Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics. *American Political Science Review*, *53*(4): 1032-1051.

Farr, Steven. 2010. *Teaching as Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Feistritzer, C. Emily. 1986. *Teacher Crisis: Myth or Reality: A State by State Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Information.

Finkelstein, Leonard B. Finland's Lessons. *Education Week*, *15*(7): 31.

Fleming, Peter, and Spicer, André. 2003. Working at a Cynical Distance: Implication for Power, Subjectivity, and Resistance. *Organization*, *10*(1): 157-179.

Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foley, Douglas, and Valenzuela, Angela. 2008. Critical Ethnography: The Politics of Collaboration. In *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed., eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 287-310. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Follett, Mary Parker. 1926. The Giving of Orders. In *Classics of Public Administration*, 6th ed. Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, (eds.), 2008. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Frederickson, H. George, and Smith, Kevin B. 2003. *The Public Administration Theory Primer: Essentials of Public Policy and Administration*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th ed. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.

Gagliardi, Pasquale. 1990. *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

Gagliardi, Pasquale. 1996. Exploring the Aesthetic Side of Organizational Life*.* In *Handbook of Organization Studies*, eds. Stewart R. Clegg, Cynthia Hardy, and Walter R. Nord, 565-580. London: Sage Publications.

Gallagher, Winnifred. 1993. *The Power of Place: How Our Surroundings Shape Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions*. New York: Poseidon Press.

Golafshani, Nahid. 2003. Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, *8*(4): 597-607.

Goleman, Daniel. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Gortner, Harold F., Mahler, Julianne, and Nicholson, Jeanne Belle. 1997. *Organization Theory: A Public Perspective*, 2nd ed. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Grant, Gerald, and Murray, Christine E. 1999. Teaching in America: The Slow Revolution. In *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*, eds. Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade Belmont, 93-101. CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Guarino, Cassandra M., Santibañez, Lucretia, and Daley, Glenn A. 2006. Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, *76*(2): 173-208.

Guillén, Mauro F. 1997. Scientific Management's Lost Aesthetic: Architecture, Organization, and the Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *42*(4): 682-715.

Gulick, Luther. 1937. Notes on the Theory of Organization. In *Papers on the Science of Administration*, eds. L. Gulick and L. Urwick, 3-13. New York, NY: Institute of Public Administration.

Harris, Peter. 2002. *Survey of California Teachers*. Rochester, NY: Peter Harris Research Group.

Hatch, J. Amos, 2002. *Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hatch, Mary Jo. 1996. The Symbolics of Office Design: An Empirical Exploration. In *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*, ed. Pasquale Gagliardi, 129-146. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

Hatch, Mary Jo, and Cunliffe, Ann L. 2006. *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Haycock, Kati. 2000. No More Settling For Less. *Thinking K-16*, *4*(1): 3-12.

Higgins, Steve, Hall, Elaine, Wall, Kate, Woolner, Pam, and McCaughey, Caroline. 2005. "The Impact of School Environments: A Literature Review". Report produced for The Centre for Learning and Teaching, School of Education, Communication and Language Science, University of Newcastle.

Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Horng, Eileen Lai. 2009. Teacher Tradeoffs: Disentangling Teachers' Preferences for Working Conditions and Student Demographics. *American Educational Research Journal*, *46*(3): 690-717.

Hoy, Wayne K. and Hannum, John W. 1997. Middle School Climate: An Empirical Assessment of Organizational Health and Student Achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *33*(3): 290-311.

Hujala, Anneli, and Rissanen, Sari. 2011. Organization Aesthetics in Nursing Homes. *Journal of Nursing Management*, *19*(4): 439-448.

Hulpia, Hester, and Devos, Geert. 2010. How Distributed Leadership Can Make a Difference in Teachers' Organizational Commitment: A Qualitative Study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(3): 565-575.

Hurworth, Rosalind. 2003. Photo-Interviewing for Research. *Social Research Update.* Retrieved July 23, 2012 from http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU40.html.

Ingersoll, Richard M. 1997. The Status of Teaching as a Profession. In *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*, eds. Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade, 102-116. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.

Jefferson, Thomas. Retrieved March 14, 2011 from the *Online Library of Liberty*: http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php?title=755&chapter=86186&layout=html&Itemid=27.

Johnson, Norris Brock. 1980. The Material Culture of Public School Classrooms: The Symbolic Integration of Local Schools and National Culture. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *11*(3): 173-190.

Johnson, Susan Moore, and Birkeland, Sarah E. 2003. Pursuing a "Sense of Success": New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions.

Kain, John F., and Singleton, Kraig. 1996, May/June. Equality of Educational Opportunity Revisited. *New England Economic Review*, 87-111.

Kelling, George, and Wilson, James Q. 1982. Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety. *The Atlantic*, March issue.

Kuhn, James. 1982. "Managing As an Art Form: The Aesthetics of Management". In *Proceedings of the General Education Seminar 11*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Langer, Suzanne K. 1942. *Philosophy In a New Key*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Lareau, Annette.2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, Ltd.

Lawler, E.E. 1973. *Motivation in Work Organizations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York, NY: The Russell Sage Foundation.

Lincoln, Yvonne S., and Guba, Egon G. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Loeb, Susanna, Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Luczak, John. 2005. How Teaching Conditions Predict Teacher Turnover in California Schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *80*(3): 44-70.

March, James, and Olsen, Johan, eds. 1979. *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*. Bergen, Norway: Universitestsforlaget.

Martin, Joanne. 1992. *Cultures in Organizations: Three Perspectives*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Martin, Patricia Yancey. (2002) Sensations, Bodies, and the 'Spirit of a Place': Aesthetics in Residential Organizations for the Elderly. *Human Relations, 55*(7): 861-885.

Maslow, A.H. 1943. A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*: 370-396.

Mathieu, John E. 1992. A Cross-Level Nonrecursive Model of the Antecedents of Organizational Commitment and Satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76: 607-618.

Metcalf, Henry C., and L. Urwick, eds. 1940. *Dynamic Administration: Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*. New York: Harper & Row.

Meyer, John W., and Rowan, Brian. 1978. The Structure of Educational Organizations. In *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education,* eds. Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade Belmont, 201-212. CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Miller, Dale T., and Norman, Stephen A. 1975. Actor-Observer Differences in Perceptions of Effective Control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *33*(2): 503-515.

Moore, Mark H. 1993. *Accounting for Change: Reconciling the Demands for Accountability and Innovation in the Public Sector*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Excellence in Government.

Morgan, G. 1980. Paradigms, Metaphors and Puzzle Solving in Organization Theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25: 605-622.

Mosher, Frederick C. 1982. *Democracy and the Public Service*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Moynihan, Donald P., and Pandey, Sanjay K. 2007, January/February. The Role of Organizations in Fostering Public Service Motivation. *Public Administration Review*, 40-53.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1997. America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-1994. Washington, D.C.: The U.S. Department of Education.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. 1983. A Nation At Risk.

Nissley, Nick, Taylor, Steven S., and Butler, Orville. 2003. The Power of Organizational Song: An Organizational Discourse and Aesthetic Expression of Organizational Culture. In *Art and Aesthetics at Work*, eds. Adrian Carr and Phillip Hancock, 93-114. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Odden, Allan R. *Strategic Management of Human Capital in Education: Improving Instructional Practice and Student Learning in Schools.* New York: Routledge.

Ornstein, Allan C. 1994. School Finance and the Condition of Schools. *Theory into Practice*, *33*(2): 118-125.

Ostroff, Cheri. 1992. The Relationship Between Satisfaction, Attitudes, and Performance: An Organizational Level Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *77*(6): 963-974.

O'Toole, Jr., Laurence J., and Meier, Kenneth J. 2003. Plus ça Change: Public Management, Personnel Stability, and Organizational Performance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *13*(1): 43-64.

Ott, J. Steven. 1989. *The Organizational Culture Perspective*. Belmont, CA: Dorsey Press.

Ottensmeyer, Edward J. (1996) 'Too Strong to Stop, Too Sweet to Lose: Aesthetics as a Way to   Know Organizations', *Organization* 3(2): 189-194.

Owens, Robert G., and Valesky, Thomas C. (2007). *Organizational Behavior in Education*: *Adaptive Leadership and School Reform*, 9th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Park, Robert E., and Burgess, Ernest W. 1925. *The City: Suggestions For Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Parrott, W. Gerrod. 2001. *Emotions in Psychology*: *Essential Readings*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Patton, Michael Q. 1990. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pelzer, Peter. 2002. Disgust and Organization. *Human Relations* 55(7): 841-860.

Perry, James L., and Hondeghem, Annie. 2008. Building Theory and Empirical Evidence About Public Service Motivation. *International Public Management Journal*, *11*(1): 3-12.

Perry, James L., and Wise, Lois Recascino. 1990. The Motivational Bases of Public Service. *Public Administration Review*, *50*(3): 367-373.

Plank, Stephen, Bradshaw, Catherine, P., and Young, Hollie. 2008. An Application of "Broken-Windows" and Related Theories to the Study of Disorder, Fear, and Collective Efficacy in Schools. *American Journal of Education*, 115 (February 2009).

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Raffel, Jeffrey. 2007, January/February. Why Has Public Administration Ignored Public Education, and Does It Matter? *Public Administration Review*, 135-151.

Rainey, Hal G., Backoff, Robert W., and Levine, Charles N. 1976. Comparing Public and Private Organizations. *Public Administration Review*,

Rosenblatt, Louise M. (1986) 'The Aesthetic Transaction', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 20(4): 122-128.

Ross, John A., and Gray, Peter. 2006. School Leadership and Student Achievement: The Mediating Effects of Teacher Beliefs. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *29*(3): 798-822.

Rumburger, Russell W., and Palardy, Gregory J. (2005). 'Test Scores, Dropout Rates, and Transfer Rates as Alternative Indicators of High School Performance', *American Education Research Journal* 42(1): 3-42.

Saldaña, Johnny. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Samier, Eugenie. 2007. Editor's Introduction "Art-Full" Government: On the Aesthetics of Politics and Public Administration. *Halduskultuur*, 8: 4-13.

Sandelands, Lloyd E., and Buckner, Georgette C. 1989. Of Art and Work: Aesthetic Experience and the Psychology of Work Feelings. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 11: 105-131.

Schein, Edgar H. 1984. Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture. *Sloan Management Review*, *25*(4): 3-16.

Schein, Edgar H. 1985. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Scott, George A. 2011. Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives: Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Federal Teacher Quality Programs. *United States General Accounting Office*.

Shafritz, Jay M., and Ott, J. Steven, eds. 1987. *Classics of Organization Theory*, 2nd ed. Chicago: The Dorsey Press.

Shafritz, Jay M., and Hyde, Albert C. *Classics of Public Administration*, 6th ed. 2008. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Sherwood, Frank P. 1990. The Half-Century's "Great Books" in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review*, *50*(2): 249-264.

Siler, Amy. 2009. How Does Beauty Matter? An Exploration of Employee Perceptions of Office Aesthetics. PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Simon, Herbert. 1946. The Proverbs of Administration. *Public Administration Review*.

Smylie, Mark A. 1988. The Enhancement Function of Staff Development: Organizational and Psychological Antecedents to Individual Teacher Change. *American Educational Research Journal*, *25*(1): 1-30.

Spradley, James P. 1980. *Participant Observation*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanavich.

Steele, Fred I. 1973. *Physical Settings and Organization Development*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Steijn, Bram. 2008. Person-Environment Fit and Public Service Motivation. *International Public Management Journal*, *11*(1): 13-27.

Stillman, Richard J., II. 1999. *Preface to Public Administration: A Search for Themes and Direction*, 2nd ed. Burke, VA: Chatelaine Press.

Strati, Antonio. 2000. The Aesthetic Approach in Organization Studies. In *The Aesthetics of Organizing*, eds. Stephen Linstead and Heather Höpfl. London: Sage Publications.

Strati, Antonio. 1999. *Organization and Aesthetics*. London: Sage Publications.

Strati, Antonio, and de Montoux, Pierre Guillet. 2002. Introduction: Organizing Aesthetics. *Human Relations*, *55*(7): 755-766.

Stuebing, Susan, Celsi, Jacqui G., and Cosuineau,Leslie Knox. 1994. *Environments That Support New Modes of Learning: The Results of Two Interactive Design Workshops*. Cupertino, CA: Apple Computer.

Taylor, Jeanette. 2008. Organizational Influences, Public Service Motivation and Work Outcomes: An Australian Study. *International Public Management Journal*, *11*(1): 67-88.

Taylor, Steven S. 2002. Overcoming Aesthetic Muteness: Researching Organizational Members' Aesthetic Experience. *Human Relations*, *55*(7): 821-840.

Taylor, Steven S., & Hansen, Hans. 2005. Finding Form: Looking at the Field of Organizational Aesthetics. *Journal of Management Studies*, *42*(6):1211-1231.

Terry, Loretta A., and Kristonis, William Allan. 2008. A National Issue: Whether Teacher Turnover Effects Students' Academic Performance? *Doctoral Forum: National Journal for Publishing and Mentoring Doctoral Student Research*, *5*(1): 1-5.

Tessmer, Martin, and Richey, Rita C. 1997. The Role of Context in Learning and Instructional Design. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *45*(2): 85-115.

Tyack, David. 1974. *The One Best System: A History of Urban American Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tyack, David, and Cuban, Larry. 1995. *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Vaill, Peter B. 1989. *Managing as a Performing Art*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Warren, Samantha. 2008. Empirical Challenges in Organizational Aesthetics Research: Towards a Sensual Methodology. *Organization Studies*, *29*(4): 559-580.0

Wasserman, Varda, and Frenkel, Michal. 2011. Organizational Aesthetics: Caught Between Identity Regulation and Culture Jamming. *Organization Science*, *22*(2): 503-521.

Weber, Max. 1922. *Wirtschaft und Gesellshcaft. Grunriß der Verstehenden Soziologie*. Tübingen: Mohr. (English translation: *Economy and Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

Weick, Karl. 1969. *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Wenglinsky, Harold. 1997. How Money Matters: The Effect of School District Spending on Academic Achievement. *Sociology of Education*, *70*(3): 221-237.

White, David A. (1996) 'It's Working Beautifully!': Philosophical Reflections on Aesthetics and Organization Theory. *Organization* 3(2): 195-208.

White, Leonard. 1926. *The Study of Public Administration*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice- Hall.

White, Sally. 1972. Physical Criteria for Adult Learning Environments. *Adult Education Association of U.S.A.,* Washington, D.C. Commission on Planning Adult Learning Systems.

Wilson, Woodrow. 1887. The Study of Administration. *Political Science Quarterly*, 2.

Wolcott, Harry F. 1994. *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Woolner, Pamela, Hall, Elaine, Higgins, Steve, McCaughey, Caroline, and Wall, Kate. 2007. A Sound Foundation? What We Know About the Impact of Environments on Learning and the Implications for Building Schools for the Future. *Oxford Review of Education*, *33*(1): 47-70.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Kenneth Goodwin is a principal with the Fort Worth Independent School District. He has had an educational career that spans two decades in several different North Texas districts, in addition to a brief sojourn in Brooklyn, New York. As a bilingual teacher, Kenneth has observed the specific needs that non-English speaking students have in a school environment that is an inviting space to discover new cultures as well as new content.

Kenneth was a graduate of the Episcopal School of Dallas. After attending the University of Southern California, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in history with a minor in Spanish, Kenneth returned to his native Dallas, where he began his career in education. Attending Texas A&M-Commerce, Kenneth earned a Masters of Education, and has been in public school administration since that time.

Future research interests for Kenneth include exploring a variety of areas regarding school culture and climate, which also includes further investigation into the aesthetic approach to understand how students and staff experience the life of a school, university, college, and so forth. Additionally, Kenneth will also be pursuing the publication of his research regarding an aesthetic view of public schools.

Personal and professional goals for Kenneth include working at the college level in the area of public administration, focusing on teacher and administrator preparation.