

This record shows the sequence of communications and consent forms I used for the *Class Acts* study. They are as follows:

Page	Communication
2	Letter of inquiry to school principals or district research committees, which always followed an initial telephone inquiry
3-4	Letter to teachers in the school asking them to participate
5	Follow-up letter asking teachers to fill out a survey
6.	Consent form teachers filled out
7.	Appeal to UCRIHS. UCRIHS said I needed to get parent consent for every child in every classroom we would visit because of the videotaping. I appealed. This is the argument I made. They accepted it.
8-9	Parent consent form we agreed to, used only when participating districts required it. Notice that the form makes <u>no promises</u> that their child will not be on the videotape.
10	Information to be said aloud to students when we entered the classroom
11	Instructions to teachers once we had finished taping, to help them prepare for the interview. Tells them what to look for as they review the tape and decide what events they'd like to discuss in the interview.
12.	Videotape consent form, given to teachers <u>after the taping and after the interview</u> , giving them control over the disposition of the tape.

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

May 4, 1999

[Principal, Elementary School]

Dear Ms -----;

Thank you for spending time with me on the telephone this afternoon. I am enclosing materials here that you can give to all of your third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers if you so choose.

As I said, our study aims to learn more about the moment-to-moment reasoning that teachers use as they make their way through their interactions with students. We have found that this is easiest to do when a lesson is videotaped, so that teachers can refer to the tape and re-construct what was happening. We have also found, though, that many teachers are self conscious about being videotaped. I hope you will emphasize in your conversations with them that our primary interest is in the interview, not in the videotape per se.

This study does not require long-term commitments from teachers. Each would be interviewed just once, about a particular lesson. The enclosed letters lay out in more detail what each teachers' participation would consist of.

As to the best time to visit, I think this should be up to you and the teachers. I know most teachers have too many other things on their mind toward the end of the school year, and again at the beginning of a new school year. So I am assuming we should either come in late May, well before year-end, or wait until late August, well after next year begins. Perhaps you and your teachers can guide us on this decision.

Sincerely,

COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION

Department of
Teacher Education
Michigan State University
116 Erickson Hall
East Lansing MI
48823-1034

Mary M. Kennedy
Professor and Study Director

Ph: 517/432-5549
Fax: 517/432-5092
mkennedy@pilot.msuedu

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

March 25, 1999

Dear [group of teachers at a school] ;

We are doing a study of teacher reasoning and would like you to participate in our study. We are trying to learn how teachers make decisions about their classroom practices, and your school has come to our attention as one we could learn a lot from. The study focuses on upper elementary teachers and we hope you will participate. In appreciation for your contributions to the study, we will provide you with a \$60.00 honorarium.

The *Class Acts Study* seeks to identify important moments in teaching, to learn how teachers make decisions about these moments, and to learn how teachers have developed their strategies over time. It is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Our main reason for wanting to do this study is that we believe most people underestimate what is involved in teaching. Students who enter our teacher education programs often have naive ideas about the field they are choosing, and policy makers often don't realize the variety of things teachers need to think about.

We would like to videotape a lesson of yours, and then interview you about what you did during the lesson. The particular lesson can be selected at your convenience. It should be a relatively typical lesson, rather than something special, and should be one in which you will feel comfortable being videotaped. Once we finish taping, we will give you a copy of the tape to view yourself, prior to the interview.

We expect the interview itself will last about two hours, and it too can be scheduled at your convenience. During the interview, we will focus on a few episodes, some of which you select and some of which we select. We merely want something to talk about that can help us understand your thinking about teaching. The interview will be relatively unstructured, allowing you to say whatever you think is relevant, but we will try to address at least the following main questions:

- What you saw, and how you interpreted events at that moment
- Why you chose to do what you did, and whether you considered any alternatives;

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mkernedy@pilot.msu.edu

- Whether you would have done this differently at some earlier point in your career; and
- If so, what experiences you had that prompted you to change your methods.

It is customary in research studies to keep participants' identities confidential. This means that, once we begin summarizing our findings and writing research reports, we will use pseudonyms to refer to anyone we quote. Since this study involves videotaping as well, we will give you the right to determine the fate of the videotape. That is, you can decide if you want a copy, if you want it destroyed, if you feel it would be all right for us to refer to it as long as we don't share it with others, etc. There is a possibility that we might want to use an illustrative videotape to present our findings at a conference, or that we will want to use a videotape in a teacher-education course, to help our teacher candidates learn some of the nuances of teaching, but we will not do so without your prior consent.

The first step to participation in the study is to read and sign the enclosed consent form, indicating your willingness to participate. You can return it to us in the enclosed envelope.

If your school district requires parental consent for videotaping, we also include parent consent forms with this letter. In this case, the next step will be for you to send these consent forms to parents and obtain their consent for their children to be videotaped.

After all the paperwork is completed, the next step will be our visit to your school. We are hoping to visit your school in mid-May. If you agree to participate, you may select the times during that week that works best for you to be videotaped and to be interviewed.

Again, we hope you will agree to participate in this study. We have heard good things about your school, and believe we can learn a lot from you.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Kennedy
Study Director

Rachel Lander
Research Associate

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

Dear [teacher who has agreed to participate]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Class Acts Study. We have scheduled our visit for -----.

In preparation for our visit, I wonder if you would mind filling out the brief questionnaire enclosed. This will give us just a bit of standardized information on each participating teacher. If you could do this some time before I visit, I will be able to pick it up at the time of our interview.

Thanks again for your help. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

[The person actually scheduled to interview you.]

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MICHIGAN STATE **UNIVERSITY**

Research Participation Consent Form

The *Class Acts Study* seeks to identify important moments in teaching, to learn how teachers make decisions about these moments, and to learn how teachers formed their ideas. The study is being conducted by researchers at Michigan State University, with financial support from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

We hope you will agree to allow us to observe one of your lessons and to interview you about your teaching practice. Participation in the study will involve three steps:

- (A) We will interview you before we visit your classroom to get an orientation to the lesson we will be observing;
- (B) We will videotape the lesson we observe; and give you a copy of the tape to view;
- (C) We will interview you again after the lesson and ask you about the reasoning behind the things you did. This interview will take about 2 hours.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and we will provide you with a \$60.00 honorarium in appreciation for your time. All of your conversations with us will be confidential. If you are quoted in any research report, we will give you a pseudonym. If an occasion arises where we want to show the videotape to someone outside of our research project, we will seek your separate permission to do so.

For further Information
Contact:

Mary Kennedy

**COLLEGE OF
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Department of
Teacher Education

Michigan State University
116 Erickson Hall
East Lansing MI
48823-1034

Ph: 517/432-5549
Fax: 517/432-5092

mkennedy@pilot.msu.edu

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions described above.

Signature _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone # _____

Social Security Number _____

e-mail address _____

For more information about human subjects research, contact David Wright, Chair,
University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (517) 355-2180

January 12, 1999

TO: David Wright, Chair
University Committee on Research involving Human Subjects

From: Mary Kennedy

Re: **IRB # 98502:** *Response to questions from UCRIHS reviewers*

I am very hesitant to establish an active consent procedure for all parents whose children participating in these classrooms, for several reasons.

1. Students are not subjects in this study. Their comments and questions will not be examined or analyzed in any way. In fact, children's voices are amazingly tiny and, since they will be facing away from the camera, it is likely their voices will not even register on the tape.
2. The camera will not be focusing on students. It will be placed in the back of the classroom and will focus on the teacher. The study is about what *teachers* do in their classrooms, not what *students* do.
3. The data of interest are teacher comments about *why* they did what they did, not on *what* they did per se. That is, the main purpose of the videotape is to stimulate the teachers' recall of the lesson so that they can describe their rationale for particular actions they took. The lesson itself is not of interest except as the basis for the interview.
4. The content of the videotapes will not be sensitive in any way. The events will involve ordinary lessons in mathematics, language arts, or science in upper elementary-school classrooms.
5. Classroom activities are, in a sense, already public activities, visible to all participants. No private data, such as interview, questionnaire, or tests, will be gathered directly from any student.
6. We, the researchers, will not know the names of any of the students, nor their

addresses, nor will we be able to link the videotaped data to any other information about them from questionnaires, interviews or tests, or even demographic data.

7. Obtaining active consent from parents is an extremely time-consuming and burdensome task for teachers. Often multiple letters must be sent home, teachers need to keep track of all of the requests and the returns, and may need to call parents in the evenings to follow up on letters. If teachers are required to do this to participate in this study, many will decline because of the added burden this presents to them, thus threatening the generalizability of the sample. Since teachers will be located throughout the country, so that we cannot easily do this for them. Even if we could, it would be burdensome for them to produce a complete list of names, addresses and telephone numbers for us, as teachers don't normally have this kind of information on their students.

8. Four of the five UCRIHS reviewers apparently approved of the study as originally submitted. Moreover, as I understand the review process, this proposal needed only two reviewers since it involves (a) normal educational practices and (d) observation of public behavior.

I am asking you to reconsider your objection, in light of the arguments raised above, and approve of the procedures as originally presented, which stipulate that: (a) we acquire active consent from teachers, who are the subjects of the research, (b) we acquire consent from parents, whose students are *not* subjects of the study, only when school district policy requires it, and (c) in the event that we desire to show the videotape to anyone who is not a member of the research team, we will seek active consent from both teacher and parents.

Attached is an active consent form for parents that will replace the passive consent form originally submitted. Also attached is an assent script that will be used to inform students about the project.

Thank you for considering this appeal.

Active Consent form for Parents:

Dear Parent:

Your child's teacher has been selected to participate in a national study of teaching expertise. The *Class Acts Study* seeks to learn how good teachers make decisions as they are teaching, and to learn how they developed their ideas about teaching. The study is being conducted by researchers at Michigan State University, with financial support from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

As part of this study, your child's classroom will be videotaped. The videotapes are primarily for purposes of research and will not be shared with anyone outside the research project without the teacher's and your prior consent. We plan to discuss the videotape with the teacher, so that we can learn how he or she made particular decisions throughout a lesson.

We do not wish to include your child in the videotape without your consent. Please indicate below whether you agree or not to this videotaping, and return the form to your child's teacher. If you do not consent, we will make every effort to assure that your child does not appear on the videotape, and if by chance your child does appear on a portion of the tape, we will not use that segment of the tape in our research.

I **agree** to having my child, _____, appear in this videotape.

I **do not agree** to having my child, _____, appear on any videotapes made as part of this study.

Signature _____

Relationship to child _____

Date _____

Assent Script for Students:

Hello. My name is _____ and I am a researcher from Michigan State University. We are conducting a study of good teachers, and your teacher, [name] _____ has been chosen to be in our study because she is a good teacher. We want to learn more about how good teachers work. To do that, we will videotape a [math, reading, etc] _____ lesson in your classroom today. Then, later on, we can talk to [the teacher] _____ about what she/he was doing and how she/he planned out the lesson.

The camera will be in the back of the room, and we will be very quiet so that we won't disturb you during the lesson. When we are finished, we will quietly sneak out. We will talk to [the teacher] _____ later on, after school.

How many say it is OK to do this?

How many say no?

[Camera angles will be arranged to avoid students who dissent or whose parents dissent]

Viewing the Tape

When viewing the videotape, be sure to have a pencil and paper handy for notes, and be sure to have the tape counter showing, so that you can write down the counter times associated with your notes or thoughts. (Press the "display" button in the upper left corner of the control panel)

In preparation for the interview, try to select a couple of episodes that were interesting or important to you. These might be times when --something unexpected happened; --you suddenly had an insight about what was going on, --you were unsure about what to do next; or --you realize something now, in retrospect, that you didn't think of at the time.

In the meantime, I will also watch the tape and will select some episodes to ask you about. Mine may be harder for you to talk about because they may refer to actions that were more automatic or that seemed obvious to you.

Expect the interview to last about two hours, so that we have ample time to talk about both of our lists of events.

Deck Control

To open the deck, press the black horizontal button on the front of the deck, and pull the lid up.

Try not to touch the viewing panel, and try not to lift the deck by the lid, because the hinges aren't intended to carry that much weight.

Playback Control

The main operating buttons are the same as on any tape player: forward, reverse, play and stop. Browse through the tape in any way you wish.

In the upper left corner of the control panel is a "display" button. Press this button to display the tape counter.

In the upper right of the control panel is a "pause" button. Pressing this button will stop the tape momentarily, and pressing it a second time will begin the play again. This might be handy when you want to write yourself a note.

Sound Control

The volume control is in the lower right corner of the control panel.

If you can't hear, there is also a speaker which plugs into the headphone jack on right side of the deck.

(There is a diagram of a headphone above this jack)

Videotape Usage Consent Form

Please check all that apply:

With respect to the videotape made of my teaching on _____,

(date)

I want a copy of the tape for my own use

I prefer that all of MSU's copies of the tape be destroyed and not used in the research study or for any other purpose.

I give my permission to use the tape for research.

I give my permission to use the tape for presentational or educational purposes.

In any case, I understand that this tape will not be copied or distributed to others and that it will not be used for commercial purposes.

Signature _____

Date _____