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Effects of Elementary Teacher Preparation and Support on Retention

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by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

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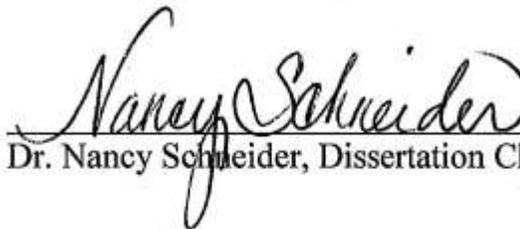
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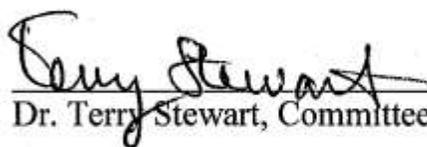
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Abstract

With the start of every school year, new teachers enter classrooms across our country filled with excitement surrounding the impact they hope to have on students. Some teachers discover that teaching at the elementary level can often times involve more than teaching and loving children. The expectations, demands, and time constraints put on new teachers can become overwhelming and even lead some to leave the field of education early on in their career.

In regards to the teacher attrition rate, this study identified reasons why so many aspiring and newly employed elementary teachers leave their chosen profession so early in the game. The research also identified factors that encourage new teachers to remain in the classroom.

This active research focused on students enrolled at or recently graduated from the Lindenwood University Education Program in St. Charles, Missouri. The researcher studied soon to be and newly hired teachers in order to identify connections or disconnects between the perceptions of becoming a teacher as compared to the reality of the actual job. The qualitative study, over a span of three years, analyzed the results of both surveys and interviews that were developed by the researcher. Findings focused on teacher frustration and satisfaction in respect to both university preparation and school/district support.

The key areas that called for attention by beginning teachers included: 1) the need for more time to plan, communicate, handle additional responsibilities, and learn curriculum and resources, 2) the need for support including a mentor and grade level team to collaborate with along with a principal to connect with, 3) more training on how

to teach and support special needs students and implement accommodations, 4) encouragement to overcome a dissolving sense of self-fulfillment, and 5) the need for strategies to efficiently handle responsibilities beyond teaching curriculum that take time from teaching such as supervision, meetings, parent communications, and more. Recommendations call for, first and foremost, ways to provide more time for dedicated new teachers to do the job well.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Quality teachers are key to a productive and successful society and essential to the continual improvement of individual achievement in all walks of life (Gardner, 2010). The need for good teachers is greater than ever as the number of students has increased nationally by 2.6 million since 2000, reaching 49.8 million in the year 2013 (Bock, 2015). Total public school enrollment is projected to continue increasing to 52.9 million by the year 2025 (U.S. Department of Education, 2012-13). The negative statistics on teacher attrition has been identified as the highest of any professional occupation nationally and it has become challenging to consistently provide students throughout the country with excellent teachers as a result (Bartlett, 2004; Bock, 2015). The available literature addressed both large cities and some smaller, rural communities throughout the country.

The research indicated that the issue of teacher retention has been problematic for the past 20 years and remains unresolved. In the business world, profit-based companies would not allow such an obvious problem to continue long term. Such negligence would be fiscally irresponsible and result in a less than quality product; while the education business is not profit based, it must be fiscally responsible and insist on a quality product – the highly educated child. The long-standing problem of teachers leaving their profession early on must be resolved (Bock, 2015). It was within this context regarding the teacher attrition rate that this study intended to identify reasons why so many aspiring and newly employed teachers, specifically at the elementary level, leave their chosen profession so early in the game.

This active research focused specifically on students who were enrolled in the Lindenwood University Education Program in St. Charles, Missouri. Also included as participants in the research were newly employed teachers who had recently graduated from Lindenwood and had gained employment as elementary classroom teachers in St. Charles County school districts. The time frame for this active research covered the duration of the student teacher practicum for one cohort and the duration of the first year in the classroom as newly hired teachers for the other cohort.

The research participants in Cohort A were made up of Lindenwood education students and were surveyed at the onset of the practicum or student teaching experience and at the completion of the practicum. These participants were also interviewed after the completion of their student teaching. The study also covered Lindenwood graduates who made up Cohort B throughout their first year of classroom teaching. The first year teachers were surveyed at the onset of their employment and at the completion of their first year in the classroom. Cohort B participants were also individually interviewed at the end of their first year teaching experience. The study gleaned perspectives both prior to and upon completion of these two experiences.

Educators and researchers throughout the nation concur that it is critical to have high quality teachers in the nation's classrooms preparing children to be productive, successful, and contributing members of society and that the concern over teacher attrition is real (Bock, 2015). The review of related literature pointed to an ongoing problem in the field of education - teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching even though their personal aspirations and higher education focus has been devoted to a career in education (Bobeck, 2002).

The literature addressed the need for quality educators as well as concerns related to the high attrition rate of those in the teaching profession. It offered reasons why individuals aspire to and pursue teaching as their career choice. The literature identified levels of effectiveness within college level teacher preparation programs and the impact, positive or negative, that these programs may have on aspiring teachers in preparing them for their first job as a classroom teacher. Additionally, the effectiveness of national, state, and district level teacher induction programs was addressed in the literature – with a specific look at the kind of support provided for and deemed necessary for beginning teachers to build confidence in their craft and arrive at job satisfaction. Finally, the review of literature included information that documents why teachers choose to leave the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

Statistics presented throughout the literature supported the goal of this study which was to identify factors impacting the career decisions of Lindenwood's teacher candidates during their practicum experience and also of Lindenwood teacher education graduates during their first year of teaching. Specifically the study looked to identify actual experiences that positively impacted the candidates and graduates to remain in their career of choice and likewise to identify experiences that negatively impacted Lindenwood teacher candidates and graduates in their decision to choose a different career path. Due to the need to recruit and retain quality teachers in elementary school classrooms, this researcher determined that it is important to identify why many new teachers do not continue with their career choice and why some do not continue even beyond the teacher candidate experience of their chosen career.

While it is important that the national concern regarding teacher attrition rate be addressed, the purpose of this study was more specific and narrow in its logistics. In order to understand why both the teacher candidates and the newly employed teachers hold fast to or change their perspectives, it was necessary to continue the research over an extended period of time. Only by extending the study over this time frame could accurate and useful data be obtained regarding perspectives before the job and perspectives once in the classroom.

Research Questions

The research questions that evolved from the review of literature are two-part in that the questions addressed the impact of both perception and reality for both teacher candidates and first year teachers.

RQ 1: (Regarding Cohort A) Do Lindenwood University teacher candidates find that their perceptions of student teaching, prior to the teacher candidate experience, align with the actual job requirements as experienced during the student teacher practicum, and do these findings negatively or positively impact the decision to remain in the profession?

The researcher answered this two-part question by interacting with participants via surveys and personal interviews, over an extended period, both before and after their student teacher practicum experience.

RQ 2: (Regarding Cohort B) Do newly employed Lindenwood education graduates, as first year teachers, find that their prior perceptions of classroom teaching align with their current reality and the actual job requirements, and do these findings negatively or positively impact their decision to remain in their chosen profession?

The researcher answered this two-part question by interacting with the participants via surveys and personal interviews, over an extended period of time prior to and during the first year of employment. The researcher analyzed changing perspectives regarding preparation and support of the teacher candidates and of the first year teachers included in the study. The researcher drew conclusions and made recommendations based on the data gathered over time.

The study looked at qualitative data including the results of both surveys and interviews that were developed by the researcher in an effort to address the guiding questions. The information obtained focused on aspiring and newly employed teacher satisfaction in respect to both university preparation and school/district support. A key goal of this project was to identify qualitative yet specific findings that point to cause and or result of teacher success and satisfaction, or lack of success and satisfaction, among Lindenwood Elementary Education students and newly hired teachers.

Having identified common reasons for success, or lack of success, the data was then utilized to recommend strategies for both educating student teachers and for supporting first year teachers toward success. Information gleaned not only by identifying areas of potential improvement but also areas of strength on which to build could lead to the development of improvement plans for Lindenwood University's teacher education program and the ability to capitalize on strong points within the program.

Results of the research could bring to light the unmet needs of both teacher candidates and newly hired teachers. The knowledge of such needs, when shared with hiring districts, could lead to positive changes in both teacher preparation and in new

teacher support programs. The information could potentially result in a strong

collaborative effort within Lindenwood University and area school districts to insure an

increasingly accurate picture of the academic, instructional, clerical, personal, and

emotional responsibilities of the newly hired classroom teacher. Collaboration regarding

identified challenge areas and points of strength could benefit both institutions – the

college that prepares educators and the schools that hire those educators. Both

institutions, of course, have the same long-term goal, which is to retain good teachers and

to ensure the best possible education for area children.

        As a principal in an elementary school within St. Louis County, Missouri, this

researcher had a personal interest in identifying the satisfaction and success of new

teachers and a personal and professional interest in seeking out solutions to ensure the

retention of new hires. As the review of literature supported, the success of newly hired

educators ultimately impacts the success of students, the ultimate goal of all educators.

Shedding light on data that could provide insight regarding needed support during

beginning teacher experiences would be beneficial to administrators, teachers, and most

importantly students. A proposed intention of the project was to provide insight to

Lindenwood University, potentially other area universities, and area school districts so

they might ensure that aspiring new educators are equipped to achieve personal

satisfaction and success in their chosen career in order to provide the best possible

education for the students they serve. The intended goal of this active research was also

that the findings of the project might benefit teacher trainers, teacher candidate

supervisors, teacher employers, and of course newly hired teachers and area students.

Overview of Methodology

Literature over the past 15 years suggested that expectations regarding a career in education might differ from the reality of the actual career (Ingersoll, 2013). Success and satisfaction within the teacher candidate experience is a strong indicator that newly employed teachers continue to improve and experience positive life-long careers in education (Hare & Heap, 2001). In support of this concept, the study collected qualitative data from a group of aspiring elementary teachers as they entered their teacher candidate experience at Lindenwood University. The research participants in this group were identified as Cohort A. Participants of Cohort A were followed from the onset of teacher candidate training through the culmination of that training. The study also collected qualitative data from a group of research participants who had earned a degree in Elementary Education from Lindenwood University and been hired by area school districts. The participants in this group were identified as Cohort B. This group was followed from the culmination of the teacher candidate training through the first year of employment.

All participants of the study completed two surveys and a random selection of participants was personally interviewed by the researcher. Initial survey questions provided opportunity for the researcher to qualitatively identify the cause for and influence on aspiring teachers to choose the field of education. Furthermore, the follow-up survey and interviews identified participants' perceptions regarding the actual responsibility of their chosen career. The study compared responses of teacher candidates (Cohort A) and beginning teachers (Cohort B), to determine if and why their perceptions regarding a career in education remained the same or changed as they

progressed through the process of becoming a classroom teacher and continuing in that

chosen field.

Methodological Limitations

The scope of the study was limited in several ways. The literature pointed out

that the majority of departing teachers leave the profession within the first five years.

The timeframe of this study did not cover five years. Following the student teachers

during their preparation, graduation, and throughout the first five years in the classroom

would have provided a more accurate insight regarding specific concerns causing

teachers to remain in or leave the profession. Future studies that include additional

cohorts over a five-year, extended period of time would result in more detailed and

helpful findings.

Additionally, the study was limited in that it only involved students from

Lindenwood University who had been hired by area school districts. There was no state

or nationwide sampling of student teachers or new teachers. Other limitations that the

study did not take into account included the many differences in practicum assigned

schools or hiring districts. It also was limited in that it did not consider specifics such as

school demographics, differences in instructional mentors, type of mentor teachers (both

content and grade specific), and amount and type of administrative support provided.

These factors could change from year to year or school to school for each participating

individual and could of course negatively or positively impact teacher satisfaction and the

ultimate job success rate. Even with the innate limitations of the study acknowledged,

the active research did bring to the forefront very real challenges for improved teacher

training and support and very real areas of strength. Such clear results could be useful to both Lindenwood University and to local school districts.

Definition of Key Terms

       Aspiring Teachers – Aspiring teachers includes those college level students who are presently enrolled in education course work prior to the actual teacher candidate/student teacher experience (Kyriacou, & Coulthard, 2000).

       Educator Attrition – Educator attrition is that rate at which the professional educator exits his or her classroom and chooses to leave the chosen profession (Luekens et al., 2004).

       New Teacher – A new teacher includes the Lindenwood graduate who is newly hired and in a first through second year employment position within a school district as a classroom teacher (McIntyre, 2003).

       Student Teacher Class – In this study, the student teacher is one who is enrolled in a 12-hour course, having completed 118 hours of prior course work, to prepare for and participate in the Lindenwood University teacher candidate/student teacher experience (Bice, 2013).

       Teacher Candidate – Teacher candidates (sometimes referred to as student teachers) are those assigned to a local school, grade level, and specific class to partner with an experienced supervising teacher to develop and improve teaching skills. These skills include, but are not limited to curriculum writing, planning, and implementation of lessons, and day-to-day activities and management requirements within the classroom (Bice, 2013).

Teacher Education Program – The teacher education program, for the purpose of this study, is specific to Lindenwood University's teacher preparation requirements. This program involves students taking college level courses, completing practicums, and a student teaching experience to prepare them for earning a degree in education and qualify to become certified classroom teachers (Bice, 2013).

Teacher Induction Program – The intent of a teacher induction program is to provide a systematic structure of support for beginning teachers (Glazerman, S., 2008; Ingersoll, 2013) .

Teacher Retention – Teacher retention, in this study, is the rate at which student teachers decide to continue their training or the rate at which first year teachers decide to remain in their chosen profession (Greiner & Smith, 2006).

Summary

The concern over new teacher attrition, within the first five years of teaching, is the highest of any profession throughout the past 20 years and has remained unresolved. As evidenced throughout the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, this continued turnover of newly employed teachers is harmful to the academic success of students. The most efficient and best teachers are those having not only a passion to teach but also experience in the classroom. The goal of this research was to identify the causes of this real and long-term problem and to recommend ways to encourage new teachers to remain in their classrooms.

The study focused on aspiring and newly employed elementary teachers enrolled in Lindenwood University's Education Program in St. Charles, Missouri and on recent Lindenwood graduates who had been hired by area school districts. The active research

included surveys and personal interviews covering the time period from the onset of the student teacher practicum experience through the completion of the first year of teaching. The researcher analyzed participants' perceptions of teaching prior to being in the classroom compared to the reality of teaching once responsible for students. Though limited, the time frame of the research revealed key concerns and frustrations of both student teachers and the first-year teachers.

After identifying participants' specific reasons for success or lack of success, the study also recommended specific ways that university education programs and hiring school districts might eliminate or minimize these frustrations and thereby encourage aspiring and new teachers to remain in their classrooms and fulfill their goal to teach our nation's children. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two points to this critical need to identify and resolve the issues that cause new teachers to leave their chosen career so early after entering their classrooms.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Statistics on Teacher Attrition

Over the past two decades, the literature has been dense regarding the problem of teachers leaving the profession during the first five years in their chosen career. The research during that period continued to identify very similar reasons that reportedly cause new teachers to depart from their jobs so early in the game (Bock, 2015; Riggs, 2013).

The reoccurring and strongest recommendation to resolve the problem of teacher attrition over this lengthy time was for hiring school districts to initiate induction programs for their new teachers. Such programs included, most specifically, professional development for new hires, teacher mentors, and better communication between administration and beginning teachers (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012; Riggs, 2013). However, the literature also indicated that the implementation of induction programs did not adequately resolve the problem in our nation's schools. Not until the research of Goldrick et al. (2012), Ingersoll (2013), and Bock (2015) did the serious issue of new teachers simply not having enough time to do the job well, take on a stronger focus.

Teachers are an essential piece to the continued success of our society locally, nationally, and globally (Kaplan & Owings, 2002). There is a need for teachers now more than ever as the number of students continues to increase. The shortage of teachers was noted as early as 2002 when student numbers were projected to surpass 48 million by 2008 (Lucas & Robinson, 2012). Bartlett in 2004 documented, "There are over 2.5 million K-12 teachers working at almost 90,000 public schools in the USA making up

4% of our nation's workforce" (p. 1). However, he also noted the shortage of high

quality teachers in our schools and expressed concerns regarding the teacher retention on

the rise. As Riggs (2013) pointed out, the challenge to retain quality teachers in the

country's schools continues to be a primary focus for school leaders. Bock (2015)

indicated that poor teacher retention rates have been a continued concern over the past

several decades with the cost impacting school districts across the nation, and teacher

turnover having a negative impact on student performance.

At the challenge According to Riggs (2013), teaching, in years past, had been originally thought of

as a temporary type of employment, "for women before they got their real jobs, which

was raising families, or a temporary type of employment for men until they moved out of

the classroom and became administrators" (p. 1). Riggs pointed out that, in more recent

times, anywhere between 40 and 50% of teachers leave the classroom within the first five

years of teaching. Surprisingly, Riggs noted that the 40 to 50% figure includes the close

to 10 % that leave before the end of their first year (p. 3).

Approximately 15.7% of all teachers leave their positions every year, and 40% of

teachers who pursue undergraduate degrees in teaching never even enter the classroom at

all (Riggs, 2013, p. 3). According to Riggs, the turnover in teaching is considerably

higher than that of other professions. Specifically, one educator told Riggs, "One of the

big reasons I quit was sort of intangible. But it's very real: It's just a lack of respect.

Teachers in schools do not call the shots. They have very little say. They're told what to

do; it's a much disempowered line of work" (Riggs, 2013, p. 3). As early as 2004, Hill

and Barth pointed out that the largest percent of newly hired teachers leaving the

profession is due to attrition. They also noted as early as 2004 that a greater number of

teachers with several years of experience were leaving classrooms than there were new teachers entering the profession (Hill & Barth, 2004).

While the loss of experienced educators has and continues to be a challenge for education leaders, Riggs (2013) noted that especially young teachers are leaving the classroom for seemingly nebulous reasons. Many of them cited "personal reasons," ranging from individual stress levels to work-life balance struggles. "We are held up to a really high standard for everything," said Emma, a 26-year-old former teacher at a public school in Kansas who worked for a music education non-profit. "It stems from this sense that teachers aren't real people. The only thing that came close to making me stay was the kids" (Riggs, 2013, p. 2).

Although 90% of new teachers are hired as a result of educator attrition according to Hill and Barth (2004, p. 177), they noted that there are a number of reasons for the teacher shortage including a lack of administrative support, salary, and job dissatisfaction. In Riggs (2013) more recent study, he suggested that there are similar overarching factors that push teachers out the door. Some of these include family or personal reasons, other career opportunities, salary, administrative support and overall job dissatisfaction. Riggs' study indicated that most teachers sounded simply frustrated, overworked, and underpaid. These sentiments appear to be echoed throughout the many years of research. According to Hayes (2004), older teachers are retiring and there are not enough new teachers entering the field. His research also pointed out that there is a lack of effective preparation at the university level. Bobeck (2002) concurred that new elementary teachers expressed concern that they felt unprepared for the demands of their classroom. Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallat, and McClune (2001) also found that

teachers indicated a lack of preparation for the overwhelming expectations. This concern

continues to be valid according to Tait's (2008) research. Tait noted that training and

induction programs among colleges and school districts are not providing adequate

support for new teachers. Additionally, Huysman (2008) noted that federal legislation,

regulations, and policies impacting schools are putting a strain on teachers, both new and

experienced, and are therefore negatively impacting the rate of attrition.

The statistics on teacher attrition are alarming and "higher than in other

occupations" (Bartlett, 2004, p. 566). Greiner and Smith (2006) stated that, "The

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that across the nation 9.3 % of

public school teachers leave before they complete their first year in the classroom" (p.

653). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) also reported that 33.5% of

teachers leave the profession within their first three years (Yost, 2006). The number rises

to 46% teacher attrition by year five (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007). Attrition is not

only a concern for educational systems in the United States. In Ontario, Canada, up to

18% of beginning teachers leave the profession (Tait, 2008). Barmby (2006, p. 251)

stated that concern over teacher attrition is not only an educational challenge in the

United States but in other nations as well, "Government figures in Whales showed that in

2000-2001, 33,710 teachers left full-time teaching," a rate of 9.3% (p. 249). London had

an even higher rate of 11.3% of beginning teachers leaving the profession in that same

year (Barmby, 2006). With 40% of students studying to be teachers switching to another

profession even while pursuing their undergraduate degree, as documented by Riggs

(2013) and, according to Dill and Stafford (2013, p. 1), another 40 to 50% depart within

the first five years, the challenge is obvious. These numbers continue to support cause

for research regarding the questions about teacher attrition and retention (Dill & Stafford, 2013; Riggs, 2013).

Attrition in education causes financial burdens on school districts as they, "invest money to recruit, hire, train, and support new teachers" (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008, p. 2). Nationally, the result of teachers leaving the field of education cost the nation more than $7 billion annually (Chambers & Roper, 2000, p. 27). In 2008, Ellis, Grogan, Levy, and Tucker-Seely pointed out the cost to replace teachers could reach as high as $2.1 billion per year for some states (p. 1). The money spent on replacing teachers was a poor investment of our educational dollars and could be used for many other educational purposes in schools (Hahs-Vaughn et al., 2008).

Affirmed by Dill and Stafford (2013), the problem of teacher attrition continues to be costly. They pointed out that the continued loss of newly hired teachers is very damaging to the educational development of students, especially low income and minority students. In economically disadvantaged schools with 75% or more minority students, the turnover rate for teachers exceeded 20%. Dill noted that, "In the schools determined to be least effective, the teacher turnover rate for was more than 40%" (Dill & Stafford, 2013, p. 2).

Even more important than the money lost due to teacher attrition was the impact this turn over in educators can have on the quality of student achievement (Ingersoll & May, 2011). This is a vicious circle as low performing schools have higher rates of attrition (Swars, Meyers, Mays, & Lack, 2009). Attrition has been found to directly impact the performance of students in schools (Ellis et al., 2008).

Ingersoll (2013) pointed out that those new to the teaching profession face serious challenges. While teaching involves intense interaction with students, the work of teachers is done for the most part in isolation from colleagues. Ingersoll noted that this isolation can be especially difficult for new educators who are, "left to succeed or fail on their own within the confines of their classrooms – often likened to a 'lost at sea' or 'sink or swim' experience" (p. 1). Another point made by Ingersoll was that beginning teachers tend to end up in the most challenging and difficult classrooms and schools assignments, "akin to a 'trial by fire' experience" (p. 1).

Many young teachers soon realize they must do overwhelming amounts of after-hours work. They pour out emotional energy into their work, which breeds quick exhaustion, and they experience the frustrating uphill battle that comes along with teaching – particularly in low-performing schools. "What people are asked to do is only the kind of thing that somebody can do for two or three years; you couldn't sustain that level of intensity throughout a career" (Riggs, 2013, p. 2). Riggs also indicated that pay is an issue that came up in the research, noting that the average starting teacher salary in the United States is $35,672 (p. 2). "What is expected of great teachers and the amount they are paid is shameful," said former teacher, Hayley, in Riggs' study. Hayley remarked,

> If you love something you should do it regardless of pay, but when you take into consideration the time, the effort, the emotional toll and what teachers are asked to actually do every day, it was painfully obvious that teaching is not a sustainable job. I really wish it had been. (p. 2)

According to Riggs' study, Hayley taught for three years before finding herself

emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and interested in pursuing a career that

provided more balance and financial security.

 Ingersoll (2013) noted that teaching has traditionally not had the kind of

induction programs for new entrants common to many skilled blue and white collar

occupations and characteristic of many traditional professions. While Ingersoll noted that

induction for beginning teachers has become a major topic in education policy and

reform, he claimed the programs to be less than adequate. He argued that the

> theory behind such [induction] programs holds that teaching is complex work,
>
> that pre-employment teacher preparation is rarely sufficient to provide all the
>
> knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching, and that a significant
>
> portion of this knowledge can be acquired only on the job. (p. 1)

According to Ingersoll, there is a need for schools to provide an environment where

novices can learn how to teach, how to survive and how to succeed as teachers. Ingersoll

concluded that these programs should, "aim to improve the performance and retention of

new hires, enhance their skills and prevent the loss of new teachers with the ultimate goal

of improving student growth and learning" (p. 2).

According to Joseph, a former teacher who loved his first years in the classroom,

he became saddened after a couple of years teaching when he came to an understanding

about the future of his career. "I realized that most older men I taught with eventually

felt pressured to advance into administration to better support their families" (Riggs,

2013, p. 2). Other teachers working in high-need schools note that being successful at

school directly conflicted with being successful spouses and parents, which related to

Riggs (2013).

"There is a significant correlation between student performance and turnover:

schools with higher turnover rates had fewer students meeting standards on statewide

assessments in both reading and math" (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 2). Freedman and Appleman

(2008) revealed, "students achieve more if their teacher has had at least 3 years of

experience" (p. 324). Thus, according to Freedman and Appleman, lower student

achievement can be directly related to teachers who are inexperienced.

Researchers' findings agreed that teachers have an overwhelming desire to help

students. This was found as a common thread among all educators but even this could

not keep teachers in the classroom. According to Riggs' (2013) conclusions, everything

else – the workload, the emotional toll, and the low pay was just too much.

Ingersoll (2013) identified the same frustrations expressed by new teachers -

causing them to depart their calling early in employment. His research indicated a

simultaneous increase in the number of beginning teacher numbers and a decrease in the

number of veteran teachers' numbers. "Beginning teachers are now the largest group

within one of the largest occupations in the nation and these beginners have steadily

become more and more prone to quickly leave teaching" (p. 3). He noted that this points

to a need for stronger support programs for new teachers.

Goldrick et al. (2012) acknowledged that the data indicates that the number of

induction programs has grown considerably. He pointed out that, "the percentage of

beginning teachers who report that they participated in an induction program during their

first year of teaching has steadily increased from about 50% to approximately 90%" (p.

4). Goldrick et al. pointed out however that the most common induction activity that

beginning teachers participated in was having supportive communication with their

principal, other administrators, or their grade-level chair or department chair. Another,

though less frequently reported experience by the newly hired, was ongoing guidance and

feedback from a mentoring teacher on a communication basis only. Goldrick et al.'s

research found that a more successful induction model was providing time for

collaboration and planning time with other teachers in the same teaching area. The most

positive response from new hires regarding induction practices, according to his research,

was the opportunity to have a part-time classroom assistant or teacher aide. His findings

indicated that the most personally and professionally successful new teachers reported

having a reduced teaching load and additional plan time to ease their transition. Goldrick

et al. noted that this is a support more common for beginning professors in higher

education but one that is very infrequently practiced in the nation's public school

districts.

Entering the Education Profession

        There are many reasons people aspire to become teachers. A study on teacher

identity by Olsen (2008) determined that his subjects entered the field of education for

several reasons. "They grew up playing teacher, other family members had found

enjoyment in the profession, or they believe it to be compatible with mothering" (p. 27).

Members of this study also aspired to, "make a difference in the world by becoming

teachers" (p. 33).

        According to Webb et al. (2004) "A previous connection and commitment to

children appears to attract people to teaching" (p. 4). Webb et al. also noted that due to

life experiences people are also intrinsically motivated to become teachers because they

believe they will be stimulated creatively and that their personal talents will be

highlighted in their daily work in the classroom.

Aspiring teachers often have the desire to develop close and personal relationships

with their students and want to make a difference in both the lives of those students and

society as a whole. The idea of nurturing others and making a difference is appealing and

attractive to many who consider entering the field of education. However, actually

fulfilling these preconceived notions about the profession can be challenging for many

(Hayes, 2004).

As early as 2006, Barmby spoke of two researchers, Kyriacou and Coulthard, who

determined three categories that identified reasons for entering the field of teaching:

1. Altruistic reasons: these reasons deal with seeing teaching as a socially

   worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed, and a desire to

   help society improve;

2. Intrinsic reasons: these reasons cover aspects of the job activity itself, such as the

   activity of teaching children, and an interest in using their subject matter

   knowledge and expertise;

3. Extrinsic reasons: these reasons cover aspects of the job which are not inherent in

   the work itself, such as long holidays, level of pay, and status (Barmby, 2006, p.

   250).

Barmby saw all three reasons as important factors for teachers entering the field of

education but indicated that the frustrations of not fully getting their altruistic and

intrinsic needs met causes the extrinsic aspects of the job, such as long work hours and salary, to have a more significant and negative impact on new teachers.

Remaining in the Education Profession

Although the research indicated that experiencing success as a new teacher proves to be challenging, it also points out a number of reasons why teachers new to the classroom are able to feel successful. These would include positive working conditions, salary level, positive mentor and administrative support, a sense of autonomy and ownership, recognition for good teaching, and of course, student achievement.

Finding success as a teacher can be challenging. Gardner (2010) stated that, "there are important simultaneous relationships among teacher and school attributes such as working conditions, job satisfactions, and teacher attrition" (p. 113). Beginning teachers must find satisfaction and support within their profession from a wide variety of systems in order to remain in the profession, as this is a predictor for teacher retention (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004). Huysman (2008) stated that, "Employees' feelings of job satisfaction directly affect the effort they put into their work and into their decision of whether they would remain in or quit their jobs" (p. 31). Gardner (2010), Mitchell (2004), and Huysman (2008) concurred that the fact that newly hired teachers find themselves working harder and putting in longer days only to find themselves spinning their wheels and feeling little self-satisfaction or success. These are not motivating factors for anyone to remain in a new position.

Personal Autonomy

Teachers who feel empowered in their day-to-day work are found to have greater success and satisfaction in the workplace and prove to maintain teacher retention (Shen,

1997; Wong, 2002). This empowerment can come from interpersonal sources, or intrinsic sources, from the school or district level sources, or extrinsic sources (Puttnam, 2000). Interpersonal sources for a teacher's feeling of success include the level of independence, control, and autonomy they have within their work environment (Gailey, 2003). "Buildings in which teachers have more say – where their voices count – have distinctly better teacher retention" (Riggs, 2013, p. 2). Shen (1997), Wong (2002), Puttnam (2000), and Gailey (2003) pointed out that more often than not, new teachers are not invited to share their voice or provided the autonomy that more tenured teacher's experience. This results in new teachers feeling under-appreciated, lack self-satisfaction and confidence.

Intrinsic Sources

Interpersonal or intrinsic sources for success and satisfaction among teachers include their perceptions of the workplace, their individual work as a teacher and their feelings of accomplishment. The recognition they get for good work, and owning a shared vision among the greater organization also impact intrinsic motivation (Glazerman et al., 2008). When a teacher maintains strong relationships with peers, feels supported within the school, and works within a collaborative setting, the chances for retention are strengthened (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Teachers must also be confident and resilient in their work despite challenges they are faced with in the workplace (Ward, Henry, & Mansell, 2002). These intrinsic motivational traits, along with efficacy and emotional competence help teachers "see difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats or failure" (Tait, 2008, p. 59). In Freedman and Appleman's study of beginning teachers entering an urban school setting one teacher stated,

> Well I definitely think it takes a certain kind of personality—a really, really hard
>
> working personality….And there's this ability to have things go wrong, you
>
> know, roll with the punches a little bit. So people with that character tend to stay
>
> [in schools]. (Freedman & Appleman, 2008, p. 330)

Having intrinsic motivators as sources for satisfaction and success enables teachers to

maintain a higher level of "effort, goal setting, persistence, resilience, willingness to try

new ideas and strategies, enthusiasm, organization, planning, fairness, and commitment

to teaching" (Tait, 2008, p. 59). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) and Tait (2008) concurred

that new teachers who feel they are a part of a community in which they have strong and

collaborative relationships with colleagues find they are more satisfied in their career

choice.

Extrinsic Sources

Teachers can also be motivated and empowered to find satisfaction and success in

their job through extrinsic sources within the school or school district in which they

work. The institution must focus on the individual teacher and his or her needs within the

classroom, the school, and the district as a whole (Piercy et al., 2005). For example,

"Those schools that do a far better job of managing, coping with and responding to

student behavioral issues have far better teacher retention" (Riggs, 2013, p. 5). When

working conditions meet employee expectations, job satisfaction improves. "Factors that

can impact and improve teacher success and therefore reduce attrition can include:

teacher roles, support from administration, paperwork, class size, availability of

resources, job security (tenure, qualifications of teachers), and collegiality" (Inman &

Marlow, 2004, p. 609).

The administration and experienced teacher mentors can provide strong extrinsic

support in a school district and positively impact the intrinsic feelings of success for

teachers. The way administration deal with both students and teachers has a huge effect

on teacher satisfaction (Riggs, 2013). Riggs noted this as being one of the potential ways

to keep teachers without spending billions of dollars increasing salaries. Rhodes, Nevill,

and Allen (2004) also indicated that strong administrative and teacher leader support can

result in a positive school culture and work environment. To create this positive school

culture school leaders can build support systems such as providing time for collaboration

and reflection among staff (Latham & Vogt, 2007), providing mentors for new classroom

teachers (McIntyre, 2003), providing a platform for teachers to share their ideas and

become leaders within the organization (Nieto, 2003), providing effective and meaningful

professional development (Thornton & Reid, 2001), and by treating new teachers as the

professionals they are by maintaining clear, consistent, and high expectations (Moir &

Gless 2001).

Parental and community support is also a necessary extrinsic support for teacher

retention. Based on other education statistics, "parental engagement and high student

achievement can be key factors. Where parental support is strong, teachers are more

satisfied, and presumably more likely to stay in the profession" (Riggs, 2013, p. 5).

Parents and the community "must become familiar with the various aspects of teaching in

order to empathize, relate and connect to the profession and partner with or participate in

the work being done within schools" (Inman & Marlow, 2004, p. 613). When these

extrinsic factors are in place, Huysman (2008) contended that "high levels of job

satisfaction and lower levels of dissatisfaction [can have] positive implications for improving student achievement and teacher retention rates" (p. 32).

Teacher Preparation Programs

Appropriate preparation for entering a career in teaching is a critical factor in teacher retention (Greiner & Smith, 2006). This preparation must begin at the university level in order for perspective teachers to fully know and understand what is in store for them once they enter the classroom. Hill and Barth (2004) found in their research that graduates of five-year preparation programs were more likely to remain in teaching than were graduates of four-year programs. "Teachers who entered the classroom without having had a student teaching experience, which can be common for under trained teachers, and those entering via shortened programs left the profession at nearly twice the rate of those with complete training" (Hill & Barth, 2004, p. 175).

Earlier researchers noted several specific components of a teacher preparation program that positively impact teacher retention. While expressing agreement that district support of new hires is critical to new teacher success, Freedman and Appleman (2008) also called for a continued focus on high quality preparation at the college level. Glazerman et al. (2008) determined that novice teachers need to build an emotional foundation, a theoretical foundation, and a practical foundation throughout their training and college classes in preparation for becoming a teacher. He concurred with earlier researcher, Salinitri (2005), that high academic expectations and solid extrinsic support during the transition from high school to college and again during the transition from college to the workplace are two crucial elements for a successful preparation program. Yost's (2006) research on teacher preparation programs at the university level stated that,

"the data highlight important contributions made by teacher education programs in fostering resiliency and persistence in teacher candidates so that they will become successful and remain in the field" (p. 72).   This information underscores how important it is to maintain a high quality education training program in order to prepare and retain the most successful and highest quality teachers.

When building an emotionally satisfying foundation for teacher success a teacher preparation program must focus on "raising competence and confidence primarily through successful authentic mastery experiences" (Yost, 2006, p. 61). These experiences must "not only teach teachers what to do which raises their competence levels, but also teach them how to do it well in a variety of contexts raising their confidence levels" (Yost, 2006, p. 61). Other emotional competencies that must be developed through teacher preparation programs include developing the abilities of "self-assessment, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and systematically developed strong social skills" (Tait, 2008, p. 71). Olsen (2008) agreed that these traits help teachers deal positively with the stress that comes with the daily tasks of the job. Tait's conclusions concurred with Moir and Gless (2001) that teacher preparation programs must provide chances for learners to actively become involved in their academic training, connect with faculty, and develop relationships with peers who are in their same field of study. Meeting these needs at the university level can help increase retention of pre-service teachers and lead to greater academic success both at the induction level and later in the workplace (Luekens, Lyter, & Fox, 2004).

In order to build on the development of necessary emotional foundation in pre-service teachers, universities must derive programming to meet the needs of future

teachers. One example of university level programming that can develop emotional

foundations for success is to group students in cohorts. This provides them with a feeling

of support and security as they realize that they are not in their professional journey alone

and that they have others they can relate to others who are learning, feeling, and going

through the same transitions and processes (Lucas & Robinson, 2012). Earlier research

by Coladarci (1992) found that cohorts also provide students with opportunities to

develop stronger skills for communication and collaboration, which are necessary when

working in a school setting with other teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

In Freedman and Appleman's (2009) research of a specific teacher prep program

called MUSE (Multicultural Urban Secondary English) they determined eight

components of a cohort program that can support the success and retention of students at

the university level and as aspiring teachers. These components included classes taken

together as a cohort, small group assignments requiring collaboration with cohort

members outside of formal class instruction, and support in the integration of

instructional learning from classes into the student teaching experience.

In addition to emotional preparation for the classroom, teachers need both

theoretical and practical training to ensure success once they are teaching in the actual

teaching setting. The more pre-service teachers are practicing what they learned from

textbooks and courses by being in an actual classroom, the stronger their skills and

abilities will be (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000).

Freedman and Appleman (2009) also concurred with researchers supporting

strong teacher induction programs by hiring districts as a critical component. They

stressed the placement of aspiring teachers with an effective master teacher along with

weekly observations and reflective sessions with university supervisors. Additionally, they noted the necessity of intensive training in curriculum development with written feedback on lesson planning and assessment development. Finally, Freedman and Appleman (2009) stressed the importance of weekly meetings with methods professors to track academic progress in the program and teaching experience.

It is critical for universities to provide pre-service teachers with as much hands-on learning as possible. Lalley and Miller (2007) depicted how learners learn best by creating a "Learning Pyramid" which shows the hierarchy of learning through a pyramid shape. This configuration shows the greatest form of learning, teaching what has been learned to others, at the bottom of the pyramid and the least effective form of learning, which is lecture, at the top of the pyramid (p. 67). Lalley and Miller stated that, "One of the most highly advocated types of practice by doing is the 'Discovery Learning' model. It is effective because it encourages students to work in the same manner as a professional in the field" (p. 74). Practical experiences in the classroom during pre-service training can include practicums, student teaching, observations, and simply being a part of the day-to-day activities of the classroom. These experiences can provide learners with the strategies and skills to handle management, instruction, communication, and problem-solving (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004). According to Mitchell and Arnold (2004), when deliberate and well-planned components of a teacher preparation program are implemented effectively, it can prepare teachers for the classroom, make for a smooth transition from the university to the workplace, and increase the retention for teachers.

School District Induction Programs

Preparing teachers at the university level for success in the workplace is where the path toward retention begins. Once teachers are hired to lead in a classroom, the district and specific school must provide even more support for beginning teachers to truly impact retention in the field of education (Hare & Heap, 2001). This support must be provided not only to first year teachers but to teachers throughout their first five years of teaching (Hayes, 2004). Many organizations have teacher induction programs but too many schools and school districts have weak programs that are not effective (Glazerman, et al., 2008). Teacher induction was defined by Cherubini (2007) as, "an extension of the learning from the pre-service year" (p. 1). High quality teacher induction programs provide a bridge from the university level of training to the classroom practice "enabling the student of teaching to become a teacher of students" (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008, p. 24). Effective teacher induction must include programming such as mentoring, meaningful professional development, orientations, opportunity for networking, appropriate feedback, and time for reflection and collaborative planning (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).

Goldrick et al. (2012) agreed that a strong college preparation was critical but noted that an even stronger predictor of teacher success was the type of new teacher induction program offered by school districts. His study concluded that there was a definite link between beginning teachers' participation in induction programs and their retention. He also found that the strength of the effect depended on the types and number of supports that beginning teachers received. His research noted that participation in some types of activities during the first year of teaching was more effective at reducing

turnover than participation in other types. "The factors with the strongest effect were having a mentor teacher from one's subject or grade-level area and having common planning or collaboration time with other teachers in that same area" (Goldrick et al., 2012, p. 4). Goldrick et al.'s data also revealed that the various and most effective types of induction supports, activities, or practices rarely existed alone. His research suggested that schools or districts providing beginning teachers with different 'packages' or bundles' of components or supports were most successful. He found that, "new teachers getting multiple induction components had a strong on whether they stayed or left" (Goldrick et al., 2012, p. 4). Moreover, he found that as the number of components in the packages increased the likelihood of their turnover decreased.

Both Goldrick et al. (2012) and Ingersoll (2013) found that beginners who received a comprehensive induction package – including a mentor teacher, supportive communication with one's principal, participation in a seminar for beginning teachers, common planning time with others in the same subject, a reduced course load, and assistance from a classroom aide decreased retention concerns by nearly half. These researchers also noted that even though such a comprehensive induction package proved to ensure greater success to new teachers, only 5% of new hires received such a comprehensive and supportive induction package. Conclusions drawn by both Goldrick et al. and Ingersoll were that the more comprehensive a new teacher induction program was the more improved and the more satisfied was the teacher in his or her job.

Providing beginning teachers with experienced mentors is an important factor in the teacher induction process and can ultimately increase teacher retention. A mentor for a first year teacher should be an experienced master teacher and, if possible, assigned to

the same school and grade level as the new teacher. The successful mentor is one who desires and has the skills to collaborate and mentor the new teacher for a full school year. While many policy makers at district, state, and national levels are mandating mentoring programs for beginning teachers, mentoring is not a common practice in all schools (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007).

Hahs-Vaughn and Scherff (2008) surveyed 8,400 teachers and found that only "50% indicated their having been assigned a mentor during their first year of teaching" (p. 33). Inman and Marlow (2004) stated that, "it is important for beginning teachers to have colleagues with whom they can share ideas, make plans, and problem solve" (p. 608). When beginning teachers are mentored in this way, they express fewer feelings of isolation and benefit by gaining knowledge from more experienced teachers. "This feeling of empowerment, gained from the support of colleagues and a positive work environment, assists the beginning teacher in gaining positive self-esteem and efficacy" (Inman & Marlow, 2004, p. 610). Even though mentors are typically experienced teachers it is noted that mentoring is in and of its self, "both a learning process and a teaching process," in that a teacher must learn how to become an effective mentor for a beginning teacher through training and professional development (Salinitri, 2005, p. 868).

The role of a mentor teacher can vary but in order to be effective, Salinitri (2005) recommended that the mentor is trained in and responsible for a number of specific tasks. These include acting as facilitator of resources, teaching time management skills, helping design schedules, and developing strategies for time management. Salinitri also noted the importance of being a role model in sharing his or her own experiences such as discussing feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, or anger. Additionally he noted the importance

of providing strategies for academic improvement, reflecting on academic successes of the mentee, facilitating opportunities for guidance, awareness and social relations, and assisting mentees in enhancing their learning while motivating them to set realistic goals.

An effective mentor should fulfill all of the responsibilities previously mentioned for a beginning teacher so that the mentee has opportunities to connect with one or more people in the field of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In Yost's (2006) research on 10 beginning teachers, one made the following statement during an interview regarding teacher mentoring, "It made you not feel alone and then you also got insight on how somebody (handled) a similar situation" (Yost, 2006, p. 69). By demonstrating encouragement, showing an interest in teacher development, offering advice, and helping new teachers develop a sense of presence within the school, mentors positively impact teacher success and retention. This feeling of collaboration can have an important impact on beginning teacher's feelings of belonging and ultimately impact their decision to stay in the profession (Holloway, 2001).

In addition to mentoring there are other forms of professional development that are necessary to positively impact beginning teachers regarding satisfaction, success, and retention. Schools and school districts must provide support through professional learning opportunities to novice teachers to ensure their success, build a strong foundation for teaching, and build confidence among new teachers (Cherubini, 2007). Quality professional development can impact, "teachers' professional self-perceptions, energy, enthusiasm and satisfaction," as they are learning and growing in their profession (Rhodes et al., 2004, p. 78).

Through Rhodes et al.'s (2004) research of teacher satisfaction in regards to professional development he found that, "professional learning, personal and shared reflection, and authentic collaboration in a supportive study group environment can create changes in teachers' perceptions of themselves and their work and catalyze professional growth" (p. 78). They also found that, "opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching and to engage in dialogue with other teachers about the experience can help to build motivation and commitment" (p. 78). Rhodes et al. indicated that this collaboration and professional development can come in the form of strategies, or through school or team meetings.

The evidence is clear that by providing support to beginning teachers through effective induction programs, quality mentor programs, and adequate time for collaboration and reflection, the results are positive for increased teacher retention. However, many schools are still up to par. The number and quality of induction programs remains a concern today as the statistics for attrition in the field of teaching continues to be the highest within the first five years of employment, at the time of this writing (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Therefore, change is in order for those schools not participating fully in adequate teacher induction programs. New teachers truly gain when support programs are implemented effectively and "appreciate the assistance they receive from induction program providers, administrators, mentors, and colleagues with the job of teaching" (Cherubini, 2007, p. 8). These seasoned education stakeholders and program structures provide the positive support needed by novice teachers.

Leaving the Profession

There are many documented reasons people enter the field of education. However, the statistics on why people leave the profession, often within the first five years of teaching, are alarming. Some are natural outcomes that are a result of personal life choices such as other job opportunities, child rearing, or retirement (Gardner, 2010). However, many reasons people choose to leave the classroom and teaching are impacted by the environment in which teachers work and other extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

In her research on resilience and teacher success, Tait (2008) looked at retention rates among beginning teachers. She found that, like many new teachers, one teacher in particular

> experienced a great degree of dissonance between her vision of teaching and the reality of her actual classroom experiences. She described her initial impressions of teaching as 'nothing like I expected' and found that the work she did in her preservice year did not truly prepare her for the realities of her job. (p. 66)

Many teachers are not prepared through their university level training to take on the myriad of responsibilities required of a classroom teacher because their focus at the university level is more theoretical rather than practical (Wong, 2002).

Tait (2008) stated,

> Teaching is one of the few professions in which beginners have as much responsibility as their experienced colleagues. New teachers carry full teaching loads and handle just as many other duties (supervision, extra-curricular, paper work, parent interviews, and report cards for example) as their higher paid coworkers. (p. 58)

Beginning teachers are often placed with the students who can be most challenging to teach or the "academically low-tracked courses" (Olsen, 2008, p. 33). Tait also stated, "many novice teachers fear that if they ask for assistance, they will appear incompetent or poorly prepared" (p. 58). Earlier research indicated that this pressure to meet the same demands and standards as more experienced teachers can be too much for beginning teachers if the right support systems are not in place at the school district and school building levels (Hill & Barth, 2004).

Teacher attrition can also be significantly impacted by extrinsic factors. Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen (2008) found," Role overload" including "excessive clerical and paperwork, and other nonteaching duties" as well as long work hours, including taking work home, and not being compensated for doing extra work through pay or promotion can have a negative impact on overall job satisfaction" (p. 2). As a result of local, state, and national policies and regulations in education, teachers are "spending increasing amounts of time on whole-school curriculum planning, lesson plans and pupil assessments. This extreme overload results in the responsibilities of individual teachers becoming increasingly demanding and diversified" (Webb et al., 2004, p. 172). They feel a responsibility to "do it all" in order to meet the needs of their students. Bartlett (2004) stated,

> Teachers work excessive hours, despite lack of financial incentives and in the
> absence of compelling workplace supports. Teachers attempt to sustain the
> expanded role, even in the absence of organizational supports, in response to their
> understandings and commitments to internal notions of good teaching, collegial

and personal expectations, and the moral imperative of teaching to provide the

best possible educational opportunities for students. (p. 578)

Additional responsibilities beyond that of actually teaching children can be

physically exhausting, take time away from personal and family responsibilities, and

cause stress (Plash & Piotrowski, 2006).

In recent years the work demands on teachers have increased while the relative

compensation of teachers—in relation to other professionals of comparable

education—has decreased. The numerous demands on new teachers has led to

increased occupational stress, tension in the negotiation of the work-family

balance, and an increase in teacher attrition. (Bartlett, 2004, p. 566)

One beginning teacher that Freedman and Appleman (2009) interviewed in their research

on beginning urban teachers stated, "I don't really have time to do much else; I get tired

but never bored by it" (p. 117). Another beginning teacher stated, "Something happens

right around the five-year mark. People get tired and start thinking about other

possibilities - about what else they could do with their lives. It's an unbelievably

exhausting job" (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p. 116).

Some teachers have the natural stamina and drive to jump into a job that can be

incredibly demanding but many do not. Work overload and long work hours add strain

and stress to a teacher's life. Bartlett (2004) interviewed several teachers on being

overworked and found,

despite their long work hours, they are not able to live up to their work ideal. The

long hours they work makes their home lives less satisfying. They complain of

strained relationships with partners, lost creative pursuits and lack of sleep. They

are torn between living up to their work conceptions and having a life outside of

school—yet feeling dissatisfied with both. (p. 573)

Physically managing all of this at once often leads to negative feelings of satisfaction as it

"exhausts their enthusiasm and erodes their commitment to education" (p. 568).

Another extrinsic factor that remains a leading impact on attrition in the field of

education is that of low salaries. Compared to other professionals with similar

educational backgrounds teachers are paid significantly less, and as stated previously, are

not compensated for any extra work or time dedicated to the job (Barmby, 2006). Webb

et al. (2004) found that teachers "did not regard the salary as sufficiently reflecting their

degree entry qualifications, their knowledge and skills and the long working hours

required of them" (p. 176). One teacher stated, "You are expected to be a professional

but you are not paid a professional salary" (p. 176). In their research on retention of

beginning teachers, Hahs-Vaughn and Scherff stated, "Teachers do not necessarily

choose to stay in teaching because today's work environment offers a plethora of career

possibilities, including jobs with high status and pay, productive work environments, and

chances for promotion to high levels" (p. 24). They also found, "Teachers who earned

less than $20,000 per academic year were nearly 6.5 times as likely to leave teaching as

compared to teachers who earned more than $20,000 per year" (p. 34). As a result, they

noted, "increases in (teacher) salary of up to 20% (are) necessary to decrease attrition" (p.

23).

Some districts, states, and nations have noted the connection between low salaries

and teacher attrition and made efforts to make teaching more attractive through incentives

and increased pay but these efforts are not universal. In England, there were such

difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality teachers that they began offering cash incentives to teachers who were new or returning to the classroom (Hayes, 2004). The salaries necessary to keep highly qualified teachers in the classroom for the entirety of their career are not sufficient and are causing potential or existing teachers to, "choose other professions that have higher status and salaries" (Lucas & Robinson, 2012, p. 3).

In addition to the many extrinsic factors that impact attrition, there are intrinsic factors that determine a teacher's decision to leave a career in education. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, which measures specific factors pertaining to job satisfaction for teachers, found that "Of the 20 dimensions of job satisfaction the 11 highest ranked factors were all intrinsic satisfaction factors" (Huysman, 2008, p. 34). According to Huysman (2008), teachers often feel the pressures of "unrealistic expectations" from their colleagues, administrators, parents, the community, and policy makers to do more and more. They can feel like they are juggling so many balls in the air at once and doing it all by themselves. As a result, job satisfaction can be greatly affected by these feelings of inadequacy and not being able to measure up.

Many beginning teachers do not find satisfaction in the workplace because it does not meet their pre-conceived expectations or ideals regarding teaching and learning. In Olsen's (2008) research on teacher identity he found that, "many first-year teachers experience fundamental identity conflicts as they work to reconcile long-held expectations with current teaching realities, and merge their personal self-understandings with their developing professional identities" (p. 37). New teachers often feel a lack of autonomy in their work environment. This feeling is often a result of being new and not having a voice to make decisions or take on leadership roles within the school.

Clayton and Schoonmaker (2007) studied three beginning teachers and found autonomy as a cause for dissatisfaction in the role of teaching. One teacher stated that, "I was told that I must seek permission from her Assistant Principal to change the arrangement of my classroom which is set up in individual seats and straight rows. I felt isolated and ready to leave the profession" (p. 259). Another study on the retention of beginning teachers also noted that teachers are not empowered to make even the most basic decisions in their schools or classrooms. Inman and Marlow (2004) stated that,

> teachers must schedule all breaks (lunch and bathroom), sign in and out of the workplace, have limited access to the school building unless the children are present, and conduct bus duty, playground duty, hall duty, and lunchroom duty. Very few teachers have private offices, access to telephones for private calls to parents, or time to confer with colleagues. (p. 611)

A lack of autonomy among new teachers can also contribute to mandated programs coming from the district or state level that lead to prescribed instruction with no room for decision-making even within the teacher's own classroom (Malloy & Allen, 2007). Beginning teachers do not anticipate these restrictions and limitations. As a result, the lack of autonomy, individual voice and empowerment can be leading causes to dissatisfaction within the workplace.

Working in environments such as these mentioned can, "stifle creativity and cause teachers to lose motivation for teaching and learning" (Inman & Marlow, 2004, p. 611). According to Malloy and Allen (2007),

> The nature of the teaching position has in the past been one of isolationism and seniority prerogatives that present challenges to teacher leadership. The

hierarchical nature of schools tends to diminish the impact of professional growth

imperative and heighten status differences. (p. 24)

Such problems are still occurring in schools today. As Clayton and Schoonmaker (2007)

stated,

For teachers to stay in the profession, they must feel that they belong.

Academically able teachers who have other alternatives do not stay with the

profession if they do not feel acknowledged and are unable to use their special

talents and abilities. (p. 261)

The research pointed to the concept that teachers must remain intrinsically motivated and

be personally satisfied with their job in order to maintain any level of success.

Teachers enter the field of education often because they are, "motivated by a

desire to have positive relationships with pupils and make a difference in the lives of

others" (Hayes, 2004, p. 38). However, for beginning teachers there are often times too

many other things on their plate to complete daily in order to achieve these goals. Tait

(2008) stated,

Risk factors for novice teachers might include the typical stressors encountered in

the first year of teaching, such as the expectations and scope of the job, disparity

between teacher preparation and expectations, isolation and lack of support, and

an emerging gap between novice teachers' vision of teaching and the realities of

the job. (p. 59)

Without the proper supports in place, a teacher can easily become overwhelmed

and lose sight of his or her original purpose in becoming a teacher. Administrative

support for beginning teachers is critical. Yost's (2006) study on enhancing retention

among beginning teachers found that, "dissatisfaction from administration and opportunities for professional development are key factors in teachers choosing to transfer to other schools to find better employment opportunities and working conditions" (p. 60). She also noted that all three of the teachers she studied "left their positions because of the perceived lack of administrative support and the failure of these schools to attend to the needs of their students" (Yost, 2006, p. 71). One teacher whom Tait (2008) studied expressed frustration,

> New teachers get the difficult kids that no one wants to teach. They get split classes, they get the portables. When you look at the business community, you'd never think of starting someone new off with that many strikes against them. And they wonder why people quit after five years. It's because you're treated, I don't want to say badly, but you're not supported in a lot of different things. (Tait, 2008, p. 68)

Effective and regular support, especially from the administration, can help new teachers by preventing them from feeling this type of lack of support.

Student behavior is another factor that can cause dissatisfaction for beginning teachers and negatively impact attrition rate. Without the proper training and support from the school and administration, beginning teachers can have difficulties with classroom management and maintaining positive student behavior. "Stressed teachers are less effective in managing classroom disciplinary problems and more likely to use aversive techniques to modify student behavior" (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004, p. 216). Furthermore, "Teachers with inadequate behavior management abilities are less likely to be effective in the classroom, which can quickly lead to teacher burnout" (p. 217). This

lack of support and training can cause stress to teachers and impact their work with

students. In Tait's (2008) study of the challenges beginning teachers face she noted that

one teacher's "resilience was tested by the behavior of her students, and her sense of

efficacy was challenged by both classroom management struggles and instructional

difficulties" (p. 68). In order to ensure that new teachers are equipped with proper

management techniques and strategies they must be deliberately taught, starting at the

university level. They must have opportunity to practice their skills, and experienced

master teachers must model the skills for them. Mitchell and Arnold's (2004) study

determined that,

> Behavior management needs to be developed and implemented for inexperienced
>
> teachers. This may need to proceed into the second year of teaching. Providing
>
> the opportunity for unskilled teachers to observe in the classroom of a master
>
> teacher offers modeling and training that can prove invaluable (p. 219).
>
> Yost (2006) and Tait (2008) noted that without the necessary support new

teachers become quickly overwhelmed and lose sight of their passion. These authors also

pointed to the lack of ability to redirect and handle disciplinary issues within their

classrooms. Without specific training in how to handle such distractions, new teachers

quickly became ineffective and frustrated. Tait and Mitchell (2004) suggested that

teacher training programs offer explicit directions on how to manage classroom

distraction due to discipline issues.

Summary

The review of literature surrounding the concern over new teachers leaving the

profession provides ample support for additional research regarding the innate strength of

Lindenwood's teacher preparation program and its predictive success of newly hired

Lindenwood graduates.   Additionally, the literature supports further study of the innate

strength and predictive success of newly hired teachers who graduated from

Lindenwood's teacher education program. A qualitative study regarding both the quality

of teacher preparation at the university level and the success of those Lindenwood

graduates newly hired by area school districts is presented in the following active

research.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Overview

In this chapter the researcher outlined the methodology used in this study and provided details regarding the purpose, research design and rationale, guiding questions, data collection methods, participants, and confidentially clauses.

Retaining quality teachers is important to school districts across the nation. It takes time, money, and valuable resources to recruit, hire, and train new staff based on the needs of each district including curriculum, culture, and traditions and support programs for newly hired teachers. The literature over time suggested a possible disconnect between the preparation aspiring teachers receive in college to become teachers and the success rate of retaining those individuals once they are actually employed in school districts. The study identified specific reasons for the possible disconnect between new teacher expectations and the reality of actual experience once on the job. The identification of such specifics could potentially lead to adjustments within the teacher preparation program at Lindenwood University with an improved teacher retention rate.

The literature also suggested the need for improved support for newly hired teachers by employing school districts. Such information could be potentially beneficial to school districts who are hiring in the St. Louis area and lead to improved teacher support in the workplace resulting in an improved teacher retention rate. Improving teacher retention would provide positive financial benefits for school districts long term. Most importantly, retaining teachers long term would be educationally positive for students.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, active research was to determine how the

perceptions of teacher trainees and first-year teachers were impacted by factors such as

the Lindenwood University teacher preparation program and area school district teacher

induction and support programs. Another purpose was to determine how their

preconceived ideas about what it means to be an elementary school teacher measure up to

the reality of actually being a teacher. If one or more disconnects are identified between

aspiring teacher perceptions at the onset of the student teacher experience, solutions to

eliminate this disconnect could be investigated and implemented by the university.

Likewise, if one or more disconnects are identified between the onset of the newly

employed teacher compared to completion of the first year of teaching, hiring districts

could develop solutions to improve support programs in order to increase both the teacher

success rate and the retention rate of the newly hired educators.

The study looked specifically at whether or not these Lindenwood teacher

candidates and Lindenwood graduates, during their first year of teaching, felt strongly

about remaining in or leaving their chosen profession. The surveys and personal

interviews utilized in the active research addressed major themes having a direct impact

on both pre-teachers and first-year teachers new to the classroom. Selected themes spoke

to teacher preparation in areas of curriculum implementation and also in areas of non-

curricular responsibilities within the job. Perception versus the reality of professional

success and job satisfaction was also analyzed through surveys and interviews. Data was

gleaned from Lindenwood University's teacher candidate program (Cohort A) and from

first-year teachers who had graduated from Lindenwood University and were employed in their first year of teaching (Cohort B).

Research Design and Rationale

The research indicated that teacher training institutions need to be fully aware of classroom reality and align teacher preparation programs with this reality in order to provide aspiring educators with a clear view of requirements for success in the classroom. The research also noted that, due to the precious resources available to invest in new teachers, school districts who are hiring must determine and implement factors that lead to the highest possible success and retention rate of their new hires. Even though more and more school districts invest support toward professional development and the retention of their new teachers, the accumulation of research confirms that a large percentage of new teachers continue to leave the profession for various reasons.

Therefore, the overarching goal of this study was to identify specific components of Lindenwood University's teacher preparation program and of area school districts' new teacher induction and support programs that either negatively or positively impacted teachers to continue in their chosen profession. Connecting with and meeting actual needs of newly employed educators could lead to a more successful transition to the workplace and first-year teacher experience. This in turn could result in a greater teacher retention rate long-term.

Participants in the Qualitative Study

For the duration of the qualitative study, all participants were attending, or had graduated from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. Participants were working toward or had completed the institution's requirements for an undergraduate

degree in elementary education and were working toward meeting or had met

requirements for teacher certification in the state of Missouri. All members included in

the research study fully understood all requirements and signed the *Informed Consent for*

Participation in Research Activities agreement to take part in the study. The consent

form used by the researcher was designed by Lindenwood University (see Appendix A).

      Participants of the study were divided into two cohorts. A total of 51

Lindenwood education students were invited to participate in Cohort A. Thirty-eight of

the 51 teacher candidates agreed to the time commitment and communication

requirements of the study. Cohort A consisted of 38 female participants and no male

participants. The 38 females were, at that time, enrolled in Lindenwood University's

teacher education program. Consent signatures were obtained from these aspiring

elementary teachers when they were attending their teacher candidate preparation class at

Lindenwood University. These participants were on track to complete their actual

student teaching experience at the completion of the following fall semester in St. Charles

County and St. Louis County school districts. The researcher obtained qualitative data

from this group throughout the duration of their student teaching experience. All 38

participants consented to participate in the active research and responded to both the first

and second surveys. Seven participants were randomly selected to take part in personal

interviews with the researcher.

      The second cohort, Cohort B, consisted of 43 participants. Members of this

cohort had already completed their Lindenwood University student teaching experience

during the spring semester of and were approaching graduation. Consent signatures were

obtained during the final class of the student teaching course. The researcher gleaned

qualitative data from Cohort B after graduation from Lindenwood and throughout the

first year of professional teaching. While 43 participants initially consented to be part of

the study, only 29 participated in the second survey. These first year teachers who stated

they could no longer participate in the research all expressed great stress over not having

enough time to fulfill their teaching responsibilities. Seven of the 29 remaining

participants were randomly selected members of Cohort B. The seven randomly selected

cohort members participated in one-on-one personal interviews with the researcher.

      Originally, the research called for a third cohort, Cohort C, which would have

consisted of 20 participants who had graduated with a degree in elementary education

from Lindenwood University who were in their fifth year of employment in area schools.

However due to privacy considerations, the University could not provide contact

information for these graduates. Therefore, the five-year teacher cohort was deleted from

the study.

Research Questions

      While a number of topics bubbled up throughout the review of literature, two

significant questions regarding these specific topics became obvious. Each of the

research questions was two-part in design and addressed reaction to both the perceptions

and realities of teaching.

      RQ 1: (Regarding Cohort A) Do Lindenwood University teacher candidates find

that their perceptions of student teaching, prior to the teacher candidate experience, align

with the actual job requirements as experienced during the student teacher practicum, and

do these findings negatively or positively impact the decision to remain in the profession?

RQ 2: (Regarding Cohort B) Do newly employed Lindenwood education graduates, as first year teachers, find that their prior perceptions of classroom teaching align with their current reality and the actual job requirements, and do these findings negatively or positively impact their decision to remain in their chosen profession?

Procedures

Cohort A and Cohort B participants were recruited during their enrollment and participation in Lindenwood's course, EDU 41000, for student teaching. This is a 12-hour course in which Lindenwood students, who have completed all 118 hours of prior required coursework, prepare for and participate in a teacher candidate or student teaching experience (see Appendix B). The teacher candidate/student teaching experience course is completed throughout a 16-week period when each teacher candidate is assigned to a local elementary school, grade level, and specific class. Each is partnered with an experienced supervising teacher to learn curriculum, and to plan and implement lessons, and manage day-to-day activities of the class. Cohort A completed *Survey 1 for Student Teachers* (see Appendix C) at the onset of the student teaching course while Cohort B completed *Survey 1 for First Year Teachers* (see Appendix D) at the completion of the course.

The researcher attended one EDU 41000 class for each cohort: the first class of the semester for Cohort A, and the last class of the semester for Cohort B. During that class period, the researcher introduced the study to all students by providing thorough details of the study including any information and commitment that would be required of the participants. Consent forms were provided to all EDU 41000 students in attendance and all willing participants completed and signed the consent forms. Once the

introduction of the study was explained and consent forms were obtained from willing

participants, the researcher continued communication with all participants via email,

phone, or during one-on-one meetings both on and off the Lindenwood University

campus for the duration of the study.

   The information gathered from individuals in both Cohorts A and B was

qualitative in nature. Every participant in each cohort completed an initial individual

paper survey in their EDU 41000 class on the Lindenwood University campus. The

researcher also requested that every participant within each cohort complete a second

survey electronically via email. Finally, the researcher conducted 14 one-on-one

interviews with randomly selected members of each cohort, either in person or over the

phone (see Appendix H & I).   The researcher collected, tabulated, and analyzed all

research data. The 14 interviews were analyzed for specific and common themes. Both

survey and interview results are detailed in Chapter Four.

Survey 1 Procedures

   The researcher conducted two surveys with Cohort A and Cohort B. *Survey 1 for*

Student Teachers was conducted with participants of Cohort A during the first session of

their EDU 41000 student teaching class. The purpose of this survey was to gather initial

data, prior to participants starting the teacher candidate process, regarding the

participants' reasons for entering the field of education in addition to their perceptions of

being an elementary school teacher.

   In order to collect ample data via *Survey 1 for Student Teachers,* the researcher

attended two different sessions of the EDU 41000 student teaching class located on the

Lindenwood University campus. The first class had 23 students in attendance. Fourteen

of the 23 students from this class signed the research consent form to participate in the study and completed *Survey 1 for Student Teachers* in class. The other EDU 41000 class was held on the same day with 28 students in attendance. A total of 24 of the 28 students in this class agreed to participate in the study, signed the research consent form and completed *Survey 1 for Student Teachers* during the class period. In total, 38 beginning teacher candidates agreed to participate in the study. The survey was multiple-choice in design with identical questions and response options on each individual survey. It was completed independently via paper/pencil. Participants were given as much time as they needed to complete the survey during the given class period (see Appendix C).

Cohort B consisted of participants who had just completed their teacher candidate experience, EDU 41000. This cohort completed *Survey 1 for First Year Teachers* during their final class on the Lindenwood University campus. The purpose of this survey was to gather qualitative data regarding the participants' reasons for entering the field of education in addition to their perceptions of being an elementary school teacher at the end of their student teaching experience with actual teaching scheduled to take place the following fall. The researcher visited class with 49 students in attendance. A total of 43 of the 49 students agreed to participate in the research study by signing the research participation consent form and completed the initial survey, *Survey 1 for First Year Teachers* in that class period. The survey was multiple-choice in design with identical questions and response options on each survey provided. It was completed independently via paper/pencil. Participants were given as much time as they needed to complete the survey during the class period.

Survey 2 Procedures

After completion of the first surveys, members of Cohort A were asked to complete a second survey at the completion of the fall semester. Members of Cohort B completed a second survey near or at the completion of their first year of teaching. Cohort members were contacted by the researcher via email to request the completion of the second survey. Email addresses for these participants had been previously acquired by the researcher on the research participation consent form. The extended time period between the completion of Survey 1 and Survey 2 provided cohort members to progress through either the student teaching experience (Cohort A) or the first year of teaching in the elementary classroom (Cohort B). The purpose of the second survey was to gather data to determine if participants' expectations or perceptions of teaching elementary school had changed or remained the same among individuals within in each cohort after new knowledge and personal experience within the teaching profession had been acquired.

Survey 2 for Student Teachers was sent to the 38 research participants in Cohort A electronically via email. The questions on Survey 2 (see Appendix E) were more detailed than the questions on the initial survey that Cohort A had completed at the onset of their student teaching experience. *Survey 2 for Student Teachers* was created and distributed by the researcher using the online *Survey Monkey* website (Finley & Finley, 1999). Utilizing this website the researcher developed and input short, open ended questions along with some multiple-choice responses to create the electronic survey.

First year teachers, Cohort B, completed *Survey 2 for First Year Teachers* (see Appendix F). The purpose of this survey was to determine if the participants'

expectations or perceptions toward teaching had changed in a positive or negative way

after graduating from Lindenwood and having their first year of professional teaching.

The questions on *Survey 2 for First Year Teachers* were more specific than the questions

on the initial survey that Cohort B completed.

As with *Survey 2 for **Student** Teachers, Survey 2 for **First Year** Teachers* was

created and distributed by using the online *Survey Monkey* website (Finley & Finley,

1999). Utilizing this tool, the researcher developed and input short, open-ended

questions along with multiple-choice responses to create the electronic survey. *Survey 2*

for First Year Teachers was sent to all research participants were used to send the survey

electronically to all members of Cohort B for completion.

Interview Procedures

Once Surveys 1 and 2 had been completed by both Cohorts A and B, the

researcher randomly selected seven people from each cohort to participate in the

interview portion of the study. Interviews of the research participants were conducted

nearing the end of either the student teacher experience (Cohort A) or the end of the first

year teacher experience (Cohort B). The purpose of these interviews was to gather

qualitative data to obtain more in depth responses in order to expand on the details of

either positive or negative changes in attitudes and perspectives toward teaching.

The random selection of participants was arrived at via the use of online random

number table software (see Appendix G). The online randomization tool website utilized

was located at http://www.randomizer.org/form.htm and named Research Randomizer

(Urbaniak & Plous, 2012). In order to accomplish random selection, each research

participant in Cohort A was identified with a number from 1-38 (the total number of

participants in this cohort) in no particular order. These numbers, 1-38, were then input

into the Research Randomizer software and seven random numbers were selected by the

software. Once the online randomizer identified seven random numbers, the researcher

matched each of those seven numbers with the research participant identified by that

number. This selection process randomly identified the participants from Cohort A to be

interviewed by the researcher.

The researcher then contacted the seven members of Cohort A who were

randomly selected to be interviewed and scheduled an interview date, time, and location.

The *Interview for Student Teachers* was conducted in person either on the Lindenwood

University campus or in other public places including restaurants or public libraries. The

researcher conducted and recorded one of the seven interviews by way of phone

conversation. The researcher developed interview questions and were open-ended in

format. Identical questions were asked of each interviewee (see Appendix H). The

researcher electronically or manually recorded and transcribed to hard copy all interviews

for Cohort A with the consent of participants (see Appendix N).

As with Cohort A, the researcher randomly selected seven first-year teachers from

Cohort B to participate in the interview portion of the study, *Interview for First Year*

Teachers. Following the same procedure used with Cohort A, each research participant

in Cohort B was numbered by the researcher from 1-43 (the total number of participates

in this cohort) in no particular order. These numbers, 1-43, were then input into the

Research Randomizer software and seven random numbers were selected. Once the

online randomizer identified seven random numbers, the researcher matched each of

those seven numbers with the research participant identified by that number.

The researcher then contacted the randomly selected interviewees via email and scheduled an interview date, time, and location. As with Cohort A, Cohort B interviews were conducted in person either on the Lindenwood University campus or in other public places including restaurants or public libraries. While it was necessary to conduct the interview via phone with only one member from Cohort A, three participants from Cohort B required their interviews to be conducted by way of phone conversation. Each of the three participants explained that time constraints was the reason for needing to respond to the interview via phone. The questions, as with Cohort A, were developed by the researcher and were open-ended in format. Identical questions were asked of each interviewee (see Appendix I). The researcher electronically recorded and transcribed to hard copy all interview responses for Cohort B with the consent of participants (see Appendix O).

Summary

The researcher contacted students at Lindenwood University pursuing or having earned a degree in elementary education, grouping participants into two cohorts.   Cohort A consisted of 38 teacher candidates, or student teachers. Cohort B consisted of a group of 43 Lindenwood graduates entering their first-year of teaching in area public school districts. From participants within the two cohorts the researcher gathered qualitative data via surveys and personal interviews. Participants responded to questions regarding their expectations and perceptions in response to either their teacher candidate experience (Cohort A) or their first-year of professional teaching experience (Cohort B). Participants were surveyed both at the beginning and end of each of these experiences so

that the researcher could compare and contrast any changes in the expectations of or

perceptions toward teaching in the elementary classroom.

The overarching goal for the qualitative research was to determine identifiable

and or common reasons for aspiring teachers or newly employed teachers who graduated

from the Lindenwood University teacher education program that caused them to remain

in their chosen career or to consider departing while yet new to the profession. Surveying

and interviewing both teacher candidates and first year teachers identified expectations,

growth, changes in perception, and potential strengths and weaknesses of the teacher

preparation programming and first year experiences. The information gathered also

identified strengths and weaknesses of school district professional support for new hires.

The benefits of this qualitative data served a two-fold purpose. It identified ways in

which both university coursework for educators might be adjusted to better prepare

teacher candidates. It also identified ways in which public school district support for new

hires might be adjusted to better guarantee teacher success resulting in improved teacher

retention.   Results of the surveys and the personal interviews are detailed in Chapter

Four.

Chapter Four: Results

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors impact educators who have graduated from Lindenwood University in their choice to remain in or leave the teaching profession. Three emerging factors of focus included: 1) college level teacher preparation programs, 2) state and district teacher induction programs, and 3) daily expectations on the job for beginning teachers. Throughout Chapter Four, the researcher reviewed the results of the study, focusing on an analysis of qualitative data acquired from both Lindenwood University student teachers and first-year educators who had graduated from Lindenwood University and were employed by area school districts.

Results and Analysis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data in this study investigated both prospective teacher perception (Cohort A) and first year teacher reality (Cohort B) regarding various components of college courses, teacher induction programs, and daily job expectations and how such components impact retention rates, job satisfaction, and teaching effectiveness. This data was collected and analyzed from both Cohort A and Cohort B participants through two different surveys. All participants completed surveys at the onset and at the completion of the observed timeframe. The researcher followed up by interviewing seven members of each cohort at the completion of student teaching (Cohort A) and at the completion of first year employment (Cohort B). Some questions in both the surveys and interviews were broad while others were quite specific. The researcher tabulated the surveys and coded the responses according to emerging thematic categories.

Results of Survey 1 for Student Teachers

Participants of *Survey 1 for Student Teachers*, Cohort A, were just getting ready

to start their student teaching experience with the intent to become classroom teachers

once graduating from Lindenwood University. Thirty-eight participants completed the

survey.

Table 1

Survey 1 for Student Teachers--Summary

Survey Question	Answer Choice #1	Answer Choice #2	Answer Choice #3	Answer Choice #4
Inspired to Teach By?	teacher-37%	parent-24%	no one specific-39%	
Immediate Graduate Goals?	teaching job-81.6%	continue edu.-18.4%	other-0%	
Five-year Goal?	classroom teacher-92%	edu. non-teacher-5%	other-0%	
Greatest Challenge for Teachers?	lack of support-31.5%	time-52.5%	poor education-8%	student discipline-8%
Greatest Reward?	student success-82%	salary-0%	test scores-0%	being a good teacher-18%
What Should Students Know at End of Year?	had a good teacher-5%	curriculum-58%	good citizenship-37%	good test scores-0%
Greatest Teacher Responsibility?	to inspire-61%	teach curriculum-5%	dev. good citizens-16%	role model-18%
Teacher Work Time Expectations?	35-40 hrs. weekly: 0%	40-45 hrs. weekly-11%	45-50 hrs. weekly-39%	50+ hrs. weekly-50%

The detailed anecdotal information as provided by these student teachers with complete questions and responses can be found in Appendix J. The responses from *Survey 1 for Student Teachers* are summarized in Table 1.

Prior to student teaching, most of the 38 participants from Cohort A predicted they would continue teaching for five years or longer after securing employment as classroom teachers. They also overwhelmingly indicated that their reason and justification for becoming teachers was to see children succeed in their classrooms. Several added that they hoped to inspire students to become avid learners as a result of their teaching instruction and support. (This researcher saw as a sideline concern that only 5% saw "teaching curriculum" as their greatest responsibility. It is possible that this is a flawed survey question and perhaps participants assumed that "inspired" students would master curriculum.) The survey findings indicated that these future teachers were entering their careers for the right reasons and with good intentions. They wanted students to learn content and skills and to become good citizens. These future teachers noted the importance of striving to, 'develop the whole child—socially, emotionally, and academically.'

Interestingly, predicted challenges were noted by Cohort A even prior to their having experience in the classroom.   Cohort A responses in the first survey included concerns regarding a lack of time to complete tasks effectively or to prepare curriculum instruction for their students. They also expressed concerns regarding a lack of professional support. Even as aspiring educators not yet having a classroom with students of their own they had seen, heard comments, or sensed that a 'lack of time' was a known problem in education. This group also predicted that they would be spending 50

or more hours per week committed to preparing, preforming, and completing their responsibilities as a teacher. Still, at this time this group did not see the time commitment as a deterrent.

Results of Survey 1 for First Year Teachers

Survey 1 for First Year Teachers was completed by Cohort B, a group who had just completed their student teaching, were preparing to graduate, and were applying for their first teaching jobs in area school districts. A total of 43 participants completed the survey. The detailed anecdotal information as provided by these new teachers can be found in detail with complete questions and responses in Appendix K. The responses from *Survey 1 for First Year Teachers* are summarized in Table 2.

At the time the survey was administered, most members of Cohort B overwhelmingly believed, as did Cohort A, that they would remain in the classroom as teachers for not only the next five years but even through the next 10 years. However, it was disconcerting that 2% of the participants already indicated they would not be teaching in five years and 5% predicted they would no longer be in the classroom in 10 years.

At this point in their educational experience, members of Cohort B had completed student teaching but 70% had not secured a teaching position in their certificated area at the time they completed the initial survey. This is understandable as they were just graduating and beginning to apply for teaching jobs when completing the survey. The majority of Cohort B claimed that their current beliefs about being a teacher and the work involved with that career, after completing their student teaching experience, were only 'similar' to their previous perceptions of what a teacher's job entailed. It seemed that the

more experience they got, the more they unveiled some responsibilities or parts of the job

they did not previously realize existed. Still, most remained committed to their career

choice.

Table 2

Survey 1 for First Year Teachers--Summary

Survey Question	Answer Choice #1	Answer Choice #2	Answer Choice #3	Answer Choice #4
Perception Change After Practicum?	same: 23%	similar: 44%	somewhat similar: 23%	not the same: 10%
Teaching in Certified Area?	yes: 30%	no: 70%		
If No, Obtained Certification?	*Praxis®* (MEGA) state test: 56%	additional courses: 21%	other: 23%	
Teaching Degree Preparation?	very well: 21%	well: 53%	inadequately: 5%	not prepared: 21%
Teaching in 5 Years?	very likely: 84%	likely: 12%	somewhat likely: 2%	no: 2%
Teaching in 10 Years?	very likely: 76%	likely: 16%	somewhat likely: 3%	no: 5%
School/Dist. Support?	very helpful: 56%	fairly helpful: 23%	somewhat helpful: 12%	not helpful: 9%
Continuing Education?	very likely: 53%	likely: 33%	somewhat likely: 14%	no: 0%

When asked how their college training prepared them for the realities of teaching

in their own classroom the majority of Cohort B stated that they were 'well prepared' or

'very well prepared.' However, 26% of respondents claimed their undergraduate training

inadequately or poorly prepared them for the realities of the classroom and for being a

teacher. These discrepancies indicated that college training seemed to meet the needs for

many of the aspiring teachers but evidently did not prepare all for the demands of

teaching. It became evident that over a quarter of those who had completed their student

teaching practicum felt they were not prepared to enter their own classroom. (*Note*:

When *Survey 1 for First Year Teachers* was conducted the *Praxis*® was the title of the

state of Missouri's assessment for teacher certification in specific areas. As of September

1, 2014, candidates no longer took the *Praxis*® tests for Missouri educator certification.

All candidates must pass the Missouri Educator Gateway Assessments [MEGA] for

admission to and completion of educator certification programs in Missouri.)

Results of Survey 2 for Student Teachers

Participants of *Survey 2 for Student Teachers* had just completed their student

teaching experience. A total of 21 participants completed the survey. The detailed

anecdotal information as provided by these student teachers with complete questions and

responses can be found in Appendix L. The responses from *Survey 2 for Student

Teachers* are summarized in Table 3.

Having an entire semester of classroom experience since completing *Survey 1 for

Student Teachers*, the respondents of the survey indicated some similar trends and some

changes in their beliefs about teaching. All respondents felt they had received adequate

opportunity for professional development in the district yet 5% expressed some

dissatisfaction with being a teacher based on their experiences in the field of education

thus far.

Table 3

Survey 2 for Student Teachers--Summary

Survey Question	Answer Choice #1	Answer Choice #2	Answer Choice #3	Answer Choice #4
Have a Mentor?	yes-57%	no: 43%		
Mentor Collaboration?	weekly-57%	monthly-5%	semesterly-0%	never-38%
Mentor/Admin. Feedback?	weekly-76%	monthly-5%	yearly-5%	never-14%
Admin. Classroom Visit?	weekly-29%	monthly-48%	yearly-19%	never- 5%
Mentor/Admin. Value?	very much-67%	somewhat-19%	not at all-14%	
Responsibilities Match Job Description?	very much-67%	somewhat-33%	not at all-0%	
Professional Development Available?	strongly agree-57%	somewhat agree-38%	somewhat disagree-5%	strongly disagree-0%
Career Satisfaction?	Strongly agree-85.5%	somewhat agree-9.5%	somewhat disagree-5%	strongly disagree-0%
Immediate Career Goals?	secure teaching job-81%	continue education-14%	other-5%	

5-year Goal?	classroom teacher-85%	non-teacher edu. job-14%	outside of education-0%	other-0%
10-year Goal?	classroom teacher-67%	non-teacher edu. job-33%	outside of education-0%	other-0%
Greatest Challenge?	no professional support-5%	time-71%	college prep-10%	discipline-14%
Greatest Reward?	academic achievement 95%	good test scores-0%	salary-5%	
Goals for Students?	curriculum mastery-43%	good test scores-10%	citizenship-47%	
Teacher Most Critical Responsibility?	inspire-71%	curriculum-5%	citizenship-14%	role model-10%
Anticipated Weekly Work Hours?	35-40: 0%	41-45: 10%	46-50: 43%	51+: 47%
Relatives in Education?	yes-67%	no-33%		

Just as was noted from this cohort in *Survey 1 For Student Teachers*, this group still overwhelmingly believed that their purpose for becoming teachers was to see children succeed in their classrooms and to inspire them as learners as a result of the teacher's instruction and support. They wanted students to learn content and skills and be good citizens. They continued to express a desire to develop the whole child—socially, emotionally, and academically.

A great majority of this group stated that they received feedback from a teacher or administrator at least weekly at this stage of student teaching. They also stated that a principal visited their classroom at least monthly if not more often. As a result of the feedback received from teachers and/or administrators, a majority of Cohort A stated that they were improving in their craft and that the job description matched the actual reality of their day-to-day responsibilities. The majority of this group also continued to believe they would be spending 50 or more hours per week committed to preparing, preforming, and completing their work as a teacher. They also pointed out that this time commitment is more than a normal work week for many who earn more.

Within this group, the majority of respondents stated that they saw themselves as classroom teachers over the next five years. However, the results showed that they became more diverse since the initial survey when asked about their career plans for the next 10 years. Sixty-seven percent of Cohort A still predicted they would remain a classroom teacher but 33% now predicted that while they would still be in the field of education, they would no longer be general education teachers. Unfortunately 5% of this group already expressed a lack of career satisfaction at the completion of their student teacher experience. It was also disconcerting that 38% expressed that there was not

enough time to collaborate with their mentor and had not even had one meeting regarding

mentor support.

Cohort A's belief about teaching's greatest challenge shifted from the first survey

which they completed prior to starting their student teaching. Initially, 31.5% of them

stated that lack of professional support was a great challenge for teachers and 52.5%

believed that lack of time was the greatest challenge in teaching. After completing their

student teaching, however, 71% of this group believed it was a lack of time and only 5%

remained consistent in their belief that is was a lack of professional development that

presented the greatest challenge to teachers. In addition, a new factor surfaced for this

group after having experience in the classroom. Once they had actually worked with the

students, 14% identified student discipline as their greatest challenge in teaching

compared to only 8% prior to their practicum. One participant expressed concern that

> I had no idea that classroom management would be such a problem for me. The
>
> kids were not really so bad when the regular teacher was in the room, but when it
>
> was just me they really tried to take advantage of me. I've never been around
>
> kids and I think it would be a big help if we had a course on discipline techniques
>
> before doing our student teacher. How to handle this kind of problem was really
>
> never brought up.

An accurate comparison of this concern would be difficult to come by due to different

school districts serving students of varying socio economic backgrounds and with

varying parental support. However, the need to equip new teachers with classroom

disciplinary skills was obvious.

Results of Survey 2 for First Year Teachers

Survey 2 for First Year Teachers was completed by Cohort B near the completion

of or immediately after their first year of teaching, having graduated from Lindenwood

University with a degree in Elementary Education the previous spring. *Survey 2*, for this

cohort was completed online via Survey Monkey. The participants completed the survey

and participants were able to choose all answers that applied to their situation as

appropriate. The detailed anecdotal information as provided by these first year teachers

with complete questions and responses can be found in Appendix M. The responses from

Survey 2 for First Year Teachers are summarized in Table 4.

Since graduating from the university, 83% reported being a classroom teacher at

the time they completed the second survey. The majority of the group surveyed was

between the ages of 20 and 30 and had secured employment in middle to low income

schools. One-half of this group was teaching primary grades (K-2) and the other half

were teaching intermediate grades (3-5). When asked about their satisfaction in their

current position, 50% surveyed reported being very satisfied and 50% reported being just

somewhat satisfied.

Table 4

Survey 2 for First Year Teachers--Summary

Survey Question	Answer Choice #1	Answer Choice #2	Answer Choice #3	Answer Choice #4
Teaching Position	yes-83%	no-17%		
Job Satisfaction	not sat.-0%	somewhat-50%	very-50%	
Confidence in Competency	not-0%	somewhat-50%	very-50%	
Strongest Influence on Competency (Multiple Chosen)	college-67%	classroom-75%	personal-83%	other-17%
Colleague Support?	not at all-8%	somewhat-42%	very much-50%	
College Didn't Prepare You For? (Multiple Chosen)	classroom mgmt.-50%	curriculum instruction-25%	meeting student needs-42%	assessment-50%
Adequate Resources?	yes-personally provided-58%	yes-dist. provided-34%	inadequate-8%	
Held Accountable To?	principal-25%	colleague-8%	dist. admin.-17%	myself-50%
Adequate Collaboration Time?	adequate-17%	more needed-66%	no opportunity-17%	

Set & Share Prof. Goals?	yes-w/ evaluator-50%	yes-w/ myself-50%	no goals-0%
Adequate Feedback? (Multiple Chosen)	evaluator-75%	teachers-33%	student work-67% none-8%
Career Aspirations Beyond the Classroom?	yes-75%	no-25%	
Receive Most Support From	admin.-17%	teachers-83%	parents-0%
SES of Students	low-33%	middle-50%	evenly dist.-17% high-0%
Grade Level You Teach	K, 1, 2- 50%	3, 4, 5- 50%	
Your Age	20-30: 67%	31-40:33%	41-50: 0% 51+: 0%
Adequate College Training for classroom mgmt.?	no-8%	somewhat-92%	yes-0%
Adequate College Training for Assessment?	no-0%	somewhat-75%	yes-25%
Closest Relationship at School?	another teacher-100%	admin.-0%	dist. leader-0%

The same 50/50 split occurred when members of Cohort B reported feelings regarding confidence and competency in their new teaching job. Fifty percent seemed to be very confident about their skills as an elementary classroom teacher and 50% were only somewhat confident. They attributed this confidence and competency primarily to personal experiences in the classroom, followed by previous experiences in the classroom during practicums, and finally to experience they gained from college coursework. A majority of the group reported having adequate resources to teach, even though many claim to have provided their own resources. They did however, report needing more time to collaborate with others in the area of teaching strategies.

Cohort B was also almost evenly split regarding their responses of 'very much' and 'somewhat' when asked if they felt that the work load was distributed evenly and shared among teammates. The research did not indicate however how many teammates, if any, these teachers have to support them nor does it indicate facts regarding the dynamics of the schools or the actual teaching teams. The respondents surveyed did note however that they received the most support in their new jobs from other teachers.

Cohort B reported three primary areas in which they felt least prepared for becoming a teacher, based on their college preparation. They noted equally that classroom management, student discipline, and assessing curriculum were the areas in which they were most unprepared as new teachers. Only one respondent reported being fully prepared to take on his/her own classroom as a brand new teacher. All reported that college only prepared them somewhat for managing student behaviors in their classroom.

The most surprising response reported from the first year teachers in Cohort B from Survey 2 was that 75% of those surveyed said they believe they will do something

other than teach in the classroom during their careers. Concern regarding the lack of time

and poor student discipline were the most frequent concerns expressed by this group.

Results of Personal Interviews

The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with 14 participants--seven

members from Cohort A and seven from Cohort B. These interviews took place within

four months after the completion of the second survey for each group. Interviews took

place either in person or via phone conversation. Five significant themes surfaced as a

result of the personal interviews. These thematic areas are discussed in greater detail in

Chapter Five. The specific interview results of Cohorts A and B were transcribed

individually (see Appendix N & O).

Results of Interview for Student Teachers

The *Interview for Student Teachers* was responded to by seven randomly selected

members of Cohort A within four months after their completion of *Survey 2 for Student*

Teachers. The researcher conducted all one-on-one interviews in person or via phone.

For complete and all-inclusive responses to Cohort A interviews see full transcripts in

Appendix N. At the point in which respondents completed this interview, the participants

had completed their student teaching experience. The analysis of the qualitative data

gathered from all seven interviews fell into the following five thematic categories: 1)

time, 2) support, 3) special needs students, 4) self-fulfillment, and 5) responsibility

beyond curriculum. Although classroom management and student discipline issues did

not surface specifically as one of the five main thematic concerns of the student teachers,

it did come up during the interview process. Several participants remarked that training

in how to manage classroom discipline during college coursework along with more advice from teacher colleagues would be helpful.

Time

A critical need noted by this group was the necessity for more time due to so many content area lesson preparations at the elementary level. The group also noted that more time was needed for grading and planning during the school day. They expressed concern that extra meetings and committees often took up plan times or extended the work day both before and after school. Two interviewees complained that bus duty at the end of the day and some recess duty also took away from planning and grading time.

Cohort A indicated a need for more time after work to find that balance in life to take care of themselves and their families, which would ultimately make them better teachers. The desire for more time outside of the classroom would not only help maintain greater balance in life but may also result in lower levels of stress such as having time to exercise outside of the workday. One interviewee stated, 'I'm too tired each day when I get home to care for myself much less my family.' This group, in general, felt that there is so much work to do that they have no personal time outside of the workday because they are continuing to work beyond their contracted hours. Another respondent stated, 'it's necessary for teachers to have a few weeks off during the summer to recover and reboot to be their best for another year.' The same respondent noted that he/she would utilize the time off 'to better prepare for the next school year.' This feeling of not having enough time to stay on top of the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching and the concern for having no personal time to recharge echoed one of the key reasons for teacher burn out found throughout the review of literature. It was notable that none of the participants

complained that the classroom workload was unnecessary. They simply expressed the

need to have more time in order to do the job well. Participants were more than willing

to work hard' they simply wanted to see the results of that dedication in the success of

their students. The self-satisfaction they perceived they would experience in working

with children was definitely lacking.

Support

'The most important need for a new teacher is a good support system such as a

good mentor teacher or help from colleagues,' stated one interviewee. Several of the

participants interviewed within Cohort A mentioned a need for support in order to

maintain the stamina and level of performance to be a good teacher. They expressed a

strong need to connect with other people and to have people around them who listen. A

great mentor or cooperating teacher was specifically mentioned as providing very strong

support for these beginning teachers. The group also identified the need for a good

teaching team to work with for support and collaboration purposes. Additionally they

expressed the need for a strong principal to provide support and ongoing feedback. 'As a

beginning teacher it's important to have regular support from the principal and my

teammates.' Generally, participants who had easy access to mentor teachers and grade

level colleagues felt they were supported. They also felt supported by visits and

encouragement from principals. This ability to get affirmation regarding what they were

doing well and timely recommendations regarding techniques that might work better was

greatly appreciated by teachers.

Special Needs Students

An area of concern that Cohort A mentioned needing more information, education, and preparation was in regards to special education. This group generally felt unprepared to meet the needs of special education students adequately within their general education classroom. They also felt unequipped when it came to team meetings and making decisions for these students during IEP meetings, 504 meetings, or RtI (Response to Intervention) meetings. One interviewee stated, 'that one class I had in college about special education needs and requirements was not enough.' The forms alone are overwhelming. Three respondents also stated a need for more knowledge in working with and supporting ELL (English Language Learner) students. One interviewee stated, 'I have 5 ELL students in my class; I wasn't prepared for this; I didn't realize how much help they really need.' One participant suggested that some of the college course work could have been

> swapped out for something more practical. I wish they would have had more special education classes. I have two autistic students and an emotionally disturbed student. I feel unprepared for working with these students. I didn't realize how much time it takes with behavior charts and academic evidence to get students the service they need.

Another student teacher concurred that, 'There needs to be more training at the college level about IEP's and 504 plans and RtI data collection. I really didn't understand what these entailed much less know how to complete the paperwork required.' Nearly all participants expressed frustration that they had not been made aware of the amount of time special needs student would require above and beyond teaching the curriculum.

This cohort concurred overwhelmingly that they had not been prepared to meet the needs of special needs students or ELL students. They expressed feeling surprised (one participant used the word "blindsided") at the significant responsibility special student needs added to the job.

Self-Fulfillment

There were both positive and negative responses regarding the self-fulfillment that participants gain from being a teacher. The student teachers in Cohort A had mixed reactions to their experiences thus far in education including how those reactions impact them personally and professionally. A small percent expressed passion for the job by looking at additional responsibilities such as recess or lunch duty in a positive way and as an opportunity to get to know students beyond the classroom. More importantly, they felt they got to know the whole child, socially, emotionally, and academically through the wide variety of duties they took part in throughout the school day. Some also had a positive outlook on learning and growing as new educators. One interviewee found that as a beginning teacher she craved strong professional development to learn and grow as a new teacher even if that took place during her plan time or outside of the school day. She enjoyed the idea of building her leadership skills within her school and having more autonomy through committee work to help fulfill her as a teacher, even though this included additional commitment, work, and time.

Others were unconvinced that teaching, and all of the responsibilities that come with the job, would be fulfilling enough to keep them in the profession long-term. One interviewee stated, 'I'd like to see how…the commitment compares to the salary.' This person specifically expressed concern because, 'the pay is not great,' but is also hopeful

that teaching will be a good fit for her family. She indicated that having time off in the

summer and being on a similar schedule with her children would be helpful. Another

concern stated was, 'I'm worried I might get burned out; the time commitment and

intense amount of work required to do a good job is nearly impossible.' It was evident

that the majority of the participants in Cohort A felt overwhelmed and unable to do the

job well.

Responsibility Beyond Curriculum

This group of interviewees from Cohort A came to realize there were many

responsibilities beyond preparing lessons and teaching the intended curriculum to

students. They were required to attend meetings outside the school day, had to maintain

class websites, produce newsletters regularly to parents, prepare for and attend student

meetings, and attend meetings with the principal. Committees, bus duty, and recess duty

were additional responsibilities this group of new teachers had not considered and

indicated that they had not previously anticipated these additional responsibilities. One

participant noted,

> At the school I'm at now each teacher is required to be on one committee but
>
> because there are so many committees each teacher ends up being on five of six
>
> different committees. There just isn't enough time to fit it all in.

Another student teacher said,

> I just didn't realize before I started student teaching how much extra time is
>
> required of a teacher outside the normal school day…like meetings, duties,
>
> meetings with parents, phone calls, emails, grading papers and tests, and simply
>
> planning for the next day of teacher.

This same participant expressed concern that,

> Going through college courses to get a teaching degree takes a long time and is
> very expensive but I really didn't feel like I had the chance to see if I would
> actually like teaching until I finished all of that and did my student teaching. I
> think there should be more opportunity at the beginning of the college to teach so
> people can figure out early if this is the right career.

Most felt that these additional aspects of teaching should be mentioned throughout the
college coursework regarding responsibilities beyond the classroom and time
management.

Although these added obligations take more time, which the majority of
respondents mentioned as a concern, several of the interviewees found some of these
extra responsibilities to be worthwhile. One person stated,

> I've learned so much from the committee [I'm on] that I wouldn't trade that hour
> of sleep before school for anything. Being on committees in the school is extra
> but good because you can learn from others and share your ideas. It does require
> more preparation and time from the teacher however.

Another person found it to be rewarding when 'connecting with parents and families
during parent teacher conferences and gaining a deeper knowledge of students is
extremely helpful.'

Results of Interview for First Year Teachers

The *Interview for First Year Teachers* was completed by seven randomly selected
members of Cohort B, near or immediately after completion of their first year of
teaching. The one-on-one interviews were conducted in person or via the phone by the

researcher. For complete and all-inclusive questions and responses to Cohort B

interviews see full transcripts in Appendix O. At the point in which they completed this

interview, most individuals had nearly completed their first year teaching experience.

The analysis of the qualitative data gathered from all seven interviews fell into four

thematic categories: 1) time, 2) support, 3) self-fulfillment, and 4) responsibility beyond

curriculum. Apparently, this group had gained enough experience with special education

that it no longer surfaced as a concern. The research indicated that had these teachers

been initially more comfortable with special education student needs, their efficiency as

first year teachers could have been potentially greater. The other four areas of concern

were identical to those of the teacher practicum cohort.

Time

First year teachers identified a need for more time to do their job well. They

wanted more time for learning classroom responsibilities and more professional

development so they could become better teachers. Several noted that getting one half

day per month for professional development was not enough as a new teacher and one

teacher stated specifically, 'I would like more time to meet with my mentor teacher.'

These teachers found value in time spent learning at staff meetings, district training

sessions, and time spent with their team or mentor. However, they also expressed that,

'Time spent doing these things is time the teacher doesn't have to plan for good

instruction, communicate with parents, or to develop quality curriculum assessments.'

Respondents all noted that the greatest need for improvement in the job was once

again more time -- time for planning instruction and completing general school work

such as grading. They expressed concern that teacher plan time was very often taken

away by PLC meetings (Professional Learning Communities), student and staff meetings,

and other responsibilities. Teachers indicated that with their personal plan time being

taken so often, they lacked the necessary time to dig into resources, materials, or research

best practices. One teacher stated, 'It takes more time than I anticipated to do the

incidental things such as paperwork and parent emails.' Another stated, 'I have to take

my school work to my own kids' evening and weekend activities to get the job done.'

Those beginning teachers who do not have family commitments stated, 'When I become

a parent it could become impossible to continue putting in the hours I currently do.'

Another interviewee agreed that the job takes a great deal of time which was not as

problematic for her because she has no husband or children so she is free to stay late at

school or work on the weekends.

One first year teacher, who indicated she was putting in 70-80 hours per week

said, 'New teachers need more time to prepare lessons and assessments for all the

different subject. There are resources in the classroom but I'm not familiar with them—

that takes time I don't have.' This participant appreciated working, 'alongside teachers

who have been doing my job for many years.' She said,

> I learn from them but we are evaluated and held to the same standards. It's
>
> impossible to teach at that level when you are making new lesson plans for all the
>
> subjects. They've had 20 years to perfect their plans and assessments. I really
>
> need more time to plan and prepare.

These first year teachers reported spending an average of 60 plus hours working per

week.

Support

'Having a good team makes the job easier because we work together!' This statement from a first year teacher summed up the general feeling of Cohort B in regards to the support needed for first year teachers. Six of the seven first year teachers interviewed felt they received a great deal of support from their team and that they had much to learn from more experienced teachers. They acknowledged receiving this support before and after school as well as during their lunch times and that the most experienced teachers shared materials and resources often with new teachers. Several teachers happily stated that they talk with their teammates daily and, 'feel fortunate that fellow teachers are willing to take time to mentor and plan instruction with them.' One first year teacher stated, 'I love my team; I couldn't have survived without them and we've become friends.' One person said they received no support and may want to change schools as a result or possibly leave the profession. He stated, 'I feel all alone. I don't see my teammates or principal. I hope I'm doing the right work.' Overall, however, this group received strong support from their mentors and fellow teachers.

Self-Fulfillment

There were a variety of reasons the first year teachers interviewed felt fulfilled in their jobs on a daily basis. Reasons noted were: loving their students and feeling happy in their job, feeling support from the principal, enjoying the company of the people they work with, and feeling like they were in a friendly and welcoming work environment. Generally these new teachers felt personally rewarded when it came to being a teacher. One teacher stated, 'I get tired often but I love my kiddos!', and, 'I am thankful for this job and hope it gets easier in years to come.' Another teacher stated, 'My first year has

been tough and tiresome but so far it's worth seeing my students succeed.' These

comments showed a mix of joys and struggles that come with being a beginning teacher.

However, the problem of not having enough time was prominent and reoccurring with

every interviewee.

While first year teachers claim to enjoy parts of the job, it was evident that there

were a number of areas within teaching that were identified as not being fulfilling. Two

different teachers talked about feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and exhausted. One

teacher struggled with student discipline stating, 'The discipline part of teaching is

something I wasn't prepared for. If I had a better handle on the behaviors I would be

more pleased with the job.' Another commented on the lack of balance between work

and home that the job presented by saying, 'I'm happy when I'm working with kids but

not happy at 9:00 p.m. on Saturday night when I'm at home doing school work.' The

most telling statement made by a first year teacher explained the frustrations of being

new to the job in comparison with experienced teachers, 'The expectations are the same

for all teachers. I am evaluated identically and held to the same standards as someone

who has taught for 25 years.' Overall, these new teachers had a mix of positive and

negative comments regarding self-fulfillment that not only focused on the fact that they

were new to teaching but also in regards to the work in general.

Responsibility Beyond Curriculum

First year teachers have many responsibilities within their classrooms each day

beyond that of teaching, implementing, and assessing curriculum knowledge. These

additional tasks include classroom management and student discipline, social and

emotional development of students, parent communication, professional learning and

team meetings, paperwork and grading, special education collaboration, recess, lunch and

bus duties, and organizing the day for themselves and their students, among others. The

first year teachers interviewed did not anticipate these additional responsibilities required

of a new teacher, beyond simply being a good teacher within his or her classroom. Extra

meetings required of teachers were noted by six of the seven different first year teachers

and were mentioned 14 times as a point of contention. These meetings included monthly

and weekly building staff meetings or PLC's, special needs meetings such as IEP's and

504's, school district committees, Care Team, district and school workshops, principal

meetings, and new teacher orientations.

In addition to meetings, these new teachers had even more responsibilities both

during and outside of their contracted work day. One teacher stated that she was, 'having

a hard time managing all of the extra responsibilities, learning the curriculum herself, and

still being a good teacher.' Four respondents said that parent communication, whether

through phone calls, emails, newsletters, websites, or face to face, was a responsibility

they had not realized would take up so much of their time. Additional duties and

supervision of students was mentioned six different times among the teachers interviewed

as an added stressor. These extra duties included supervising hallways before and after

school, walking students to buses after the bell, recess duty, and supervising breakfast in

the cafeteria. Three teachers also led a before or after school club or tutoring session of

some kind. The overall feeling among these new teachers was summed up in this

comment, 'I don't care for all of the additional stuff. I just want to spend time teaching

my students; I hadn't expected that so much 'other than teaching' stuff would be on my

plate.' One first year teacher indicated that [the responsibility beyond teaching],

really surprised me. I supervise hallways and bathrooms each morning and

afternoon. I also have recess duty and I'm on three different committees that

meet before and after school. I do a ton of communicating with parents. I also

meet with student before school Thursdays for tutoring. Some weeks I have

something every single day before school.

It was evident that all first year teachers felt they were distracted from focusing on

planning for and teaching their students by the many responsibilities beyond their

classrooms.

Summary

The research in this study was qualitative in nature with the purpose of

determining how various and specific factors impacted success of teachers new to the

field. The three broad areas potentially seen as impacting new teacher success included:

1) college level teacher preparation programs, 2) state and district teacher induction and

support programs, and 3) daily expectations and responsibilities of the new teacher

beyond curriculum and assessment - to include discipline and time constraints.

Specifically, the research, gathered through surveys and personal interviews, focused on

how these three overarching areas might impact the success or lack of success of student

teachers who are near graduation at Lindenwood University and also newly hired

teachers who have graduated from Lindenwood and secured employment. The research

identified potential resolutions to address the decades of literature that indicates a very

low retention rate of new educators across the nation. A more local focus of this study

attempted to identify reasons these new or soon to be new teachers decide to stay in or

leave the teaching profession. While the literature over the past two decades, in almost

redundant in nature, continued to point to 'a lack of time to do the job well' as a

prominent reason for poor teacher retention rates, this particular study identified very

similar reasons for new teacher dissatisfaction among Lindenwood student educators and

recent Lindenwood graduates presently employed in area school districts. While the

results of this research echoed the concerns expressed in the available literature over the

past decade and longer, the intent is to provide recommendations in Chapter Five that

might begin to resolve the long standing and costly problem of poor teacher retention

rates.

   Specifically, the study utilized both written response surveys and personal

interviews to collect data from student teacher candidates and first year teachers. This

study focused on perceptions prior to beginning teaching in comparison to the reality of

being a new teacher in the classroom and looked at how these might differ. The intended

goal then, having identified these perceptions and realities, was to provide potential

solutions to alleviate these real concerns for new educators in an effort to encourage them

to remain in their chosen profession. As indicated throughout Chapter Four, the concerns

expressed by both future and newly hired teachers were: having so many responsibilities

beyond classroom teaching, a lack of knowledge required to meet the needs of special

students, discipline issues within the classroom, and most frequently noted, 'not having

enough time to do the job well' as the most prominent concern. Positive findings

impacting the soon to be or newly hired teachers included the satisfaction of seeing

students grow and learn and the joy of working with and being supported by colleagues.

   There was evidence throughout the literature, and supported in this study, that

college level teacher preparation programs (specific to this study was Lindenwood

University), state and local district teacher induction programs, and daily on the job expectations for beginning teachers do have a notable and negative impact on the retention rate of new teachers. Recommendations that could potentially improve new teacher retention rates for Lindenwood University education students and graduates are discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

Overview

The goal of this research was to identify factors impacting the challenge to improve the new teacher retention rate. The specific focus was on future elementary teachers who were soon to graduate from Lindenwood University in St. Charles County, Missouri, as well as newly employed elementary teachers who had graduated from Lindenwood and been employed in area school districts. In the previous chapter, the researcher summarized the findings of the qualitative data collection. This chapter discusses these findings, notes any limitations found in the study, and makes recommendations for improved teacher retention based on the results of the study. It is within the context of this active research that several reasons were identified that cause so many aspiring and newly employed teachers to leave their chosen profession so early in the game. The study also pointed to several teacher preparation and support options that could potentially encourage new teachers to remain committed to their chosen careers.

Discussion of Methodology and Results

The methodology was designed to provide multiple measures of qualitative data by utilizing both surveys and direct interviews. The 'before and after' perceptions of the student teaching experience and the 'before and after' perceptions of the new teacher classroom experience were compared and analyzed. The researcher followed two cohorts over an extended period of time in an effort to identify the reasons why aspiring and new teachers give up their aspirations to teach so early in their career. The overall results of the study provided helpful information regarding issues causing new teachers to turn away from their chosen field. However, due to the time limitation of the study, it did not

provide clear information regarding the most specific windows of time that negatively

impacted teachers and caused them to turn away from education. The researcher

determined that the cohorts would need to be followed for a period of five years, rather

than the limited time on which this study focused, to gain a better understanding of

specific time frames that negatively impact new teachers regarding their career choice.

The results of the research (in agreement with the review of literature) indicated

that the struggles which new teachers face are commonly experienced by nearly all

teachers just beginning their careers.   Five specific areas of concern and frustration

became evident among Lindenwood University's aspiring teachers making up Cohort A.

These included: 1) time, 2) support, 3) special needs student requirements, 4) self-

fulfillment, and 5) responsibility beyond curriculum and instruction. These five themes

were identified as serious concerns for the Lindenwood University teacher candidates

having just completed their student teaching requirements. Interestingly, the newly

employed teachers, Cohort B, were frustrated by nearly all the same concerns. Areas of

frustration for this group included: 1) time, 2) support, 3) self-fulfillment, and, 4)

responsibility beyond the curriculum. While the learning curve for teacher candidates

regarding special needs students and accompanying documentation requirements was

challenging, it was one concern that the first year teachers were able to particularly

overcome during that initial year in their own classrooms. They became more efficient

regarding special needs forms and requirements and became more comfortable in their

abilities to meet special student needs by the end of the year causing this concern to no

longer surface as a major issue for first year teachers, Cohort B.   However, the four other

areas of concern continued to be a challenge for teachers even after a full year of teaching experience.

All participants in both Cohort A (student teachers) and Cohort B (first-year teachers) completed surveys both at the onset and completion of their experiences. The original intent of the researcher was to interview 10 participants from Cohort A and 10 participants from Cohort B, however only seven members from each cohort were available to take part in the final interviews. When the researcher personally inquired as to why some were not able to participate in the interviews, the non-participating teachers cited 'a lack of time' as the greatest deterrent. It is interesting that 'a lack of time' was the reason provided for non-participation in the interviews. The challenge of 'never having enough time' was the number one concern expressed by both Cohort A and Cohort B throughout the survey responses. Lack of time to do the job well was also the number one concern of every participant individually interviewed.

While the personal interview respondent pool was limited to only a small number from each cohort, several concerns – the lack of time and need for more support - were so strongly expressed and consistent, the researcher would predict these concerns to remain evident in a larger sample and over a longer time period. The researcher determined that a larger sample of participants followed over a timeline of at least five years would provide more insightful data. This study, however, adequately identifies several reasons why new teachers decide to throw in the towel so early in their career, and it provides several possible solutions to potentially curb the early departure of newly hired teachers from their chosen career.

Recommendations

The surveys and individual interviews consistently supported specific themes of concern that caused both aspiring and new teachers to lose hope. Over the past 20 years there has been much research regarding the benefits of specific teacher induction and mentoring programs to improve the nation's poor teacher retention rate.

The earlier research points to the need for higher quality teacher prep programs by colleges and universities while more recent studies stress the need for stronger new teacher support packages from hiring districts. The focus should not move from one to the other but consist of a combined effort on the continued improvement and strengthening of both.

However, several participants suggested that the induction programs, while 'good' took away much needed time to prepare lessons and to do the job well. Providing additional and simpler solutions to the thematic concerns that surfaced again in this study may have more positive results than only focusing on more complicated induction programs and may prove to be more successful and more cost effective over the long haul.

Time

Lack of time to do the job of teaching well at the elementary level was the number one concern for Lindenwood student teachers upon completing their practicum. The lack of enough time was also the most significant concern for Lindenwood teachers who had completed their first full year in the classroom. Not having adequate time to write lesson plans and assessments or to grade meaningfully was a frustration of every educator surveyed and interviewed. Participants also expressed the concern that there was no time

to respond adequately to the required building and special needs paper work beyond that of instruction and assessment.

New teachers require time to plan and write meaningful lesson plans and assessments. This is a task that more seasoned teachers have already accomplished and are able to do more efficiently. Experienced staff members have developed and perfected plans and assessments over many years. Practical ways to maximize the time available to new teachers should be considered by both the universities and the hiring school districts. Solutions that focus on providing new teachers with additional preparation time could potentially resolve this barrier for struggling new hires. This researcher concurs with Goldrick's 2012 research and with Ingersoll's 2013 study. While new teachers need to be included in a strong induction program that offers professional development and a strong subject or grade level mentor, this active research strongly suggests that the provision of more time is the most important element in a quality induction program. The research pointed out that teachers expect to be paid professional salaries, and teachers agree that strong induction programs with a focus on trained mentors are beneficial. However, it is more 'time' that they crave. Considering the 20 dimensions of job satisfaction noted by teachers, the 11 highest ranking factors were all 'intrinsic' satisfaction factors. Having ample time to do the job well and thereby meet those intrinsic needs would go a long way in ensuring that teachers remain in their classrooms.

Support

Need for support was the second area of concern noted by both the teacher candidates and the newly hired teachers once responsible for their own classrooms. Interestingly, throughout the interviews, participants consistently connected what they

called 'support' to the provision of more time. This was particularly evidenced during

the personal interviews when teachers had the opportunity to explain what they needed in

the way of support. Participants always brought the need for more time to develop

excellent plans in order to do the job well.

The first year teacher has no more plan time than the 20 year teacher to develop

lessons and to perfect assessments, making their responsibilities of the job considerably

greater than that of the mature teacher.   Throughout the literature it was evident that

seasoned teachers viewed the new teacher's frazzled first year as 'a rite of passage.' "We

struggled with failure so they should too" (Tait, 2008, p. 74). However, as participants in

this study pointed out, the lengthy to do list for new teachers can be overwhelming if not

impossible considering the amount of time available. There is no business that would

keep its most successful sales tools from their new hires if they wanted to ensure a profit.

Therefore , it is only reasonable that new teachers be provided with all available and

proven lessons, assessments and best practice tips.   Master teachers should turn in their

strongest lesson plans and assessments to the district curriculum specialist. The district

could then compile best practice documents and equip new teachers with them. Having

excellent lessons and assessments would pave the road for new teacher success.

Excellent lesson plans and proven assessments developed by successful master teachers

for each subject area should be considered district property and be provided to all new

hires.

Additionally, it would prove beneficial if new teachers were provided an

additional plan time several days a week to personalize and to perfect already successful

lessons and tests, manage tasks such as parent communication, mentor meetings and learn

the curriculum and resources available to them. This would ensure that the students in

the new teacher's classroom would be offered an educational opportunity closer to that of

the student in the master teacher's classroom. This holds true especially at the

elementary level where any new teacher can be expected to have 12 engaging subject

lessons prepared each day to include four levels of math, four levels of reading, science,

social studies, writing/composition, and handwriting. Additionally, he or she would be

expected to develop excellent and differentiated lessons and activities at various rotation

stations for students not working directly with the teacher at any given time. While this

teacher would typically have 60 minutes of time to plan 12 successful and engaging

lessons for one day, she or he can be left suddenly with no plan time at all when notified

to be ready for an IEP meeting during the regular plan time. Although all very important,

a mentor meeting, parent phone calls, emails and other necessities could take all of the

five scheduled plan times for this teacher during any given week. No successful business

would put its new hires on the job without the necessary tools and neither should school

districts.

       It was surprising that one new teacher who stated she was putting in 70-80 hours

per week still did not feel it was enough time to do the job well. Participants expressed

frustration in that they were working twice as hard as seasoned teacher with less success.

One concern regarding this issue of time is that new teachers were having to recreate the

wheel so to speak. If successful lesson plans and assessments, or even models or

frameworks of such items, were provided to new teachers they could focus on perfecting

teaching techniques and personalizing the lessons and assessments over time.

Members of both Cohort A and Cohort B demonstrated a passion for wanting to help children succeed and committed many hours to get the job done but were greatly frustrated with not having enough time to do it well. Providing new teachers with more time to do their jobs effectively would require a paradigm shift within the education community – especially among tenured teachers. The recommendation to hire additional staff in order to provide new hires with more plan time or support within the classroom would also require district commitment in the form of dollars up front. This would, however, ensure less frustration and greater success for new teachers and result in a greater fiscal savings long term by retaining high quality experienced teachers. Simply providing new hires with the much needed time they desire in order to do their job well would address both top concerns of 'time' and 'support' expressed by new teachers who graduated from Lindenwood University.

A strong support effort available in some area districts is to provide release time during the contracted teaching day for new teachers to observe and meet with mentor teachers. Additional support could come by providing release time for mentor teachers to observe and spend time in new teachers' classrooms. It is recommended that the mentor teacher would assist and co-teach at least one time a quarter during the first year. Allowing the mentor to observe real hands-on instruction rather than simply listening to the new teacher before or after the school day would provide more targeted and stronger support. Additionally, it would not take more time away from the new teacher's before and after school preparation.

Special Needs Students

While most Lindenwood cohort participants noted that they had been introduced to the requirements of special education, 504 and parent communication needs, they had not been exposed to specific forms and reporting documents which they found intimidating and confusing once in classrooms of their own. Introduction to and actual practice with the special needs and 504 reporting forms of area school districts at the university level would be helpful to aspiring educators. In any task, familiarity and hands-on experience increases proficiency and expediency of the task. If the university classroom offered opportunities for teacher candidates to become familiar with the reporting forms similar to those of the area school districts, the learning curve for new teachers would be greatly minimized – and the focus on lessons and assessments improved. This easily implemented solution would minimize the learning curve for new hires and allow them time to do their jobs more efficiently – by providing a little more of their much needed time.

Likewise, participants in both cohorts found themselves lacking in knowledge and proficiency in how to meet the individual needs of both special education students and English language learner students their classrooms. The majority of cohort members indicated they would have benefitted if they had received actual training and specific strategies by experienced special education teachers regarding best practices to connect with and address the requirements of special needs students. One way to address this need might be to invite master teachers into the college classroom to teach specific practical techniques and share best practices. Another possible way to address the concern would be to ensure student teachers had opportunities to observe master teachers

in the classroom demonstrate how to meet the needs of special education students within the instructional setting. This study did indicate that the first year teachers had resolved their special needs student concerns by the end of their first year in the classroom. However, providing new teachers with greater insight and better skills to meet the needs of special education students prior to entering their first year of teaching could improve their success with these children much sooner in the school year - benefitting teachers, the special education students and most importantly, overall academic achievement.

Self-Fulfillment

Every participant indicated that he or she had entered the field of education with a strong passion to teach and to see children become successful. Lindenwood University cohort members noted that many of the concerns they experienced during both the practicum experience and the first year teacher experience caused their passion for their career choice to diminish to some degree. Literature over the past two decades stressed that self-fulfillment can be bolstered by encouragement and positive reinforcement from administrators, mentors, and the grade level team. However, each of the five concerns identified by Cohort A – student teachers – and each of the four concerns identified by Cohort B – first year teachers – were related to not having enough time to do the job well which directly impacted their feelings of self-fulfillment. The interviews with first-year teachers indicated that they continued to experience new concerns even during the final weeks of the school year. These unknowns such as completing culminating portfolios, parent communications, year-end field trips and parties, and final report cards often resulted in the need to alter plans and adjust at a moment's notice.. New teachers expressed greater concern over 'unplanned adjustments in their time' than did the student

teachers. The first year teachers said that their self-fulfillment was negatively impacted by surprise meetings and report requirements that robbed them of much needed time. They indicated that they would begin to feel good about the connections they were making with students and about improved student success only to have the passion they had entered the field with be diminished by unexpected and frequent interruptions to their planning and teaching. While important and necessary, building level meetings, district induction programs, and parent communication requirements brought about unexpected interruptions and once again took time away from their planning and teaching. Most expressed disappointment that their passion and self-fulfillment could be diminished so easily. Several indicated that they did not believe that they had set their teaching goals too high. They simply felt they did not have time during the school day to accomplish their goals for the students in their classrooms, which led to feelings of disappointment within. Therefore, while encouraging communication and positive reinforcement by administrators and mentor teachers does provide some support to teachers new to the classroom, real support according to the participants of this study, would be in the form of more time.

In most careers one becomes proficient within several months on the job. The first year teacher, however, has never experienced the very different requirements and expectations that come with each new quarter of the school year. Participants noted that they were not so surprised that they were caught off guard by the interruptions and the unknowns during the first part of the school year. They believed, however, that they would be better able to control their planning and teaching after several months. However, they indicated that they never really felt that desired control and self-

satisfaction even through the end of the first year of teaching. They strongly indicated that they never felt caught up or on top of the workload.

Providing student teachers and new teachers with a timeline of requirements for the entire school year would be helpful and a very doable. It would be a practical solution to reduce surprises. Many school buildings provide teachers, including new hires, with teacher handbooks though few include the actual timelines and copies of the forms with which new teachers need to be familiar. Although a seemingly simple solution to the concern for time, such a familiarity to timelines and special education documentation and 504 student needs and reporting forms could give new teachers the opportunity to be proactive and to plan ahead. Such a handbook could even be presented to Lindenwood students during their teacher practicum course as a sample. This handbook could be reviewed during the education course work setting and then added to and expanded throughout the practicum experience. Again, while a simple recommendation, it would provide some knowledge of the unknown to aspiring and new teachers. Any time a professional educator can focus on the task of teaching and learning, and know what to expect rather than worry about and wonder about what is next, greater efficiency, feelings of confidence, and success will be experienced.

In order to minimize the unknowns for teacher candidates the university could place a stronger focus on day to day tasks and responsibilities of the elementary teacher. More strategies and explicit instruction in the area of special education and ELL could be provided. Also helpful would be to offer strategies on daily organization, parent communication and lesson planning. Most helpful would be a stronger transition program

with more time spent in elementary classrooms and more exposure to a teacher's daily routine.

Responsibility Beyond Curriculum

Additional responsibilities required of new teachers beyond curriculum and instruction was specifically noted as a concern of both the student teachers, Cohort A, and the first year teachers, Cohort B, throughout both the surveys and the individual interviews. Teacher candidates listed this challenge of responsibilities beyond teaching as number five out of five among their greatest challenges. First year teachers listed this concern as fourth on their list of four issues. So, while not the most challenging concern within either cohort, it was mentioned frequently enough throughout the study to make it to their list of notable concerns.

It became very clear, during the interview process, that new educators would not see 'responsibility beyond the curriculum' as such a grave concern if they had adequate time to devote to the development and implementation of curriculum and instruction. Once again, what was noted by participants as 'responsibility beyond teaching' was actually their concern for the loss of time these responsibilities took from preparation for their students. Participants did not dislike or resent the required time with students outside the classroom. A number of participants noted that they enjoyed getting to know their students beyond the classroom setting. Therefore, the need to resolve the concern regarding extracurricular responsibilities could be attained by solving the even greater concern regarding a lack of time to develop the lessons and assessments necessary to be great teachers. Providing an increase in plan time for new teachers could potentially resolve nearly all the concerns expressed by participants in both Cohort A and Cohort B.

Additionally, if teacher assistants were hired to cover for first year teacher duties beyond the classroom such as recess and lunch, the much needed element of time would be more available to new hires. Districts could designate paraprofessionals or classrooms assistants to new teachers in order to assist with administrative tasks, additional bus or recess duties, and even classroom management. This would require the district to support a relatively small amount of additional funding in support of new teachers but the rewards would exceed the cost if the very high attrition rate of new hires was reduced.

In the corporate world, the sales person is not expected to develop his or her own sales contract or to become familiar with company documents only after the potential client has been met. Unfamiliarity with the forms would be a recipe for failure. Yet this is the typical experience of first year teachers who find themselves buried under the many time lines, lesson plans, assessments and the special education and 504 forms. While every new employee in every walk of life has to start at the beginning, the education business does not tend to provide the new teacher with a very palatable beginning.

If we want to retain the best of the best for local and national students now and in the future, school district leaders will need to focus on the education business profit – real academic success where every child can do his or her very best. This will happen only when the stage is set to ensure that every new teacher has not only the training but also the time that is guaranteed daily and the support in the form of actual and excellent lessons and assessments to do his or her very best. The new teachers can then improve on and personalize and differentiate these throughout the year as the learning styles of individual students become evident.

As previously stated, providing new teachers more time would call for a paradigm shift within the ranks of tenured teachers. Realistically, making such a shift would require districts to get buy-in from teachers and teacher union representatives. This solution to provide more time in the way of additional plan periods would require a financial commitment from school districts that would mean more dollars up front to ensure the success of new hires but would result in a greater fiscal savings over the long term by retaining quality teachers. This would ensure the ultimate goal of greater academic success for all students – or as the corporate arena would evaluate it – an improved bottom line.

Additionally, school leaders can only evaluate how successful one teacher is as compared to another if they are being measured by the same standard. Identical curriculum and assessment tools are an important way to ensure required standards are mastered by students. While a personal observation of teacher and student interaction in the classroom may leave the observer delighted, only the actual assessment results tell the real story of success. If newly hired teachers are mentored by experienced teachers and provided with identical tools and given extended preparation time, the 'time' concern for new teachers would be diminished and there would be better quality control within the education business. The end result would be fewer frustrated and disenchanted new teachers. School districts could offer more effective induction programs. Instead of requiring more time of the new teacher by having them attend more meetings and training sessions, they could provide additional plan time in the form of a classroom assistant to cover their class while they meet with their mentor teacher, observe that mentor or simply dig deeper into the curriculum and resources provided. A classroom assistant could also

be used to work in tandem with the new teacher in the classroom to support instruction

and learning. Providing the mentor teacher time to observe the new teacher's classroom

and provide advice would also be helpful. School districts could also reduce the

responsibilities beyond the classroom for new teachers by not requiring first-year

teachers to serve on committees and assigning them a minimum number of extra duties,

clubs, or tutoring both during and outside the school day. Principals in hiring schools

could support new hires by considering student placement including not only the number

of students in a new teacher's class but especially the number of special needs, ELL and

gifted students assigned to a first-year teacher. This careful placement of students would

benefit students and teachers by allowing the new teacher to better focus on fewer

specialized needs, attend fewer IEP and 504 meetings and would require less

differentiated planning and instruction.   Districts willing to implement this paradigm

shift of not requiring first year teachers to be responsible for the same work load within

the same limited plan time as seasoned teachers could contribute to successful first year

teachers who feel good about their career and retain their passion to reach students. With

new teachers experiencing greater success, the hiring district could be more confident

that the attrition rate for new hires would be decreased. Most importantly, when

professionals have the time to do the job well, their confidence and passion is retained.

Prepared, confident and passionate teaching ultimately results in improved student

academic performance over time.

Conclusion

        This active research demonstrates that good aspiring teachers and good first year

teachers quickly lose sight of their passion when they realize there is not enough time to

succeed. Even within this limited study, the trend is clear. At the onset of their teacher

candidate training, 92% of the Lindenwood students saw themselves still in the classroom

in five years and were passionate about their chosen career. After completing their

student teaching, that number dropped to 85%. More disconcerting is the fact that only

84% of Lindenwood graduates who had been hired as first-year teachers in area school

districts, and in their own classroom, believed they would still be teaching in five years.

Unfortunately, by the end of their first year that number dropped to only 75% who still

planned to be teaching in an elementary school classroom five years out. If teacher

retention is to improve, new teachers must be provided the time and resources necessary

to excel at their jobs and remain in their profession. Successful universities, successful

school districts, successful communities want both their teachers and their students to win

– to succeed! These new teachers need to be provided time to do the task if they are

expected to succeed.

By providing solutions to the concerns of unfamiliarity, support for special needs

students, the steep and ongoing learning curve, the desire for self-fulfillment, and first

and foremost, the lack of adequate time, the teacher training university and the hiring

school districts can assure new teachers greater success resulting in a greater sense of

self-fulfillment for teachers and improved overall student performance. By ensuring that

new teachers have the necessary time to do their jobs well, the other concerns are

resolved as well. Only when the concerns of aspiring and new teachers are resolved will

our newest educators retain their passion and remain in their classrooms.

Interestingly, not one participant in this study expressed a concern regarding

salary. Throughout the 90's, the review of related literature pointed most specifically to a

need for higher teacher salaries but much of that research focused on secondary teachers. It is possible that a salary concern may be present if this study followed the new teachers throughout the first five years in the classroom. As passionate, new teachers, these cohort members were focused expressly on their responsibilities, the time they needed to do their job well, and on student success.

In summary, the finding of this study would call for strong induction programs that do not take away from the first-year teacher's plan time or add to the length of the school day. A strong induction program would include the hiring of part-time classroom assistants actively involved in teaching and learning. It would also include the hiring of teachers' aides to monitor bus, lunch and recess duties. It would provide a reduced course load and additional plan time for new hires. The model would also provide for mentor teachers to assist and observe in new teachers' classes, and for the first-year teacher to observe in master teacher classrooms. The recommended model would call for a paradigm shift within the teachers' union and an initial commitment in additional dollars at the district level to fund the hiring of additional staff. However, the model would positively impact the new teacher retention rate and ensure improved student success. Over time, districts would benefit financially and academically by encouraging young teachers to remain in their chosen career - inspiring students to achieve at their highest possible level.

In regards to improved preparation of aspiring teachers still in the university setting, the participants of this study noted that a greater focus on actual classroom tasks, forms, responsibility timelines and active or hands-on learning above and beyond the one semester practicum would be helpful.

As the decades of research and literature pointed out, it is during the first five years that new teachers walk away from their chosen careers. This short-term study does not show the complete picture regarding concerns and potential solutions. It would of course be more accurate and more beneficial if the active research followed the first five years of new teacher employment rather than the limited time frame of this study. Also helpful to the teacher retention effort both locally and nationally would be the ongoing study and comparison of inner city, suburban and rural teacher retention rates as these variables were not a factor in this study. Still, within the study's limitations, this researcher was able to make some substantiated recommendations to improve new teacher retention rates.

The results of this study, if utilized in a collaborative effort between the University and the hiring school districts, would give a more successful picture of the academic, instructional, managerial, personal and emotional needs, and responsibilities of the newly hired elementary classroom teacher. Ensuring new educators are successful and fulfilled by providing the time necessary to do their jobs well would lead to the retention of these professionals. The most important goal, providing the best possible education for area children, could be ensured by keeping the best teachers in the profession.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities
Elementary Student Teaching to the Real World: A Study of Cohorts of Elementary Student Teachers

Principal Investigator _Sarah Turpin-Padberg_____
Telephone: 314-496-8081   E-mail: sarahaturpin@hotmail.com

Participant_____

Contact info _____

1.	You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sarah Padberg under the guidance of Dr. Nancy Schneider. The purpose of this research is to investigate why beginning elementary teachers stay or leave the field of education after graduating with a degree in elementary education. I want to determine if student expectations prior to entering the field of education will match the realities of the actual job of being a teacher. As a result, does the reality of the actual job impact their decision to stay in the classroom as a teacher? If the decision to stay in the classroom as a teacher is negatively impacted is there something prior to graduating with a teaching degree that could help better prepare them for the realities of the actual job and help them make the decision to become a teacher or not prior to entering the classroom in order to retain teachers?

2. a) Your participation will involve:
   ➢ Participants enrolled at Lindenwood University will complete the *Student Teaching Questionnaire* during a class period designated by their student teaching facilitator, Dr. Nancy Schneider
   ➢ Each participant will complete three surveys online in response to the Principal Investigator, Sarah Padberg
   ➢ Each participant will complete two interviews with the Principal Investigator, Sarah Padberg
   ➢ Each participant will be contacted five times total (surveys and interviews combined) by the Principal Investigator, Sarah Padberg
   ➢ Participants will complete surveys online at no specified place
   ➢ Participants will complete interviews at a location named by the subject and Principal Investigator, Sarah Padberg

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be:

   ➢ Completing the *Student Teaching Questionnaire* will take ten minutes

➢ Completing online surveys will take ten minutes each (three surveys)

➢ Completing interviews will take thirty minutes each (two interviews)

➢ Total participation time for participants will be one hour and forty minutes (if completing the *Student Teaching Questionnaire)* or one hour and thirty minutes (if not completing the *Student Teaching Questionnaire*)

➢ Participants will not receive compensation for their participation

c) Approximately one hundred and seventy people will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about teacher preparation and retention and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Sarah Padberg at 314-496-8081 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Nancy Schneider at 636-949-4918. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date   Participant's Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date   Investigator Printed Name

Revised 1-21-2010

Appendix B: Sequence of Classes for a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education

Lindenwood University

Sequence of Classes for a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education

Italicized courses represent course selections mandated by current university policy. Normal type represents Major classes that should be taken in the indicated sequence unless absolute necessity or a lack of prerequisites dictates changes.

Freshman Year, Fall

Course	Hours
LUL10100 Freshman Experience	2 hours
PE 10000 Activity	1 hour
ENG 15000 Eng Comp I	3 hours
EDU 10000 Orientation to Ed Exp.	3 hours
EDU 20200 Psychology of Teach & Learn	3 hours
MTH 13400 Concepts in Math I	3 hours
COM 10500/11000 or SW 10000	3 hours
Total	18 hours

Freshman Year, Spring

Course	Hours
ENG 17000 Eng Comp II	3 hours* WPA
EDU 11100 School Observation	1 hour
EDU 24600 Children's Literature	3 hours
EDU 34100 Education of Ex. Child	3 hours
MTH 13500 Concepts in Math II	3 hours
BIO 10000 Concepts in Biology	4 hours
Total	17 hours

Freshman Year, JTERM OPTION:

Course	Hours
EDU 34100 Education of Exceptional Child	3 hours

Sophomore Year, Fall

Course	Hours
EDU 32200 Teaching and Technology	3 hours (w/21501)
EDU 21501 PRAXIS II Foliotek Seminar	1 hours (w/32200)
PHY 10000 Physical Science or Equiv.	4 hours
HIS 10500/10600 American History	3 hours
PS15500/HIS15500 Am. Nat'l Gov't	3 hours
Cross Cultural: GEO 20100-required-DESE	3 hours
Total	17 hours

Sophomore Year, Spring

Course	Hours
EDU 34400 Differentiation & Class Mgmt	3 hours (w/38000)
EDU 38000 Pre-Student Teach Practicum	1 hour (w/34400)
EDU 34500 Health, Nutrition, Safety	3 hours
EDU 30500 Reading Methods	3 hours
HIS 10000 World History	3 hours
Social Science: ECON 23010 required-DESE	3 hours
Total	16 hours

Sophomore Year, JTERM OPTIONS:

Course	Hours
EDU 34500 Health, Nutrition, Safety	3 hours
EDU 27600 Integrating Art, Music, & Movement	3 hours

Junior Year, Fall

Course	Hours
EDU 31200 Math Methods	3 hours
EDU 31900 Science Methods	3 hours
EDU 30900 Analysis & Corr Rdg	3 hours
EDU 39900 Reading Practicum	3 hours
Literature: ENG 23500/23600-suggested	3 hours
Total	18 hours

Junior Year, Spring

Course	Hours
EDU 31300 Social Studies Methods	3 hours
EDU 30600 Language Arts Methods	3 hours
EDU 27600 Integrating Art, Music, & Move	3 hours
Fine Art Appreciation/History	3 hours
Literature: ENG 23500/23600-suggested	3 hours
Social Science: PSY / SOC-suggested	3 hours
Total	17 hours

Senior Year, Fall

Course	Hours
EDU 40400 Adv. Meas and Eval to En. Learn	3 hours
Cross Cultural: ANT 11200-suggested-DESE	3 hours
PHL/REL	3 hours
Elective / Minor	3 hours
Elective / Minor	3 hours
Total	15 hours

Senior Year, Spring

Course	Hours
EDU 41000 Student Teaching	12 hours
Total	12 hours
Grand Total	**130 hours**

Note: Geography is required by DESE. Taking Anthropology is highly encouraged because it will meet the DESE requirement for a 21 hour emphasis required for elementary education certification. This preparation would also better prepare students for taking the CBASE. Additionally, Geography and Anthropology will meet the Lindenwood University General Education Cross Cultural requirement. Students can still take two semesters of the same foreign language to meet the Lindenwood University General Education Cross Cultural requirement. Economics is also a required course for DESE and will meet one of the Lindenwood University Social Science General Education requirements. The preceding represents the minimum course hours required for graduation. Students may take additional classes up to the maximum number of credit hours per semester. Additionally, this assumes that the student has the necessary prerequisites for the degree plan. J term and summer classes can reduce the number of hours taken during the regular semester schedule.

Updated: F12, SP13

Appendix C: Survey 1 for Student Teachers
(Cohort A)

1. What or whom inspired you to pursue a degree in education?
   _____ A Teacher   _____ A Mentor
   _____ A Parent   _____ No one in particular

2. What are your immediate goals upon completing student teaching?
   _____ Secure a teaching job   _____ Other
   _____ Continue my education

3. Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?
   _____ As a classroom teacher   _____ Working outside of the
                                                      field of education

   _____ In the field of education but   _____ Other
   not teaching in a classroom

4. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge facing today's teachers?
   _____ Lack of professional support   _____ Poor college preparation
   _____ Too few hours to complete the task   _____ Undisciplined students

5. What do you believe will provide the greatest rewards for you as a teacher both
   personally and professionally?
   _____ Seeing students succeed   _____ Having the best
                                                      standardized test scores

   _____ Paycheck that supports me   _____ Knowing how to be a good
   and my family   teacher

6. What do you ultimately want your students to know when they leave your class at
   the end of the year?
   _____ I am a good teacher   _____ They are good citizens
   _____ They have learned the curriculum   _____ They have good test scores

7. What do you see as the most important job of a teacher?
   _____ Inspire children   _____ Develop good citizens
   _____ Teach the curriculum   _____ Be a good role model

8. How many hours per week do you predict you will commit to your job if you
   become a teacher?

_____ 35-40   _____ 45-50
_____ 40-45   _____ More than 50

9. Do you have a family member or relative presently in the teaching/education profession?
    _____ Yes   _____ No

Appendix D: Survey 1 for First Year Teachers
(Cohort B)

1. How would you compare your previous perception about the field of teaching with your current reality of working in the classroom as a teacher?
    _____ Very much the same   _____ Somewhat similar
    _____ Similar   _____ Not the same

2. Are you currently in a teaching position that you were originally certified to teach?
    _____ Yes   _____ No

3. If not, how did you gain certification for your current position?
    _____ PRAXIS   _____ Other
    _____ Additional coursework

4. My undergraduate training prepared me for a lifetime career in teaching.
    _____ Very well prepared   _____ Inadequately prepared

    _____ Well prepared   _____ Not at all

5. My career plans/goals in <u>five</u> years will include being a classroom teacher.
    _____ Very likely   _____ Somewhat likely
    _____ Likely   _____ Not likely

6. My career plans/goals in <u>ten</u> years will include being a classroom teacher.
    _____ Very likely   _____ Somewhat likely

    _____ Likely   _____ Not likely

7. How helpful were other support systems during your first year of teaching (teachers, administrators, district leaders, etc.)?
    _____ Very helpful   _____ Somewhat helpful
    _____ Fairly helpful   _____ Not very helpful

8. Do your future goals include continued professional development at the university level in the area of education?
    _____ Very likely   _____ Somewhat likely
    _____ Likely   _____ Not likely

Appendix E: Survey 2 for Student Teachers
(Cohort A)

1. Were you assigned a mentor teacher by your school or school district?
   _____ Yes   _____ No

2. If so, how often do you collaborate with your mentor teacher?
   _____ At least once a week   _____ Once or twice per semester
   _____ Once or twice per month   _____ Never

3. How often do you get feedback on your performance from your mentor or an administrator?
   _____ At least once a week   _____ Once or twice per year
   _____ Once or twice per month   _____ Never

4. How often does an administrator visit your classroom?
   _____ At least once a week   _____ Once or twice per year
   _____ Once or twice per month   _____ Never

5. Does your mentor or administrator help you improve as a teacher?
   _____ Very much   _____ Not at all
   _____ Somewhat

6. Does your job description match the actual responsibilities you are encountering as a teacher?
   _____ Very much   _____ Not at all
   _____ Somewhat

7. I have adequate opportunity for professional development.
   _____ Strongly agree   _____ Somewhat disagree
   _____ Somewhat agree   _____ Strongly disagree

8. I am satisfied being a teacher.
   _____ Strongly agree   _____ Somewhat disagree
   _____ Somewhat agree   _____ Strongly disagree

9. What are your immediate goals upon completing student teaching?
   _____ Secure a teaching job   _____ Other

_____ Continue my education

10. Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?
_____ As a classroom teacher   _____ Working outside of
                                             education
_____ In the field of education but   _____ Other
not teaching in a classroom

11. Where do you see yourself professionally in ten years?
_____ As a Classroom Teacher   _____ Working outside of the
                                             field of education
_____ In the field of education   _____ Other
but not teaching in a classroom

12. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge facing today's teachers?
_____ Lack of professional support   _____ Poor college preparation

_____ Too few hours to complete the task   _____ Undisciplined students

13. What do you believe will provide the greatest rewards for you as a teacher both
personally and professionally?
_____ Having students master curriculum   _____ Receiving a paycheck to
                                                   support my family
_____ Having the best standardized test scores

14. What do you want your students to have accomplished when they exit your
class?
_____ Mastery of curriculum   _____ Good citizenship
_____ Good test scores

15. What do you see as the most important job of a teacher?
_____ Inspire children   _____ Develop good citizens
_____ Teach the curriculum   _____ Be a good role model

16. How many hours per week do you predict you will commit to your job if you
become a teacher?
_____ 35-40   _____ 45-50

_____ 40-45   _____ More Than 50

17. Do you have a family member or relative who has been or is currently in the teaching/education profession?

_____ Yes   _____ No

Appendix F: Survey 2 for First Year Teachers
(Cohort B)

1.   Do you have a classroom teaching position this year?
      _____ Yes   _____ No

2.   How satisfied are you with your current position?
      _____ Not satisfied   _____ Very satisfied
      _____ Somewhat satisfied

3.   How confident are you that you have the knowledge and skills to be a
      competent teacher?
      _____ Not confident   _____ Very confident
      _____ Somewhat confident

4.   To what or whom do you attribute your teaching knowledge and skills? (You
      may choose more than one.)
      _____ College experience   _____ Personal experience
      _____ Teaching experience   _____ Other experience

5.   Do you feel a shared responsibility for your work load and student success in
      your school or team?
      _____ Not at all   _____ Very much

      _____ Somewhat

6.   For what aspect(s) of teaching did your college experience not prepare you?
      _____ Classroom management   _____ Implementing
                                                          curriculum

      _____ Meeting student needs   _____ Assessing
                                                          curriculum

      _____ Other responsibilities   _____ I was fully
                                                          prepared.

7.   Do you have adequate resources, including materials, to do your job? Did
      you obtain these resources personally or were they provided to you by your

district?

_____ Yes, personally provided   _____ No, inadequate
                                                              resources

_____ Yes, district provided

8.   Who holds you accountable for ensuring student success?
        _____ Building administration   _____ District
                                                              administration

        _____ Teacher colleagues   _____ I hold myself
                                                              accountable.

9.   Do you have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers, principals, or
        district leaders? Is the amount of time for collaboration adequate?
        _____ Yes, collaboration time is adequate.   _____ No, there is no
                                                                       opportunity.

        _____ Yes, I would like more collaboration time.

10.   Do you set professional goals for yourself? Do you share these goals with
        anyone?
        _____ Yes, I share my goals with my evaluator _____ No, I don't set
                                                                       professional goals

        _____ Yes, I keep my goals to myself

11.   From whom and how do you receive feedback on your teaching? (You may
        choose more than one.)
        _____ During meetings with my evaluator   _____ From student work

        _____ During collaboration time with teachers _____ I don't receive
                                                                       feedback

12.   Do you think you will ever do something in the field of education besides
        teaching in the classroom?
        _____ Yes   _____ No

13.   From whom do you receive the most support?
_____ Administrator(s)   _____ Parents
_____ Other Teachers   _____ Students

14.   What is the socio economic status of the school in which you teach?
_____ Low   _____ Evenly distributed

_____ Middle   _____ High

15.   What grade level do you currently teach?
_____ Primary (Pre-K, 1, 2)   _____ Intermediate (3, 4, 5)

_____ Other

16.   What is your age?
_____ 20-30   _____ 41-50

_____ 31-40   _____ 51 or Above

17.   Did your college experience prepare you well for managing students?
_____ Not at all   _____ Very much

_____ Somewhat

18.   Did your college prepare you for teaching and assessing the curriculum?
_____ Not at all   _____ Very much

_____ Somewhat

19.   With whom do you have the closest relationship with in your school or school district?
_____ Another teacher   _____ School counselor or nurse

_____ School administrator   _____ District leader

Appendix G: **Directions for Online Research Randomizer**

1. Put the people in each cohort in some logical order (for example, alphabetical order, or the order that they entered the study). Then, number the people in each cohort (1-50 for example).

2. Go to: http://www.randomizer.org/form.htm. This software will be used to randomly select interview candidates from each cohort.

3. At the top of the webpage, click on Randomize.

4. Enter a number representing how many sets of numbers you want to generate.

5. Enter a number representing how many numbers per set.

6. Number range: From 1 to 50 (if 50 is the total number of participants you are choosing from)

7. Do you wish each number in a set to remain unique? Yes

8. Do you wish to sort the numbers that are generated? Yes

9. How do you wish to view your random numbers? Place Markers Off

10. Click Randomize Now!

11. Another window will pop up with your list of randomly chosen numbers. Now take these numbers and match them up with the numbers you put next to all the people in your research group. These are the people you have randomly selected.

Appendix H: Interview for Student Teachers
(Cohort A)

1. Tell me what you are doing now.

2. What grade level, school, and district do you believe would be ideal for you?

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have as a teacher beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?

7. Do you believe you will make teaching your career?

8. Is there anything else you want to add?

Appendix I: Interview for First Year Teachers
(Cohort B)

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?

2.   How could your current job be improved?

3.   Are you happy in your current job?

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

Appendix J: **Responses: Survey 1 for Student Teachers**

Question 1: What or whom inspired you to pursue a degree in education?	Number of Responses
Teacher	14
Mentor	0
Parent	9
No one in Particular	15

Question 2: What are your immediate goals upon completing student teaching?	Number of Responses
Secure teaching job	31
Continue my education	7
Other	0

Question 3: Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 years?	Number of Responses
Classroom teacher	35
In education but not teaching in classroom	2
Working outside field of education	0
Other	1

Question 4: What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge facing today's teachers?	Number of Responses
Lack of professional support	12
Too few hours to complete the task	20
Poor college preparation	3
Undisciplined students	3

Question 5: What do you believe will provide the greatest rewards for you as a teacher both personally and professionally?

	Number of Responses
Seeing students succeed	31
Paycheck that supports me and my family	0
Having the best test scores	0
Knowing how to be a good teacher	7

Question 6: What do you ultimately want your students to know when they leave your class at the end of the year?

	Number of Responses
I am a good teacher	2
They have learned the curriculum	22
They are good citizens	14
They have good test scores	0

Question 7: What do you see as the most important job of a teacher?

	Number of Responses
To inspire children	23
Teach the curriculum	2
Develop good citizens	6
Be a good role model	7

Question 8: How many hours per week do you predict you will commit to your job if you become a teacher?

	Number of Responses
35-40	0
40-45	4
45-50	15
More than 50	19

Question 9: Do you have a family member or relative presently in the teaching/education profession?	Number of Responses
Yes	23
No	15

Appendix K: **Responses: Survey 1 for First Year Teachers**

Question 1: How would you compare your previous perception about the field of teaching with your current reality of working in the classroom as a teacher?	Number of Responses
Very much the same	10
Similar	19
Somewhat similar	10
Not the same	4

Question 2: Are you currently in a teaching position that you were originally certified to teach?	Number of Responses
Yes	12
No	31

Question 3: If not, how did you gain certification for you current position?	Number of Responses
PRAXIS state assessment	24
Additional coursework	9
Other	10

Question 4: My undergraduate training prepared me for a lifetime career in teaching.	Number of Responses
Very well prepared	9
Well prepared	23
Inadequately prepared	2
Not at all	9

Question 5: My career goals in the next 5 years will include being a classroom teacher.	Number of Responses
Very likely	36
Likely	5
Somewhat likely	1
Not likely	1

Question 6: My career goals in the next 10 years will include being a classroom teacher.	Number of Responses
Very likely	33
Likely	7
Somewhat likely	1
Not likely	2

Question 7: How helpful were other support systems during your first year of teaching (teachers, admin., district leaders)?	Number of Responses
Very helpful	24
Fairly helpful	10
Somewhat helpful	5
Not very helpful	4

Question 8: Do your future goals include continued professional development at the university level in the area of education?	Number of Responses
Very likely	23
Likely	14
Somewhat likely	6
Not likely	0

Appendix L: Responses: Survey 2 for Student Teachers

1. Were you assigned a mentor teacher by your school or school district?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57%	12
No	43%	9

2. If so, how often do you collaborate with your mentor teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
At least once a week	57%	12
Once or twice per month	5%	1
Once or twice per semester	0%	0
Never	38%	8

3. How often do you get feedback on your performance from your mentor or an administrator?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
At least once a week	76%	16
Once or twice per month	5%	1
Once or twice per year	5%	1
Never	14%	3

4. How often does an administrator visit your classroom?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
At least once a week	29%	6
Once or twice per month	48%	10
Once or twice per year	19%	4

Never	5%	1

5. Does your mentor or administrator help you improve as a teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	67%	14
Somewhat	19%	4
Not at all	14%	3

6. Does your job description match the actual responsibilities you are encountering as a teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	67%	14
Somewhat	33%	7
Not at all	0.0%	0

7. I have adequate opportunity for professional development.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	57%	12
Somewhat agree	38%	8
Somewhat disagree	5%	1
Strongly disagree	0%	0

8. I am satisfied being a teacher.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count

Strongly agree	85.5%	18
Somewhat agree	9.5%	2
Somewhat disagree	5%	1
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0

9. What are your immediate goals upon completing student teaching?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Secure a teaching job	81%	17
Continue my education	14%	3
Other	5%	1

10. Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
As a classroom teacher	86%	18
In the field of education but not teaching in a classroom	14%	3
Working outside of the field of education	0%	0
Other	0%	0

11. Where do you see yourself professionally in ten years?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
As a classroom teacher	67%	14
In the field of education but not teaching in a classroom	33%	7
Working outside of the field of education	0%	0
Other	0%	0

12. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge facing today's teachers?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of professional support	5%	1
Too few hours to complete the task	71%	15
Poor college preparation	10%	2
Undisciplined students	14%	3

13. What do you believe will provide the greatest rewards for you as a teacher both personally and professionally?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Having students master curriculum	95%	20
Having the best standardized test scores	0.0%	0
Receiving a paycheck to support my family	5%	1

14. What do you want your students to have accomplished when they exit your class?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Mastery of curriculum	43%	9
Good test scores	10%	2
Good citizenship	47%	10

15. What do you see as the most important job of a teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Inspire children	71%	15
Teach the curriculum	5%	1
Develop good citizens	14%	3
Be a good role model	10%	2

16. How many hours per week do you predict you will commit to your job if you become a teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count

35-40	0.0%	0
40-45	10%	2
45-50	43%	9
More Than 50	47%	10

17. Do you have a family member or relative who has been or is currently in the teaching/education profession?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67%	14
No	33%	7

Appendix M: **Responses: Survey 2 for First Year Teachers**

1. Do you have a classroom teaching position this year?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83%	10
No	17%	2

2. How satisfied are you with your current position?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not satisfied	0%	0
Somewhat satisfied	50%	6
Very satisfied	50%	6

3. How confident are you that you have the knowledge and skills to be a competent teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not confident	0%	0
Somewhat confident	50%	6
Very confident	50%	6

4. To what or whom do you attribute your teaching knowledge and skills? (You may choose more than one.)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
College experience	67%	8
Teaching experience	75%	9
Personal experience	83%	10
Other experience	17%	2

5. Do you feel a shared responsibility for your work load and student success in your school or team?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	8%	1
Somewhat	42%	5
Very much	50%	6

6. For what aspect(s) of teaching did your college experience NOT prepare you? (Choose all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Classroom management	50%	6
Implementing curriculum	25%	3
Meeting student needs	42%	5
Assessing curriculum	50.0%	6
I was fully prepared.	8%	1

7. Do you have adequate resources, including materials, to do your job? Did you obtain these resources personally or were they provided to you by your district?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, personally provided	58%	7
Yes, district provided	34%	4
No, inadequate resources	8%	1

8. Who holds you accountable for ensuring student success?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Building administration	25%	3
Teacher colleagues	8%	1
District administration	17%	2
I hold myself accountable.	50%	6

9. Do you have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers, principals, or district leaders? Is the amount of time for collaboration adequate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, collaboration time is adequate.	17%	2
Yes, I would like more collaboration time.	66%	8
No, there is no opportunity.	17%	2

10. Do you set professional goals for yourself? Do you share these goals with anyone?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I share my goals with my evaluator	50%	6
Yes, I keep my goals to myself	50%	6
No, I don't set professional goals	0%	0

11. From whom and how do you receive feedback on your teaching? (You may choose more than one.)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
During meetings with my evaluator	75%	9
During collaboration time with teachers	33%	4
From student work	67%	8
I don't receive feedback	8%	1

12. Do you think you will ever do something in the field of education besides teaching in the classroom?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	75%	9
No	25%	3

13. From whom do you receive the most support?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Administrator(s)	17%	2
Other Teachers	83%	10
Parents	0%	0

14. What is the socio economic status of the school in which you teach?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Low	33%	4
Middle	50%	6
Evenly distributed	17%	2
High	0%	0

15. What grade level do you currently teach?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Primary (Pre-K, 1, 2)	50%	6
Intermediate (3, 4, 5)	50%	6
Other	0%	0

16. What is your age?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
20-30	67%	8
31-40	33%	4
41-50	0%	0
51 or Above	0%	0

17. Did your college experience prepare you well for managing students?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	8%	1
Somewhat	92%	11
Very much	0%	0

18. Did your college prepare you for teaching and assessing the curriculum?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	0%	0
Somewhat	75%	9
Very much	25%	3

19. With whom do you have the closest relationship with in your school or school district?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Another teacher	100%	12
School administrator	0%	0
School counselor or nurse	0%	0
District leader	0%	0

Appendix N: **Interview for Student Teachers, Interview Transcript**

Cohort A
Participant 1:

1. **Tell me what you are doing now.**

I am student teaching at _____ elementary school in the _____ school district in grade I have three and a half weeks left. November 30 [2012] is my last week but plan to stay an extra week because I'm not ready to leave them [the students] and I have nothing else to go do.

2. **What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?**

Once I get certified in early childhood education, which I plan on doing as soon as I graduate, I'd like to teach kindergarten or first grade. Right now there are two districts that I really like. My mom works in a different district and really loves it. I've also had a teacher (in college) who worked in one of the districts I would like to work in and has said wonderful, wonderful things about it. I really like the area of the district I'd like to work in and would like to live there. My mom works in the district offices at _____ district so she doesn't get to work with kids as much as she'd like.

3. **When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?**

Elementary 1-6

4. **Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.**

More time. That's what I've really found. Now that I've finished my intensives (the weeks during student teaching when I take over the class entirely) the stress and the crying is mostly over so now that I'm not teaching all four subjects and I'm only teaching two I've noticed how much more time I have to prepare and am able to put into each lesson. It's so much nicer and I feel so much more prepared on a daily basis. Also having a way to de-stress at home. Something like exercise that would help me not stress about every little thing. I also need a person I can vent to and say, "…here's what's going on at school". That person could be in my personal life and my professional life. Right now, my cooperating teacher will notice when I'm really down. We will sit and talk through it and she has, at some time or another, been through anything that I'm going through so she can talk me through it. Then I'll also go home to my mom and tell her, "This kid doesn't have shoes that fit", so she becomes emotionally involved with all my students too. Even though she doesn't know how to teach them she knows so much about them through me that she is a good support for me.

5.   Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.

Support for special education. I really, really needed that during student teaching. I have a lot of really low kids and that one special ed. class I had in college was not enough. Also, support for English Language Learners. We have five in our class. One teacher per grade has all of them for that grade. I didn't realize how much help they really need. As a teacher you don't know how much English they have or how what background knowledge they have. Mom or Dad don't usually speak English either. Also, knowing that I can go to different people in the building (school) and get different resources (to help me teach) from different teachers like the reading specialist or the special ed. teacher or the OT (occupational therapist); knowing that in some way those resources are available for any student who needs them. I'm realizing how important that is and have really used them a lot. I have a hearing impaired students and I'm able to go to other teachers and say, "What are we supposed to do to help him? How can I teach him better in small groups?" In small groups I have to talk quieter but he can only hear out of one ear so how am I supposed to do that and make sure he is hearing me?

6.   What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?

Being on committees within the school. At the school I'm at now each teacher is required to be on one committee but because there are so many committees each teacher ends up being on five or six different committees. I'm on the RtI (Response to Intervention) committee. I'm really getting to see a lot of different resources and see how a lot of different teachers are doing different interventions with their students. Those are things you have to meet before and after school for but being new, I've learned so much from the committees that I wouldn't trade that hour of sleep for anything. It helps me help my students better. Also, parent teacher conferences are something I didn't consider in college before getting into the classroom. I didn't realize how enlightening they could be. I learned so much about my kiddos that I would have never known if I had not met with their parents. I cried almost in one of the conferences because a mom made me realize how wonderful her daughter was. I realize how much her ELL (English Language Learner) daughter didn't understand. So parent teacher conferences were one of those things I knew about (before student teaching) but I didn't realize how intensive they were. They helped me realize how important these little kids are to their families and made me feel special to have them in my classroom. Other expectations that I didn't think about are times when I eat my lunch with kids or am out at recess. I get to see my kids in a different light. The kids I have concerns about in the classroom might be more social at recess or show other strengths. I can see if kids are interacting with others or if they are over by themselves on the playground. My kiddos get to know a little bit more about me at that time too. We have a second recess every day that the teacher supervises

plus once a week we have a study hall that a teacher supervises where kids who have
work to catch up on can go to complete it. Kids can also earn lunch with the teacher as a
reward for good behavior or work completion. The extra recess and lunch with the
teacher are not school-wide programs but something that my grade level started.
Sometimes I do see other teachers go outside with their kids during their lunch recess
which they aren't required to do but they do anyway to just watch their kids, especially if
there are certain kids they are monitoring. Lunch recess is during the teacher's lunch
time.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?
Classroom teacher, I don't know. I eventually would like to get my masters (degree) as a
reading specialist. I would like to spend at least a good ten years in the classroom even at
different grade levels and really see what different kids are needing. I really love to read
and so I want other kids to love to read. I want to be able to help teach them how to do
that but I won't be able to teach all kids to read if I've only seen kids read at a third grade
level. So I want to get that experience, especially in the younger grades because that's
where they need the jumpstart. So I eventually want to become a reading specialist. I
want to be in education for my whole career.

8. Is there anything else you want to add?
I don't know if some of the classes I took in college could have been swapped out for
something more useful. I really wish I would have had more special education classes.
It's not that I don't sometimes use my art and my PE classes I just don't know that the
one special ed. class I took my sophomore year was enough. I have two autistic students
and an emotionally disturbed student and there are more and more of these types of
students every year. Coming into my student teaching I felt so unprepared for working
with these students. I really want to help them so it is nice to be on the Care Team and
RtI (committee) so I can really learn how to help them better. My supervising teacher is
on these committees so I get to go with her to meetings and I've actually started to voice
my own opinion at these meetings and not just sit there and listen because I have my own
RtI group so I'm able to say, "this is what I tried with my kids and it didn't really work so
we tried this and this instead. I'm actually able to bring things and ideas to the table and
get really good resources. I have had a really good teacher to work with this year and it's
been a really good learning experience. I have had a challenging group of students this
year but I will feel so much more prepared on my first day of teaching than if I'd had a
class that sat there and did everything they were supposed to do. It's been very
challenging but good. I've also learned about IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings.
I did not know anything about these before but now I've learned how students receive
services (for special education) and how the IEP process works. I had no exposure to this
process before student teaching. I worked with students before student teaching who I
knew had special needs but wasn't a part of the process of getting them special ed.

services and didn't know how that worked. I didn't realize how much documentation it takes with behavior charts and academic evidence to get students the services they need. Often, one of us (me or the teacher) would be teaching and the other would be documenting behavior or academic progress. It's very time consuming but has been good practice for me to learn how to write a behavior chart or how to document other things for individual students to bring to meetings on them. I hope I will be well prepared to have my own classroom.

Cohort A
Participant 2:

    1. Tell me what you are doing now.
I am in the middle of my student teaching in grade 5. I am starting to take over the class and do more on my own without the classroom teacher.

    2. What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?
I would like to teach upper elementary, grade 4 or 5 but will take what I can get. I would prefer to be in in a public elementary school in a district closer to my house somewhere in St. Charles County if I can get hired. It's hard to get a teaching job right now.

    3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?
Elementary 1-6

    4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.
A shorter commute if possible because I have kids. The ability to have my kids attend the school I work at. Time for grading and planning at school so I can be a mom outside of school.

    5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.
I'm hoping to have a good team to work with. The team I work with now as a student teacher is a little dysfunctional and don't really share anything or work together much. I would want a team to share ideas with and plan with. I would also want a good principal who knows how to be a good leader. The principal is the most important person in the school and I would want to feel free in asking them for help or for anything I might need. The principal at the school I'm at now seems very friendly and is around the school all of the time. The third think I would hope for would be plenty of time to plan and grade and prepare for my class and teaching time. This is important for me because of my kids so I don't have to take a lot of work home in the evenings and on weekends. So having time to prepare before and after school and during my plan time would be important to me. Right now there are a lot of meetings at the school I'm at before school for different committees and the staff that the teacher I work with attend and we go to those but they

often go right up to the start of the day and that doesn't allow us much time before school to prepare for the school day and our students.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?

I'm not sure but right now at the school I'm at we have bus duty at the end of the day and also a recess duty in the middle of the day so I assume other schools have similar responsibilities for their teachers. The teacher I work with is also on committees for the district and the school and has to attend those meetings. She also attends staff meetings every other week before school.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?

If I can get a job I'd like to see how it feels to have my own classroom of students and see how the commitment compares to the salary. I have had other jobs in the past and I'm hopeful that teaching is a good fit for me and my family because I will have summers off. However, the pay is not the best compared to other careers but because I love working with kids so much I want to give it a shot. Hopefully I can get a teaching job somewhere!

8. Is there anything else you want to add?

I have really liked my classes and my student teaching experience so far. I really want to be a teacher which is why I went back to school but I would be disappointed if I did all of this work and paid all of this money to get my degree and then couldn't get a job or if it takes too much time from my family. I worry about that and hope it all works out.

Cohort A
Participant 3:

1. Tell me what you are doing now.

I am finishing my student teaching at ____ Elementary in the ____ School District. I am in a 2nd grade classroom.

2. What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?

I prefer younger kids. I like the little ones best because they seem to still be interested in school and learning the most. I am planning to apply for jobs in the ___ School District because they are in a better area, it's a nice suburb, and the children would come from better homes.

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?

Elementary 1-6

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.

It's hard to think of everything. You have to be ready and prepared for anything. It takes so much energy—physically, mentally, and emotionally to run a classroom and take care of student needs and make sure they are learning what they need to succeed. It's a great responsibility and can be wearing on a teacher. I guess that's why it's so important for teachers to have the summers off so they can recover and reboot for another year. Because I'm on my own right now with no kids I am able to give everything to the classroom and students but I am really tired each day when I get home. I don't know if I could do it if I had kids to go home to but maybe once I got used to it and had my own classroom it would get easier. So the three things I guess I would need personally would be time to prepare, lots of energy, and time to recover in the summers.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.
As a teacher I think it is important to have support from your principal, especially for behavior problems. There are a lot of behavior problems in the class I'm student teaching in and I don't really feel like the school has a good plan in place for helping with some of those issues so it's really all up to the teacher on her own to deal with any behavior while still trying to keep the rest of the class on task. I also think it's important to have support from your teammates. The 2nd grade teachers I work with are all friends and have really welcomed me onto their team. They talk all the time and have lunch together each day. I think that's important so you can have some adult interaction during your day and share ideas for teaching together too. The other thing I would need professionally might be ample plan time. It never seems like we have enough time to plan for all of the subjects and different things we have to teach in a day. We have one hour of plan time and at least five different subjects to plan for. It's impossible to get everything prepared and ready for the kids in that one hour so that means you have to take a lot of stuff home to work on.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?
Like I said, just planning for and teaching the curriculum is a lot all by its self but I know there are other things that teachers must do in a school. The school I'm student teaching at has meetings outside of the school day for teachers and summer trainings. They also have the teachers maintain their own websites and send weekly newsletters or communication home to parents. Once a week the grade level teams meet together with the principal to talk about planning and student progress. Other than that, the teachers stay pretty busy just trying to keep up with their own classrooms and students on a daily basis.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?
I really like teaching but because of the behavior problems I have in the classroom I work in now and the lack of support from the school or principal I am worried I might get burned out. I went into to teaching because I wanted to work with kids but sometimes it

seems like those few kids that have major behavior issues overshadow the many kids who are really good. The kids with behavior problems also seem to take up so much of my time and attention and that doesn't seem fair to the other kids. If I could teach at a school that had a school-wide behavior plan in place for student behavior that would be so much better. Other than that, I do like the teachers and working together with a team. I also really do like the kids, most of the time.

8. Is there anything else you want to add?
No.

Cohort A
Participant 4:

1. Tell me what you are doing now.
I am currently student teaching at _____ Elementary. It's in ____ School District. I work with first graders.

2. What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?
When I graduate I want to teach kindergarten or first grade. It doesn't matter to me right now what school or district I'm in. I will apply for any openings in St. Charles County.

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?
1-6

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.
A good team of teachers to work with, a school that makes me happy that I fit into, and a school I can call home for many years.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.
Professionally, I think the most important things I would need as a beginning teacher is a good support system. The teacher I work with now is amazing so I would hope that I would get a mentor teacher that would be able to answer questions and help me through my first year as things come up. I also would like to continue learning as a teacher. I have received a great education in college but once you're actually in the classroom there is so much more to learn, not only about how to manage and build relationships with kids but how to actually teach. I would hope there would be a lot of opportunity for professional development in my school and district especially in the area of technology because that is a particular passion of mine and I know that children are more engaged when they are able to use technology in their learning. I have done a lot of learning on my own in this area but need more knowledge on how to connect technology to the curriculum I'm teaching. I would also want opportunity for leadership within my school.

I know as a beginning teacher this might not happen right away but being on committees and eventually leading within the school would be an ultimate goal for me.

6. **What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?**

Being on committees in the building and within the district would be above and beyond just my work in the classroom. This requires more time and preparation but is a good thing in the long run because there are more chances to learn new things and share your ideas with others. In my school the committee meetings are all after school and I do attend a few with the teacher I work with but the people at those meetings don't seem that interested in being there. I would want to do meaningful work on committees that actually made a difference in the teaching and learning for students in the classroom; work that got teachers excited to be there.

7. **Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?**

I would like to start out as a teacher for maybe ten years or so and then become a district coordinator or something. I'm really interested in science and technology so maybe I would specialize in one of those areas and work at the district level. I plan to get my masters while I'm teaching and then see what happens from there.

8. **Is there anything else you want to add?**

I have been very lucky to be partnered with an awesome teacher for my student teaching so I've gotten to learn a lot. I'm at a great school with a great class so it has made the transition from the college classroom to the first grade classroom much easier for me. I am excited to have my own classroom in the future and want to be the best teacher I can for my students!

Cohort A
Participant 5:

1. **Tell me what you are doing now.**

I am student teaching in grade 2 at _____ Elementary in _____. I just finished having the class all on my own for the last few weeks and am transitioning back to the teacher taking over as we wrap up the semester.

2. **What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?**

I would be fine with any grade level. I've always wanted to be a third grade teacher because I loved my third grade teacher and she was the one who inspired me to go into

education. I would love to be in the _____ School District because that's where I went to school but will apply to lots of different districts when I graduate and see what happens.

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?
Elementary 1-6

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.
I didn't realize before I started student teaching how much extra time is required of a teacher outside the normal school day besides just teaching like meetings, duties, meeting with parents, phone calls, emails, grading papers and tests, and simply planning for the next day or week of teaching. Personally, I think teachers either need more time during their work day to do some of this or need to be paid more because they are doing these things outside of the normal work day. Teachers don't get paid enough as it is but once I realized all of the extra work they do I know they definitely don't get paid enough. I don't know why that is because it's such an important job. Besides time and payment for the amount of work I do as a teacher it would be important for me to remember to take time for myself. A lot of the teachers at my school with stay at school late into the evening and come in really early in the morning or on weekends to work in their classrooms. I would hope I could have a balance between school and my personal life.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.
I would hope to be recognized for the good work I'm doing in the classroom. The teacher I work with now is always giving me feedback, good and bad, to help me get better. I would need that as a beginning teacher as well whether it come from a mentor, my teammates, or the principal. You can't become a better teacher by keeping your door closed and hoping you're getting it right. I would also want a good team to work with who is open to communicating, planning, and sharing ideas. This is important for a beginning teacher too to help them know if they are on the right track and so they have a place and group of people they feel safe with asking questions. Lastly, I would want the right resources to be able to do my job well besides just the curriculum. I would want ideas and materials to help teach all learners—the lows and highs. That might be textbooks, other books, the library, computers, hands-on learning resources for the classroom, and so on. If the school provides these resources then the teachers don't have to go out and make them or buy them on their own. It should all just come with the classroom.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?
Teachers have meetings and training outside of the school day and sometimes additional duties like recess or bus duty or hall duty. This just comes with the job I guess.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?

I hope to. Like I said, I decided to be a teacher because of my third grade teacher. She loved her job and I hope to. I have so far. I just wish they would pay teachers what they deserve for the work and passion they put into the job and for what they are doing to serve children. Teachers do it because they love kids and I do too so hopefully I'll be able to make ends meet financially!

8. Is there anything else you want to add?

I have been so grateful for the teacher I've been partnered with. Like I said, she has really worked with me and given me so much feedback on my teaching. The short time I've spent in her classroom with her as my teacher has been so much more valuable than most of the coursework I've done over the last years in college. It's so different actually being in the classroom and learning as you go rather than reading about it in a textbook or discussing how to work with kids when kids aren't in the classroom with you. I don't know how to make that better but I know I've learned a lot from the second grade teacher I'm working with!

Cohort A
Participant 6:

1. Tell me what you are doing now.

I am finishing my student teaching at ___ Elementary School in the ___ School District. I am teaching grade 4.

2. What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?

I really wanted fourth or fifth grade because I have always preferred the older kids who can do more. I don't have a specific district in mind; just something in St. Louis County, near where I live.

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?

Elementary 1-6

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.

More time to relax. More time with adults, not always just 10 year olds. Plenty of support from other adults –family and friends who can help me take my mind off the job when I'm not at work and help me de-stress.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.

More time to learn the curriculum, plan good lessons, and grade.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?

Through my student teaching I have been a part of parent meetings, emailed parents, and sent home weekly newsletters so communication with parents has been time consuming.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?

I'm not sure at this point. I'm just getting my degree so I feel like I should try to get a teaching job but I'm not sure if at this point it's something I am loving and would want to do for the rest of my life. We'll see….

8. Is there anything else you want to add?

Going through the college courses and schooling to get a teaching degree takes a long time and is very expensive but I didn't really feel like I had the chance to see if I would actually like being a teacher until I finished all of that and did my student teaching. I think there should be more opportunity at the beginning of college to teach and do all the things teachers do so people can actually figure out early on if this is the right career choice for them.

Cohort A
Participant 7:

1. Tell me what you are doing now.

I am teaching 3rd grade at _____ Elementary in _____.

2. What grade level, school and district do you believe would be ideal for you?

I would like to teach 3rd grade because that's what I've done my student teaching in and that's what I feel like I have experience doing now. I would love to teach in a good school district in _____.

3. When you complete student teaching what will you be certified to teach?

Elementary 1-6

4. Name the three most critical personal needs you have as a teacher.

Time to breathe and reflect on life and my work. Time for my own hobbies (reading and spending time with my dog. Maintaining positive feelings about work and life and keeping a good balance between both.

5. Name the three most critical professional needs you have as a teacher.

Support from other adults in the school—teachers and principal. As a student teacher I feel like I have so many questions and I hate to keep bugging the teacher I work with and I have the same fear as a beginning teacher—that I will have questions but no one to go to for answers and not know what I'm supposed to be doing half the time. I would also

need a good mentor as a beginning teacher. This person might be a good contact for me when I have questions or need something. I would want to be sure I had enough time in my work day and life to be the very best teacher I could be for my students. I sometimes wonder if that's possible though with as much time as this job seems to require to be good at it.

6. What additional responsibilities would you expect to have beyond teaching and assessing the required curriculum?

There are a lot of meetings and committees that the teacher I work with is on because she has been here a long time. As a new teacher I don't think I would have to do that much but I'm not sure. There are also meetings that all teachers do like staff meetings, weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings, monthly RtI (Response to Intervention) meetings, Care Team meetings, IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings, and 504 (Individual Education Plan for Physical Disability) meetings. I didn't know what half of these things even were when I started student teaching so it's good to go to these meetings but it does take up a lot of the teacher's plan time or requires you to stay after school.

7. Do you believe that you will make teaching your career?

I'm still figuring that out. I really wanted to be a teacher because I love kids so much and have always loved working with kids but there is so much that goes into being a teacher that I didn't know about and still don't feel like I know that much about like the IEP's and 504 plans and RtI data collection. I've learned a lot about that stuff this semester but there is so much more to learn in addition to just trying to be a good teacher for your kids.

8. Is there anything else you want to add?

I think that more training at the college level on some of those things I just mentioned like IEP's, 504, and RtI, and even PLC's would be a good thing for beginning teachers to learn even more about. That would help them keep up with the experienced teachers better when they started as a new teacher. It would also be one less thing for a new teacher to have to figure out. It's hard enough just learning how to manage and teach a group of 24 kids!

Appendix O: **Interview 1 for First Year Teachers, Interview Transcript**

Cohort B
Participant 1:

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?
I attend staff meetings and trainings offered by my school and district during the school year and in the summer mostly. I also talk to other teachers and get ideas from them.

2.   How could your current job be improved?
Teachers need more time for professional learning and development so they can become better teachers. They teach all day and don't have a lot of time for learning. The nice thing about my district is they allow for one ½ day per month for professional development for teachers where students go home early. This gives us more time as a team and school to work together on new learning and ideas.

3.   Are you happy in your current job?
Very. I love my team and I love my principal. They were all very friendly and welcoming when I started and are always open to me when I have questions or need anything. It has been a great place to work!

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?
I have an apartment and a cat but no husband or kids yet. I am able to focus all of my time on my job and my students right now in life. This is important because it takes up a lot of my time. I am able to stay late and go in on weekends whenever I need to in order to be prepared for the upcoming week.

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?
Yes! We all work well together. We spend time together each day whether it's before or after school, at lunch, or during our designated PLC (Professional Learning Community) time. We all help each other and bring ideas to our meetings. It makes the job a lot easier because we work together.

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?
Per day: ten or eleven hours
Per week: 70-80 hours

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

meet with my team during our PLC time weekly. I help with an after school club called Girls on the Run. I also spend time communicating with parents, making copies, and planning and grading. Before school I have a cafeteria breakfast duty each day.

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

No. I am only in my first year of teaching and so far I love it. Maybe someday if I become a mom it could become too much if I continue to put in the hours that I currently do

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

Just summer jobs in high school and college. Not a different career before teaching.

Cohort B
Participant 2:

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?

I try hard to network with other teachers. My district allows me to do this through new teacher trainings and new teacher meeting for professional development. As new teachers we meet every other month as a group to work on something we can use in our classroom such as training in classroom management, grading, differentiation, RtI (Response to Intervention) and so forth.

2.   How could your current job be improved?

Being a first year teacher can be good and bad because I'm working along- side people who have been doing my job for many more years than I have. The good side to this is that I can learn from these experienced people. The bad side to this is that the expectations are the same for all of us whether we've been doing this job for 25 years or 2 months. We are evaluated the same and held to the same standards. I feel parents are even more critical of me as a new teacher. I'm not sure how this situation could be better or different though.

3.   Are you happy in your current job?

I am happy. I love the kids in my class. They are so sweet and this job has shown me how rewarding it is to be a teacher. See a student learn something new and knowing that I was responsible for that progress is just awesome.

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?

I just got married last summer and have no kids. My nieces and nephews live close to me so I spend a lot of time with them babysitting on the weekends.

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?

My grade level team works well together. Some or all of us talk daily. They have been very helpful to me as a brand new teacher.

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?

Per day: 9 hours plus 5 hours on the weekends

Per week: 50 hours

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

I go to our Care Team meetings for RtI and I'm on the school social committee. I also help with the school newspaper that our 5th graders publish monthly. Other than that I attend district workshops and building staff meetings.

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

Not yet! Some days I get tired but I love my kiddos!

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

I worked as a server at a restaurant throughout college just for spending money.

Cohort B
Participant 3:

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?

At my school I work with my team every day. There are five of us on the team and several of the others have been teaching for more than fifteen years so they have a lot of experience and resources. I am lucky they are willing to share with me and take time to work with me on planning and learning as a first year teacher.

2.   How could your current job be improved?

I am in constant need of more time! I don't have enough time to plan for teaching so many different subjects plus all of the other stuff that goes along with teaching. I get one hour of plan time per day but one day a week that is taken by our team PLC (Professional Learning Community) meeting and one other day a week is usually taken by IEP

(Individualized Education Plan) meetings or other meetings so that really only gives me three to four hours a week to plan for my instruction, grade, communicate or respond to parents through my weekly newsletter or emails or phone calls, touch base with my principal or other teachers, and of course all of the other stuff that comes up during a school day. It's not enough time.

3.   Are you happy in your current job?

I feel overwhelmed and stressed a lot. Like I said there is not enough time to get everything done and certainly not enough time to do things the very best they could be so I work a lot at night or on the weekends and do my best to keep up. I am happy when I'm working with my kiddos and helping them learn but I'm not that happy at 9:00 on a Saturday night when I'm at home doing school work.

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?

I am not married but do have a boyfriend who I spend a lot of time with. I do volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity once a month and for two weeks in the summer. Other than that and hanging out with friends when I can, school has really been my life this year.

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?

I love my team. Like I said earlier they have been an enormous help to me this year and I don't think I could have survived without their help and support daily. Beyond just helping me figure out how to be a teacher they have made me feel welcome on their team and we I have become friends with them. I love working with my team every day.

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?

I'm at school by 7:30 each morning and leave around 5:30 usually. So that ends up being 10 hours a day plus I probably spend 6 hours on the weekend. So 56 hours a week. I don't make enough money for that amount of time!

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

I have my weekly PLC meetings with my team. I also have monthly team meetings with our principals. I have hallway supervision before school and walk my kids out to their buses at the end of the day. I'm on the technology and social studies committees for my school so I have monthly meetings before school for both of those committees. I also have district trainings that I go to once per quarter for new teachers.

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

Some days I do when I get exhausted and overwhelmed and super stressed. This is only my first year though so I'm thankful to have a job and am hoping it will get easier in the next few years.

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

The only other job I've have was working as a hostess at Applebee's for three years. This is much different.

Cohort B
Participant 4:

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?

As a first year teacher I am trying to use what I learned in college. I went to a couple of summer workshops through my district before school started too.

2.   How could your current job be improved?

I wasn't really prepared for all of the other stuff that goes along with the job beyond just teaching. There is a lot of stuff I didn't know teachers did like keeping track of so many different assessments, having so many meetings, and having parent communication take up so much of my time. I am still just trying to learn the curriculum and what I'm supposed to be teaching so it's hard to manage all of that other stuff too and still do a good job teaching.

3.   Are you happy in your current job?

The reason I became a teacher is because of my fifth grade teacher but like I just said I didn't realize he had so much other stuff he had to do beside just teach us. I don't care for all of that other stuff. I just want to spend time with my kids.

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?

I have a wife and a baby and a toddler at home. They take up my time at night and on the weekends so it's important for me to get everything I need to do done while I'm at school.

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?

I work at a pretty small school so I only have one other person in my grade. We talk every day and have lunch together. I have gotten to know pretty much everyone at my school since it's smaller and everyone has been nice and welcoming.

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?

I'm there from 8:30 to 4:30 [8 hours] every day and then I have to pick up my daughter at daycare so I can't stay later. Sometimes I take work home to do when they go to bed so I would say I put in about 45 hours per week, give or take.

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

Because I'm a first year teacher I'm not on any committees for my school. I went to a new teacher orientation for a week before the school year started. I also supervise recess a couple of times per week; me and my teammate trade off.

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

Not yet. I have to finish my first year before I start thinking about that! Really though, I have enjoyed it for the most part this year. It takes more time doing the stuff I don't love to do like the paperwork and emails and stuff but overall I think I'll stick with.

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

I worked for a moving company in high school and through college and will probably still do that in the summers.

Cohort B
Participant 5:

1.   How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?

I read a lot on the internet and do my own research. I've also been able to participate in several trainings and workshops during the summer and the school year as a first year teacher in my district. My principal has sent me outside the district for one training this year.

2.   How could your current job be improved?

I have so many resources from the district and that I find online and that even came with my classroom. The problem is I have never had time to go through and really determine what I need, what I want to use, and what is outdated or doesn't go with my curriculum. There is a lot of old stuff that came with my room—files, books, textbooks, and games. Plus I have my own stuff that I've made or found online. Plus my teammates share stuff with me all the time so maybe this summer I'll have time to go through it all and get more organized. I guess it's better than having nothing at all to teach with!

3.   Are you happy in your current job?

I am very happy. I love my team and my school and especially my students. My first year has been tough and tiresome but I love seeing my students succeed!

4.   What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?

I have two daughters—5 and 7 [years old]. So we have lots of activities for the girls but my husband has been a huge help this year or I just take my school work to their activities.

5.   Do you feel like a part of a team?

I love my team. I always feel like I'm receiving and never giving anything to them but they are so helpful and don't seem to mind. I have built strong relationships with my entire team already this year.

6.   How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?

I arrive an hour and a half before school since my husband is able to drop off the girls each day but I have to leave soon after buses to pick them up. So I would say maybe 48 hours at work plus all of the hours I put in at home and on weekends…maybe 60 hours a week total for school.

7.   What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?

This piece really surprised me when I started teaching at _____ school. I didn't realize how much extra stuff I would be responsible for. I supervise hallways and bathrooms near my classroom each morning and afternoon. I also supervise recess. I'm on 3 different committees that meet monthly before school and attend monthly staff meetings before school. I do a ton of communicating with parents which also takes up a lot of time but I feel it's worth it in the end. I also meet with students every Thursday before school for tutoring. Some weeks I have something every single day before school.

8.   Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?

No, I'm just getting started! I worked hard to earn my degree and have worked really hard this year. I do hope it becomes less demanding and that I feel like I can keep my head on straight and actually take a breath every once in a while as I get better at the job.

9.   Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?

I worked for a real estate company until I had children, then stayed home for several years and now this [teaching].

Cohort B
Participant 6:

1. **How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?**

I haven't had a ton of time this first year to read educational books or magazines but I do meet with my mentor teacher once a month. I was hired really late so I didn't get to go to any summer workshops but I did go to new teacher orientation before school started.

2. **How could your current job be improved?**

Meeting with my mentor more often would be nice. We are at different ends of the school so we don't even see each other that often. We really only see each other during my plan time for 30 minutes once a month. It's hard to get much done during that time. Another thing that could be better is my principal. I never see her. I think she has been in my classroom once this year during the first week of school. I just kind of feel like I'm out here all alone and hope I'm doing the right work.

3. **Are you happy in your current job?**

I am…it's different than I thought it would be coming into it and maybe I would be better off at a different school eventually but I was glad to get a job at the last minute and try to do the best I know how.

4. **What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?**

Nothing really. I'm single and have an apartment and a roommate.

5. **Do you feel like a part of a team?**

No. Like I said before I feel like I'm out there alone most of the time—just me and my kids. I don't know if that's my fault because I'm new of if that's just the way this school is that I'm at.

6. **How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?**

I get to school about 30 minutes before kids and stay about 30 minutes after they go home just to be organized and get ready for the next day. Sometimes I take stuff home to work on so in all I bet I spend 50-55 hours a week on school.

7. **What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?**

Not too much. I email parents a lot. I'm on the science vertical team for my school and we meet quarterly after school. I go to district and school mandated meetings and stay after school once a week with a small group of students from my class just to help them with math facts.

8. **Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?**

No, but I do think I would like to work at a different school where there might be more support or I might have the opportunity to get to know more of the adults in the building. Everyone here seems to go in their rooms and shut the door. That makes it hard for someone new like me.

9. **Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?**

Just odds and ends summer jobs really. Nothing major.

Cohort B
Participant 7:

1. **How do you continue to develop and grow as a professional?**

By going to staff meetings or building or district trainings for new teachers. I also work with my mentor teacher and teammates a lot.

2. **How could your current job be improved?**

The discipline part of teaching is something I wasn't prepared for. My class is really challenging with a lot of special needs students on top of the many behavior issues I have. It tests my patience often and takes my focus off what I'm really here to do, teach the curriculum.

3. **Are you happy in your current job?**

If I had a better handle on the behaviors I would be more pleased with the job. I am hoping next year's class will be a better mix of students plus I will have more experience with discipline under my belt then. This year I really came in with nothing for discipline or classroom rules and have been creating and developing discipline procedures, behavior charts, and taking a ton of class time on discipline that it hasn't been that pleasant for me.

4. **What other responsibilities do you have in your life beyond teaching?**

I just graduated last year so I'm try to save money now and still living with my parents at this time.

5. **Do you feel like a part of a team?**

I do feel like I'm a part of my 4th grade team. They are all really nice and try to help with anything I need. I have gotten a lot of ideas for discipline in my classroom from them which has really helped since I came in with really no ideas for this and have needed a lot of help.

6. **How much time do you devote to your teaching job per day? Per week?**
 I'd say 50-60 depending on the week.

7. **What additional responsibilities do you have at school beyond teaching in your classroom?**
I meet with my team weekly at our PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings and for our monthly RtI (Response to Intervention) meetings. I also go to building meetings and am on one committee this year. I sponsor an after school homework club as well two days a week.

8. **Have you considered leaving the teaching profession for a different career and why?**
If my class isn't any better next year I might! Really, my plan is to stay in teaching. The only change that may happen is that I might go back to get my Master's Degree in administration or counseling someday. I'm not sure though.

9. **Have you ever had a different work experience? If so, what was it?**
No.

Vitae

Sarah Turpin-Padberg received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2000. She earned her Master of Education in Administration from Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, in 2005. While at Lindenwood, Sarah was awarded the Francis and Elizabeth Huss Graduate Award in Education Administration. Sarah anticipates her Doctorate in Education Administration from Lindenwood University in 2017.

Sarah holds certification in elementary education, 1-6, and also holds K-8 principal administrator's certification. After teaching for four years at the elementary level in the Rockwood School District, she moved into administration as an assistant principal. Sarah Turpin-Padberg is currently the principal of Rockwood's Kehrs Mill Elementary School in Chesterfield, Missouri.